

Nr. 26/2021

HERMENEIA

Journal of Hermeneutics, Art Theory and Criticism

Topic: Philosophical Research

Editura Fundației Academice AXIS
IAȘI, 2021

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Journal's Address

Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania
Department of Philosophy and Social-Political Sciences
Blvd. Carol I nr. 11, 700506, Iasi, Romania
Email: contact@hermeneia.ro Web: www.hermeneia.ro
Contact persons: Petru Bejan (Professor, Dr.), - Editor in chief
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Editor's Address

Axis Academic Foundation
Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania
Blvd. Carol I nr. 11, 700506, Iasi, Romania
Tel/Fax: 0232.201653
contact@hermeneia.ro / pbejan@uaic.ro

ISSN print: 1453-9047

ISSN online: 2069-8291

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Ayna ISABABAYEVA *

Plato's *Ion*: Art as an Act of Hermeneutics

Abstract: The dialogue *Ion* is one of Plato's most controversial works. The disagreements among historians of philosophy regarding this work are caused primarily by doubts about this dialogue's authenticity, which have been more or less resolved recently in favor of Plato's authorship. However, this dialogue carries within itself one even more complex and almost insoluble problem - the actual interpretation of the author's content and message. Each researcher of this work understands that Plato, through the mouth of Socrates, in this dialogue, makes a riddle for Ion and calls on him and a reader of the dialogue to solve it. However, this riddle, expressed in the myth of the Magnesian stone, is so polysemantic, consists of so many semantic layers that everyone who studies this work has the opportunity to solve it in his own way. The present article attempts to focus on the problem of the essence of art as a hermeneutic act. Plato views creativity exclusively as a hermeneutic process. For him, it is a chain of interconnected and interdependent elements, where each participant acts as an interpreter of the previous one. Plato builds an extremely ambiguous model of the creative process. The author (artist) must be simultaneously intellectually passive to perceive knowledge coming from outside through inspiration and hermeneutically active to interpret this inspired knowledge.

Keywords: the hermeneutics of art, hermeneutics of music, philosophy of art.

"Whoever begins to conduct philosophical inquiry with Plato can be sure that he or she is on the right path" (Szlezak 1999, 2).

Only one of thirty-six dialogues in Thrasyllus' canon has a title of a literary work in the thematic addition (ἀπὸ τοῦ πράγματός). This dialogue is *Ion*, and in the canon, it is called *Ion*, or *On the Iliad*. It is unclear what prompted Thrasyllus to give such a name to it, for there is almost nothing in this dialogue about the *Iliad*. There are some references to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but they are all of an auxiliary nature only. This dialogue's central theme is the idea of interpretation and the nature of this interpretation, namely hermeneutics.

In this dialogue, Socrates examines the nature of interpretation from different angles, proving himself a true hermeneut. Throughout the dialogue, the hermeneutic theme manifests itself in indicator words and

* Assistant Professor, PhD, Erciyes University, Fine Arts Faculty, Music Department, Kayseri, Turkey; isababayeva@erciyes.edu.tr

phrases: “apprehending his (the poet’s A.Ī) thought and not merely learning off his words... since a man can never be a good rhapsode without understanding what the poet says. For the rhapsode ought to make himself an interpreter of the poet’s thought to his audience” [530c], “expound” [531a, 531b], “good poets interpret to us these utterances of the gods... act as interpreters of interpreters” [535a], “a knowledge of different things” [538b], “what he means by this, and whether it is rightly or wrongly spoken” [538d]. All these concepts reflect the hermeneutic spirit that lives in this dialogue.

After the introduction, which is remarkable for its geographical allusions and mythological references, Plato puts a rather strange monologue into Socrates’ mouth. This monologue is odd in several ways: it is strange in its suddenness - Plato leads the reader into the deep waters of wisdom at once, without preparing. It is also strange in its brevity, which seems unusual after short welcoming remarks. But even more, it is strange and remarkable in its content. Socrates tries to turn the attention of Ion from the outside of the rhapsodic art (the dress of the rhapsodist, memorizing poetry, etc.) to the inner - to the fact that the rhapsodist must above all “delve into the idea, comprehend and interpret it”, that is, to the hermeneutic side of art:

I must say I have often envied you rhapsodes, Ion, for your art: for besides that it is fitting to your art that your person should be adorned and that you should look as handsome as possible, the necessity of being conversant with a number of good poets, and especially with Homer, the best and divinest poet of all, and of apprehending his thought and not merely learning off his words, is a matter for envy; since a man can never be a good rhapsode without understanding what the poet says. For the rhapsode ought to make himself an interpreter of the poet's thought to his audience; and to do this properly without knowing what the poet means is impossible. So one cannot but envy all this [530bc].

This speech of Socrates is also interesting for its form, which musicians call One-theme’s Rondo. Here, two episodes on the theme of hermeneutics are held together in a monolithic construction by three pillars - a recurring refrain with the theme of Socrates’ “envy” (at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end). Interestingly, this miniature form foreshadows and hints to the reader about the composition of the entire dialogue that is ahead of him, which is generally built on the same principle. The three main speeches of Socrates, Plato places at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the dialogue, and each of them has its own function: the initial one introduces the reader to the theme of the conversation, the final one summarizes what has been said, and the central one (both in position and in meaning) expresses the essence of artistic and hermeneutic relations, the formula of

which is proposed metaphorically in the famous myth of the Magnesian stone. Plato places this myth as a most precious crystal in the very center of the work and frames it with completely exquisite twists of dialogue.

Usually, the myth of the Magnesian stone is understood as a theory about the nature of creative inspiration, and the most zealous debates are on the topic only of whether this nature is irrational or not. Russian philosopher Losev answers the adherents of the irrational approach like this: “At first glance, it may really seem that here we are preaching exclusively only ecstasism, that is, irrationalism. This is completely wrong” (A. F. Losev 2000, 556). In fact, the idea of the artistic inspiration’s irrationalism as a bright flash overshadows the main idea that Plato expounds here, in this myth. He very carefully prepares the reader during the entire previous conversation of Socrates with Ion. So, Socrates brings Ion to why he, the rhapsodist Ion, speaks better about Homer than about other poets. Ion himself does not understand this and expresses his bewilderment. Socrates explains to him: “this is not an art in you, whereby you speak well on Homer, but a divine power, which moves you like that in the stone which Euripides named a magnet” [533d]. And then Socrates unfolds this myth before Ion, during which it becomes quite apparent that the nature of artistic inspiration for Plato is hermeneutic from the very beginning to the end, because: “the poets are merely the interpreters of the gods... And you rhapsodes, for your part, interpret the utterances of the poets... And so you act as interpreters of interpreters” [534e-535a]. It turns out that this whole chain of the creative process is one sequence of the several hermeneutic acts: poet interprets the “will of God,” rhapsodist “interprets the interpreter-poet,” listener “interprets the interpreter of the interpreter.” Thus, in his myth, Plato creates a chain of interpretation, which we can call a hermeneutic chain or a hermeneutic vertical.

Hermeneutic Vertical

Plato’s hermeneutic vertical is structured as follows: God¹ - author - performer - listener. This is precisely the vertical, the rigid vertical, in which the creative and hermeneutic movement is one-way and carried out from top to bottom. That is, the active role of the interpreter, the reverse movement from the interpreter to the author, or the dialogue between them, on which the hermeneutics of Dilthey and Schleiermacher will later insist, is not envisaged by Plato. Also, the Platonic formula does not provide for equal co-creation between the inspirer and the inspired. Therefore, when we talk about the vertical of art that Plato offers us, we must first ask the following question: who, in essence, is the author of a work? Not only Plato, but the entire culture of Antiquity says that the true Creator of any work is God. It is a work of art: “directly invested by the gods, and this is

not a metaphor ... but a genuine belief. Homer and Hesiod cannot take a step without Apollo and the muses, and so it is for all the Greek poets. Moreover, like Pindar, each of them can rightfully call himself a 'prophet of the muses', so that it is no longer he who sings, but the muse itself, he only forms this singing with chorus and lyre" [Nem. III 10] (A. F. Losev 2000, 97). Starting with the invocation of the God, deity, muses with a request for inspiration, the ancient Greek epic song revealed God's existence in almost every line. God was a constant in the epic.

And what of the poet? If we take the relationship God - Author, Plato assigns a relatively passive role to the poet, where he must submit to the true Creator. Plato gives a formula for the relationship between two creators: the Creator in the world of Ideas - God and the Creator in the world of substances - a poet. However, this is not an equal partnership. This is the formula of the leader and the led, and this formula is the most crucial condition of creativity for Plato. In the dialogue, metaphorically, Socrates is also perceived as the leader and Ion as the led. Socrates shows the way, leads Ion to the goal, asks heuristic questions. Knowing the answer in advance, Socrates "takes the hand" of Ion and leads him along the shortest and most promising path to the answer to the main question, and this answer he foresees to receive from Ion and gets it at the end of the dialogue.

The poet's value as a personality and his functionality are very ambiguous in Antiquity. On the one hand, we know that poet was extolled in Ancient Greece and that poets gave religious revelations; we know that poets are hermeneutists of gods and that they are "prophets": "in order that we who hear them may know that it is not they who utter these words of great price when they are out of their wits, but that it is God himself who speaks and addresses us through them" [534d].

An ancient poet is a prophet through whom God speaks. Nevertheless, he is also a person who sacrifices his own human voice to materialize the voice of God through himself. Moreover, if, following Plato, we proceed from the fact that poetry is the transmission of knowledge and that the poet is the transmitter, then, in essence, the poet's personality ceases to be important to Plato and us. This is another side of the poet's life in Antiquity, which the Middle Ages later borrowed as the central position concerning the phenomenon of the author.

The hermeneutic vertical in medieval theology was as follows: God (author) - text - interpreter. This structure is developed mainly in theological hermeneutics, and here the most important thing is that the writer, as an author, is almost completely negated. God dictates the sacred text to a receiving person (theory of divine dictation), and God is recognized as an author. Moreover, the writer's personality has absolutely no meaning and interest from hermeneutics' point of view. The writer here becomes a pure

transmitter. Its only value lies in the fact that it somehow² becomes the most suitable transmitter for this purpose. This is the primary position of medieval Europe concerning the phenomenon of the author. In Antiquity, and Plato in particular, an ambiguous situation arises, when, on the one hand, in the relationship between God and the author, the role of the author is almost completely negated, and on the other hand, in the relationship between author and interpreter, the author (Homer) is deified, elevated to the position of God. In this connection, the author-interpreter, the interpreter's role, the performer, in this case, the actor, receives a fascinating light in Plato.

The whole dialogue takes place in the mood of Socrates' irony towards Ion. Socrates makes fun of Ion, plays with him in words and concepts, pushes him to a thought, to an answer. In creating a first in the history of philosophy, Plato created a conflict between a philosopher and poet, vividly and clearly showing the inequality of the positions of Socrates and Ion. Moreover, this attitude repeatedly casts the rhapsode down to such boundaries when his absence becomes possible not only in the dialogue but even in the whole concept of the hermeneutic vertical. This is due to several factors at once. First, a rhapsodist, like an author, but to an even greater extent, is an intermediary; that is, he is somewhere in the middle of the hermeneutic process.

Furthermore, for Plato, the hermeneutic vertical is an act's sequence of the truth's transmission. And with each subsequent act, distortions of the truth can take more severe and irreversible forms. Therefore, getting rid of the rhapsode link in this hermeneutic chain can only mean relief from another, unnecessary interpretation that adds new and otiose meanings to the truth expressed in the work. Plato's attitude towards rhapsodes could be further enhanced by the fact that rhapsodic art was relatively new in the era of Plato's Greece. It was only "in the 7th - 5th centuries BC aoidos singers are replaced by rhapsodists" (Sobolevsky 1946, 78). It was at that time, during the late stage of the development of the ancient epic, that performance was separated from authorship. Until that time, aoidos in its person united the author and the performer, negating misinterpretation risks.

When the rhapsodes appeared, and the performing arts were professionalized, the problem of interpretation arose. Therefore, Plato's Ion was perceived as an alien, falsely and forcibly introduced an element into the hermeneutic process. He interfered. He was just a tribute to the times, a popular actor who was loved by the crowd, who cared more about looks: "your person should be adorned and that you should look as handsome as possible" [530b], "in all the adornment of elegant attire and golden crowns" [535d] than about what he said. Moreover, Plato in the dialogue repeatedly opposed the appearance of the rhapsode, his own dress [530b] and how

well he had “embellished Homer” [530d], to the meaning that is expressed in the work in the form of divine truth and which the rhapsode cannot or does not want to be involved with. Thus, Plato shows the shift of emphasis from internal to external, from content to form, and to the shortcomings of the entire hermeneutic process, which are caused to a greater extent by this.

Another category, the last element in the hermeneutic chain, is a reader, or listener and spectator in Plato: “And are you aware that your spectator is the last of the rings which I spoke of as receiving from each other the power transmitted from the Heracleian lodestone?” [535e] Here, the paradox of the situation lies in the fact that a text (like any work of art and literature) is created for him, for that person who must perceive it. However, in essence, philosophy, in this case, is very little interested in this abstract, historically indistinguishable, and almost mythical reader or listener. He plays a secondary, even tertiary role in the Platonic hermeneutic composition. Because that reader may not be in this structure. There is an author (we found out that it is God in Plato), and there is a text that was materialized from a pure idea. Furthermore, this is a self-sufficient consistency, so much self-sufficient that it becomes unimportant not only how the reader will interpret this text, but even whether the reader will come to this text or not. The text does not change its meaning and its value.

The meaning of a text at Plato is exceptionally significant. Even though the text is present in the relations between all participants in the hermeneutic process, theoretically, in this structure, only one position could be assigned to the text - between God and the author. Then this whole composition would look like this: God - text - author - interpreter - spectator. However, Plato rejects any kind of definition of the text. Moreover, Plato avoids using the concept of a text and any of its synonyms and terms that can somehow materialize this concept and make it plastic, visible and tangible, and therefore easily accessible to the reader. The question arises: how is it possible not to use a single category denoting a text in a work that, in general, is devoted to the text and its understanding? It seems downright incredible. First, he rejects a text's concept as a text, that is, from its formal and material understanding. At the beginning of the dialogue, Plato opposes verse to intention, that is, form to content. Socrates says: “apprehending his (Homer-A.Ī.) thought and not merely learning off his words” [530c]. It seems that Plato is not interested in the text at all, but only in the meaning expressed in the text and the interpretation of this meaning.

Second, Plato does not want to speak directly about the text. Plato wants to talk about understanding, not so much of text as of the author, Homer. Plato exists and wants to exist in such a paradigm when creation is eclipsed by the Creator, and it is not the form of the Creator's revelation that is important, but the meaning revealed in the creation. Because the form is

unstable, the form is perishable, and the form is deceptive. Plato does not trust text as a written medium. In one of his letters, he says: “and for this reason, no man of intelligence will ever venture to commit to it the concepts of his reason, especially when it is unalterable - as is the case with what is formulated in writing” (Plato 1903, [343a]). Plato supports here a relatively widespread idea about the impossibility of writing true knowledge and the rigidity of the written medium. Of course, the Pythagorean prohibition on written philosophical doctrines was eventually overcome, and therefore, we now can read ancient literature in the form of written texts. However, questions regarding the problem of written expression as the materialization of an idea were not finally resolved in Antiquity.

Conclusion

The dialogue *Ion* is the first work of ancient Greek philosophy in which the problem of the nature of the hermeneutics of art is illuminated, and its theoretical model is deduced. This dialogue’s appearance is historically and philosophically justified because Plato answers the very relevant questions and which philosophy was eager to receive. Therefore, the dialogue *Ion* can be considered a work, in the highest sense satisfying the needs of general hermeneutics and hermeneutics of art at the initial stage of their development.

What themes does Plato cover in this dialogue? In general, the entire problematic of the dialogue could be reduced to two major themes, which in their essence carry qualities that are not only contradictory but mutually exclusive - these are the importance of realizing the need for the hermeneutics of art and its impossibility as an act of a human will.

Importance of realizing the need for the hermeneutics of art

Hermeneutics’ relevance as a way (perhaps even the only way) of interaction with philosophical and artistic works was first realized by philosophy in Socrates and Plato’s era. There were several reasons for this. First, at this time, knowledge (philosophical and literary) began to go beyond verbal expression limits, which is named “acousma” in the Pythagorean tradition. Written texts appeared and became publicly available, because of which they lost their sacredness. Second, they became open to different interpretations. Thus, if we take as an axiom Plato’s assertion that God speaks through a poet and affirms the truth in the created work, then we must admit that there can be only one, reflecting that truth, interpretation. All other interpretations will be different from that truth and thus false. The text, cut off from its creator and hence from the only correct interpretation, loses its connection with the truth at the very moment when

it begins its life on a written medium. Thus, the written text becomes a kind of obstacle to the hermeneutic transfer of its meaning.

Another such obstacle is the rhapsode, which was included in this chain historically quite late, at about the same time when epic works began to be recorded and perceived (by philosophy) in this chain rather inorganically. It is inorganic precisely because a rhapsode is an alien element in this chain; he is not needed. He creates an unnecessary, most often false interpretation. Besides, rhapsode, with all his appearance and all his activities, brings in so much form that this diverts attention from the content, and therefore from the meaning, and sidelines them. Philosophy, of course, could not accept this at that stage of its development.

All these historically new phenomena had put philosophy before the need to understand these problems. Philosophers, in particular Plato, were engaged with these issues and offered some answers. However, here philosophy ran into one obstruction that it could not overcome – the established belief in the impossibility of art as an act of a human will.

Impossibility of art and hermeneutics as an act of a human will

The belief that true art is always initiated by the higher powers exists as long as art itself. These ideas about the possibility of transmitting true knowledge only on the condition of divine presence in this work had a very stable meaning both in Antiquity and especially in the Middle Ages when they turned into a ramified theory of the divine inspiration of sacred texts.

Concerning the ancient idea of the divine inspiration of creativity, special attention should be paid to the following: a) for an ancient philosopher, there were true art and not-true art. Not-true art was always created on the initiative of man. It could not be compared with true, divine art, which was initiated by some higher power: “A convincing proof of what I say is the case of Tynnichus, the Chalcidian, who had never composed a single poem in his life that could deserve any mention, and then produced the paean, which is in everyone’s mouth, almost the finest song we have, simply - as he says himself – ‘an invention of the Muses.’ For the god, as it seems to me, intended him to be a sign to us that we should not waver or doubt that these fine poems are not human or the work of men, but divine and the work of gods [534de]. Moreover, since Plato further says that: “the poets are merely the interpreters of the gods” [534e], we understand that b) the poet in the process of creativity becomes a kind of an instrument that is involved in the creativity by a higher power. Since the higher and the leading (God) presupposes the lower and the led (poet), the poet’s passivity as a creative principle was a natural and desirable state. Another state, not only desirable but necessary, was c) the poet’s madness. Plato shows that true art is impossible within the boundaries of reason: “a poet is a light and

winged and sacred thing and is unable ever to ignite until he has been inspired and put out of his senses, and his mind is no longer in him: every man, while he retains possession of that, is powerless to ignite a verse or chant an oracle” [534b]. Here one may get the mistaken impression that madness is a state of a person that is already present in him and thanks to which God chooses him for art. According to Plato, God first chooses a person endowed with reason (a gift, in Plato), then he takes this mind away from him and endows him with the ability for poetic prophecy (also a gift): “And for this reason God takes away the mind of these men and uses them as his ministers, just as he does soothsayers and godly seers, in order that we who hear them may know that it is not they who utter these words of great price, when they are out of their wits, but that it is God himself who speaks and addresses us through them” [534cd]. Plato does not doubt that the poet (or rhapsode) creates in a mad state, for how can he be in reason: “when in all the adornment of elegant attire and golden crowns he weeps at sacrifice or festival” [535d]. It is worth noting that a spectator is also driven to the same insane state [534d]. Here we again come across the idea of the chain of art, in which all the constituent elements must have a qualitatively identical state, be “congenial” to each other. This is necessary in the highest degree because art in Plato is an act of understanding and interpretation. After all, every element of this chain is an “interpreter” of the previous element. Furthermore, the central meaning of Plato’s message, expressed in the dialogue and in the myth of the Magnesian stone, is that any break in the hermeneutic chain means an interruption of the artistic process. Therefore, art for Plato is undoubtedly a hermeneutic act, basically carrying the phenomenon of understanding and interpretation.

Notes

¹ In *Ion*, Plato uses the following concepts to define the creative principle: God, gods, muse, muses.

² Both in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages, the condition for this was considered the coincidence of the author’s personal properties (mainly moral) with divine creative energy.

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Constantin-Ionuț MIHAI*

Protreptic and Medicine in Plato's Early Dialogues

Abstract: This article explores Plato's relation to medicine as documented in his early dialogues by taking into account the historical and cultural context of the fourth century BC. In Plato's time, medicine and philosophy often interfered and competed with each other for cognitive and moral authority in matters concerning human nature, health, and happiness. To increase philosophy's public recognition, Plato challenged medicine's claims of being the rightful arbiter of the best *modus vivendi* and argued for philosophy's moral and intellectual preeminence over all other *technai*. As I intend to show, Plato's rivalry with medicine is often supported by a protreptic rhetoric, which aims both to highlight medicine's limits and to illustrate philosophy's primacy in defining the conditions for a temperate, ordered, and happy life. Along with a critique of different approaches to bodily health and happiness taken by Hippocratic writers, Plato emphasizes the soul's invaluable superiority over the body and describes philosophy as a genuine medicine of the soul. The explicit references to therapeutic techniques and vocabulary also function as rhetorical devices to demonstrate the useful and necessary character of philosophy.

Keywords: Plato, protreptic, polemics, Hippocratic Corpus, ancient philosophy, ancient medicine

As recent scholarship has increasingly shown, medicine figures prominently in Plato's work. One can identify at least two ways in which Plato refers to the medical practice and literature of his time. First, medicine is referred to as a term of comparison for the philosophical activity, as a rival *technē* whose claims to cognitive and moral authority Plato seeks to debunk. Besides this polemical stance, Plato's engagement with medicine reveals another, complementary purpose. As I intend to show, the medical language and analogies frequently operate as powerful rhetorical devices by means of which Plato intends to secure philosophy's status as a legitimate discipline and promote it in the intellectual milieu of his time.

* Scientific Researcher, PhD, Institute for Interdisciplinary Research, Social–Sciences and Humanities Research Department, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Romania; email: ionut_constantin_mihai@yahoo.com

** Acknowledgment: This work was supported by a grant of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS/CCCDI – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P1-1.1-PD-2019-0519, within PNCDI III.

Philosophy's competition with medicine and the protreptic intent manifest in the Platonic corpus can be better understood if we take into account the historical and cultural context of the fourth century BC, in which Plato lived and wrote his works. As Collins (2015, 4, n. 5) has stressed, after the Peloponnesian War, "philosophical protreptic had to contend with every possible formulation of and approach to 'the good life'—including new intellectual discourses like historiography and medicine". Various disciplines, such as philosophy, rhetoric, medicine, sophistry, poetry, etc., were often engaged in a mutual competition for cognitive and moral authority, each one claiming its preeminence over the others. Ancient protreptic literature shows compelling evidence of the reciprocal attacks carried out by the advocates of various competing *technai*. The authors of protreptic speeches not only praised and recommended a particular *technē*, a school of thought, or a certain way of life, but also criticized the rival sources of knowledge and downplayed other competing disciplines. As Kotzé (2004, 57) notes, in a protreptic, "apart from showing the audience that they are in need of help, the merits of the recommended way of life must be presented together with a refutation of the claims of rival groups that they represent the best *modus vivendi*." (Cf. Aune 1991, 91). Plato's own dialogues contain much evidence of such a rivalry with rhetoric, sophistry, medicine, poetry, and even pre-Socratic philosophy. In what follows, I will discuss Plato's engagement and rivalry with medicine, taking into analysis some of his early dialogues. Without being exhaustive, the discussion below will focus on some relevant passages in dialogues such as the *First Alcibiades*, *Charmides*, *Laches*, and the *Gorgias*, which reflect a primary, but important stage of Plato's engagement with and opposition to medicine.

Before delving into our analysis, it may be useful to take a brief look at the development of Greek medicine in the fifth and fourth century BC. As shown by Jaeger (1957, 55), in Plato's time, "the methods of medical procedure, like those of mathematics, became the object of widespread interest even among educated laymen." There is abundant literary evidence of the growing public interest in medical matters in the Athens of Plato's day. As Carrick (1995, 12) has rightly noted, "the average Athenian held in high regard the practical applications of the medical craft", since physicians were generally regarded as experts in matters relating to human health. As people considered health as one of the highest goods for human life, "physicians could wield considerable power and authority" (*ibidem*). The Hippocratic writers often discussed human nature, bodily and psychic health, and maintained that prescribing the conditions for the best way of living falls within the province of medicine itself. As the author of the *Regimen in Acute Diseases* states, the art of medicine "has great power to bring

health in all cases of sickness, preservation of health to those who are well, good condition to athletes in training, and in fact realization of each man's particular desire." (*Regimen*, IX, 3-6, transl. by Jones 1959, 71). There is no surprise, therefore, that several Hippocratic authors argue for medicine's preeminence over other *technai*, including philosophy. This is particularly evident in the treatise entitled *On Ancient Medicine*. In a key-passage, the Hippocratic author overtly criticizes the approaches made by various philosophers on themes such as "what man is and by what causes he is made" (ἄνθρωπος τί ἐστὶν καὶ δι' οἷας αἰτίας γίνεται), "knowledge of nature" (περὶ φύσιος γινῶναι), and other similar points (*De vet. med.*, 20, 1-17, ed. Jones 1957, 52-53; cf. Levin 2014, 79). However, establishing the conditions for a good and happy life (*eudaimonia*) was a topic that interested philosophers as well, and their statements often interfered with similar points made by Hippocratic writers. Therefore, in such a competitive intellectual milieu, "there is little reason to doubt that on some occasions, at least, philosophers and physicians competed for influence and authority before their public on moral matters relating to *the right way to live*." (Carrick, 1995, 12)

The contest (*agōn*) between the advocates of the two competing *technai* often resulted in a mutual critique between philosophers and medical men (cf. Dean-Jones 2003, 98). The *Hippocratic Corpus* occasionally echoes this critique, as it is evident in the already mentioned treatise *Regimen in Acute Diseases*. In chapter VIII, 4-5, the Hippocratic author complains that "the art [of medicine] as a whole has a very bad name among laymen, so that there is thought to be no art of medicine at all" (transl. by Jones 1959, 69).¹ Additional evidence of the attacks mounted against medicine is found in the Hippocratic treatise *On the Art*, which seems to have been written, mainly, as a reaction to hostility from outside.² As we shall see in the following, Plato figures prominently among the opponents and critics of medicine. Many of his dialogues contain a vivid and overtly attack directed against several points made by Hippocratic authors.

Although Plato's engagement with medicine has been the subject of much scholarly interest over the past few decades (Desclos 1992; Lidz 1995; Lombard 1999; Moes 2000; Craik 2001; García Novo 2005; Boudon-Millot 2005; Moes 2011; Campos 2016, etc.)³, little attention has been paid to the particular aspect of Plato's rivalry with and polemic against medicine (exceptions include Carrick 1995, 12-13, and Levin 2014). Yet, as I hope to show in the following, a close look at this particular issue can help us grasp not only a fresh view of Plato's relationship with medicine, but also a deep insight into the way he sought to define and promote philosophy in the intellectual milieu of his time. Dialogues such as the *First Alcibiades*,

Charmides, *Laches*, and the *Gorgias* show evidence that medicine was often the target of a critique conducted by Plato, who seems engaged in a contest (*agōn*) with the medical writers and practitioners of his time. Though much slighter when compared with the situation found in later dialogues such as the *Symposium* or *Republic*, Plato's rivalry with medicine in his early dialogues is still important and worth investigating, since any dialogue reflects, to a greater or lesser extent, important aspects of the historical and cultural context in which it was written.

Several passages in the dialogues under discussion here contain the explicit statement that medicine cannot acquire the status of the *technē* par excellence, as some of the Hippocratic writers firmly claimed. To establish philosophy's preeminence over medicine, Plato introduces a well-known philosophical topos, namely the soul-body distinction, stressing the former's invaluable superiority over the latter. What Plato insists on is that while medicine is primarily concerned with the body, philosophy privileges the soul, which must be regarded as the most important of all.

Soul's preeminence to the body is a leading theme in Plato's early dialogues. In the *Crito*, 48A, for instance, the soul is defined as "that part in us which is concerned with right and wrong", and is considered to be more important (τιμιώτερον) than the body. A similar point is made in the *Gorgias*, 465C-D, where the soul is said to be in command of the body (ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ σώματι ἐπεστάται).⁴ The motif is further developed in the *First Alcibiades*, where the soul is told to be the user and the ruler (ἄρχουσα, 130A) of the body.⁵ Following Socrates' line of argument in the same dialogue, man turns out to be nothing else than soul (μηδὲν ἄλλο τὸν ἄνθρωπον συμβαίνειν ἢ ψυχὴν—*ibidem*, 130C). From a cognitive perspective, such an argument concludes that "anyone who gets to know something belonging to the body knows the things that are his, but not himself" (*ibidem*, 131A). Now, since the art of medicine is concerned with the body, "no physician, in so far as he is a physician, knows himself" (οὐδεὶς ἄρα τῶν ἰατρῶν ἑαυτὸν γινώσκει, καθ' ὅσον ἰατρός) (*ibidem*). The same goes true for farmers and craftsmen generally (γεωργοὶ καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι δημιουργοί), who are far from knowing themselves. These people, Socrates argues, "do not even know their own things, but only things still more remote than their own things, in respect of the arts which they follow" (κατὰ γε τὰς τέχνας ἅς ἔχουσιν) (*ibidem*). Now, if knowing oneself is temperance (σωφροσύνη), "none of these people is temperate in respect of his art" (οὐδεὶς τούτων σώφρων κατὰ τὴν τέχνην) (131B). This is why "these arts are held to be sordid, and no acquirements for a good man" (βάνανσοι αὐταὶ αἱ τέχναι δοκοῦσιν εἶναι καὶ οὐκ ἀνδρός

ἀγαθοῦ μαθήματα) (*ibidem*). The passage under discussion concludes with Socrates' statement that anyone willing to rule over the others must first learn how to rule over himself, by taking care of his soul and looking to that (ψυχῆς ἐπιμελητέον καὶ εἰς τοῦτο βλεπτέον) (132C).

In the passages above, Plato stages an *agōn* between philosophy—which is alluded by terms such as “temperance” (σωφροσύνη) and “care for the soul”—and the other *technai*, especially medicine. The soul-body split and the motif of “know thyself” (γινῶναι ἑαυτόν—129A; 130E) provide good grounds for arguing in favor of philosophy's preeminence over medicine. Plato's polemical stance here is evident. As we have seen, he overtly denied medicine's cognitive authority in matters concerning the soul and ranged it among the “sordid *technai*”.

That the *ergon* of medicine is only bodily health, while philosophy is a soul-focused *technē*, is also argued in the *Laches*. Nicias, a character in that dialogue, disapproves of Laches' opinion concerning the abilities of the practitioners of the medical art because he [i.e. Laches] falsely “thinks that the physician's knowledge of illness extends beyond the nature of health and disease. But in fact the physician knows no more than this.” (*Laches*, 195C, transl. by Jowett 1961, 139).⁶ The critique expressed here may be paralleled with the point made in the *Charmides*, 164C, where Socrates advocates the idea that “sometimes, the doctor may have done what is helpful or harmful without knowing the effect of his own action” (ὁ ἰατρὸς οὐ γινώσκει ἑαυτόν ὡς ἔπραξεν) (transl. by Lamb 1927, 47). While in the *First Alcibiades* Plato denied medicine's cognitive authority in the sphere of the soul, in the *Charmides* he seems to move even further, questioning the physician's cognitive abilities also in matters pertaining to bodily health. Physicians simply maintain that health is always better than sickness, but, regarded from a philosophical standpoint, this cannot be true. On the contrary, health itself can sometimes be more dreadful than sickness, and thus, for many people, it is better “never get up from a sickbed” (*Laches*, 195C). That the bodily health is not always the highest good is also maintained in the *Charmides*, 174B, where Plato makes Socrates say that “only the science of the good and evil (περὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν τε καὶ κακόν) makes men act rightly and be happy”. The argument is further developed in the *Gorgias*, where Socrates argues that a sound bodily condition can sometimes be detrimental to or destructive of the well-being of the soul, defined as an orderly state governed by justice (δικαιοσύνη) and self-control (σωφροσύνη) (*Gorgias* 504D).

Thus, while the authors of the *Hippocratic Corpus* maintained that health is the greatest good for men's life, Platonic dialogues such as the *Laches*, *Charmides*, and the *Gorgias* restrain this view, arguing that health can be

counted among the highest *agatha* only for those whose soul is in a good condition. Plato further echoes this Hippocratic statement in the *Gorgias*, 452A-B, where a fictitious and unnamed character argues that medicine deals with men's greatest good (περὶ τὸ μέγιστον ἀγαθὸν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις), namely health (ὑγίεια). Interestingly enough, the statement made by the unnamed (Hippocratic) character, that "there is no other greater good for men than health" (*ibidem*), will be overtly refuted by Plato towards the end of the same dialogue. Since psychic welfare is much more important than the welfare of the body, "being unjust, licentious, cowardly, and ignorant is more painful than being poor and sick" (*Gorgias*, 477D, transl. by Lamb 1925, 365). Arguing that "injustice, licentiousness, and in general, vice of soul, are the greatest evils" (*ibidem*, 477E, transl. by Lamb 1925, 365), Socrates will show to his interlocutors "how much more wretched than lack of health in the body it is to dwell with a soul that is not healthy, but corrupt, unjust, and unholy" (*ibidem*, 479B, transl. by Lamb 1925, 371).⁷ As Levin (2014, 102) notes, the conclusion of the argument is that "restoring an individual to health can work against justice", when man's soul is incurable.⁸ As we have seen, while the physician regarded the health of the body as the *summum bonum* for everyone, and claimed that medicine should be ranked at the pinnacle of the hierarchy of different *technai*, Plato repeatedly denies the medical men's ability to grasp the truth regarding the human nature. In Plato's view, the philosopher alone is able to handle correctly the relationship between the soul and the body and to prescribe right rules of conduct for his fellow-citizens.⁹ As the *First Alcibiades* and the *Gorgias* suggest, the true happiness (*eudaimonia*), which encompasses bodily health as well, depends on self-knowledge and *sōphrosynē* (self-control), which are not in the command of the physician. For Plato, what is most important is to take care of and heal the soul, a task that overcomes the cognitive ability of the Hippocratic physician. Therefore, Plato concludes, medicine should address only the body, since ensuring a good condition of the soul falls in the province of philosophy.¹⁰

The passages discussed so far show much evidence of Plato's intent to promote philosophy at the expense of medicine and other *technai*. In my opinion, Plato's critique of medicine is part of a wider rhetorical strategy intended to persuade the audience of the value and importance of philosophy, by placing special weight on *sōphrosynē* and by revealing the deficiencies in the writings of the Hippocratic authors. There can be little doubt that this positive and negative rhetoric was designed to fulfil, mainly, a protreptic purpose.

It is now time to turn to those passages in Plato's early dialogues in which the rhetorical use of medical concepts and analogies embodies, once

again, a protreptic purpose.¹¹ In addressing this issue, it may be useful to remind that the medical imagery is a topos largely attested in ancient protreptic literature. In order to understand more accurately the importance of this topos in works of protreptic intent we should keep in mind that the author of a protreptic often “assume(s) that if the hearer can be brought to real self-knowledge, i.e. knowledge of the sickness of his soul, this should be enough to motivate him to change.” (Kotzé 2004, 57)¹² Therefore, a philosophical protreptic reveals the inner contradictions in the addressees’ feelings and behaviour, and encourage them to undertake a conversion to a certain school of philosophy and, implicitly, to a way of life (*cf.* Malherbe, 1986, 122). Rhetorical topoi such as the “sickness of the soul”, “*therapeia*”, “*philosophus medicus*” and other similar concepts were frequently used by ancient authors to strengthen protreptic purposes. As Carrick (1995, 11) has noted, “philosophers associated with the ancient Academy were especially eager to coax the public into believing that they ought to care about the health and state of their invisible soul as diligently and thoughtfully as they already cared about the health of their visible body.” However, this was not a phenomenon limited to one particular school (e.g. the Academy), since the therapeutic function of philosophy is a topos largely attested in ancient sources, Greek and Latin as well. In the late third century AD, for example, Porphyry still deals with this topos in his letter *ad Marcellam*, 31, where he quotes this famous statement from Epicurus: “Empty are the words of that philosopher who offers therapy for no human suffering. For just as there is no use in medical expertise if it does not give therapy for bodily diseases, so too there is no use in philosophy if it does not expel the suffering of the soul.” (Transl. by Long and Sedley 1987, 155)¹³

If we turn now to the Platonic corpus, we see that the medical language and imagery is so closely mixed with philosophical questions that one can rightly assess, with Moes (2000, 46), that, on various occasions, “Plato models philosophy on the practice of medicine”. Quite often in his early dialogues, Plato conceives of philosophy as a therapy and portrays Socrates as a skilful *medicus*, able to diagnose and treat the maladies of the soul. Already in the *Apology* (29D–30B) Socrates’ discourse focused on the care of the soul¹⁴, and the *Laches*, 185E, overtly raises the question about someone “proficient in treatment of the soul” (τεχνικός περὶ ψυχῆς θεραπείαν).¹⁵ Also illustrative are some passages in the *Charmides*, where Socrates plays the role of a doctor (ιατρός, 155B), pretending to know a cure for Charmides’ headache (τι κεφαλῆς φάρμακον, 155B). As we are told at 157A, “if the head and body are to be well”, one “must begin by curing (θεραπεύειν) the soul—that is the first and essential thing” (transl. by Jowett 1961, 103). This “cure of the soul”, Socrates continues, “has to be effected by the use of

certain charms, and these charms are fair words, and by them temperance (σωφροσύνη) is implanted in the soul, and where temperance comes and stays, there health (ὑγίεια) is speedily imparted, not only to the head, but to the whole body.” (Transl. by Jowett 1961, 103)

Plato’s emphasis on the soul’s superiority over the body and his insistence on the importance of having the former in a good condition have already paved the way for a protreptic discussion by which readers and auditors are encouraged to take care of themselves by adopting a philosophically informed world-view. Since ignorance (ἀμαθία) is reckoned to be responsible for the evil condition of the soul (as we learn from *Gorgias* 477B), education plays an important role in preserving the well-being of the soul. Instruction (*paideia*), which is at the core of any philosophical protreptic, functions as a *pharmakon* for the diseases (νοσήματα) that can assail the soul. This idea is advocated by Socrates in the *Hippias Minor*, 372E-373A, where he says to his interlocutor: “I hope that you will be good to me, and not refuse to heal me, for you will do me a much greater benefit if you cure my soul of ignorance than you would if you were to cure my body of disease.” (Transl. by Jowett 1961, 210)¹⁶

In many passages of his early dialogues, Plato repeatedly insists on the importance of preserving or restoring the health of the soul. As we have seen, in the *Gorgias*, 479B-C, Socrates openly criticizes those who are unaware “how much more wretched than lack of health in the body it is to dwell with a soul that is not healthy, but corrupt, unjust, and unholy” (ὄσω ἀθλιώτερόν ἐστι μὴ ὑγιοῦς σώματος μὴ ὑγιῆ ψυχῆ συνοικεῖν, ἀλλὰ σαθρᾶ καὶ ἀδίκω καὶ ἀνοσίῳ) (transl. by Lamb 1925, 371). This is why one who has committed an injustice “must go of his own freewill where he may soonest pay the penalty, to the judge as if to his doctor (παρὰ τὸν δικαστήν, ὥσπερ παρὰ τὸν ἰατρόν), with the earnest intent that the disease of his injustice shall not become chronic and cause a deep incurable ulcer in his soul.” (*ibidem*, 480A-B, transl. by Lamb 1925, 375). The same point is maintained at 480C, where Socrates argues that “instead of concealing the iniquity, [one ought] to bring it to light in order that he may pay the penalty and be made healthy (ἵνα δῶ δίκην καὶ ὑγιῆς γένηται).” The unjust man ought “to compel both himself and his neighbors not to cover away, but to submit with closed eyes and good courage, as it were, to the cutting and burning of the surgeon, in pursuit of what is good and fair, without counting the pain.” (Transl. by Lamb 1925, 375, modified).¹⁷ As one can notice, here again the welfare of the soul is described by making appeal to various medical terms, such as ἰατρός, ὑγίης, νόσημα, ἀνίατος, τέμνειν, κάειν, ἀλγεινός, etc.

It is important to note how the vocabulary of therapy and disease helps Plato in advancing his protreptic purpose. In order to emphasize philosophy's importance and primacy over other *technai*, Plato explicitly states that true *eudaimonia* is not attainable without the study and practice of philosophy. Temperance (σωφροσύνη) and self-mastering (ἐγκράτεια) are among the *erga* of philosophy (see *Gorgias* 491D-E), and without these virtues, there can be no true *eudaimonia* at all.

To reinforce the protreptic purpose of the *Gorgias*, Plato introduces, towards the end of the dialogue, the myth of the judgment in the life beyond, which emphasizes, once again, the importance of the care of the soul.¹⁸ What seems to be most important from the perspective of the judgment to come is to have the soul pure and free from any wickedness (πονηρία). It is exactly what Socrates strives for, as he shows himself preoccupied with preparing his soul to go to that judgment as healthy as possible (ὑγιεστάτην τὴν ψυχὴν, 526D). As we have already seen, preparing the soul to be in a good condition, healthy, and free from vice is a task that only philosophy can achieve. This is exactly why, from a teleological point of view, the life of philosophy turns to be far more valuable than any other way of life. According to Socrates' narrative, it is the virtuous soul of the philosopher, not that of the politician, nor that of a physician, who will fare well in the life beyond (526C). Arriving in the Isles of the Blest is not allowed to anyone but those who have lived "a holy life in company with truth", i.e., the philosophers (*ibidem*). The *exemplum* of the privileged condition of the philosopher's soul in the life beyond functions as an implicit protreptic to the philosophical life, which is in direct opposition to the life of the politician and that of the rhetorician.¹⁹ It is not by chance that Callicles' apotreptic from philosophy (484C-486D) is replaced at the end of the dialogue by an explicit protreptic to philosophy, articulated by Socrates himself (526D-end). The use of the verbs παρακαλέω, ἀκολουθέω and πείθω, the explicit references to an eternal *eudaimonia* (εὐδαιμονήσεις καὶ ζῶν καὶ τελευτήσας, 527C), as well as the topos of the hearer's choice of "the best way of life" (527E), transform the whole passage into a direct utterance of Plato's protreptic purpose.

In the light of the discussion above, we can assess more accurately Plato's view on the status of different *technai* in the *Gorgias*. Although 521D has introduced Socrates qua *homo politicus*—"I think I am one of the few, not to say the only one, in Athens who attempts the true art of politics" (transl. by Lamb 1925, 515, slightly modified)—, the *politikē technē* which Socrates refers to is not so fundamentally different from the practice of philosophy as described in other early dialogues. In my view, *pace* Campos (2016, 231), the true political art described in the *Gorgias* as Socrates' field of expertise, is

in many respects similar to the philosophy exposed in the *Apology* or in the *First Alcibiades*, where Socrates explicitly defines his activity as a “therapeia” or “care of the soul”. Politics in the *Gorgias* can thus be assimilated to a kind of philosophy, whose influence now revolves not only around each particular man (as in the *Apology*), but envisages the cure of the city as a whole (θεραπεία τῆς πόλεως, 521a). I also diverge from Levin (2014, 55), who maintains that the knowledge concerning the welfare of the soul belongs exclusively to the art of politics (*politikē technē*). Although at 464B the art that has to do with the soul is called “politics”, by the end of the dialogue it tends to closely identify with philosophy. As we have seen, while the discussion initially concentrates on rhetoric and politics, it gradually moves towards emphasizing philosophy’s role in achieving the health and the well-being of the soul.²⁰

As the discussion above has shown, Plato’s early dialogues contain elements of an *agōn* between philosophy and medicine for cognitive and moral authority in matters concerning human nature, health, and happiness (*eudaimonia*). Against the claims to intellectual preeminence made by the authors of the Hippocratic Corpus, Plato’s early dialogues aimed to show the readers how greatly philosophy surpasses the art of medicine when psychic welfare is concerned. For Plato, human happiness cannot be granted by the physician’s art alone since his activity revolves only or mostly around the body. By emphasizing the soul’s invaluable superiority over the body, Plato implicitly urged his audience to embrace philosophy, which is constantly described as the activity most worthy of pursuit. In arguing for the usefulness and the necessary character of philosophy, Plato made frequent appeal to medical imagery and analogies, nearly all of which are designed to fulfill or sustain a protreptic purpose.

Notes

¹ *Regimen*, VIII, 4-5: διαβολὴν γε ἔχει ὅλη ἡ τέχνη πρὸς τῶν δημοτέων μεγάλην, ὡς μὴ δοκεῖν ὅλως ἰητρικὴν εἶναι (ed. Jones 1959).

² See the translation and commentary by Mann 2012.

³ Previous studies on the same issue include those by Kucharski 1939, Schuhl 1960, and Joly 1961.

⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, 512A.

⁵ All translations from the *First Alcibiades* are taken from Lamb 1927. I will not embark here on the discussion of the controversial issue of the dialogue’s authenticity. I agree with Lamb (1927, 97), Motte (1961), Denyer (2001, 14-26), and Lachance (2012, 132) in asserting the authenticity of the *First Alcibiades*. As far as its chronology is concerned, most scholars have argued for an early dating of this dialogue (e.g. Lamb 1927, 97; Motte 1961, 32). I thus diverge from Denyer (2001, 11-12), according to whom Plato would have written the dialogue “at some time in the early 350s”, when he was about seventy. For a more lengthy discussion on the chronology of Plato’s dialogues, see Brandwood 1990.

⁶ Cf. Aristotle, *Protrepticus* fr. 46 Düring, where we are told that the physicians and experts in physical training “use their skill only on the health and the strength of the body” (τῆς τοῦ σώματος ἀρετῆς εἰσι δημιουργοὶ μόνον). (Transl. by Düring 1961, 67, slightly modified).

⁷ The same point is made by Plutarch, *Animine an corporis affectiones sint peiores*, 501E.

⁸ Cf. Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, fr. 2 and 4 Düring.

⁹ Again, one can find a parallel in Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, fr. 9 Düring. In fr. 39, Aristotle also depicts the philosopher as the right “standard” (κωνών) or “landmark” of what is good (ὄρος ἀκριβέστερος τῶν ἀγαθῶν). For more on this, see Mihai 2016, 94.

¹⁰ As Levin (2014, 66) rightly emphasizes, “to subordinate medicine is of course not to deny its merit altogether.” What Plato contends for is that medicine correctly assess its own limitations and acknowledge that it takes instruments for a thorough knowledge and understanding of the soul itself. (*ibidem*)

¹¹ The protreptic purpose of Plato's early dialogues has been discussed at some length in modern scholarship. Slings (1999, 73) considers the *First Alcibiades* to be “the only protreptic text from the pre-Christian era which has been preserved un mutilated” and provides a long list of various “protreptic situations” in Plato's dialogues (*ibidem*, 76). To Jordan (1986, 314), both the *First Alcibiades* and the *Gorgias* have a protreptic intent. Cf. Collins (2015, 98).

¹² For more on the interconnections between ancient protreptic rhetoric and medicine, see Jordan (1986, 316-317), Slings (1995, 179-180), Van der Meeren (2002, 598-599; 610-611), and Kotzé (2004, 63). For a further discussion on ancient philosophy as medicine, see Pigeaud (1981), Voelke (1993), Sellars (2018, 183-198), and Mihai (2018, 258-270).

¹³ The same topos is found in Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* III, 6 (*est profecto animi medicina, philosophia*); *Academica posteriora* I, 11; Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrrhoneion Hypotyposeon* III, 280-281. The analogy between medicine and philosophy is also found in a famous passage from Philo of Larissa (quoted by Stobaeus, ed. Wachsmuth & Hense, 1884, II, 39-40), in which the philosopher's activity is compared with that of a physician. The passage has been much discussed in recent scholarship and many scholars retain the analogy between medicine and philosophy to be a distinctive feature of the protreptic genre (e.g. Jordan 1986, 316-317; Kotzé 2004, 56; 63; Collins 2015, 243).

¹⁴ Note the use of the verbs ἐπιμελέομαι and φροντίζω, which occur several times in the *Apology*.

¹⁵ Cf. *Charmides*, 157b: τὴν ψυχὴν ... θεραπευθῆναι. See also *Protagoras* 313E: τις ... περὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ... ἰατρικός, and 340E: εἰμί τις γελοῖος ἰατρός (Socrates' reference to himself).

¹⁶ *Hipp. Minor*, 372E-372A: μὴ φθονήσης ἰάσασθαι τὴν ψυχὴν μου· πολὺ γὰρ τοι μείζον με ἀγαθὸν ἐργάση ἀμαθίας παύσας τὴν ψυχὴν ἢ νόσου τὸ σῶμα. In the *First Alcibiades*, learning also functions as an antidote against the harmful influence of the Athenian people. At 132B, we have Socrates urging the young Alcibiades with these words: “Exercise yourself first, my wonderful friend, in learning what you ought to know before entering on politics; you must wait till you have learnt, in order that you may be armed with an antidote (ἴν' ἀλεξιφάρμακα ἔχω) and so come to no harm.” (Transl. by Lamb 1927, 207).

¹⁷ Similarly, Epictetus, *Dissertationes*, III, 23, 30, compares the school of the philosopher with a surgery: Ἰατρειὸν ἐστίν, ἄνδρες, τὸ τοῦ φιλοσόφου σχολεῖον· οὐ δεῖ ἡσθέντας ἐξελεθεῖν, ἀλλ' ἀλγήσαντας. See also Seneca, *Ep.* 75, 5-6; 108, 4.

¹⁸ The protreptic function of the myth is discussed in ancient handbooks of rhetoric. A scholia to Aethonius explicitly insists on this rhetorical function: Τὸν μῦθον προδήλως τοῦ συμβουλευτικῶν κατὰ ῥητορικὴν φαμέν εἰδῶν· ἢ γὰρ προτρέπομεν ἐπὶ τι, ἢ ἀποτρέπομεν ἀπὸ τίνος τὸν ἀκροατὴν διὰ τοῦ μύθου. (Walz 1835, 568, 9-12).

¹⁹ Levin (2014, 25) is right to assess that in the *Gorgias*, “antithetical models of *eudaimonia* are at stake”.

²⁰ Particularly telling is the discussion at 507C-D, where Plato introduces the well-known protreptic topos of the universal human desire for happiness. In that passage, Socrates asserts that “anyone who desires to be happy must pursue and practice temperance” (σωφροσύνη), which is not the *ergon* of politics, but of philosophy itself. Cf. *Charmides* 175E-176A; *Euthydemus* 278E-279A. See also Aristotle, *Protrepticus* fr. 94 Düring; Cicero, *Hortensius* fr. 58 Grilli; Seneca, *De beata vita* 1, 1.

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Bogdan GUGUIANU *

Greek Skepticism and Its Improbable Oriental Origin: A Critical Perspective on Aram M. Frenkian's Theses

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to analyze the thesis on Oriental philosophies' influence over the Ancient Greek skepticism. The Romanian philosopher Aram M. Frenkian is one of those who support this influence, basing his study on three main *topoi*: the *snake-rope* analogy, the *where there's smoke, there's fire* inference and the *tetralemma*. This present analysis is meant to be a rigorous critique of the Romanian philosopher's set of ideas and argumentative approach, and thus to expose their hermeneutic frailty and their lack of historical foundation and conceptual depth. The goal of this critique is to reinterpret the fusion of Hellenism and Hinduism.

Keywords: Greek skepticism, Hindu philosophemes, intercultural fusion, tetralemma, Aram M. Frenkian

The interaction between major socio-cultural archetypes represents a subject of high amplitude nowadays. Still, the interest in such a phenomenon has been fuelled and maintained for some time. When it comes to Antiquity, not a few debates took place regarding the effects of the contact between the ancient Greeks and Orientalism (Reale 1987, 11-12; Riedweg 2005, 42). Considering the scale of this phenomenon, it is quite obvious that no clear-cut conclusions could be reached when it comes to concrete influences suffered by a part or the other. If we attempt to offer a particular example of this kind of tendency, such as the theological concept of metempsychosis, we will immediately notice how difficult it is to decide which of these two cultural spheres this phenomenon belongs to. It is even more complicated to establish whether one of the two cultures could have made it manifest itself inside the other.

We may rather intuitively assert that, since ancient times, the human existence cycle based on birth-death-rebirth formula has been one of the chief principles that shaped the Eastern religions. Buddhism is worth

* PhD Candidate, Al. I. Cuza University of Iasi; e-mail: bogdan.guguianu@yahoo.com

** Acknowledgement: This work was supported by a grant of the Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization, CNCS/CCCDI – UEFISCDI, project number PN-III-P1-1.1-TE-2019-0610, within PNCDI III.

mentioning in this case, and its controversial *samsāra*; and, why not, the Osiris myth in ancient Egyptian mythology. There is also the Greek philosopher Pythagoras (6th-5th century B.C.) - the uncertainty about the period 570-480 B.C. is well known (Riedweg 2005, 42) - who consolidated a theological vision based on relatively similar principles throughout the Hellenistic world. Still, *The Upanishads*, a collection of texts that spanned an uncertain period until the beginning of the 7th century B.C. (Phillips 2009, 30), also evoke this strange phenomenon, which makes us think that, by the time the Greek philosopher promoted it, it's highly likely that the belief in transmigration had already been active in the Oriental cultural environment. When it comes to the Egyptian myth, there is no point in discussing its ancestral origins in this manner, considering that we are talking about millennia, and not centuries. Adding the fact that Pythagoras made contact with the Orient in his journeys (Diogenes Laërtius VII, 2-3), we may speculate about the origins of metempsychosis in the Greek culture. The question is, can we go so far as to say that the Orient constituted the real source of inspiration for Pythagoras? Maybe we would risk too much to claim so. What role might we then assign Orpheus in this whole story, a legendary character of Thracian origins, whose existence dates back to pre-Homeric origins (Freeman 1984, 9) and which is also known to have consolidated a religious cult that supported the belief in transmigration (Uzdavinys 2011, 55)? Pythagoras might have shaped his doctrine by drawing inspiration from his own cultural environment. But we cannot be certain of this either, because the father of history himself states that the Orphic Mysteries may also have Oriental origins (Herodotus II, 81).

This example, though common, could at least offer a schematic representation of any kind of problem a thorough exegesis deals with when it attempts to bring the origins of a cultural phenomenon to light. The huge timespan and inadequate data constitute significant setbacks from this standpoint. And yet, despite these inconveniences, it is perfectly legitimate to form hypotheses, on condition that these should be well founded.

From an ideological standpoint, the Greek skepticism ranks among the most controversial phenomena, one that would irreversibly change the European societies' thinking pattern. Famous representatives of European philosophy such as Sextus Empiricus, Michel de Montaigne, David Hume, Pierre Charon, La Mothe Le Vayer, Pierre Bayle confirm not only the presence of this doctrine in European culture from the ancient times to the 16th-17th centuries (Junqueira and Charles 2017; Moreau 2014), but also the amplitude of the philosophical phenomenon itself. It was quite clear that this doctrine and the study of its origins would constitute the subject of numerous research projects. The doctrine's origin itself is actually the main aspect of the present article.

For methodological purposes, we are going to make use of Aram M. Frenkian's analysis of Greek skepticism's origins which sustained that this philosophical doctrine spread throughout Europe via Oriental connections, namely Hindu. He begins his argumentation by supporting this idea while using an instrument which skeptics employed to appraise the relations between two objects, phenomena or abstract notions, namely *tetralemma*. Frenkian reveals the only possible options that would give us an idea about the influences between Greek and Oriental culture. The four versions are as follows:

1. Greece influenced India
2. India influenced Greece
3. The two influenced each other
4. Each one of them developed their doctrines independently

The so-called skeptic's *tetralemma*¹ is easily noticeable in this four-fold scheme, a method that will be at the core of the present study. Thus, Frenkian takes this position: the first hypothesis is totally excluded; if there had been an influence from this standpoint, it could have only been from the Indian part (Frenkian 1996, 56). It is worth mentioning though that this option is taken into consideration in some sources (McEvelley 2002, 503). In Romanian philosopher's view, the second hypothesis is considered valid, specifically the Greek skepticism was built on the influence of Oriental philosophemes, especially the Hindu ones. The third hypothesis is not excluded by Frenkian; he accepts the mutual influence, but sustains that skepticism came from the East and spread towards West. Finally, the fourth hypothesis is not completely counted out by Frenkian, but he shares deep reservations about it; still, G. V. Aston dedicated a solid argumentation to this version in his 2004 study named *Early Indian logic and the question of Greek influence*.

As displayed above, this approach determines us to concentrate exclusively on the second mark of the *tetralemma*, the one that assumes the influence of Eastern culture over the Greek skepticism. Of course, there were other similar endeavors that tried to support this hypothesis. In his study, *Greek Buddha: Pyrrho's Encounter with Early Buddhism in Central Asia*, Christopher I. Beckwith seeks to support the idea that the Pyrrhonism represents quite a faithful copy of early Buddhism. His theses were refuted with strong arguments.²

It is also worth mentioning the foundation on which the researchers based their speculation about this influence, one that is essential in Frenkian's perspective too. Diogenes Laërtius is probably the most reliable source that proves the validity of this foundation. From the biography of Pyrrho of Elis, the so-called founder of Greek skepticism, we find out this:

„Afterwards he joined Anaxarchus, whom he accompanied on his travels everywhere so that he even forgathered with the Indian Gymnosophists and with the Magi. This led him to adopt a most noble philosophy, to quote Ascanius of Abdera, taking the form of agnosticism and suspension of judgement. He denied that anything was honourable or dishonourable, just or unjust. And so, universally, he held that there is nothing really existent, but custom and convention govern human action; for no single thing is in itself any more this than that.” (Diogenes Laërtius, IX, 61).

Besides the precious information we pointed out, we also encounter here two of the three defining characteristics of skepticism as defined by Sextus Empiricus (*Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes* I, 8). We are talking about ἐποχή, known as „suspension of judgment” and ἰσοσθένεια τῶν λόγων, the so-called „equal validity of contrary arguments”. The one that was omitted by the biographer in this context, ἀταραξία, promoted by skeptics as inner peace, is mentioned by him later and recorded in the specified register (Diogenes Laërtius IX, 107). All three marks find their correspondent elements in the *Madhyamaka* Buddhism (Kuzminski 2008, pp. 53-57), a relevant religious tradition in the Eastern World. Despite this, we notice that, as in the previously mentioned situation in which metensomatosis might have come from the East and spread throughout the Hellenistic world, there is no solid reason to assert that these three elements that describe Greek skepticism in its essence were borrowed by Pyrrho of Elis from Orient and diffused throughout the Greek cultural environment, thus setting the base for the doctrine. Aware of the fact that no clear connections can be established, Aram M. Frenkian seeks to identify some concrete elements that might prove the Oriental origins of Greek skepticism. Therefore, he will insist on three philosophemes: the *snake-rope* analogy, the *where there’s smoke, there’s fire* inference and the aforementioned *tetralemma*. According to Frenkian, all these three elements might constitute solid proof of Oriental influence over Greek skepticism. This is the conclusion of his study:

„In the previous pages, we hope that we proved, with a degree of probability that is inherent in solving this kind of problems, that Indian thinking, in its logical and philosophical aspect, has exerted influence on Greek’s way of reasoning since the second half of the 4th century B.C., and that this influence has been exerted over the Greek’s schools of skepticism.” (Frenkian 1996, 62)

All those three Aram M. Frenkian’s arguments will undergo a rigorous critique so that we prove their hermeneutic frailty and lack of conceptual depth. We will, of course, take into account the phrase „inherent degree of probability” formulated by Frenkian in the conclusion and emphasize that, from the standpoint of the history of philosophy, there is no genuine source

to support his interpretation. He actually claims that, even if there had been a Hindu influence on the Greek skepticism it must have been transmitted by word of mouth (Frenkian 1996, 45). This is probably why Frenkian affirmed his reluctance by avoiding irrefutable assumptions and employing an essay style writing. Nevertheless, if we carefully read the text, we will notice that Frenkian seems quite assured in drawing his conclusion - the Greek skepticism was influenced by Oriental culture, and Hindu philosophemes and logic -, which would require a well-supported philosophical rebuttal in the context of the present study.

First, we have to emphasize that the demonstration of *tetralemma* originating in the Oriental culture plays a more important role in his argumentation than the other two aforementioned elements (the *snake-rope* and *where there's smoke there's fire* inference), which is the reason why we will offer this philosopheme a preferential treatment in our study too. We will respect though the order established by Frenkian and start our critical analysis with the first two aspects of our demonstration. Here we can find the most concrete element that might prove the Oriental provenience of those two marks according to Aram M. Frenkian:

„But if we pay attention to the fact that those two examples are widespread in India, while in Greece they can only be find in Sextus Empiricus' work, that the snake is encountered more frequently in India, and that the smoke-fire formula, besides its large dissemination in India, can be generated by the experience of summer wildfires in the region's immense forests, the hypothesis that Sextus, or his source, borrows these examples from Indians becomes quite plausible.” (Frenkian 1996, 32)

We have to specify that the *snake-rope* example appears in Sextus Empiricus' texts thanks to Carneades' philosophical concepts. This image is regarded as a means of consolidating the skeptic's action criteria for practical problems, the controversial *πιθανόν* and, implicitly, the three steps of approaching the phenomenon from a gnoseological perspective. Empiricus also evokes this image when he discusses about the particularities of the Academic philosophers' doctrine (*Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes* I, 227-228). According to Frenkian, this *snake-rope* example has only two other occurrences in Greek literature: one in Sextus Empiricus' *Adversus Mathematicos* VII, 187, where it is presented in the same context (Frenkian 1996, 17), and the other in Demetrius of Phaleron's, *De Elocutione*, 159. Still, some more recent exegetical resources signal that the image is also present in Aesop's *Proverbia* 132 (Aklan 2018, 12). This presence is eluded in Frenkian's approach. As far as its occurrence in Demetrius of Phaleron's text is concerned, it doesn't make the Romanian philosopher ascertain an independent presence of this image in Greek literature. He first justifies his angle through the fact that, in Demetrius' case, Carneades' rope is replaced

with a belt, and then he notices that, in that context, the image has a mostly comic effect that alters the philosophical and theoretical character this symbolic representation is supposed to possess (Frenkian 1996, 18, n. 3). Based on this observation, Frenkian considers that the occurrences in Ancient Greek literature are too sparse compared with those from the Oriental cultural sphere. In the case of the latter, according to Frenkian, the *snake-rope* appeared first in *Vedānta*, one of the six orthodox Indian philosophical systems whose shaping elements have existed since the birth of Buddhism (6th century B.C.). The phrase „it might have appeared in *Vedānta*” is justifiable, considering that the occurrence was rather an inference based on Bādarāyana’s commentaries, who is estimated to have lived in the 4th century (Frenkian 1996, 19). What is certain is that the *snake-rope* presence was confirmed for the first time in *Mahāvibhāṣā*, a compendium of texts dating back to approximately the second half of the 2nd century AD (Aklan 2018, 17).

There is need for a critical analysis of the thesis that the *snake-rope* image is proof of the influence of Indian philosophy over the Greek skepticism, knowing that this image had been found in pan-Hellenic texts of Aesop (approx. 6th century B.C.), Demetrius of Phaleron (4th-3rd century B.C.), and Sextus Empiricus (the end of the 2nd century AD), while in Hindu world it first appeared, as we have established, in the 2nd century AD. Frenkian doesn’t offer here any solid argument for the alleged Oriental influence on Greek skepticism, but he only gives other three examples of the image’s dissemination in Eastern world which are registered after the 4th century AD, thus being rendered irrelevant in his demonstration. So, in this case, what’s the relevance of invoking 6th century AD authors such as Gauḍapāda, Śāṅkara, 8th-9th century AD (Comans 2000, p. 163), Rāmānuja, and later on, 12th century AD. (Jones and Ryan 2007, 352), authors that make use of the *snake-rope* analogy in their works? We think that Frenkian’s attempt of increasing the occurrences of the image in the Oriental world based on sources that appeared a millennium later than the origins of Greek skepticism is exaggerated to say the least, despite the argument the philosopher offers trying to convince us of the irrelevance of the chronological analysis regarding the development of philosophical ideas in Hindu culture (Frenkian 1996, 26-27). Actually, we will prove that this is not the first time when Frenkian makes use of these sources in order to increase the occurrences of the philosophemes seen as proof in this case.

Based on the mentioned aspects, we can state that the *snake-rope* occurrences are more frequent during Antiquity in the Greek world than in the Orient. Therefore, we are going to reject Frenkian’s thesis that this image constitutes a philosopheme borrowed by Greek skeptics from Hindu culture, considering it invalid from a historiographic standpoint.

Regarding the second argument - the *where there's smoke, there's fire* inference -, it is even harder to back it up. This formula, says Frenkian, occurs only four times in the Greek literature, and only at Sextus Empiricus (Frenkian 1996, 29). It is necessary to ask a simple question in this case: based on this aspects, can we even deduce that the inference was brought from the Eastern world to the Greeks and integrated as an important element in strengthening the doctrine of Greek skepticism? The answer is absolutely not. The thesis of Oriental influence cannot be accepted, considering that the aforementioned inference confirms one of the operating devices used by the Dogmatic philosophers. We are speaking of *modus tollens*: if p , then q .³ Exegetically speaking, this kind of inference attempts to prove an immanent causality between two phenomena such as fire and smoke, something a skeptic wouldn't have accepted under any circumstances. Sextus brings it to the table indeed, but he refuses it, as he writes in *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes*, II, 101-102.⁴ What Frenkian admits is unacceptable, because the presence of this inference at only one Greek skeptic doesn't prove that skepticism (as a doctrine) was influenced by the Hindu philosophy. We can at the very most ask ourselves: how justifiable would it be to argue that this philosophy influenced the Stoicism or Epicureanism? But as this question is not important for our study, we can just deny the validity of this second argument offered by the Romanian philosopher and go to the next step.

As far as *tetralemma* is concerned, Frenkian focuses on three aspects in his demonstration that skepticism's principles were determined by the Oriental logic: its *anteriority*, *originality* and *dissemination*. For a better understanding, we will present two quotes from the Romanian philosopher's text: the first tries to emphasize the idea of chronological anteriority and the originality of this philosopheme in the Oriental world:

„Comparing Sextus Empiricus' tetralemma and the one that appears in the Indian philosophy, we can get a clear impression that the Indian form is the original, while Sextus' tetralemma is a collateral logical method that lacks depth. Therefore, the anteriority of tetralemma in Indian philosophy relative to its use by Sextus Empiricus is clearly established, although we limited ourselves to the *Pāli Canon* (1st c. B.C.).” (Frenkian 1996, 56)

The second draws attention to the problem of the scarce dissemination of the method among Greeks:

„As a logical method, tetralemma is hardly employed in Greek philosophy. Besides Sextus Empiricus, there are very few examples in Greek literature.” (Frenkian 1996, 51)

In order to support this last exhibited viewpoint, Frenkian points to one more occurrence of this philosopheme in Greek literature, more precisely in Plato's *Parmenides*, signaled by Stcherbatsky, but as the Romanian

philosopher specifies, it is impossible to confirm, therefore it should be excluded (Frenkian 1996, 51, n. 1).⁵ As for the most recent occurrence of tetralemma in the Orient, it is signaled in the *Pāli Canon* 1st c. B.C (Frenkian 1996, 55-56). We infer that this mark is chronologically anterior to the logical method present in Sextus Empiricus' work, who was active in 150-210 AD (Brochard 1887, 314-315), and who, according to Frenkian, represents the only source of tetralemma's presence in Greek literature. Once any trace of tetralemma present in the Greek cultural environment before Sextus Empiricus excluded, it would appear that all the three *tetralemma*-related ideas invoked by the Romanian philosopher can be accepted without any reservation: anteriority, originality and dissemination.

Another excerpt from his text determines us to change our perspective:

„Therefore, with a high degree of probability, we can state that both the two images that represent philosophical themes [the *snake-rope* and the Stoic inference, *An*] and the tetralemma were borrowed by Sextus Empiricus, or his source, from the Indian world.” (Frenkian 1996, 56)

The phrase „by Sextus Empiricus, or his source”⁶ draws our attention in particular. What source is he speaking about, while once Plato's *Parmenides* option excluded, the only possible proof of the tetralemma's presence in Greek culture was rejected? Does he prepare us for revealing the fact that *tetralemma* had been present in the Greek cultural environment before its appearance in the Orient, the *Pāli Canon* 1st c. B.C? That's quite obvious. Frenkian subtly comes back to the anteriority thesis and registers the presence of this philosopheme in Greek literature (attention!) in the 3rd century B.C. at a skeptic named Timon of Phlius (325-235 B.C.), known among the specialists as a pupil of Pyrrho of Elis (Diogenes Laërtius IX, 69). References to the presence of *tetralemma* in Timon's *Python* can be found thanks to Eusebius of Caesarea's apologetic writing called *Praeparatio evangelica*, which also contains the way the Peripatetic philosopher Aristocles of Messene critically responded to the skeptics' ideas. He offers us explanations related to Timon of Phlius that confirms the use of tetralemma in the Greek literature of 3rd century B.C. Here is a quote from *Praeparatio evangelica*:

„The things themselves then, he professes to show, are equally indifferent, and unstable, and indeterminate, and therefore neither our senses nor our opinions are either true or false. For this reason then we must not trust them, but be without opinions, and without bias, and without wavering, saying of every single thing that *it no more is than is not, or both is and is not, or neither is nor is not.*” (*Praeparatio Evangelica* XIV, 18)

The text in italics reflects the use of this philosophical *topos* by the skeptic Timon of Phlius in theorizing the problematic nature of the object of knowledge. Frenkian accepts this and confirms the presence of *tetralemma* at

this 3rd century B.C. author, building a solid analysis of the method. We are not going to insist on it, simply because it does not interest us. For the moment, we will settle for rejecting *the anteriority of Hindu tetralemma* basing our arguments on what Frenkian himself confirmed. We keep in mind that the anteriority of the philosopheme in Orient applies only relative to Sextus Empiricus moment, the end of 2nd c. AD., and not to what happened within the Greek skepticism of 4th-3rd century B.C. represented by Timon of Phlius. Thus being said, Frenkian's thesis that „the Indian version is the original” (Frenkian 1996, 56) loses its credibility.

Approaching this second element critically, we raise the following question: what else might determine us to accept the originality of Oriental tetralemma or the fact that Sextus Empiricus borrowed it from the Indian philosophy, considering that Sextus was certainly familiar with Timon of Phlius' work, which is proven by the multiple references to his ideas (*Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes*, I 223-224; *Adversus Mathematicos*, I 53-54, 304-307; *Adversus physicos* I, 57)? Frenkian offers the following solution:

„It is clearly established that Pyrrho had lived in the Orient for eleven years, and that he returned to Elis after the death of Alexander. The historians of Greek skepticism, such as Brochard and Robin, pointed out the influence of Indian lifestyle over Pyrrho and his ethical attitude. In addition to this, we might notice the Indian influence over the theoretical aspect of his doctrine. We are entitled to believe that Pyrrho was the first Greek philosopher who presented philosophical problems in tetralemma form, which he introduced in the Greek's way of thinking, especially in the schools of skepticism.” (Frenkian 1996, 61)

From what we understand here, the presence of *tetralemma* in Timon of Phlius' work is a mark of the influence that his master had over him, who also borrowed it from the Indian culture during the great conqueror's journeys, which is a plausible hypothesis. Aram M. Frenkian tries to maintain the idea of the Oriental origin of the aforementioned *topos* in the sphere of plausibility (not the one of the proven fact).

However, the fragment cited above reveals the weakest point of Frenkian's thesis, because the statement that Pyrrho of Elis was the first Greek philosopher who employed tetralemma to present philosophical problems is historically inaccurate. We notice that the presence of this philosopheme is signaled in Greek culture before Pyrrho's involvement in Alexander the Great's conquest campaign, and implicitly before the father of skepticism's encounter with magi and Indian gymnosophists. Besides Timon of Phlius and Sextus Empiricus, there are other Greek authors that use the *tetralemma* in their works. The first of them is Plato:

„Your examples are all ambiguous, in that it is impossible to form any definite conception of them either *as being something, or as not being something, or as both, or as neither.*” (*The Republic*, 479c)

The second is Aristotle:

„For he says neither that *it is so-and-so nor that it is not so-and-so, but that it both is so-and-so and is not so-and-so; and again he also denies both these, saying that it is neither so-and-so nor not so-and-so.*” (*Metaphysics*, Γ1008a)

The sequences in italics show the occurrences of *tetralemma* in the texts of the two mentioned Greek thinkers. We will thus refute the second argument proposed by Frenkian: *the originality* of Oriental tetralemma proves to be highly debatable; its anteriority, even more so. We don't know whether the Romanian philosopher ignored the two examples or he simply wasn't aware of their existence. He certainly avoids taking them into consideration, fact that irreversibly compromises his argumentation. We therefore have all the reasons to support that both Sextus Empiricus and his predecessors, Pyrrho of Elis and Timon of Phlius could have easily borrowed this technique from their own culture. A recent exegesis issues solid hypotheses in this regard (Long 2006, 54-55, n. 31).

We are now reaching the third argumentative point registered by the Romanian philosopher in his demonstration: its ampler diffusion in Oriental culture. We will mention the rest of *tetralemma* occurrences listed by Frenkian: *Mādhyamika-sūtra*, Nagarjuna, end of 2nd c. beginning of 3rd c. AD, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, 4th-5th c. AD and *Māṇḍukya Kārikā*, Gaudapāda, 5th-6th c. AD (Frenkian, pp. 51-56). Adding the *Pāli Canon* to this list, we count four Hindu sources mentioned by Frenkian. We will see whether these texts can justify this „more widespread” presence of this philosopheme in the Eastern world supported by the Romanian philosopher.

From what we demonstrated so far in our analysis, we can say that not only are the *tetralemma*'s appearances quite abundant in Greek literature, but also they are more widespread than in Oriental culture. There are four ancient Greek authors that employ the *tetralemma* in their texts: Plato, Aristotle, Timon of Phlius and Sextus Empiricus. We fairly exclude the occurrence of *tetralemma* in Simplicius' work, even when it confirms the use of the method by Parmenides, given the period in which the Neoplatonist lived and wrote. As far as the Orient is concerned, Frenkian also registers four significant presences: the *Pāli Canon*, Nagarjuna, Gaudapāda and Vasubandhu. So, there are four occurrences in Greek culture and four in the Eastern world. The problem resides in the fact that the four presences in the Orient cannot be taken into consideration given the historical periods that two of them are registered in (Vasubandhu in 4th-5th c. AD, while Gaudapāda even later, in 5th-6th c. AD). Given the criteria of chronological evaluation, these two texts came up too late compared to the practising of Greek skepticism in the pan-Hellenistic world. Like Frenkian, we focus on the *origins* of Greek skepticism which, according to our data (Duignan 2011,

135), had set its foundations eight-nine centuries before these two Indian writers wrote about *tetralemma*. Thus, only two occurrences mentioned by Frenkian apply to this demonstration: the *Pāli Canon* (1st century AD) and Nagarjuna (2nd-3rd century AD). Now, the ratio is 4 to 2 for Greeks, who register three presences of *tetralemma* in the 4th-3rd c. B.C. and one in the 2nd c. AD, thus the ampler dissemination of the method in the Orient is rendered inconclusive.

Considering everything that has been said regarding skeptical *tetralemma*'s status, we can observe the frailty of argumentation elaborated by Frenkian. Thus, based on every aspect presented so far, we think that neither the *anteriority*, nor the *originality*, nor the *widespread dissemination* of this philosopheme in the Oriental world can be supported with solid historical and philosophical arguments. Based on the „proofs” Frenkian offered, it's practically impossible to assert, let alone demonstrate, that „Sextus Empiricus or his source” borrowed the *tetralemma* method from Hindu philosophy.

To sum up our whole approach: in the case of the first argument invoked by Frenkian in his attempt to prove that Greek skepticism draws its inspiration from Hindu culture (the *snake-rope* example), we showed that neither „the widespread expansion” nor the *anteriority* can be offered as evidence here: the spread of the image is neither „enormous” nor anterior to its presence in Greece.

When it comes to the *where there's smoke, there's fire* inference, we also demonstrated that it does not represent relevant proof because this is an element specific to Dogmatic philosophies (maybe Stoicism), and definitely not to skepticism.

Finally, as far as the Oriental origin of *tetralemma* is concerned, we proved that all three hypotheses expounded by Frenkian, namely *anteriority*, *originality* and the *widespread dissemination* of the Oriental *topos*, can be disproved with solid historical arguments.

As a result, Aram M. Frenkian's perspective needs to be revisited. An endeavor of this amplitude not only could enrich the cultural patrimony with more objective exegetic analyses, but also bring its contribution to the definition of the paradoxical exegetical destiny that skepticism should embody in order to maintain its presence and validity. We therefore believe that skepticism should manifest itself even when its own origins undergo painstaking analysis.

Notes

¹ For the uninformed reader, we explained the *tetralemma* scheme here: A and not-B, not-A and B, A and B, not-A and not-B.

² See Johnson and Shults 2018.

³ This type of inference is frequently used in Stoic logic. Still, it seems that some Epicureans might also have used this inferential formula. A relevant example is Philodemus of Gadara (Cornea 2015, 383).

⁴ See also *Are there any indicative signs?* from *Pyrrhoniae Hypotyposes* II, 104-133, where the rest of the examples including demonstrations employed by Stoic philosophers confirm the use in their logic of „from the specific to the specific” inferences, such as where there’s a scar, there was a wound, or the woman’s lactation as proof of her recent pregnancy.

⁵ Anna Aklan’s specifications eliminates the possible confusion made by Frenkian: it is about Parmenide the philosopher, not Plato’s dialogue (Aklan 2018, 25). The proof of the tetralemma’s use by the Eleatic thinker is found in the commentaries on Aristotle’s *Physics*, Simplicius 117, 4.

⁶ The phrase is also used in the case of the other two philosophemes. See Frenkian 1996, 32. This example was actually cited and proves both the caution and the permanent reticence of the Romanian philologist in developing strong theses regarding this aspect.

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Antonela CORBAN*

L'armure et autres éléments du répertoire visuel dans l'art du portrait généalogique

Abstract: Genealogical portraiture, through the pictorial representation of the descendants of a royal family (and nobility), had the role of visually marking, in chronological order, a succession of sovereigns and to emphasize the importance of dynastic continuity. Thus, the portrait was to provide, on one hand, information about his identity, individuality and visual individualization of the represented character. The other hand, it was to indicate data of another order, namely information about the seniority of the family whose descendant was the character, and about its military and political tradition.

This type of portrait was made according to models and rules established by the artists who worked for these families, and was continuously supplemented and perfected with representative details, which were later constituted as visual sources for the new compositions. This means that around each character there is a descriptive context, to indicate a certain space, and a number of visual elements (armor, sword, general's baton or scepter, helmet, gloves) with a symbolic role, which lead to the idea that the representation is one of a character with a special status.

Keywords: genealogical portraiture, visual inventory of the portrait, aesthetics of the chivalric devices, power, identity.

L'art du portrait et les lignées sanguines directes

L'art du portrait généalogique, par la représentation picturale des descendants d'une famille royale (et nobiliaire, à partir d'un moment donné), a eu le rôle de marquer de point de vue visuel, en ordre chronologique, toute une lignée de souverains, et de souligner, ainsi, l'importance de la continuité dynastique. En égale mesure, ce type d'art du portrait, nommé par Joanna Woodall „généalogie visuelle” (Woodall 1997, 3) a eu comme objectif d'exprimer la fierté d'appartenir à une certaine lignée sanguine (Bass 2009, 63).

Au XVII^e siècle, les peintres ont commencé à utiliser de plus en plus souvent la toile à la place des panneaux en bois, et ce fait a conduit à la réalisation d'ouvrages de plus en plus amples. De façon que les

* PhD, University of Burgundy, Dijon, France and “Al. I. Cuza” University of Iași, Romania; email: acorban2001@yahoo.com

compositions à personnages grandeur nature, en pied, sont devenues pratique courante, certains types évoluant vers de vrais paradigmes. Au départ, ces peintures ne renvoyaient pas de point de vue iconographique au visage de la personne représentée, car, ce que les artistes voulaient transmettre, c'était l'idée de modèle universel, de „figure à qualités transcendantes” (Woodall 1997, 2), ou, encore, l'idée d'émulation suscitée par les victoires des antécédents, obtenues à force de mérites personnels. Cette absence de ressemblance physiologique dans le tableau n'empêchait pas d'établir l'identité du personnage, car le langage visuel supplémentaire était compensatoire (par exemple, on inscrivait sur le tableau son nom, une date, plus exactement une année et des moyens conventionnels de reconnaissance, tel le blason).

Dès le milieu du XVe siècle, la méthode de représentation idéalisée a été combinée avec celle réaliste, et, de cette façon, „par l'assimilation sans grand tapage du réel à l'idéal, l'art du portrait naturaliste a permis à un certain être humain de personnifier la grandeur du royaume ou le courage du leader militaire” (Woodall 1997, 2). Le XVIe siècle a apporté toute une série d'éléments visuels organisés de manière préétablie, qui se trouve à la base de la majeure partie des portraits réalisés selon la manière naturaliste, jusqu'au XIXe siècle. Il s'agit du fait qu'à chaque statut social on a associé une forme distinctive de portrait, et on lui a attribué un langage pictural spécifique.

Les personnages et leur répertoire visuel

Les portraits généalogiques sont réalisés selon des modèles et des lois établies par des artistes ayant œuvré pour des familles royales. Ces portraits ont été continuellement améliorés, complétés, peaufinés de détails représentatifs, constitués ultérieurement en sources visuelles pour les nouvelles compositions. Cela veut dire qu'autour de chaque personnage il existe un contexte descriptif indiquant un certain espace, délimité d'habitude par un seul objet, ou un cumul d'objets: une fenêtre, un rideau, une table, une chaise, un fauteuil, une console, un carrelage.

Afin de compléter ce tableau, on en ajoute encore d'autres éléments visuels à rôle symbolique, éléments qui font tout de suite penser que la représentation est celle d'un personnage ayant un statut à part: l'armure, le sabre, le bâton ou le sceptre, le heaume, les gants (la plupart d'entre ces objets portant les signes et armoiries de divers ordres de chevaliers), éléments qui peuvent fournir des détails au sujet de leur encadrement temporel – la période où ils ont été confectionnés, le style ou la mode auxquels ils appartenaient.

Le long du temps, l'utilisation de ces objets a eu pour but le fait d'indiquer l'idée de noblesse ou de royauté, moyennant un message évident,

transmis sans ambiguïté. Richard Brilliant nomme ces éléments des „propriétés privilégiées de la représentation” (Brilliant 2013, 26), leur rôle étant de conduire à la reconnaissance immédiate d'un portrait comme appartenant à la royauté ou à la noblesse. À part les objets, on utilisait aussi dans la démarche artistique certaines attitudes à valeur symbolique ayant trait au portrait moral (réel ou construit) du personnage, dans le but évident d'en améliorer l'image, par le truchement d'une mine solennelle et grave (l'air sérieux, parfois crispé, étant associé aux attributs et aux responsabilités sociales et politiques du personnage en cause).

1. L'armure. Le corps en armure

Le premier attribut présent dans la peinture généalogique est l'armure, ce qui peut être considéré comme l'indice le plus parlant pour l'image d'un monarque (un noble). Les artistes trouvés au service des dynasties et des familles régnantes ont réalisé à travers le temps des portraits en pied, vêtus d'armures, et ils ont toujours cherché des solutions artistiques pour valoriser au maximum le potentiel de l'image créée. Les plus brillantes réussites du domaine appartiennent à l'intervalle allant de la seconde moitié du XVI^e siècle à la fin de la première moitié du XVII^e siècle.

L'Europe a eu toute une pléiade d'armuriers célèbres, et certaines de leurs réalisations témoignent jusqu'à nos jours de leur talent. Force nous est de rappeler ici Lorenz Helmschmid, Cohlman Helmschmid, Desiderius Helmschmid, Wolfgang Grosschedel, Bartolomeo Campi et Master Filippo Negroli. L'armure a été un instrument de protection assez lourd et inconfortable, et l'on a toujours ressenti le besoin d'amélioration, de perfectionnement, d'où les nombreuses tentatives de transformation, les interventions dans le but de mieux l'ajuster au corps. On envisageait l'armure comme une sorte de prolongement du corps pour le guerrier, une sorte de „seconde peau” (idée qui était inspirée par l'aspect concret des cuirasses antiques en cuir), afin de le rendre le moins que possible vulnérable à l'attaque, et, par conséquent, plus fort, plus apte à gagner le combat.

En se centrant juste sur l'armure, Maximilien I^{er} est celui qui a établi les principaux éléments de l'image iconique de l'empereur-chevalier (Schroth 2004, 113). Il existe plusieurs versions de son portrait officiel en cette hypostase, réalisées par Bernhard Strigel (à présent au Kunsthistorisches Museum de Vienne). „Qu'est-ce qui pourrait être plus précieux pour un roi, qu'une armure vouée à protéger son corps au combat” (Terjanian 2019, 17), c'était la question de l'empereur Maximilien, qui cherchait ainsi à indiquer son statut de connaisseur en matière d'équipement à rôle de protection corporelle pendant la lutte, mais aussi le fait qu'il se sentait lui-même

capable de donner des indications utiles pour la réalisation de pareilles armures.

Si au départ seulement les monarques posaient en armure, ultérieurement elle a été adoptée aussi par les nobles, un des premiers portraits qui en témoignent étant celui du duc d'Alba, dont l'auteur est Anthonis Mor, selon Titien. Au XVII^e siècle, l'armure est devenue seulement une précieuse et élégante ressource pour les artistes, qui l'utilisaient pour les commandes de tableaux venues de la part d'individus qui n'avaient plus rien à voir avec la monarchie ou la noblesse.

L'armure – une question d'image et de pouvoir

Si la fonction initiale de l'armure a été celle de protection, avec le temps, elle a acquis d'autres rôles et significations, de plus en plus abstraites, finissant par devenir un véritable signe de l'Etat et du rang social. C'est pour cela que ses valences symboliques ont été longuement étudiées par les historiens et les théoriciens de l'art, ce qui a donné une riche bibliographie à ce sujet.

La réalisation des armures a été destinée à la défense, non seulement sur le champ de bataille, mais aussi dans les tournois. Au début, les tournois ont été une simple occasion d'exercice public afin de s'entraîner aux futures guerres. Avec le temps, ils sont devenus une bonne occasion pour les rois, monarques et les nobles (comtes et ducs) pour organiser des spectacles impressionnants, qui leur permettaient d'affirmer ainsi leur statut, leur rang, la richesse et le prestige. Toutes ces festivités opulentes, éblouissantes, le jeu parfois mortel de la lutte (des accidents non négligeables avaient eu lieu à de pareilles occasions, celui de Henri II, mari de Catherine de Médicis, dont le visage avait été touché par la lance de son adversaire, en est le plus connu), ont eu aussi pour but de favoriser des négociations politiques et diplomatiques; parfois, lors de ces tournois on faisait et on défaisait des alliances de toute sorte.

Une esthétique du dispositif de défense.

Les armures pour les événements du type tournois ont commencé à être adaptées au contexte, à être de plus en plus riches en décorations, et ceux qui les réalisaient étaient plus que de simples artisans, plutôt de vrais designers ouvrageant le métal. De façon que l'armure est devenue une sorte de témoignage du bon goût du propriétaire et de sa volonté de s'adapter aux exigences du temps, de la mode. Certains modèles avaient été conçus de

manière sobre, même austère, et d'autres étaient ornés, recouverts de feuille d'or, sous la forme de rubans ou divers reliefs, selon la personnalité et le goût des commanditaires.

Les armures réalisées dans l'espace allemand et autrichien s'imposaient par leur caractère pratique, mais assez raffiné, tandis que celles d'origine italienne se distinguaient par leur aspect décoratif, étant de véritables „sculptures à être habillées” (*wearable sculptures*), ce que l'on pourrait actuellement qualifier d'art fonctionnel.

À partir d'un certain moment, les armures ont commencé à être utilisées seulement pour des enjeux cérémoniels, en tant que „parure spectaculaire du corps masculin” (Schroth 2004, 126), tout en perdant leur dimension fonctionnelle connue sur le champ de bataille. Pour cette raison, à côté de sa dimension concrète, pragmatique, l'armure cumule le long du temps de nombreuses significations abstraites liées à une série d'éléments comme: la guerre, le combat, l'autorité, le courage, la victoire, le pouvoir, le rang, le statut, le titre, la santé, la dignité que l'on occupait, et surtout l'image!

Cérémonie et propagande

Avec l'avènement des armes à feu, l'armure est devenue un objet redondant, finissant par être exclue de l'usage. Mais les rois et les nobles ont continué de l'utiliser” dans les tableaux qui les représentaient, tout en lui attribuant ainsi le rôle de communiquer un message assez complexe. La description du personnage en armure pouvait avoir un rôle de propagande, indiquant, par exemple, le fait que celui-ci avait remporté jadis une victoire militaire stratégique (Ishikawa 2004, 115). Les armures avaient donc tant un message individuel, qu'un autre, politique. Tout comme le portrait dans son ensemble avait aussi un rôle idéologique, on pourrait dire la même chose sur la signification de l'armure étalée dans ce type de portrait.

Donc, la présence de celle-ci dans le tableau avait des liens précis avec la politique de l'intérieur, comme à celle de l'extérieur, vérités que les détenteurs voulaient transmettre. En fonction de ces intentions, le personnage en question choisissait l'armure qui lui convenait: soit celle d'apparat, soit celle dont il se servait au champ de bataille.

À côté de l'armure, ce qui comptait beaucoup c'était la posture affichée par le personnage dans le tableau: si l'on voulait souligner ses qualités militaires, il tenait sa main gauche sur l'épée; si l'intention était d'indiquer ses qualités diplomatiques, il tenait sa main sur sa hanche. La majeure partie de ces personnages ont tenu à présenter une image idéalisée sur eux-mêmes, en utilisant justement l'armure, dans le but de transmettre l'idée de prestige, de

pouvoir, d'autorité, mais ce fait ne s'appuyait pas à vrai dire seulement sur des données réelles et sur des mérites précis. Mais on s'en servait assez souvent, surtout dans le but d'indiquer la manière dont le monarque ou le noble respectif se voyait soi-même, étant, en réalité, une forme de représentation de soi. Et cela parce que le monarque, tout comme „de nombreux autres militaires, s'est cru accomplir un idéal plus haut” (Sinkevic 2006, 68).

Art et collections

Comme les armures personnalisées avaient été des investissements très coûteux, leurs propriétaires ont cherché à élargir leur utilisation. Si bien que, à la fin du XVIe siècle, les possesseurs d'armures ont tenu à apparaître dans les toiles qui leur étaient consacrées juste en ces armures, car de cette manière ils léguaient à la postérité une image significative sur eux-mêmes, une sorte de déclaration sur leur statut, leur capacité militaire et sur leur richesse. Par exemple, on connaît bien le fait que l'armure, chargé d'une multitude de significations, a été un élément essentiel dans le développement de la peinture de la cour en Espagne, jusque vers le XVIIIe siècle.

Pour les artistes, la présence des armures dans les peintures, avec leurs surfaces luisantes et courbes, a été une occasion de montrer leurs habiletés, leur art à jouer avec la lumière et les reflets du métal. Uns des plus connus portraits qui montrent des monarques/ nobles et leurs contemporains en armure, tous accessoires y compris, sont l'œuvre d'artistes bien connus, comme Rubens, Van Dyck, Velázquez, Titien, Coello, Mengs, Anthonis Mor, Pantoja de la Cruz.

„La présence de diverses figures armées dans des œuvres d'art dépourvues de tout contenu militaire indique le fait que pendant la Renaissance et l'Age baroque, les armes et les armures ont acquis une vie propre, souvent distinctement de leur fonction initiale sur le champ de bataille” (Sinkevic 2006, 13).

A côté de son rôle pratique, ou bien celui festif, avec toute son symbolique, tant dans la vie réelle que dans les tableaux, l'armure elle-même s'est constituée en un objet de collection. C'est tout spécialement les familles royales qui avaient acquis plus d'une fois de pareils objets très coûteux, en pouvant retrouver parmi les plus coûteux ceux appartenant aux rois d'Espagne ou bien aux empereurs autrichiens, qui détenaient des armures réputées pour leur valeur. À partir d'un certain moment, ces collections à caractère dynastique ont commencé à être exposées dans des

pièces spécialement aménagées, à côté de toute sorte d'armes, tout en devenant, à travers le temps, des éléments centraux du décor des résidences royales, impériales.

De toute façon, les commandes d'armures, en tant que symboles du rang, du pouvoir, „reflétaient la qualité de fin connaisseur du propriétaire” (Schroth 2004, 123), et parmi les exemplaires les plus réputés, on rappelle ceux appartenant à l'empereur Maximilien Ier et à l'archiduc (devenu plus tard empereur) Ferdinand II.

Et les peintures réalisées par divers artistes, ayant comme source d'inspiration justement des objets de ces collections, ont souvent constitué de remarquables œuvres d'art qui ont valorisé ensemble le portrait et l'armure, avec toutes leurs significations historiques, artistiques, esthétiques et symboliques.

2. Le bouclier et les symboles héraldiques

Dans l'inventaire des éléments qui tiennent de la composition d'un portrait de monarque ou de noble, on doit en rappeler un très important, présent dans le tableau soit sous forme concrète, physique, soit sous la forme du dispositif héraldique de la famille à laquelle le personnage est associé. Il s'agit du bouclier.

À côté de l'épée, le bouclier a depuis toujours été un des plus importants éléments de la vie des chevaliers sur le champ de bataille. Il a eu des fonctions pratiques immédiates et il est apparu sous diverses formes et modèles, tout en continuant à être modifié et perfectionné le long du temps. Un de ses rôles initiaux a été celui de support pour le transport facile du chevalier blessé sur le champ de bataille (Mills 2012, 35). À part son utilisation pour la défense contre les flèches envoyées par l'armée ennemie, ou dans la lutte à l'épée, le bouclier pouvait aussi être utilisé dans des buts offensifs, dans la lutte corps à corps, lorsque le combattant restait sans épée ou autre arme d'attaque.

Les pièces plus anciennes, réalisées en bois, n'étaient pas trop compliquées et présentaient peu de détails. Ces boucliers avaient des formes géométriques, et les décorations simples que l'on y voyait devaient recouvrir les nervures saillantes, tandis que les petites barres et les pourtours en métal, fixés au moyen des clous, avaient le rôle de les renforcer. Avec le temps, les boucliers en plaques de bois ont été recouverts, sur les deux faces, de cuir ou de parchemin épais, matériaux qui ont permis par la suite leur peinture, leur décoration, devenant le lieu parfait pour exposer les enseignes de la

famille. Mais d'où est apparu, cependant, ce besoin de faire voir un emblème?

Le dispositif héraldique – indice de l'identité d'un personnage

Dans une première étape, les symboles héraldiques ont réellement eu un rôle important et immédiat, étant utilisés directement sur le champ de bataille. Puisqu'il était recouvert d'armure, le chevalier était difficile à identifier, surtout lorsque le heaume recouvrait son visage entier. Comme on pouvait faire de graves confusions, il s'est imposé la nécessité de l'emploi d'un détail particulier, à l'aide duquel le chevalier en cause puisse être reconnu par les soldats qu'il conduisait dans la lutte. Le premier signe d'identification auquel on a eu recours ont été les armes peintes sur le bouclier. Par la suite, l'emploi des détails a reçu des connotations plus complexes. Tout d'abord, ces détails indiquaient le fait que le dispositif présent sur le bouclier était spécifique, par ses symboles, sa forme, sa couleur, à un seul individu.

L'expression visuelle du statut d'un personnage

Les boucliers avaient des formes et des dimensions différentes, mais les simples soldats n'avaient pas accès à des modèles sophistiqués, ni à des enseignes particulières. Les boucliers sont donc devenus l'apanage des chevaliers, et c'est pour cela que chaque nouveau projet d'un bouclier était réalisé selon une forme particulière précise, et en tenant compte de la position sociale du possesseur. Il a donc eu le rôle de souligner le statut noble du porteur d'arme (*armiger*), et, à partir d'un certain moment, le fait même que ce détail se trouvait représenté sur le bouclier était un indice exact de l'appartenance du chevalier à la noblesse. Le dispositif héraldique est devenu ainsi l'expression visuelle du statut d'un personnage, étant constitué d'armoiries, blasons et emblèmes.

Avec l'apparition des tournois, tous ces dispositifs héraldiques allaient trouver leur place, plus que dans des situations concrètes de combat. Si le tournoi avait été initialement une modalité populaire d'entraînement, avec des armes et des chevaux, il s'est ultérieurement transformé en un spectacle ayant des règles bien établies. Parmi les premiers à avoir décidé de ces lois des jeux chevaleresques et des cérémonies, on situe l'empereur Maximilien Ier, imbu de son désir de promouvoir les idéaux chevaleresques. C'est pour cela que, à partir d'un certain moment, le tournoi n'a plus été accessible aux

lutteurs à possibilités matérielles limitées, devenant l'apanage d'une classe restreinte, à savoir la chevalerie. Et c'est pour la même raison qu'a eu lieu un changement au niveau de la réception: les symboles héraldiques se sont transformés, des éléments d'un dispositif militaire à rôle pratique au début, ou d'indices du statut, en une certaine forme d'exposition publique de l'orgueil personnel du chevalier (*Self-Representation in Heraldry*).

Initialement, les emblèmes dynastiques et territoriaux avaient été transmis sur des sceaux, monnaies, timbres et oriflammes. Une fois les symboles transférés au bouclier, ils ont donné naissance à ce qui est connu sous le nom d'héraldique, à partir du XIIe siècle, et cette pratique s'est répandue assez vite à travers toute l'Europe. Le long du temps, l'héraldique s'est développée dans toute sa complexité, en passant de simples formes géométriques à de véritables projets élaborés qui contenaient des images de créatures fabuleuses et chimériques.

Au XIIIe siècle, la science de l'héraldique s'est cristallisée, prenant la forme qu'on lui connaît aujourd'hui, avec la même gamme de couleurs, métaux, fourrures et les mêmes lois d'organisation des armes. Tout se concentrait autour du principe conformément auquel les armes étaient propriété personnelle, ne pouvant donc pas être utilisées par des étrangers, principe qui a généralement été admis dans toute l'Europe.

Puisqu'il indiquait l'identité et le statut du propriétaire, le dispositif héraldique a été transmis par filiation héréditaire. Le bouclier à blasons est ainsi devenu un symbole généralement accepté du rang nobiliaire ou du statut chevaleresque.

Après avoir été transférés sur des murs et des arceaux de portes à l'entrée des cités ou des châteaux, en une dernière étape, les symboles héraldiques ont été attachés aux représentations artistiques des possesseurs, en premier lieu aux tableaux représentant des portraits généalogiques.

3. Le glaive, de la dimension pratique à celle esthétique

Au-delà des multiples significations qu'on lui attribue selon le contexte, le glaive et sa présence dans l'art du portrait généalogique indique sans conteste un symbole masculin.

Même si on l'a regardé comme une des plus nobles armes, le glaive a été, cependant, un objet conçu dans le but d'éliminer un adversaire. C'est là son origine paradoxale, car il est devenu un symbole à signification opposée à ses attributs concrets et pratiques, finissant par être un indice du statut du personnage qui le tient, voire même un emblème de la justice.

Pendant la période médiévale, la croix obtenue à la suite du croisement de la lame droite et de la garde (à barre tendue) était associée à la foi, et les chevaliers l'ont tout de suite adoptée et préférée. Le modèle iconographique le plus connu est celui de l'Archange Michel, tel qu'on le représentait dans les images chrétiennes, ayant une épée (parfois de feu) dans la main – comme symbole de la vérité, de l'équilibre de l'âme et de la justice, tout cela révélé dans la lumière de Christ. Le message de l'épée était ainsi élargi et enrichi de nouvelles significations et il renvoie au courage ultime, à la hardiesse et à la tradition religieuse héroïque. „C'est une confrontation directe, un rituel développé par les chevaliers en accord avec un code héroïque de comportement” (Schroth 2004, 119), et, le plus souvent, pour l'amour de la foi.

Jusqu'alors le chevalier à épée (combattant, bien sûr), a dû regarder son ennemi en face, à avoir du courage, de la foi, du caractère, être un grand défenseur de l'honneur. Mais avec le passage au modèle de la croix, on l'a chargée de hautes significations spirituelles. C'est pour cela que, pendant la période médiévale, l'épée des chevaliers a été l'arme la plus importante et la plus précieuse, et, à côté du nom de son maître, on avait gravé sur sa lame des mots de prière.

Tout comme les autres composantes qui tiennent de l'habit chevaleresque, l'épée comporte à son tour une dimension esthétique, qui rejoint sa dimension pratique. En le prolongement de la lame et de la garde, elle a aussi une poignée (pommeau et fusée), chacun de ces éléments ayant son rôle bien défini. Les éléments sur lesquels on a pu intervenir de point de vue artistique ont été surtout la garde et le pommeau, les deux responsables du rôle essentiel d'appui, de soutien, de façon que la main du chevalier ne puisse glisser et que l'instrument de lutte ne puisse tomber, échapper. En fonction de la forme et des éléments décoratifs supplémentaires, on peut établir sans difficulté l'époque à laquelle ces armes appartiennent.

Dans les portraits de monarques et de nobles, le glaive est toujours présent en tant que symbole du pouvoir, de la force. En égale mesure, il peut symboliser la protection, l'autorité et le courage de celui qui le tient; d'autre part, le glaive représente le discernement et la puissance pénétrante de l'intellect de celui qui y est représenté (associés aussi à l'image de la justice). Nous savons bien que ces qualités étaient rares chez les personnages peints, étant plutôt „forgées” et „améliorées” au niveau de l'image, justement à l'aide de ces objets à rôle symbolique. La plupart des fois, dans l'armure du tableau se trouve un corps appuyé à une épée, mais rarement une personnalité.

4. Cols, manches, manchettes, manteaux et autres caprices vestimentaires

Les cols blancs avaient, initialement, une destination fonctionnelle, celle de protéger la peau contre le contact et la friction avec le métal de l'armure. Car le réseau de mailles était trop faible, dans le cas d'un coup de lance ou d'espadaon, pour une meilleure protection au niveau de la gorge, le plastron était prévu d'un col plus élevé en métal (gorgerin), sous lequel on pouvait apercevoir le col en toile. Autour de ce col fixé à une cuirasse (la protection pour la poitrine et le dos) se trouvait le heaume, qui était conçu de manière à protéger toute la tête. Le heaume comme élément de protection a été à l'origine combiné avec la couronne du monarque, comme un prolongement de celle-ci, qui respectait la forme du crâne et les organes des sens. A travers le temps, le heaume est devenu un signe visuel de la tête, ayant acquis toute une série de traits symbolique, tout d'abord ceux qui sont liés à l'idée de triomphe. C'est pour cela qu'il a été orné d'éléments décoratifs précieux, de plumes, afin d'attirer tout de suite l'attention.

Pendant le règne de Philippe II, le col à plis est devenu très populaire en Espagne, étant nommé *lechuguilla* („petite salade”), puisque les volants obtenus à la suite du fronçage du tissu ressemblaient aux feuilles de salade. Plus tard, avec la mode imposée par Philippe III, les dimensions de ces *lechuguilla* ont été augmentées, évoquant, plutôt, les feuilles de bardane (Bernis 2001, 179-86). Et la variante très plissée et rêche de ces cols est devenue un accessoire à la mode, étant très utilisé, répandu à travers toute l'Europe.

Les manteaux ont été, à leur tour, un élément vestimentaire à forte charge symbolique, étant intensément utilisés dans l'art du portrait, atteignant l'apogée dans la peinture française à la fin du XVII^e siècle et au début du XVIII^e siècle. Si leur utilité immédiate était celle de protéger, ou c'était purement décorative, dans les portraits généalogiques, les manteaux ont des significations beaucoup plus complexes. Tous ceux qui étaient utilisés pour les cérémonies des sacres, à lourds plis qui tombaient jusqu'aux pieds des personnages, ornés de fourrure, venaient accentuer une posture de fierté, orgueilleuse et élégante, aspects rendus si bien par les peintres de l'époque. La présence de la fourrure d'hermine a fonctionné comme un symbole du statut social, tout en sachant que cette fourrure était accessible (et permise) seulement à la famille du monarque ou de la haute noblesse. Un des plus extravagants exemplaires se retrouve dans le très connu portrait de Louis XIV, enveloppé dans son célèbre manteau royal bleu, à fleur de lys, mesurant presque 100 mètres carrés, doublée de hermine, pièce qu'il avait étalée lors de son sacre.

Les gants. Dans l'art du portrait généalogique, les gants ont eu aussi leur rôle à jouer. Leur signification et leur valeur culturelle ont été différentes d'un espace à l'autre et d'une époque à l'autre. Leur rôle initial de protection des mains a acquis aussi d'autres significations liées à des contextes qui supposaient l'élégance, l'étiquette, ou des gestes protocolaires. À l'époque médiévale, les gants étaient utilisés en tant qu'objets rituels dans la liturgie, mais pouvaient aussi être un symbole de l'autorité légitime. Pendant la période moyenâgeuse, les gants élevés voulaient exprimer l'acceptation d'un défi lancé, ou pouvaient être offerts comme cadeaux qui montraient la loyauté et la soumission, la fidélité envers celui auquel on les offrait.

À partir du XVIIe siècle, les gants perdent en bonne partie ces significations, devenant seulement un symbole pour le statut de leur possesseur. „Les gants, tout comme les éventails et les mouchoirs, étaient des pièces couteuses, mais des accessoires à la mode, dont la fonction principale était d'afficher la richesse et le statut de leurs propriétaires. Le fait que ces accessoires étaient des articles de luxe très convoités a été aussi la raison pour laquelle ils constituaient des témoignages d'amour bien connus, ou cadeaux offerts à l'occasion des mariages” (Winkel 2006, 85-7). Petit à petit, ces significations se sont perdues à leur tour, les gants devenant des articles standardisés, n'ayant plus aucun lien avec le statut social.

5. Le bâton de général et le sceptre

Dans l'art du portrait généalogique ayant comme sujet le commandant militaire, il apparaît souvent un élément iconographique à signification précise, bien que dépourvu de rôle pratique. Il s'agit du bâton de général, et une des sources qui ont été à la base de l'adoption de ce modèle se retrouve dans les copies réalisées selon les peintures montrant les douze empereurs romains. Onze parmi ces peintures sont dues à Titien (mais elles ont été ultérieurement détruites, lors d'un incendie, à Madrid), puis elles ont été reproduites et complétées par la douzième, par B. Campi. Elles ont été gravées et publiées à Antwerp en 1593, par Aegidius Sadeler II, puis republiées par Marcus Sadeler, en 1662. A partir de cette époque, le bâton de général est presque toujours présent dans l'art du portrait généalogique, incontournable, on pourrait dire, indiquant la victoire dans les campagnes militaires, en même temps que l'autorité et la distinction du possesseur.

Un autre élément, à message tout aussi évident, c'est le sceptre, comme symbole de l'autorité et de la souveraineté monarchique. Nous le retrouvons dans l'art du portrait généalogique sous la forme d'un bâton décoratif en métal, plus long ou plus court, incrusté de pierres précieuses, tenu en main

par un souverain en tant que symbole de l'autorité et du pouvoir suprême dans l'Etat.

Conclusions

Le rôle de l'art du portrait généalogique a été de renvoyer à des données essentielles liées au personnage représenté, mais aussi à son appartenance à une famille de renom. Ainsi, les portraits allaient offrir, d'une part, des renseignements portant sur l'identité, l'individualité, les particularités, mais aussi l'individualisation visuelle de celui-ci (dans cette étude nous avons référé uniquement au répertoire pictural mis en œuvre: armure, armes, vêtements). D'autre part, cet art devait renvoyer à des données d'autre ordre, précisément des renseignements concernant l'ancienneté de la famille dont le personnage était le représentant, sa tradition militaire (avec, bien sûr, ses époques de gloire), et, en égale mesure, des données sur sa continuité politique.

Donc, les portraits de ces personnages historiques ayant un statut royal ou nobiliaire, ont eu pour fonction (parmi d'autres) de rendre quelque chose qui parlait de leur caractère, de leur personnalité, tels qu'ils avaient été en tant qu'êtres humains, et, en égale mesure, ils ont essayé de recouvrir des aspects d'ordre plus général, plus large, politique et historique (et souvent ces détails étaient inexistantes en réalité, donc ils devaient être „fabriqués”, construits), le tout avec un fort accent idéologique et de propagande. A travers ce type de représentation, on devait surprendre et rendre ce que ces personnages avaient réussi à accomplir (et moins ce qu'ils avaient manqué de faire) au niveau de l'histoire d'une communauté ou de tout un empire. C'est là qu'est intervenue la maîtrise, le talent de l'artiste.

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Petru BEJAN *

The Body in the Mirror of Consciousness

Abstract: The present approach follows the "problematic" relationships among body, mind and consciousness, their comfortable vicinities, and, at the same time, the tense ones, in disagreement, which ultimately make us uncomfortable "in our own skin". What does it mean to be a body or to have a body? What does it mean to have a conscience? How exactly do the two realities "communicate" and interact? On an historical scale, numerous metaphors describe the oscillating evolution of public perception relative to the body. There have been talks of the body as a micro- or macro-cosmos, as "dungeon of the soul", "grave" of the soul, "temple of the Holy Spirit," organism, machine, clock, mechanism, instrument of action, archetype of beauty, "mirror" of social relations, source of alienation. The "pneumatic body," the body as a "democratically organized system of forces", the body as "an organic federation, led by a soul" (Leibniz), the "social body" (Marx), the "body without organs," the body as a "desiring-machine" (Deleuze and Guattari) and, more recently, the "image body" (Paul Ardenne) have also been invoked. As a representation of the body, the image has a certain artificiality, given by our predisposition to simulation. We are seen either as we are, or as we would like to be, or as others want us to be. When exposed to the gaze of others, the body becomes a dynamic, versatile image, one that we work on or seek to retouch. The "aestheticization of the body" according to the agreed standards of perfection at a given time occurs in the "mirror" of consciousness, which acts sometimes permissively or indulgently and sometimes tyrannically, triggering unpredictable reactions. Can we speak today of a "crisis" of the body? And, if so, what would be the best strategies to overcome it? How can one gain "self-esteem"? What is the key factor in acquiring or re-acquiring "self-confidence"? The body? The mind? The consciousness?.

Keywords: body, mind, consciousness, self-care, self-esteem, self-technologies, somatic aesthetics.

1. *Terminological ambiguities.* When we talk about body, mind, and consciousness, we easily find that for each word the semantic indeterminacies are sovereign, and the ambiguities of use – real epistemic obstacles. In Romanian, sometimes we invoke the corpus, sometimes the body, without explaining the basis of their differentiated use. Therefore, the discussions about consciousness mobilize heterogeneous terms – soul, spirit, mind, brain, intelligence, reason, my-self, self – invoked, as a rule, in

* Professor, PhD, Department of Philosophy, "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iasi, Romania; email: pbejan@gmail.com

specific philosophical and psychological contexts. An unprecedented scientific descent mobilizes, among others, neurobiology, evolutionary biology, genetics, cognitive sciences, linguistics, neuroscience, quantum mechanics, computer science, cybernetics, artificial intelligence, ready to explore with specific tools the problematic "fields" on which it assumes competence.

In common speech, the mind and consciousness receive meanings that first highlight all the differences. One may have a "brilliant mind" or an "illustrious brain," but "rebukes" or "regrets" – if any – are only a matter of consciousness, meaning of that intimate and vigilant "court" that evaluates one's own gestures or decisions. How could the mind be described? As a reason in practice, a process of cognition, applied thinking, associative intelligence, agility in search of solutions or solutions. Psychologists tell us that, in fact, the mind represents the result of the mutual action between consciousness and the brain. Any damage to the organ of thought causes immeasurable mental and physiological reactions. Psychopathology investigates and diagnoses memory deficits, loss of consciousness, identity, or personality disorders. Physical integrity generally guarantees the balanced functioning of the mind and consciousness.

Does consciousness in any way imply intelligence? Or, on the contrary, is it independent of it? Here also the answers are shared: in some situations, it would be said that yes (the nature, content and consistency of information stored in the brain seriously influence our decisions); in others, not (artificial intelligence, as for computers or robots, excludes consciousness from the start). Therefore, what could consciousness be (more)? Subjective, autoscopic and reflective court alike, a personalized moral and axiological censor, self-"judge", but also of others.

To be conscious means, on one hand, assumed intentional conduct, reflection, vigilance, self-concern, but also care for the others; it means, on the other hand, to have the feeling of your own identity and personality, of your "uniqueness" in relation to the world. That is why the formation of consciousness is a gradual, lasting process, starting from childhood. Psychologists also describe in successive stages the sedimentation of a "bodily consciousness" (Wallon 1959, 258). In most situations, recognizing one's own body as distinct but also similar to the others implies an essential experience – that of looking in the mirror (Bernard 1995, 39). The image of the body is part of the representations that the subject makes on himself. It matters more and more "what is seen," the way we look, and, at the same time, the way we are perceived.

The body is felt as the center of the sensations and lived experiences, which exclusively belongs to us and with which we identify. We are the authors of our own actions, as long as our body, at the urging of the mind or conscience, deliberately assumes them. But there are also situations –

calling them pathological or deviant – when this "complicity" does not work. I feel I am the author of the intentions and actions of thought, without participating with my own body, as I can perform actions mechanically, without the explicit and effective participation of consciousness (Jeannerod 2010, 193). If the innocence of the first age is both inborn and natural, the in-consciousness of the mature man (of the one who premeditatedly suspends any judgment) is as reprehensible as possible, being, in fact, the source of all misdemeanor and monstrosities.

Most studies associate the consciousness of the intimate and private sphere. Psychoanalysis, in the canonical versions of Freud, Adler and Jung, for example, studies the sub-terranean of consciousness, the turbulent, nebulous areas of the personal and collective sub- and un-conscious, in which impulses, obsessions, complexes and frustrations are camouflaged. Here, the Self, the Ego and the Supra-Ego dispute their primacy and the force of contamination and seduction. On the other hand, sociology and anthropology approach the phenomena of consciousness in a social context, seeking to explain its fluctuations at the scale of large groups or communities. Customs, stereotypes, mentalities, projections of the imaginary, religious options, lifestyles are aimed..., shaped according to specific traditions and "ideologies".

2. *A stigmatized body.* The West owes to Greco-Roman philosophy and then to Christianity the current perspective on the body, but also on its proximity to the soul. It is known that the Greeks recognized an equal rank in body and mind. An expression assigned to them, which has become common in the medical discourse of Antiquity, praises the agreement between a healthy mind and a healthy body. However, on the philosophical side, things have not always been the same. In accordance with an entire tradition which saw the body as a "prison" of the soul, Plato recognizes the former as second in relation to the rational part. Driven rather by passions, the body is incapable of reaching the essence of things (*Phaidon* 65c). However, it can be modeled or educated (*Timaeus* 88, c-b), if he accepts the ascendancy and priority of the soul (*The Republic* 3, 403b).

Christianity will make a decisive contribution to the depreciation and even stigmatization of the body. As the Bible says, man was created "in the own image" of God. If we read the passages in which the sequences of temptation and sin are evoked, we also discover the moment of becoming aware of the possession of one's own bodies. Expelled from Heaven and exiled to the world to atone for their guilt and experience precariousness, Adam and Eve received from the Creator "garments of skin" and – as the text says – "felt ashamed" (*Genesis* 3:21). Shame on one's own nakedness can be a sign of a perception of the body as a personal and distinct reality.

The body is shown here both in the "mirror" of one's own consciousness and in the "eyes" of God. Prudishness is precisely the gesture of withdrawal, of retreat of consciousness in a situation of exposure considered "intimate" and inappropriate; the redness of the cheeks, the gazes fixed on the ground are the body's response to the stimuli of barely raising consciousness. The recognition of the sin committed takes the form of regret, obviously in the very postures of the two. In this case, the "skin" is the stigmatized one; it becomes a perishable garment, a figure of appearance, of the mask, of the chameleonic versatility, of the surface that simulates and conceals. Stripped of skin, the man shows himself as he is, only "flesh and blood", revealing his ephemeral condition. Christianity will repudiate and severely punish the sins of the flesh. After the Last Judgment, the bodies of the wicked will burn in the fire of Hell. But the happy eternity of Paradise is one without bodies. Their materiality and vulnerability contradict the exigency of perfection, so that only the souls of the good and the righteous ones will join the feast of eternal salvation.

3. *A skilled sailor*. Devalued by most Christian theologians, the body will be recognized in Descartes' writings with a "substance" rank distinct from the soul. However, *res cogitans* and *res extensa* interact in a real way, "as if confound". The relationship between the two substances is similar to that between the sailor and the ship; the soul "lives" and "leads" to the target this massive and hard-to-control... body (Descartes 1992, 294). Here, the body is the "support" of the soul, the "place" from which it exercises its prerogatives as a leader. Concerned with "locating" the soul, Descartes identifies a gland at the base of the brain, the pineal gland, as the "headquarters" of the thinking substance, which functions as an autonomous command center. In order to be able to exercise its leadership skills, the soul needs a specialized mediating body to justify the good "coexistence" between soul and body.

The following centuries will sabotage the idea of the prevalence of the soul in relation to the body. In *The Will to Power*, Nietzsche discusses consciousness, identifying several "errors" in its reception. The first one aims at "absurd overestimation," which makes consciousness "a unity, an essence: 'the spirit', 'the soul', something that feels, thinks, desires..." (Nietzsche 1999, 341). Nietzsche believes that the overestimation of consciousness is as uninspired as the exaggerated appreciation of the body.

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the philosopher addresses at one point the "despisers of the body," describing his relationship with the soul through a confusing cascade of metaphors: "The body is a great reason, a plurality with one sense, a war and a peace, a herd and a shepherd. An instrument of your body is also your little reason, my brother, which you call 'spirit' – a little instrument and toy of your great reason [...] Behind your thoughts and

feelings, my brother, there stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage – whose name is self. In your body he dwells; he is your body." (Nietzsche 1994, 89-90). In Nietzsche, the *great reason of the body* and the *embedded Self* are two terminological "innovations," which explain to us the way in which the body and reason intertwine and determine each other. If in Descartes the soul "leads" the body, in Nietzsche reason is presented as the "instrument" of the body, and the Self is the privileged inhabitant of the latter.

The Self, in Nietzsche's opinion, is stronger than the senses, but also than reason. The idea of the Self seen as a dark and chaotic part of the mind, as a source of libido (cauldron of energy and excitement in continuous boiling), will be recycled and adapted by Freud, who was not inspired by Nietzsche, as one might think, but from the research of Georg Groddeck, a brilliant Viennese psychiatrist of the time. The position of the new inhabitant of the psyche will be intensely disputed. Although it influences our behavior and decisions, the Self remains external to consciousness. But not passive or inert.

4. *The dialectic of mastery and obedience.* Phenomenology will take the discussions to another level of abstraction, making the "description" of feelings, states or events of consciousness a true speculative program. Reinterpreting Descartes, Husserl notes the difficulty of discussing consciousness, denouncing "the failure of all modern attempts to distinguish between the psychological and philosophical theory of consciousness" (Husserl 1994, 70). What is its hallmark? Consciousness is and must be intentional, meaning to be "consciousness of something," taken as the object of a transcendental description. "Intentionality is the generic essence of consciousness. [...] All feelings that have this property of essence are called 'intentional feelings'; to the extent that those feelings are 'consciousness of something,' we will say that they 'intentionally relate' to that 'something.'" (Husserl 2011, 136). The transcendental reduction committed in the phenomenological description "puts in parentheses" the world, including the body. This is not a simple "representation" of consciousness, but rather something "that is constituted within consciousness," it is the deductive work of the transcendental *ego*.

In his *Phenomenology of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty discusses the relationship between consciousness and body in different theoretical parameters. "To be consciousness itself, or rather *to be experience itself*, means to communicate from within with the world, with the body, and with others, to be with them, instead of being next to them..." (Merleau-Ponty 1999, 130). The body expresses total existence, "not because it is an external accompaniment to that existence, but because existence realizes itself in the body. This incarnate significance is the central phenomenon of which body and mind, sign and significance are abstract moments" (Merleau-Ponty

1999, 208). The body is the fixed existence, and the existence – a continuous incarnation. Existence cannot be reduced not only to the body or sexuality, but not only to the mind. The relationship between the two is similar to that between speech and thought, in the sense that the former "expresses" the other, not being able to function separately.

As Merleau-Ponty believes, there are more ways for the body to be body, and more ways for consciousness to be consciousness. Consciousness must be defined in a phenomenological sense, as a reference to an object, as being-in-the-world, and the body – as its vehicle to be-in-the-world. For the French phenomenologist, the body is eminently an expressive space, the "means of having a world" where it makes its presence felt.

For what reasons does man show his own body? Either to fascinate or to overcome his fears. The individual oscillates between modesty and its lack. Thus, the two "take their place in a dialectic of the self and the other which is that of master and slave: in so far as I have a body, I may be reduced to the status of an object beneath the gaze of another person, and no longer count as a person for him, or else I may become his master and, in my turn, look at him. But this mastery is self-defeating [...] Saying that I have a body is thus a way of saying that I can be seen as an object and that I try to be seen as a subject, that another can be my master or my slave, so that shame and shamelessness express the dialectic of the plurality of consciousness, and have a metaphysical significance." (Merleau-Ponty 1999, 209). Therefore, the body is both the subject and the object of the gaze, depending on the role assumed, on the posture in which it relates to others, but also on how it chooses to expose itself to the gaze, thus triggering the unpredictable games of domination and servitude.

5. *The alienated body.* Phenomenology relativizes the perspective on the body. For example, in some of the profile writings, the idea of the "extended" body is invoked, whose organs are artificially extended, thus with a compensatory use. For the blind, the cane is the tactile extension of the eyes deprived of the faculty of sight. The body itself suffers in the absence or loss of the other – the parent, the child, the partner, the friend – perceived as indispensable. The house, the city, the country can also be extensions of the body beyond its physical boundaries. Departure, alienation, exile can be the pretexts of an acute metaphysical discomfort, felt as lack, anxiety, despair.

The disease, as a functional imbalance or as a deficit of vitality, sometimes amplifies to the paroxysm the "consciousness" of the body. Life is even more precious if, at some point, it has been seriously tested. Proximity or threat of death exponentially increase the mindfulness for the body itself. On the other hand, the healthy body seeks different forms of "alienation," some instrumentalizing its possibilities on the vector of

efficiency increment, others fixing it as a center of interest – either as a source of pleasure or as a place of proliferating seduction. In this context, comfort, control, power, beauty, eroticism become the favorite refuges of the body that "experiences" the world.

In his time, Marcuse denounced that "repressive desublimation" that makes the individual orient his transforming energies towards himself. Work and sports are just some of these forms of "alienation" (Bernard 1995, 12). The de-eroticized body is put at the service of industrial efficiency, in working position. Author of a study on the body, Michel Bernard observes a change in the mentality of the body: "The civilization that was one against the body, a repression of it, seems to turn into a civilization of the body, and the negative culture of the body becomes a positive and affirmative one. The body has become a fetish value in all spheres of culture..." (Bernard 1995, 13). The body is a mediator... not a closed reality; everyone wants to feel good "in their own skin," in their own protective coating.

Actually, "being in your own skin" translates to the comfortable closeness between body and consciousness. Narcissism describes it in terms of gratitude, delight, and care – sometimes exaggerated – for its own body and image. On the contrary, feeling "alien" in someone's own skin is the expression of a conflict, of a tense relationship of consciousness with someone's own body. Hence an endless list of "diseases" – either of the body or of the soul. Identifying the *New Diseases of the Soul*, Julia Kristeva believes that "there are diseases of the soul comparable to somatic ones. Passions are part of them" (Kristeva 2005, 9). As an autonomous discipline, psychoanalysis mobilizes an arsenal of survey methods and techniques, through which it seeks to improve and heal the slippage of consciousness.

6. *The treacherous body*. Daniel C. Dennett – one of the nowadays most important philosophers of mind – returns to Descartes' explanatory scheme, but acknowledges to the body the "merits" that the post-Cartesian tradition has neglected. In reality, as the American believes, I cannot be separated from my current body, clearly separated from it... My body contains as much of me, of the values, talents, memories, and skills that make me who I am, as much as my nervous system. Even among those who fought Descartes' vision there is a strong tendency to treat the mind (in other words, the brain) as the head of the body, as the pilot of the ship. By accepting this standard way of thinking, I ignore an important alternative: to consider that the brain (and therefore the mind) is also an organ like so many others, a recent controlling usurper, which I will not understand until I will treat it not as a boss, but as a servant, a servant like many others, who works to promote the interests of the body that shelters and nourishes it and gives meaning to its activities (Dennett 2006, 90).

Daniel C. Dennett's arguments sensibly sum up the thesis of the superiority of the soul or spirit over the body, even if the Cartesian image of a "puppet-self" trying to control the disobedient puppet-body is still extraordinarily strong. But we must admit, the body is not easy to manipulate or control – as one might think at first glance. There are situations – not a few – when he does not "listen" to anyone and, even less, to his own conscience. The appetite of the obese gourmet in front of the favorite food platter, for example, cannot be stopped by simple medical or rational arguments. The passionate enthusiasm of lovers is rather "blind" to the censorship of logical thinking or to the moral filters claimed by others. Sometimes the body seeks to free itself from the severe control of consciousness, resorting to evasive solutions (alcohol, hallucinogens...), meant to weaken its attention and alertness. At the same time, it can also betray the hidden secrets, hurriedly agitating, blushing, trembling, sweating, in other words displaying "signs" that tell the truth in another way, even abstracting the speech. Only in the theatrical play, when actors skilled in the art of concealment easily enter the "skin" and mind of the characters, the substitution of roles and gestures is both "tasted" and accepted without reservation.

7. *The disarticulated body and the tyrannies of appearance.* Aware of the perceptual fluctuations regarding the own bodies, Susie Orbach – the author of a book that proposes a "rethinking of the relationship between mind and body" – considers that today these "are our ever-malleable calling cards, either erasing or articulating our class, geographic and ethnic backgrounds and gender aspirations." (Orbach 2008, 12). The search for visual recognition and confirmation is so diligent that omitting a time to check your face or appearance in the mirror may seem strange or inappropriate.

There are many readings that emphasize the critical perspective. Describing the body as the "mirror of the world," Jasmine Chasseguet-Smirgel presents it as radically "disarticulated," like the world in which we live (Chasseguet-Smirgel 2008, 21). "Deconstruction" is even more virulent from the perspective of the Frenchman David Le Breton. In a reference work for understanding the "anthropology of the body," he denounces the "tyrannies of appearance," those that make someone's own body an *alter ego*. From a phenomenological point of view, man cannot be separated from his body. It is not a possession of circumstance, but it is the being-in-the-world without which man would not exist... The human condition is corporeal. Unpleasant states (illness, uncertainty, disability, fatigue, pain, etc.) or pleasure (tenderness, sensuality, etc.) give the person the feeling that "he cannot control his body" (Le Breton 2009, 289). Both appreciated and despised, "the body is perceived as something other than the individual it

embodies" (Le Breton 2009, 290). In fact, today we reiterate the posture of the *écorché* of Valverde de Amusco (Spanish anatomist of the 17th century), contemplating thoughtfully, without pain or nostalgia, the skin he holds in his hand, like an old coat, and which he is preparing to have repaired. Explanation? Not feeling well among the others, he takes refuge in himself, trying to feel good in his own body, in his own skin.

David Le Breton's critiques aim to transform the body into the only landmark of identity. Man is no longer defined by the soul – as Descartes believed. The body is like a curtain on which a sense of identity can be projected reshuffled at any time. Subjected to repeated metamorphoses, the body is the field of a persevering "identity retouch," of a temporary staging of presence. Invested with the power to replace the self, it keeps only the status of a draft waiting to be taken seriously, finished, and signed. "Between man and body there is an interfering game of difference between self and self and of an extreme joy at the idea of becoming an inventive and tireless master of his own appearance. Taking care of one's own body becomes a full-time job for some. Especially the society of the show imposes a cult of appearance... In its capacity of representative of the self, the body becomes a personal affirmation, highlighting an aesthetic and a morality of presence" (Le Breton 2009, 294).

Nowadays, the body is an *alter ego*, Le Breton believes, in the first instance another deceptive self, but always available for all sorts of changes. In order to grow in one's own eyes, it is important that the body signs are visibly multiplied; somehow you put yourself out of the self to become yourself. "The external aestheticization of the body has effects on the inside. The interiority materializes in an effort of exteriority. Intimacy disappears in favor of 'extimacy'." These "tyrants of appearance" demand uninterrupted work on the self... Self-care is hyperbolized in the form of consumption, which gives rise to an industry of modeling and beauty. The anthropomorphic pattern promoted more and more aggressively today is that of the bodybuilder – an island that painstakingly builds a kind of sumptuous and infallible body shelter, in which he thinks he is "master of himself" or in which he creates the illusion that he is himself; the bodybuilder "bathes in the phantom of his own conception," assuming his body as a "second skin," as an over-body, a protective body, where he finally feels comfortable.

8. *Foreign body and self-esteem.* We live, in fact, under the sign of a "despotism of fashion." The contemporary trend is not that of sophistication of the appearance, as evidenced by Le Breton's analyzes, but that of "nutritional constraints, fitness and maintenance activities... In a system marked by the pluralism of appearances, everyone is their own stylist [...]; we are pushed to become the permanent sculptor of one's own bodily

appearance, guided by one and the same aesthetic model" (Lipovetsky & Serroy 2013, 380-381).

Everlasting youth and everlasting life seem to be the utopian dream of today's man. Medicine and cosmetics have become beauty industries, promoting freshness, physical strength, and the power of seduction. Everyone is looking for a style that represents him in a convenient version, preferably retouched or augmented, folded on the model of the successful man and the impeccable body.

The emancipation of the body is also claimed out of non-aesthetic scruples. For example, the sick man fervently desires to free himself from the tyranny of an infirm or vulnerable body. However, the society of the "normals" takes out of the race the unattractive and undesirable bodies, even if science and technology continuously deliver therapies, remedies, prostheses, which can compensate certain forms of deficit. The elderly and the sick are housed in special institutions (asylums, hospitals...), intended for either temporary isolation or palliative care. Body obsolescence causes self-esteem and self-confidence, monotonously claimed in motivational discourses, to be seriously tested.

Invoking the right to difference, sexual minorities intervene on the body to bring it into harmony with the repressed self. Sexuality evades biological or hereditary determinism. Gender is not anatomically conditioned, but socially. "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman", wrote Simone de Beauvoir. A strange and unpredictable genetic lottery places female natures in men's bodies, male natures in women's bodies, or even mixes them both indecisively. In such cases, the conflicts between the body and the conscience acquire dramatic accents. Everyone wants to feel good in their own body, in their own skin. Identity camouflage solutions or surface rallies are felt as oppressive and repressive. Medicine, cosmetic surgery can intervene to reconcile the tensions or divergences arising from this sad game of masks. In happy cases, the body is modeled with the syringe and scalpel, to harmonize it with its own self. Are there solutions that exclude painful interventions? Of course... Abandoning stigma, accepting the difference, trying to put yourself, even temporarily, "in the other person's shoes."

9. *Aesthetics of care.* In his mature writings, Martin Heidegger postulated "anxiety" as the fundamental ontological coordinate of man. To give it its proper meaning, the philosopher proposes to focus the human being on an axis of "care" (Heidegger 1994, 190-192). In fact, it is an exhortation to return to the exigency of "self-concern" encountered in Greeks and in Latin Stoicism. Philosophers such as Epictetus, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius favor the search for self, recommending introspection, meditation, confessional retreats, inner dialogue. Such a preoccupation was consumed not in an

eminently abstract register, but in one of the self-imposed pagan experiences, which did not lack asceticism, obedience, silence, detachment, and, finally, "examinations of consciousness."

In *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, Michel Foucault makes an excellent systematization of the "technologies of the self" practiced in Antiquity. The Greeks, for example, recommended *metanoia*, which meant both penitence, but also the radical change (metamorphosis) of thought and mind. By his exhortation to *epistrophê*, Plato aimed to divert the gaze from appearances, to detach the soul from the body, from the body-prison or from the body-grave (Foucault 2004, 204-205). In the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, self-conversion meant liberation from what we could not control or dominate. It is not a release from the body, but an effort to establish an appropriate relationship between the Self and the Self itself. In this context, knowledge is no longer the essential element; it is more the exercise, the practice, the training, the asceticism that are oriented towards a noble, edifying goal. To the Hellenistic Stoics, "conversion of gaze" meant looking away from others, turning away from the things of this world, looking at yourself (Foucault 2004, 213).

Philosophy is gradually evading the sphere of abstractions inadequate to current problems, becoming – for skeptics, Stoics and Epicureans – a true way of life (Hadot 2019). In turn, the philosopher becomes a "master of formation through subjectivization" – in the words of the same Foucault –, concerned with providing useful advice or exhortations to the common man. A true "existential aesthetics" favors the requirement to "live beautifully," in a hedonic manner common to both soul (spirit) and body. Condensed, laconic formulas summarized true "existential" programs, from which novices learned that what matters is not how long you live, but how you live; that you must not long for inaccessible things; that it is good not to long for what you cannot have; that you should live every day as if it is your last; that the ideal would be to live and cherish every moment unconditionally...

10. *The "artification" of the body, life, and self.* The demand for "self-care" and for others will be resumed in three particularly influential projects in contemporary art and philosophy that aim to transform into art their own body (*body art*), their own life (M. Foucault), their own Self (R. Schusterman).

The history of art captures the transition from the simple pictorial, sculptural, graphic or photographic representation of the body to its transformation into a work of art. An entire critical and illustrative literature describes the stages of this mutation; only passingly mention the books of some Paul Ardenne (Ardenne 2001), Sally O'Reilly (O'Reilly 2010), Victor

Ieronim Stoichiță (Stoichiță 2020), relevant for the way they capture the new artistic hypostases of the body – painted, tattooed, decorated and/or augmented.

Contemporary *body art* transforms the body into an object of art. The 60's exalts the mutilated, wounded, flogged body, the bleeding flesh, provocatively exposed. It is the revolt of the organic against the "purist" conventions, favorable to appearance and bodily surface. The Frenchwoman Orlan demystifies the idea of artificially augmented female beauty, through painful interventions on her own body, presented as a "work of art." It is not the skin that matters, just what is underneath. Gina Pane resorts to violent gestures on her own body: cuts, stings, rituals meant to suppress mediation: "my body in action is not only in the relationship, but the relationship itself." Experiences such as tattoos, piercings, scarifications (cuts and scarring of the skin) have allowed analogies between body art and primitive art. (Bejan 2012, 54-57).

The idea of a life conceived in the pattern of the "work of art" had been formulated in the 1980s by Michel Foucault, who, in a public conference for American students, denounced the exclusive reporting of artists to external objects, ignoring the most important thing: life itself. Foucault argues in favor of an "aesthetics of existence" characterized by "self-care." Everyone can become a "worker" dedicated entirely to the beauty of their own lives. Thus, a rhetoric of authenticity and return to the Self is activated, subsumed by an ideology of personal fulfillment and emancipation – obviously dominant at the beginning of the last century, but with a somewhat more distant antecedent.

The dandyism of the 19th century, for example, sought to "everydayz" the experience of art, translating it in terms of style. What is a *dandy*? English invention of the end of the 18th century, then borrowed by the French and transformed into a style or "way of life," practiced even today. Dandy is the character who makes it possible "to cultivate the idea of beauty in their persons" (Baudelaire). An aristocracy of bold and ostentatious style takes shape. Dandyism imposes itself as a "doctrine of difference and appearance." Its hidden purpose? "The dandy must aspire to be constantly sublime: he must live and sleep in front of a mirror," to remain trapped – seductive and destructive –. The ethics of these people is clearly narcissistic, of excessive singularity and negativity, consumed – sadly or tragically – in revolt, opposition, and loneliness. Dandy, the guy, has crises and identity disorders: he is usually the visibly effeminate, egotistical, misogynistic, unmarried, homosexual, self-concerned, "manly," and artificial. The real dandy "aestheticizes" his gestures in the smallest details; for him, "to appear means to be" (Barbey d'Aureville), consecrating the final triumph of masks and surfaces. For him, emancipation means both access

to culture, to beauty, to art, in order to raise to maximum level the quality of life, to make it sublime. *Vivere artisticamente* is both an ideal and accessible fact – at least in an assumption free of prejudices (Bejan 2014, 215-217; 220-221).

The idea of making changing the Self into an "work of art" is encountered in the writings of Richard Schusterman (Schusterman 2007). The somatic aesthetics proposed by him has as object the body, as it is perceived by everyone, to offer pleasant sensations or beautiful representations. The body is a place of sensory aesthetic appreciation and creative self-modeling. By recognizing the aesthetic function of the body, we can better capitalize on its potential.

Pragmatist somatic aesthetics has a prescriptive character, proposing models to follow and methods to improve the body "shape," simultaneously with mind education exercises. Some ("representational") methodologies focus exclusively on the external shape of the body, on its surface aestheticization. This includes sophisticated make-up and maintenance practices, plastic surgery, *body-building* techniques. On the other hand, "experiential" methodologies focus primarily on the aesthetic quality of the internal experience, encouraging oriental meditative practices (yoga, for example). A third possibility is offered by *performative* aesthetics (practice); it implies disciplines specifically dedicated to strength (force) and body health (martial arts, athletics, gymnastics, weightlifting). The stake of these approaches would be the experience of someone's own body, perceived from within, in terms of satisfaction and beauty (Bejan 2014, 222-225).

In *Body Consciousness* (Schusterman 2007), the American philosopher shows that somatic aesthetics is not intended exclusively for private space. Widely accepted, somatic practices produce political effects in the immediate reality. Somatic aesthetics broadens the consciousness and reflective part of our behavior, in order to be able to improve our own perceptions and actions. Explicit awareness of spontaneous habits is useful to stimulate new thinking, to increase flexibility, mobility, and creativity of the spirit. The continuous "stylization" of the Self through body modeling, even if it discharges a utopian scent, is an upheld idea. And maybe to be applied.

11. *Body as a gift*. Although a venerable tradition presents the body as a "puppet" of consciousness, the idea that, in fact, the body also influences or determines the contents of consciousness is becoming more and more pronounced. Gender, anatomical parameters of the body, age, health are necessarily outlined and cannot be changed by simple interventions at the level of consciousness. Moreover, this is not a vigilant and efficient guard all the time. It is no less true that by premeditatedly acting on ourselves, we can

shape or "stylize" in a convenient way our body, our consciousness, our Self, our life.

Personal narcissism, the pleasure of contemplating in the mirror, although natural, should not, I think, be exaggerated; also, no excessive reference to himself. For man, the body is a given or a *gift*, of nature, of love or of God, and must be taken as such, without making it the field of all possible experiments. Even if everyone seeks to feel good "in his own skin," it would not be bad to try sometimes to put ourselves, discreetly and comprehensively, "in the skin of others." Maybe in this way we will dissipate less in the "aestheticization" of appearances, nor will we long with so much zeal for what we cannot have anyway – eternal flawless health, beauty, happiness.

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Emanuel COPILAS^{*}

Weber and Hegel on authority, bureaucracy, and capitalism. The missing normative link

Abstract: Detailed comparisons between Weber and Hegel's political and social thought are rare and are usually written by sociologists and legal theorists. Also, not infrequently, they tend to generate more problems than they solve. This contribution aims to compare Weber's and Hegel's views on authority, bureaucracy and capitalism from a broader political-theoretical perspective, taking into account especially such issues like normativity, freedom, political economy and religion. The overall aim of this article is to argue that Weber and Hegel have both less and more in common than is usually thought. In particular, my purpose is to argue in favour of a claim that normativity, understood here in a prescriptive, i.e. ethical, and not the juridical sense, should be read as a key element in understanding the differences between the two thinkers in the areas of political theory and political philosophy.

Keywords: freedom, reason, ideology, political economy, religion.

Introduction

The intellectual and scientific endeavors that strive to analyze different aspects of Max Weber and G.W.F. Hegel's political and social thought are rather scarce. The majority of existing comparisons of Weber's and Hegel's political and social thought are written by sociologists, and usually are quite profound and relevant. There are positions that stress the important social and political continuities between Weber and Hegel (Just 2017; Spicer 2009; Oittinen 2014; Sager, Rosser 2009; Gale, Hummel 2003; Knapp 1986; Parsons 1966; Avineri 1994, 160). There are also analyses of the powerful and often neglected differences that set apart Weber's social thought from that of Hegel (Tijsterman, Overeem 2008; Welty 1976; Jackson 1986; Shaw 1992).

Still, as I will try to point out in this article, many issues are left so far unanswered. Take, for instance, the question of normativity (which is understood in this paper in ethical, speculative Hegelian terms, as the distance between effectivity and the Idea): Shaw approaches it when he writes about Aristotle's distinction between technical and practical rationality and how Weber embraced the first while Hegel embraced the

^{*} Lecturer, PhD, Political Science Department, West University of Timisoara, Romania;
email: copilasemanuel@yahoo.com

latter (1992). However, the problem is not dealt with to its last consequences. In order to do so, one must advance on the realm of the philosophy of science. Here, Weber's positivism becomes very clear, although it seems to be tempered, on the whole, by some (ambiguous) preferences for Nietzscheanism – while Hegel's philosophy of science is specifically critical towards positivism. But normativity is at the core of what separates Weber from Hegel. It also explains why the writings of the first never toyed with ontological matters, even if Weber himself did not pursue this specific goal, but Hegel's philosophy most certainly did. Beside these aspects, Shaw's argument is deeply flawed, as I will argue below, from an ideological point of view, this being in direct continuity with our normative argumentation. This shortcoming reverberates upon his entire theoretical construction and, ultimately, does not make Hegel and Hegelian studies a favor, but on the contrary, it disadvantages them.

Next, authority, bureaucracy and freedom are brought into discussion. Weber's traditional, legal (rational) and charismatic ideal types of legitimacy, along with his ethics of moral conviction, respectively his ethics of responsibility, are confronted with Hegel's political philosophy. It turns out that the two are compatible to a certain point, although Weber's preference for modern democracy and universal suffrage goes beyond, from a strictly procedural point of view, to that of Hegel. Their approaches of bureaucracy, law and nationalism are also taken into account, thus bringing forward new similarities, and, nevertheless, new disagreements. This section ends with a debate on topics best described as belonging to political economy, a highly important field of knowledge neglected by the above-mentioned authors in their comparisons between Weber and Hegel. In this particular aspect, the differences separating these two highly seminal German thinkers outweigh from afar the points of convergence.

Capitalist political economy is ascribed such an important role in the argumentative economy of this paper that the following section is dedicated entirely to it. Adam Smith's concept of the 'invisible hand' appears to be, in economy, identical to Hegel's concept of the 'cunning of history', at a larger ontological scale. As a liberal, although a pretty peculiar one, Weber is fond of Smith's invisible hand and its capacity to generate social order in the absence of a predeterminate purpose in this regard. Nevertheless, Weber accurately acknowledges the limits of the market and the easiness with which it can transform itself into a suppressor, from a presumable guarantee of freedom. Hegel, on the other hand, although he mentions favorably Smith's invisible hand in one of his early works (Hegel 1979, 172-173), his cunning of history is far more complex and dialectical than the invisible hand. Moreover, Hegel was a critic of capitalism, in his own, speculative way, but, overall, explicitly, while Weber accepted managerialism, even if

reluctantly, as the guiding modern principle of both economy (market) and politics (bureaucracy).

Finally, the topic of religion, which substantially preoccupied both thinkers and must be taken into account in order to shed new light on their visions upon capitalism - is discussed in the last section of the paper. Even if Weber and Hegel insist that religion, especially Christianity, is inextricably linked to reason and thus induces secularizing effects, there is an enormous difference between Weber's account of religion, which leads to capitalism, and Hegel's historical and philosophical theology, which induces emancipation, progress, and ultimately the self-creation of spirit from its yet not superseded fallacious exteriority.

Every section of the paper makes use of the different semantics of rationality in the case of each thinker, a fact that explains their divergent positions on core issues, respectively their formal and partial agreements on other issues, extremely important as well; hence the title of the article: the missing normative link. Yes, the missing normative link, because the normative position assumed (Hegel) or rejected (Weber) by the two intellectual protagonists of this essay represents the basic premise of a successful comparative analysis of their concepts of authority, bureaucracy, and capitalism. After decades of approaching the issue almost exclusively from sociological positions, the Weber-Hegel intellectual relation needs more than ever to be consolidated from the side of philosophy and political science.

Methodology

As Peter Knapp pointed out more than three decades ago, Hegel's influence upon social sciences is huge; however, 'Hegel's influence operates prior to the differentiation of the social science disciplines and is often diffuse, indirect and disguised' (Knapp 1986, 606). This is obviously puzzling, since the numerous convergences that appear between the positions of these two intellectual giants are not supported by an epistemological common ground. Consequently, what sets them apart prevails in comparison to what makes them compatible, at least in certain respects. Yet, as the conclusion section stresses, they are both authentically, in their own ways, committed to scientific, politic and economic modernity.

The main research questions of this scientific endeavor are the following: why do Hegel and Weber seem to belong together with reference to issues like authority, bureaucracy and capitalism, only to discover immediately after that they are two entirely different continents? How, through what means can we obtain a grasp of these similarities/differences? Do Weber and Hegel share the same general ideological position? Last, but not least, how can one make sense of their engagement with modernity,

since they are epistemologically incompatible, politically contradictory and socially contiguous?

As announced in the introduction, the main hypothesis of my paper is that, in order to properly distinguish the social and political assumptions of both authors, and especially those referring to authority, bureaucracy and capitalism, it is best to start with a normative investigation. This leads – the secondary hypothesis, to the types of rationalities assumed by Weber and also by Hegel, rationalities that are understood as normativity expanded by means of political theory and political philosophy and which may seem continuous but, after a certain point of no return, they become utterly incompatible. Hence the substantial distances and also the occasional proximities between their tackling of authority, bureaucracy and capitalism. Furthermore, and this anticipates the paragraph where the methodology is going to be outlined, another important premise, that basically wraps up the entire stake of the paper is that the Weber-Hegel connection, if there is one after all, must be approached also from a philosophical and political science angle, and not left entirely to the sociological ‘camp’.

With the risk of becoming redundant, the research steps are as follows: first, I introduce the normative dimension that is at stake in the present discussion. Second, the political views of both thinkers are compared and placed into perspective. Third, I will insist upon issues pertaining to political economy that were largely neglected until now when it came to the comparison of certain political and social aspects existent in the work of both thinkers – to show how the normative aspect can shed a new light upon this dimension of our discussion. Forth, the rationalities that both Weber and Hegel claimed to have identified within religion are brought into question, along with the significant contrast that lies between them, in order to offer more weight to their stances on capitalism. Finally, the two types of commitment to modernity that both Weber and Hegel unquestionably share are stated. The methodology I make use of to highlight these steps is mainly anchored in political philosophy, political theory, and comparative politics.

The main results this paper delivers were already mentioned in the above introductory remarks. Weber and Hegel do not share the same epistemological ground, hence the substantial differences between their political and social views. However, as deeply modern thinkers, they tried to offer solutions that met and even went beyond the challenges posed by the huge transformations brought by modernity. Consequently, by taking this into account, one can understand and circumscribe better their similitudes when it came to political and social matters, particularly to authority, bureaucracy and capitalism.

Literature review

The literature partially pertaining to the topic analyzed here is thoroughly discussed within the next sections of the paper. I will single out the contributions that I consider to be the most relevant: Carl Shaw's article, 'Hegel's Theory of Modern Bureaucracy', Sebastiaan Tijsterman and Patrick Overeem's article 'Escaping the Iron Cage: Weber and Hegel on Bureaucracy and Freedom', and Gordon Welty's conference 'Hegel and Weber: From Transcendence to Rationalization'. Since these contributions, along with many others, are tackled in length as the argumentative economy of the present paper unfolds, and given also the question of redundancy, combined with the already appreciable dimensions of my article, I think it is best to cut short this already lapidary literature review here.

Normativity: Hegel's speculative logic and Weber's positivism

Although Shaw (1992) openly acknowledges the normative dimension that separates Weber and Hegel, he does so in an incomplete way, because he does not take this argument further, placing it where it belongs, into the field of philosophy of science. It follows that Shaw did not fathom this train of thought enough to call Weber a positivist, even if a *sui-generis* one (Shaw 1992, 381).

As mentioned in the introductory section, this practical approach of normativity (not only) in the case of bureaucracy differentiates Hegel from Weber, which favors a purely technical, instrumental one, but also points out, although indirectly, Shaw not being aware of this – to the conclusion that Hegel would have somehow embraced conservatism. Why? Because this Aristotelian distinction between practical and technical rationality is internalized by Shaw from the works of the prominent conservative philosopher Michael Oakeshott, who already offered his own normative-ideological flavor to the Aristotelian distinction when he analyzed what he called rationalism in politics, advancing the conclusion that modern political knowledge on the whole is technical, lacking empathy and the capacity to take into account different historical and cultural contexts, while conservative political knowledge, found in ancient and medieval times and, to a worrisome less degree in modern times, is a practical one, purged of idealism and of the homogenizing calculability that supposedly pervades all modern political projects (Oakeshott 2010). However, as I will argue in detail in the next section, Hegel was not ideologically indebted to conservatism, which he openly criticized, although some of his political stances may resemble from afar conservative aspirations.

However, Hegel was not a positivist either, and this conclusion is not fully endorsed by Shaw, even if it is directly anticipated, unlike the

ideological conclusion mentioned above. Positivism's main tenets are that it distinguishes between facts and values, on one hand, and that the researcher not only can, but he must also detach itself from the object of his research. This being said, experience and what it teaches us, experience devoid of ideology and of what Weber calls 'value-judgements' (Weber 1949) is the central assumption of modern positivism, positivism that has infused greatly the sociological thought in the making of the 19th century and, although to a lesser extent, continues to do so today.

Hegel is far from the methodological ambitions of positivism. Writing, as Knapp observed (Knapp 1986), before the modern differentiation of social sciences, he somehow anticipated their tendency towards fragmentation and their preference for calculability and mechanization; this evolution worried him, and he criticized it especially in his philosophy of mathematics, physics and nature. But this critique was not confined to scientific purposes alone: it entailed, as it will be argued below, consistent normative, ideological and ultimately political assumptions (Copilaş 2017). For him, experience can never prove anything in itself (Hegel 1984, 138). This is because experience is always inherent to a certain philosophical, a certain normative vision of the world; in itself, in the absence of a value-oriented teleological purpose, experience is not possible. Furthermore, modern sciences and their ambitions to isolate themselves from one another, each considering it is solely in possession of some kind of 'truth' are utterly mistaking: as Hegel wrote in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the truth is always the whole (Hegel 1977a). This amounts to recognizing the fact that modern sciences are not separated, and they are produced by a unitary modern vision of the world, a vision weakened and simultaneously propelled by its specific contradictions (Hegel 2004, 103).

Mediation is a key term in Hegel's philosophy. In order to think in a concrete way, one must take into account the many facets of a certain problem, event, conflict and so on; in the common understanding, the concrete, practical approach of facts is referred to exactly in the opposite, unilateral way. However, 'facts' cannot be isolated from the webs of mediations that made them possible in the first place, anticipated them and sublated them as well in new dialectical unfoldings. By proceeding so and isolating facts from the environments that caused them in the first place, and caused them like accidents, because things could have turned out in many other ways, one misses in fact the encounter with the issue at stake, because that issue, approached isolatedly, no matter how detailed, vivid and pertinent that approach is, is bound, sooner or later, to err. Separated from the ultimate truth, the whole, this will certainly be the case at some point (see Harris 1979, 3-96 in Hegel 1979).

As far as Weber is concerned, this kind of argumentation is utterly disposable, obscure philosophical nonsense that definitely impedes the possibilities of a proper social science to develop. While he concedes Hegel that every social phenomenon must be analyzed from as many angles as possible in order to be accurate and that passion is a necessary ingredient in teaching (Weber 1949, 2, 68-71), although Hegel offers passion a central place in history and far beyond history (Hegel 2011), Weber dismisses value-judgements as setbacks in the process of developing a true, empirical science, and he also fears that teachers who spice up their 'lectures stimulating by the insertion of personal evaluations will, in the long run, weaken the students taste for sober empirical analysis' (Weber 1949, 9). Furthermore, 'in the cultural sciences, the knowledge of the universal or the general is never valuable in itself'; this 'Hegelian panlogism' (Weber 1949, 80, 86) which inspired the Marxism that Weber never missed an opportunity to criticize – rests rather on faith than on accurate scientific premises (Weber 1949, 54-55).

Next, a real scientist, a sociologist, to follow Weber's train of argumentation, advances his hypotheses by identifying empirical patterns within the social field and confronting them to already construed 'ideal-types'. This method allows him to pursue various 'deviations' from the ideal type chosen in a certain analysis and to counterfactually pronounce himself regarding what the rational course of action might have been (Weber 1978, 6). As I will detail further, Hegel would definitely not agree with this approach. It must not go unnoticed, however, that Weber borrowed the 'ideal-type' concept from Georg Jelinek, a legal theorist that used it in a more normative and far-reaching way, applying it to both social and natural sciences (Machlup 1978, 236-239).

Weber insists in his magnificent and central work, *Economy and Society*, that sociology must take every measure possible in order to differentiate itself from history, which is a narrative science, based on causal relations, evenimental analyses and on amplifying the role of political and military personalities within different courses of action. Sociology, on the other hand, is preoccupied mostly with highlighting social structures and processes and how their interaction gives way to diverse outcomes, outcomes in which politics and military affairs play an important, but not necessarily decisive part. Those structures and processes are filtered from the beginning through the lens of a certain 'ideal-type' (Weber 1978, 19-21, 29). While the shortages of the 19th century type of positivist history are a thing of the past, even if Weber was probably not aware that his sociology shared with this methodological branch of history basically the same normative and epistemological assumptions – had he researched the philosophy of history thoroughly, like Hegel did – not necessarily history as processes and events of the past, an area in which Weber no doubt excelled

– he would arrived sooner or later to the conclusion that counter-factualism is rather an obstacle in the research of history than a successful method of analyzing it. It almost goes without saying that Hegel was deeply aware of that.

Furthermore, in order to simplify his sociological method, Weber considers that states, corporations, associations, unions and different organizations should be treated as individuals in the course of social action because they possess agency, which is not to be treated subjectively, as an end in itself, but only as a means of further deciphering social action, how it relates, in other words, to the surrounding social structures and processes (Weber 1978, 13, 22). As I will argue below, Hegel deeply disagrees with the former and agrees with the latter. Also it is worth noticing that, in this respect, Weber anticipates the highly influential sociological theory of agency, later developed by sociologists like John Langshaw Austin, Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann, Anthony Giddens, and also by philosophers like Jürgen Habermas or political theorists such as Nicholas Onuf.

But maybe most important methodological and also normative contribution of Weber lies in the distinction he makes between formal and substantive rationality. The first one is technical, based on quantifiable premises and outcomes, and is exemplified by the managerial approach that has pervaded social sciences, especially economics, and also politics. In reverse, substantive reason amounts to what Hegel called truth as the whole: a plenary reason that aims to reconcile, never completely, however, all social classes, and all conflicting interests existent in society. While this is for Weber a utopian ideal – ‘As far as the dream of peace and human happiness is concerned, the words written over the portal into the unknown future of human history are: *‘lasciate ogni speranza’* (Weber 1994, 13-14) – he nevertheless accepts it, at least in the form of a metaphysical, divinely inspired need for justice impossible to put in practice in a world where conflict and what Kant called heteronomy represents the norm (Weber 1978, 110-111, 138, 140, 183-184).

So, counterfactually speaking – with all the vested risks associated to counter-factualism, which I fully assume, in order to be able to unfold the argumentation contained in this paper - how would Hegel relate to Weber’s normative and epistemological assumptions? First, while he would not deny at all the need for objective methodological criteria in modern sciences, he probably would, in a phenomenological manner anticipating to a surprising extent that of Husserl (Kojève 1969; Bondor 2013, 137-158) – conclude that every scientific and methodological endeavor is conditioned and predestined almost entirely by the type of consciousness and thus philosophical awareness belonging to that particular author. Acknowledging this does not necessarily equate with a matter of faith, only with the impossibility of integrally separating faith from science, a fact which,

according to Hegel's speculative totality, enriches them both and simultaneously places them in new perspectives.

Next, Hegel would certainly defend the personal evaluations of teachers of the pedagogical material as a means of actualizing and thus facilitating the understanding of the audience, even if this latter goal was not the core of his pedagogy, Hegel being a very exigent but also sympathetic teacher (Pinkard 2000). Regarding the universal, which for Weber must not be the goal of an empirical science, and of any science, to be precise, Hegel would also agree, arguing that universal is construed also against the voluntary scopes of those sciences, just like history uses the passions and the narrow personal interests of individuals as dialectical fuel for greater emancipatory purposes. However, following their specific methodological paths, all sciences should at least allow a glimpse of the universal to make them aware of the fact that their philosophical scaffolding is, on the long run, general human progress and emancipation.

Referring to the ideal-types that Weber valued so much, we must take into account the possibility that Hegel would consider them isolated mental abstractions produced by a far reaching but also surprisingly obtuse intellect. Nothing solid can proceed from the pen of an author, no matter how important; it has to be forged in the arena of social conflict. This is why, as a parallel, Hegel rejected the concept of the 'state of nature' that other hugely influential philosophers like Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Kant enthusiastically endorsed. Because it places theory before practice: those authors were already the products of specific social and cultural environments, and their understanding of politics was deeply tributary to those contexts. How could they pretend, in these circumstances, to imagine and describe a supposedly pre-political reality that they could only think of with the modern ideas that shaped their argumentation? If we appeal to Hegel's logic, this theory coming before practice amounts to quantity coming before quality, necessity before liberty, intellect before concept and nature before reason. But quality is first because it arises as differentiation within quantity, as limit, consciousness, as need to overcome it into something new, something which is not outside quantity in itself, but something that fathoms the differences within quantity under the form of concept and thus propels quantity to go beyond its initial, static condition, to sublimate itself into something more dynamic, more rewarding. Quality is therefore quantity approached in a different way, and not metaphysics, not the beyond of quantity (Hegel 2010; Hegel 1986; Hegel 1984, 492-493).

Even if Weber clearly stated otherwise (Weber 1949), I incline to think that for Hegel Weber's ideal type would pretty much precede real, empirical knowledge and it would thus be nothing more than a mere intellectual abstraction, just like the state of nature. I am not arguing that Hegel rejected any kind of typology; on the contrary, he acknowledged the utmost

importance of classifications and hierarchies of all sorts, but these classifications must result from facts, even if those facts are unavoidable normatively inscribed, not pose facts as their result. Typology is a consequence of effectiveness, not its cause. This supposed approach of Weber's ideal type by the Hegelian logic has much to do, as I will argue later, with Hegel's interpretation of Kantian political philosophy.

Weber's historical sociology would surely be appreciated by Hegel, who on his turn insisted that history is much more than events and personalities; to the extent the latter exist, they are the embodiment of a historical stage of spirit, not isolated monads thinking and acting for themselves, even if they perceive themselves in this way (Hegel 2011). There is, however, one problem: the already mentioned counter-factualism. Hegelian dialectical rationality lies in things, not outside them: pure thinking is only and abstraction. It follows that dialectic is a philosophical method that proves its validity only retrospectively, not prospectively. To think how things could have unfolded in a more rational way than they did, this is for Hegel and incommensurable enormity: as we recall from the preface of the *Philosophy of right*, the Owl of Minerva spreads its wings only in the evening, after the trepidation of the day has passed (Hegel 2003).

Hegel would probably also disagree with the Weberian methodological simplification that would allow sociologists to treat states and collectivities like individuals in vice-versa. The individual, the isolated intellect, can never be, by himself, a substitute for the universal, politically incarnated by the state. Yes, the individual is the phenomenological vehicle of reason, but that reason is superior to him, even if it is dependent on him; political reason compels citizens to understand themselves as parts of complex and ever-changing webs of mediations, not as selfish intellects that pursue exclusively their own interests and believe they have no duty whatsoever towards the community. However, this is not to say that Hegel endorsed arbitrary state behavior towards its citizens; far from neglecting what liberals call negative liberty, he clearly stated in his philosophy of right that subjectivity is the basic tenet of modernity, but that subjectivity never reaches its full potential outside the community, but only as a part of community, as a part of the state, which for Hegel ultimately has a theological nature (Hegel 2003). I will return to this aspect later.

As for substantive and formal reason, Hegel is definitely a partisan of the first, considering the latter to be only procedural reason, extremely important but perpetually haunted by the danger of becoming self-sufficient, isolated and considering itself to be above the society which produced it in the first place. But for Weber, as we have seen, precisely the opposite is the case, substantive reason being especially a utopian ideal (even if, however, relative to non-European religions, Weber shows how substantive reason actually works by shaping the behavior of individuals and

groups and thus molding societies ‘imaginaries’ and political institutions – Weber 1978). I am not arguing that Weber exalted formal, bureaucratic-managerial reason: he reconciled with it in a rather existential, deferent and defensive way, but he never rejected it to the extent as Tijsterman and Overeem consider (Tijsterman, Overeem 2008, 80-83). And yes, for Weber ‘formal rationality is occupied with the problem *how* to obtain certain goals, while material (substantive, m.n.) rationality defines *what* these goals are’ (Oitinnen 2014, 45-46; emphasis in original), but this does not mean at all that for Hegel, formal rationality ‘is the idea of subjectivity as the main principle of modern life forms and especially philosophy’ (Oitinnen 2014, 48). Even the syntagma ‘subjective rationality’ is deeply problematic for Hegel, and it is not to be confounded what he calls ‘subjective spirit’, which is to be understood more as concept than as reason (Hegel 2015). Formal rationality, managerial rationality is for Hegel a form of rationality nevertheless, of collective thinking and action, but it has technocratic, undemocratic and regressive, quantitative implications that may endanger the progress of spirit on the whole.

To sum up, this different perspective on normativity that infuses both Weber’s sociology (formal rationality) as well as Hegel’s speculative logic – the Idea that gives birth to nature out of itself and then dialectically supersedes it as itself other – (substantive rationality), lies on the basis of their divergent, albeit contiguous, to some point – epistemological and ontological grounds. As we are about to see in the next sections, this normative difference, which is ultimately a difference of rationality and, in political terms, of ideology, infuses to a great extent what both authors have to say on authority, bureaucracy, and capitalism.

Authority, bureaucracy, freedom

Weber’s notorious typology of political authority – traditional, rational (legal), and charismatic (Weber 1978, 36-38, 142, 215, 219, 244-245; Weber 1994, 311-312), on which Hegel might have expressed doubts, due to the fact that is a particularization of the ideal-type method discussed above – advanced the idea that, in the modern world, rational authority prevails, traditional authority is on withdrawal, and charismatic authority is a hybrid, synthetic type of authority that will incline, after a certain point, either towards traditionalism, or towards legalism.

Forged along the rise of the industrial revolution and capitalism, the rational authority that gave birth to ‘mass democracy’ functions on bureaucratic principles. This is what Weber calls a calculable type of authority, one that also is in close connection to capitalism, with the need of the market to convey qualities into quantities in order to function according to its internal, standardized logic. Simply put, modern democracy and

capitalism share the same working principles of formal rationality: 'capitalism is the most rational economic basis for bureaucratic administration and enables it to develop in the most rational form, especially because, from a fiscal point of view, it supplies the necessary money resources' (Weber 1978, 224); 'Looked at from a social-scientific point of view, the modern state is an 'organization' (...) in exactly the same way as a factory; indeed, this is its specific historical characteristic' (Weber 1994, 146, see also 147-148). I will return to this argument in detail below.

Being a (dialectical) critic of capitalism (Hegel 2003; Hegel 1983, 139-145), Hegel cannot agree with substituting capitalist principles for democracy. This actually weakens democracy and, reifying it as technocracy, can easily turn it into an authoritarian regime. While Weber acknowledges on his own part the authoritarian tendencies of the market and the treat it poses to our democratic freedom (Weber 1978, 731), he nevertheless insists that interests, not ideas, rule the world (Weber 1978, 183-184). But for Hegel, this is an incomplete, non-dialectical conclusion: interests are not something alien to ideas, but ideas void of their concepts, ideas that perceive phenomenological scissions as permanent, when they are merely transitory. This type of ideas is specific to the intellect that did not yet reach, and may never reach, speculative intelligence (Hegel 1977b). Be that as it may, reason advances in history most of the times against individuals, without needing their cooperation. A very practical example Hegel offers us in this regard is the construction of a house: the elements used for construing it pull down, due to gravity, yet they are used to erect something against their natural condition; fire can burn the house down, but it also helps the building process by melting metal for nails, among other things; wind, which fuels fire and thus contribute to the house being done, is latter prevented from blowing freely by the walls of the house, and so on (Hegel 2011).

Hegel is keenly aware of the unstoppable fragmentation political modernity brings about, and he tries to overcome it by appealing to constitutional monarchy. In incipient forms, all Weberian types of authority are present in Hegel's political philosophy, especially the traditional and the rational one. In general, charisma is reserved to military and political heroes which Hegel perceives as the embodiment of spirit in different historical stages; consequently, they are used by reason for its universal purpose, even if they are aware of it or not, and thus act especially as concepts, not as isolated and obtuse intellects (Hegel 1988a). In the modern age, charisma almost disappears in the face of the relentless drive towards formal rationality, both in politics and in economics. But because nothing great in history cannot be achieved in the absence of passion, of charisma, and the impersonal, procedural charm of bureaucracy, the instrumental scaffolding of both modern democracies and capitalism, cannot give birth to a proper

charisma – Hegel argues that constitutional monarchies are the solution to this problem. They preserve both the institutional advantages of democracy and the charisma embedded in the person of the monarch. In this way, progress is not hindered: the people can maintain personal fidelity towards the king/queen and the royal family, something which is harder to do in the case of abstract institutions and processes, while the political repressiveness and arbitrariness of old, divine-right monarchies is replaced by democratic elections (Hegel 2003).

But Hegel is also circumspect in matters like universal suffrage, for example, not to mention women's vote, and this approach renders him more like a thinker with demo-protective rather than democratic propensities. He stresses the fact that the modern electoral process induces apathy and disinterest within the electorate, an aspect which deeply compromises the quality of democracy. Not only that: left to the arbitrary of intellects, citizens that are improperly educated (most of them) in political matters and tend to pursue only their personal interests, the universal institutionally embodied by the state is once again endangered (Hegel 2004, Hegel 2009).

On his turn, Weber acknowledges both the shortcomings and the benefits of the universal suffrage. The relentless bureaucratic homogenization driven by capitalist interests that occurs in modern democracies can be viewed by citizens as a threat, and they may vote in favor of stronger political regulations of the market. But this is just a social-democratic trap: parliaments are not able to maintain capitalism in leash no matter what they do. The danger of resorting to the state for this outcome resides in the fact that capitalism will pervade state institutions and will impose its priorities to a greater extent than in the case it would remain in the sphere of the market and be challenged by the state in various other ways (Weber 1994, 105). In the same time, universal suffrage allows citizens to exercise some kind of influence upon the bureaucratic machinery that imposes on them all sorts of regulations and may even send them to die, in case of war (Weber 1994, 105-106).

Weber and Hegel's notion of modern democracy bear striking resemblances. Hegel would almost surely approve of Weber when the latter writes that politics is essentially a struggle between classes and individuals and that democracy and demagoguery are inseparable (Weber 1994, 219-220). Acknowledging that democracy may mean 'an infinite variety of things', Weber defines it as the juridical situation in which 'no formal inequality of political rights exists between the individual classes of the population' (Weber 1994, 275). Like Hegel, he too is worried by the tendency of democracy to sabotage itself and calls for a political aristocracy to prevent it from happening. The aristocrat prevents the intrusion of emotions into public life, something the democratic 'masses' are by definition unable to

do; he is also more malleable and more accessible than the monarch, he possesses the political education needed in order to make things work and, most importantly, he possesses the means to live satisfactorily in the absence of a salary. He is not as corruptible as a bureaucrat is. ‘The most elementary, precondition of all is that an aristocrat should be able to live *for* the state and should not have to live from it’ (Weber 1994, 109-110; emphasis in original; see also 26).

However, despite these elitist corrections of democracy, neither Hegel nor Weber can be considered conservative thinkers. This is especially visible in the case of Weber, and much less so in the case of Hegel. With all his critiques towards modern democracy, Weber remained a firm liberal, although a rather melancholic, existentialist one. His (tempered) preference for Nietzsche may explain his favorable stances towards aristocracy (Weber 1978, 494, 934-935, 1134; Weber 1994, 122). Hegel, although considered by authors like Karl Popper or Bertrand Russell a fierce conservative, an enemy of democracy and even a fascist (Popper 2013, 242-290; Russell 1972, 730-746), he was none of that, despite the fact that, unlike Weber, he was not a liberal either. Even if his discontents with democracy breed more conservatism than those of Weber do, and also even if he favored more strong states that Weber did, who warned explicitly against the glorification of the state (Weber 1949, 46-47), Hegel was an adept of progress more than Weber was, who considered progress an impossibility (Weber 1949, 35). Last but not least, would a conservative criticize aristocracy with such conviction as Hegel did in the following passage?

‘Old right’ and ‘old constitution’ are such grand and beautiful words that it sounds like a sacrilege to rob a people of its rights. However, whether that which goes by the name of the old right and constitution is right or wrong cannot depend on its age. The abolition of human sacrifice, of slavery, of feudal despotism and of countless infamies was also always a cancelling of something which was an old right (Hegel 2009, 65).

Furthermore, would a conservative praise the French Revolution to the extent that Hegel did? ‘The beginning of the French Revolution must be considered as the struggle of the rational right of the state against the mass of positive rights and privileges which had oppressed it’ (Hegel 2009, 65).

Taking all these into account, we can move on to how both thinkers related to bureaucracy and to why Shaw’s remark that Hegel’s bureaucracy adopts normative stances while Weber’s bureaucracy does not, adopting a formal rationality and only implementing political decisions that are exterior to it – is, as announced in the introduction, incomplete and ideologically flawed (Shaw 1992). The Aristotelian distinction between practical and

technical rationality that Shaw extracted from Oakeshott's work on rationalism in politics is not an abstract, ahistorical one; on the contrary, it comes imbued of Oakeshott's conservatism. While Shaw acknowledged correctly that Hegel's bureaucracy is more than a managerial elite that follows the orders of politicians without ever thinking of contesting them, like Weber's bureaucracy is, he misses the ideological implications of the issue: after reading his article, one is left with the impression that Hegel is a conservative who challenges Weber the liberal and teaches him how politics should work. This is deeply untrue, since Hegel was not a conservative, Weber was not the serene liberal portrayed here, and many nuances of the relation between the two are overlooked.

Moreover, if we accept Shaw's indirect premise that Hegel was a conservative, this has normative implications that may make his departure from Weber clearer, but it does so on false grounds. In this case, to use Weber's terminology, Hegel may appear as a defender of traditional authority and Weber as a reluctant supporter of rational authority. Hegel is different from Weber on both normative and epistemological grounds; if we extrapolate this issue on ideological coordinates, the distance between them remains, but is placed in a new perspective: Weber's half-hearted liberalism comes face to face with Hegel's patriarchal pre-social-democracy infused, but never engulfed by liberalism.

As both Spicer and Welty observe, Weber and Hegel were greatly influenced by Prussian bureaucracy and by the strong, impersonal state Frederick the Great had built in the 18th century (Spicer 2004, 99-101; Welty 1976). This is yet another argument that favors the hypothesis that Hegel had conservative sympathies. Moreover, Hegel accepted a highly influential bureaucratic position in 1818, when he became rector of the Berlin university. What both Spicer and Welty fail to mention is that Hegel occupied this top position within the Prussian bureaucracy after a new rulership of Prussia, inspired by Napoleon's administrative reforms and the ideas of the French Revolution, proposed him to take this office (Hegel 1984, 377). Not out of opportunism, so to speak. His letters reveal that, from this posture, he was a very normative bureaucrat, not one that uncritically complied with all the political interests the Berlin university and Prussia itself were, up to that point, part of. Years earlier, he even entered a conflict regarding the (partial) censorship of the press requested by the French administration, a censorship affecting one of the papers he was working with. True to his maxim the philosophy is impossible in the absence of political (and mediatic) freedom, Hegel thus stood against his political hero, Napoleon, which, therefore, he did not admire uncritically, but only to the extent he acted in favor, not against freedom (Hegel 1984, 173, 587).

Continuing on the topic of bureaucracy, Sager and Rosser observe that Weber and Hegel share important common features when it comes to it: hierarchy, meritocracy, impersonality (Sager, Rosser 2009, 1142). Bureaucracy represented a new social class, one that was in the service of the universal and also stood above petty personal interests (Tijsterman, Overeem 2008, 74). Drawing from Shaw's account of Hegel's normative, moral bureaucracy, Tijsterman and Overeem consider that, in liberal theoretical terms, Hegel's concept of negative, personal freedom is less outlined than Weber's, even if they judiciously stress that is not at all absent, but on the contrary; when it came to positive freedom, however, Hegel was undoubtedly at the forefront and Weber lacked the usual intellectual precision in formulating his concept of positive freedom. This is because Weber did not believe, like Hegel, that objective freedom is possible: for him, there exist only conflicting normative visions upon the world, and none of them is neither imposed democratically, nor freely chosen. The public sphere is for Weber deeply and permanently heteronomous; here, his Kantian moral influence is most evident (Shaw 1992, 384; Jackson 1986, 152-153). According to Tijsterman and Overeem, 'Weber's political writings could be seen as disenchanting the Hegelian state and its pretention to represent objectively the public interest and to bring about human freedom' (Tijsterman, Overeem 2008, 80). Furthermore, 'for Weber, bureaucracy poses a threat to liberty' and, more importantly, there is no free will at all in social structures, because 'Every political structure of society predetermines choice and thus cannot be chosen freely, even if one personally agrees with it and would choose it if there was a choice' (Tijsterman, Overeem 2008, 80-81).

Despite Tijsterman and Overeem's seminal interpretation of the Weber-Hegel connection in terms of freedom and bureaucracy, they address neither Hegel's critique of Kant, which would have been particularly helpful, since Weber was, according to Shaw (1992, 384), a neo-Kantian, nor Hegel's deep awareness of how society predetermines individual choice, which can still remain a free and meaningful choice. Kant is criticized by Hegel both in his logic and also in his philosophy of nature. In the first because his use of reason is reduced to the intellect, and thus the power of reason to know and emancipate is severely damaged, and in the second because Kant reduces also space and time to the intellect as well, to subjective and therefore limited and isolated perception, without taking into account that time and space can only be understood in motion, space being sublated into time as history unfolds itself spiritually (Hegel 2010; Hegel 1970). For Hegel, heteronormativity is an abstract mental device that can only exist from the perspective of the intellect with his undialectical thinking and narrow understanding of the world; from the perspective of reason, heteronormativity is necessity as former, reified liberty and also as future,

prospective and mature freedom, a freedom that can only succeed through necessity, not by going around it.

Regarding how society predetermines individual choice which is, therefore, according to Tijsterman and Overeem's Weber, never free, Hegel would dismiss this argument without hesitation. First of all, because he agrees with it in the sense that the way in which an individual thinks and acts is always historical, always contextual: you cannot think beyond your time any more than a man can crawl outside its skin, Hegel affirms in his history of philosophy (Hegel 1995). To think otherwise, that a metaphysical liberty, separated from the society or societies you were formed in, separated from the cultural and political stakes of your own epoch – is possible, means to create, out of your illusions, a chimera, something seductive, but impossible. However, this is not a fatalist stance stating that authentic liberty cannot exist, because it is always in conflict with the social order in which it occurs; what Hegel is saying is that this particular conflict as well is a product of that order and acts like a function of it.

Moishe Postone's argument regarding how time and teleology, and work as well, are products of capitalism, may be very useful for this discussion (Postone 2003). It follows that liberty is nevertheless possible, both for and against a particular *stan-quo*; but a liberty that goes beyond every social order imaginable is nonsense, for the same reasons the state of nature taken into account above is nonsense: it is a product of a political community, with all its contradictions, merits and discontents. Politics can never be fully separated from freedom, just as history, the politics of the past, cannot; you may wish it, but then again you can also wish to be a millionaire, and think you are not entirely free if you do not become one. The world we seek is one thing, and the world that exists is another; the first can be brought closer to the second only through the second, only through work, the essential human activity that helps us to overcome the alienation that it produces in the first place, just like Hegel's concept of original sin, which came to be through knowledge and can only be historically overcome also through knowledge (Hegel 1988b). While this work always reproduces a certain social order, one cannot affirm, like Just does (Just 2014), that in the modern, rational state, work as man's activity of taming and exploiting nature is, for Hegel, over. While Hegel's understanding of work, is of course, a feature of intellectual modernity, just like his entire philosophical system is, Hegel links work with freedom, property and recognition. The struggle for recognition is permanent and it cuts across classes and epochs, taking various shapes; this struggle for recognition does not come to an end within the modern state; it is just extrapolated within new parameters. The quest for freedom, for property, that links subjective freedom to the rational, objective freedom of the state, is the main driving force of spirit: indeed, history ended in modernity because it just had barely begun, after

centuries and even millennia of metaphysical obstacles. This is why Hegel's notion of work, as historical as it is, also offers us, through recognition, a glimpse outside his era of emergent capitalism, towards a future that can never be anticipated and, most importantly, 'may take forms never contemplated in the system' (Hegel 1984, 53, 99, 337, 540).

From bureaucracy and freedom, we arrive at law, another major component of both Weber and Hegel's political thinking. For Weber, according to Tijsterman and Overeem, 'As part of the process of rationalization, laws themselves become more and more rational, but they do not have moral worth. The laws are contrary to freedom' (Tijsterman, Overeem 2008, 83). Here, as in many other respects, Hegel sharply disagrees: law is the rational, contextual form of political freedom. It is the culmination, rather than end of freedom, and it has ethical, not necessarily moral (individual) value. These being said, Tijsterman and Overeem's Weber is probably too pessimistic and antagonistic when he posits bureaucracy in reverse proportion with freedom. If they would have investigated more the Kantian side of Weber, they would have found out that heteronomy is not incompatible with an existing social order; it just functions as a reminder of the impossibility of that particular order to fully understand and reconcile with itself. Heteronomy is thus for politics what the unconscious is for psychoanalysis: the incapacity of the individual to fully know and assume himself, to deal once and for all with all the traumatic experiences that shape his existence, experiences that he makes sense of using signifying channels that parallel and intersect one another and eventually lead to what Jacques Lacan called 'symbolic overdetermination', which is, in the first place, the main reason for the existence of the unconscious (Lacan 2006, 88). Hegel also recognizes that societies cannot reconcile with themselves integrally in politics, but only in philosophy, religion and art, but he does not consider this a motif for abandoning this quest (Hegel 1983, 176-177; Pinkard 2000, 494, 603-604). Or, like Weber wrote, 'All our experiences teach us that "history" is unremitting in spawning ever new "aristocracies" and "authorities" which anyone can cling to if he feels he (or the "people") needs to do so' (Weber 1994, 69).

This Kantian Weber, one that arrives at terms with modernity when he writes about the 'free market', is definitely not the bitter, existentialist Weber that Tijsterman and Overeem endorse. Weber and Hegel's remarks on capitalism were neglected by the above-mentioned authors who compared their political, social and administrative thinking. Yet this is a crucial aspect, one that makes their normative and epistemological departure so visible, I have decided to treat it in a separate section of the paper.

As a side glance, nationalism is another theme on which both Hegel and Weber pronounced themselves in fruitful manners and, like capitalism, is a topic that remained unexplored in the comparisons made on different political and social themes existing in their works. Both thinkers share a deep distrust towards this modern ideology, even if in Hegel's case this aspect is often neglected, or worse, confounded with his ancient Greek inspired form of patriotism. But if one takes into account Hegel's stinging ironies towards political romanticism, his negative attitude towards nationalism becomes clearer (Moland 2011; Hegel 1988a; Hegel 1984). Weber also acknowledges that fact that nationalism is not to be overlapped with a language, a territory, or an anthropological type, but with memories of a common political past, respectively a common political 'destiny' (Weber 1978, 922-925). However, Hegel and Weber also believed in strong, 'aristocratic' nations which can play leading role on the international stage; Weber even calls them 'nations of masters', but he quickly points out that the only valid criteria to assert that mastery are cultural and democratic (Weber 1994, 269), while Hegel refers rather to civilizations than nations that have, in history, different spiritual missions (Hegel 2003).

Finally, Hegel would probably endorse Weber's distinction between the ethic of intentions and the ethic of responsibility, that suggests that a politician should be judged not by his intentions, but by his concrete results and how they benefit the society that elected him (Weber 1994, 359-360). This shows a more pragmatic, mature side of Weber's liberalism, which is nevertheless liberalism: 'We are "individualists" and partisans of "democratic" institutions 'against the tide' of material constellations' like Marxism or capitalism, for example (Weber 1994, 69) or, more explicitly, 'The present author', after voting for the conservative party at the end of the 19th century, 'now writes for liberal papers' (Weber 1994, 133-134).

Enter capitalism. The invisible hand and the cunning of history: similar but not the same

Weber's distinctive branch of liberalism that fiercely criticizes capitalism while stressing the advantages of a proper politically kept in check market resembles Fernand Braudel's and Karl Polanyi's understandings of capitalism as a monopoly which slowly paralyzes the competitive dynamic of the market while expressing itself in the same time in its name (Weber 1994, 69; Braudel 1992; Polanyi 2001).

The market, however, is a rather different story than capitalism. The market spontaneously entails processes of standardization, simplifying and homogenizing human economic behavior in predictable and calculable ways. Market induced standardization is very valuable in sociological terms, since it offers patterns of analysis that are much more coherent (and

inflexible) than traditional habits voluntarily practiced in a community. Furthermore, the way in which individual, personal interests seem to contribute to the edification of a harmonious social whole is, for Weber, appealing (Weber 1978, 30). But Weber agrees with Adam Smith that the market, even if it produces formal rationality, also contributes to substantial irrationality, by amplifying the already heteronomous conditions in which it activates in the first place: the market should not overlook the poverty and social displacement created in its name. A society in which the majority of the population is poor is not a well governed society; also, in a capitalist society, capitalists can pursue their interests more convincingly than workers, because they are fewer, more educated and have way more political and mediatic influence than workers (Smith 2009). Indeed, Smith warns us, way before Polanyi and Braudel did, that the market can be easily overthrown by the monopolistic interests of big capitalist investors who adopt its discourse on freedom and meritocratic competition while following exactly the opposite and sabotaging it from inside.

Following this line of thought, Weber was keenly aware not only of the almost inevitable overlap between capitalism and market, the suppression of competitiveness by monopoly, that is, even if he strongly criticized the Marxist solution to this outcome and Marxism in general on the grounds that it was too economically unilateral and deterministic (Weber 1978, 687-688; Weber 1994, 103-104)– but also of the authoritarian tendencies that are deeply imbedded in the market’s internal logic (Weber 1978, 731). In Hegelian terms, the market contains the seeds of its own dialectical negation: competitiveness is negated by monopoly and freedom by authoritarianism. And, because, ‘Every rational course of political action is economically oriented’, respectively ‘the modern economic order under modern conditions could not continue if its control of resources were not upheld by the legal compulsion of the state’ (Weber 1978, 65) – this market authoritarianism becomes, through managerial bureaucracy, a political authoritarianism as well.

Once again, Weber is not the classical, serene liberal that considers competitive, market freedoms to contribute to general political freedoms. On the contrary, he points out the despotic tendencies present in both modern politics (bureaucracy) and economics (market), tendencies that are amplified, not tempered, by technological process.

Hegel is also at odds with capitalism. According to his dialectical logic, capitalism is quantity born from a previously quality that was reified due to its unavoidable internal contradictions, present-day necessity that occurred, centuries ago, as a form of liberty in the overcoming of feudalism. While capitalism is socially and economically violent, it is not to be understood as modernity in itself, or, as Teshale Tibebu argues, as the end of the master-servant struggle for recognition (Tibebu 2010). Just like in the above

discussed case of work, the struggle for recognition is never-ending, cutting across classes and historical contexts; only its forms are historical. Its drive, its dynamic content, not. Capitalism's existence is immoral, but it is nevertheless justified from an ethical (political, in Hegelian terms) standpoint. Phenomenological existence, the inconsistent effective diversity, is both a negation of spirit and also its particular and deficient vehicle towards the universal. Earned historical existence is tantamount to the right to presence, even as necessity. Liberty would be unconceivable in the absence of necessity just like, in sociological terms, agency cannot exist outside structure. But necessity cannot be sublated into something new only through outbursts of moral, individual indignation; however righteous, however rational particularity can become, it amounts to nothing if it remains isolated and cannot convert itself into an ethical stance. Simply put, the capitalist political economy cannot be replaced through isolated moral protests, but only through joint and significative political action. And yes, capitalism must be balanced by strong states with social acumen, by those states will unavoidably amplify capitalist contradictions (Hegel 1983, 139-140).

It is clear by now that for both Weber and Hegel, the political economy of modernity is deficient. Both understand and criticize the social effects of markets gone authoritarian wild, both understand that states can only limit to a certain extent this tendency, and in any case not reverse it, yet both, Weber too, as it will be shown, favor strong political leaders that can keep in check the turmoil created by capitalism, wars and so on. In short, the turmoil entailed by internal and international contradictions, preventing them from becoming too disruptive and threatening for the very existence of the state (Weber 1994, 270-271).

All these being said, Weber's Kantianism makes him accept the market with its formal rationality, its powerful contradictions and the permanent heteronomy that it entails, while Hegel too reconciles with capitalism in his own speculative way. Why, then, the invisible hand that drives the market and the cunning of history through which spirit exteriorizes and apparently negates itself in order to dialectically sublimate this alterity he produced into a propelling force – remain so different? Why Hegel and Weber cannot agree, after all, that they share the same basic understanding of general social dynamics? Did not young Hegel dedicate some sympathetic lines to Adam Smith' concept of invisible hand and had he not accepted, in his entire philosophy of economics, as Marx did, Smith's labor theory of value (Hegel 1979, 172-173; Hegel 2003, 411)?

Because, to use one again Weber's distinction, the invisible hand pertains to formal rationality and the cunning of history to substantive rationality. Major turning points or catastrophes in history reveal the absence, or even the opposite of reason. Still, reason does not disappear, but, according to

Hegel, uses even the most irrational materials out there to enforce its mundane, historical soteriology (Hegel 2011). From a psychoanalytic perspective, Lacan interprets the cunning of reason not teleologically, but individually, by making use of another Hegelian concept from the *Phenomenology*, the beautiful soul, which complains about the disorder the world is and the immorality it contains, without understanding how he substantially contributes to these regretful results. As he begins to understand the major role he plays in the world he so convincingly denounced, the beautiful soul becomes more rational, this being history's dialectical trick to make him aware of the phenomenological and spiritual mediations that circumscribe his entire existence (Lacan 2006). However, this approach of the cunning of history is made from particular, psychological positions, not by rational positions, and it actually represents a limitation of this fertile Hegelian concept.

Moreover, the spurious dialectic of the invisible hand makes its presence felt only to a certain phenomenological extent, even if its influence goes well beyond the field of economics and thus amplifying the problems it already produces there. It does not overlap Hegel's total and historical dialectic. It is only a form of incomplete necessity that stands in contrast with proper dialectical freedom. It lacks, furthermore, the historical continuity of successions and also the totality of simultaneousnesses of the Hegelian space – nature. Isolated from the speculative totality that nurtures it, and even aiming to replace it, the dialectic of the invisible hand thus becomes an abstraction and, in comparison to the wholeness of truth, an error. In Weberian terminology, even if formal rationality is more practical than substantive rationality and also is, in modern times, what makes the world go around, when it tries to become self-sufficient by separating itself from that all-encompassing substantive reason, or simulate it, it will fail.

The rational content of religion: capitalism as spirit?

Another theme that remains to be explored in order to stress out the stake of this paper resides in Weber and Hegel's also similar, but different approaches of religion. Taking into account the arguments I have presented so far, their different views upon the rational content of religion will hopefully emerge in a clearer perspective.

Weber's position on how the protestant ethic gave birth to capitalism is probably one of the best-known theoretical contributions he has ever made. Yet, from Hegel's perspective, is superficial. Weber stresses out how the Calvinist doctrine of predestination triggered, for its followers, an extremely powerful psychological conflict. Since God decided from the beginning of time, before the Earth itself was created, who will go to Heaven and who will go to Hell, your fate was determined even before you

were born, and your deeds could not have altered it no matter what. To think that you could have pleased God through your good deeds in order to pacify your conscience amounted, for Calvin, to a sacrilege. However, and this produced not only capitalism, but a whole new philosophy of work, according to Weber – the believer could ease this debilitating psychological drama in two continuous ways. First, to even think of it was regarded as a sign of a diabolical presence aiming to corrupt the soul of the Christian, preventing him from his daily routine. Second, this daily routine became overwhelmingly important in establishing some sort of contact with divinity, in contrast to the meditation, solitude, ascetism or the activity of caring for the poor, the crippled, the vulnerable, advocated until then by Catholicism and Orthodoxy. To become successful in your profession meant to honor God in the most effective way possible and thus to obtain a certain confirmation that you, as a believer, were chosen to spend eternity in Heaven rather than Hell. No pragmatism, no stinginess was involved in this spiritual equation, at least for now. Later, as generations passed, fortunes that were amassed in the beginning from purely religious reasons constituted the infrastructure of emergent capitalism and thus entered a process of secularization, despite their religious origins (Weber 2005; Weber 1978, 556-588).

Not only that: Weber pertinently singularizes the social embeddedness of religious feelings according to their class dimension with a meticulousness and accuracy that Hegel's philosophy of religion never achieved, although it never prioritized this specific theoretical objective (Weber 1978, 491).

This secularization process that developed on capitalist coordinates seems to have strong dialectical underpinnings. Why, then, Hegel would not have agreed with Weber's explanation regarding the religious origins of capitalism, with his account on how the (formal) rational content of Protestantism developed into something new, shedding its (already) religious form and becoming market rationality?

As already mentioned, Hegel theorizes the original sin in a manner very similar to work: both as the beginning and as the cure of the process of alienation, be that capitalistic or historical. God is spirit to the extent that it is disenchanted, to use Weber's term, and it is forced to renounce its metaphysical position that separated him from humanity in order to become the fuel of moral and social emancipation. God is knowledge, but not simple, representative, alienated thinking, in the form of religion; God is knowledge available for everyone in the form of concept (Hegel 1988b). Besides that, religion's ability to nurture progress, a notion that Weber strongly disagreed with, is nevertheless limited when compared to that of philosophy, because religion is valuable on moral, individual grounds; in modern times, the public role once played by institutionalized religion is taken over by the state, with its ethical and civic attributes that foster proper

citizens: moral, yes, but first of all ethical, aware of their duties towards the society and its political expression, the state (Hegel 1984, 572; Hegel 1961, 95-98). If states try to behave like religious institutions and enforce moral duties to their citizens they become ridiculous, because trust must first arise in order to be recognized, and not the other way around (Hegel 1961, 98).

For Hegel, Weber's account of religion becoming more and more rational contains two major weaknesses. First, market rationality and the capitalism it produces if not politically contained is formal rationality, technical rationality, while Hegel is, as already argued, a supporter of substantive rationality, way more socially and historically complex than bureaucratic rationality, despite its economic and/or political form. Second, to consider Protestant mentality the main premise of capitalism suffers, for Hegel, from the same deficiency the theory of the state of nature did: it places the cart before the horse. Minerva's owl only flies when the night falls, and its flight does not produce, neither does accelerate the day's end in any way: it just embraces and tries to make sense of it, retrospectively. As strange as this may seem for Hegel, often considered an abstract philosopher that valued rambling theoretical constructions and stylistic inflation above everything, ideas alone do not change the world, even if, of course, the world is changed through ideas. In Marx's terms, who followed Hegel's dialectical method closely, structural reality changes not only by super-structural means, but by a permanent dialectic between the two. Better yet, structure always changes faster than superstructure, hence the latter's inability to make sense of the metamorphoses of the former in time, but always tardively. Quality can never understand quantity by isolating itself from quantity and pretending to enlighten it from above, when it is only a limit, a differentiation within quantity that places it in a new ontological perspective. Protestant ideas and protestant spirituality may have contributed to a great extent to the development of capitalism, but they did not create capitalism out of their sheer intellectual power. Among other scholars, Fernand Braudel questioned Weber's theoretical assumption in depth (Braudel 1992) So would have Hegel, I presume, had he lived a century after his time.

Conclusion: two different commitments to modernity

Given the length of this article, and in order to avoid redundancy, I will summarize the conclusions as much as possible. I will start by noticing once again that my research is indebted in the first place to Shaw's use of the Aristotelian distinction between practical and technical rationality when comparing Weber and Hegel's understanding of bureaucracy (Shaw 1992) – a distinction acknowledged in Weber's own works as a differentiation between formal and substantive rationality, but that Shaw's use of this

finding is both schematic and ideologically flawed. Schematic, because bureaucracy is not enough if we are to thoroughly compare Weber and Hegel's political and social thought and see this distinction producing its full-size effects. Political economy, religion, nationalism, among other issues, must be taken into account. Ideologically flawed, because Shaw extracts his argument from the political philosophy of Michael Oakeshott, a leading conservative thinker. However, one of the main endeavors of the present paper was to argue that Hegel was not a conservative thinker, as he was neither a liberal nor a progressive, although he somehow inclined towards a sort of paternalistic, proto social-democracy. If we would accept Shaw's premise without taking into account its conservative, Oakeshottian background, it would follow that Hegel was also a conservative, anti-modern philosopher, while Weber was not, hence the fundamental ideological separation between them, end of story.

But this is not the case at all, since Hegel was a philosopher deeply attached to intellectual and political modernity. So was Weber, although the extent of his commitment to modernity never reached the totalizing ontological implications existent in Hegel's philosophical system. As already argued in the paper, Weber's commitment to modernity is indebted to the Kantian tradition, although Weber and Hegel alike had their discontents with modernity, especially Weber. Unlike Hegel's, Kant's political philosophy accepted heteronomy as one of its main premises, not as a temporary defensive posture reason is coerced to take in order speculatively unfold its historical possibilities. In other words, Hegel's trust in reason was firmer than Kant's and his followers, including Weber, even if Kant specifically warned about the antinomies of reasons, which Hegel dismissed maybe too easily as dialectical and dynamic contradictions.

Overall, Weber and Hegel are both deeply and seminal modern thinkers. What pulls them apart in the end is the internal, dialectical dynamic of modern reason itself, which oscillates between practical positivism and an also practical, but nevertheless contemplative inducing totalizing allness. Between two epistemological positions. This internal dynamic of modern reason can ultimately be understood as a perspective issue, as a question of normativity. Last but not least, this is why the conclusions reached by Weber and Hegel about authority, bureaucracy and capitalism may seem similar, but, in the end, reflect, as this last section is entitled, two relatively deeply different commitments to political, social and economic modernity.

I am very aware that this article could have very well been shorter and more focused on, let us say, only the problem of authority, or bureaucracy, or capitalism, as it is dealt with in the writings of the two German intellectual titans brought together – abruptly, at times – by my paper. But that would have equally entailed a sort of analytical and

conceptual impoverishment of the whole endeavor. By narrowing a research topic too much, one can miss important and fertile parallels and also discontinuities identifiable in different comparative analyses that can substantially enrich the topic of one's paper and place it in new and challenging perspectives. Or maybe this whole effort can be reduced to a methodological issue: sociologists and administrative theorists, researchers who approached so far Weber and Hegel's positions with reference to bureaucracy, and rarely advanced beyond this matter – endorse empirical research strategies that are narrower and more applied, while political scientists and political philosophers consider that a more inclusive (not necessarily shallow) method is needed in order to adequately grasp the whole implications that are at stake in this kind of intellectual effort. Far from representing a dilemma, I actually consider this multidisciplinary approach the best way of encountering and exploring a scientific subject, the best way of fostering intellectual progress.

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Declarations:

Funding – Not applicable

Conflicts of interest/Competing interests – The author declares he has no conflict of interests

Availability of data and material – Not applicable

Code availability – Not applicable

Authors' contributions – Not applicable

Emil Cioran: tra fede e nichilismo

Intervista ad Antonio Di Gennaro* (a cura di Tudor Petcu)**

TP: Qual è secondo Lei la caratteristica più importante del pensiero di Emil Cioran? Le pongo questa domanda, pensando innanzitutto all'influenza di Friedrich Nietzsche sulla personalità di Cioran, considerato in Romania e in Francia il più grande filosofo nichilista del XX secolo.

AdG: Esistono, a mio avviso, diversi tratti distintivi del pensiero di Cioran, che ne fanno uno dei maggiori filosofi del Ventesimo secolo. Contrariamente a quanto pensano in molti, Cioran non è un semplice scrittore, ma un autentico, autorevole filosofo, se per filosofia intendiamo non un mero esercizio teorico, accademico, ma originariamente, nella sua essenza, una costante riflessione sulla vita, ricerca di un senso, a partire dall'assurdità e dalla drammaticità della condizione umana. Non parlerei quindi di una caratteristica "unica" o "univoca" del suo cammino di pensiero, ma di molteplici aspetti peculiari e complementari nella sua concezione "sovversiva" della filosofia. Innanzitutto, sin dal primo volume pubblicato in Romania, *Pe culmile disperării*, del 1934, Cioran, si allontana dalla filosofia "ufficiale", rivolgendole un duro attacco, una critica radicale e senza appello. Pur essendo laureato in filosofia a Bucarest e pur avendo acquisito un solido bagaglio di conoscenze (anche grazie ai viaggi di studio a Monaco e Berlino), Cioran, ritiene che la filosofia tradizionale, letteralmente, "non serve a niente". Lo scrive ad esempio nei *Quaderni*: «Uno dei rari

* Antonio Di Gennaro (1975) si è laureato in Filosofia all'Università di Napoli Federico II. I suoi studi privilegiano lo sviluppo dell'esistenzialismo contemporaneo con particolare riferimento alle problematiche del tempo e del dolore. Ha pubblicato la raccolta di versi *Parole scomposte* (Alfredo Guida Editore, 2000) e saggi sul pensiero di Emil Cioran, raccolti nel volume *Metafisica dell'addio* (Aracne, 2011). Nel 2011, ha organizzato il Convegno per il centenario della nascita del filosofo romeno, in collaborazione con l'Accademia di Romania in Roma, curando poi la pubblicazione degli atti nel volume *Cioran in Italia* (Aracne, 2012). Attualmente sta svolgendo un'attività di ricerca sui testi inediti di Emil Cioran, con particolare attenzione a interviste e carteggi. In tal senso ha recentemente curato i volumi: *L'intellettuale senza patria. Intervista con Jason Weiss* (Mimesis, 2014), *Vivere contro l'evidenza. Intervista con Christian Busy* (La scuola di Pitagora, 2014), *Al di là della filosofia. Conversazioni su Benjamin Fondane* (Mimesis, 2014), *Tradire la propria lingua. Intervista con Philippe D. Dracodăiș* (La scuola di Pitagora, 2015), *La speranza è più della vita. Intervista con Paul Assall* (Mimesis, 2015), *Un'altra verità. Lettere a Linde Birk e Dieter Schlesak* (Mimesis, 2016). Website: <http://digilander.libero.it/ant.digennaro/>

** PhD, University of Bucarest, Romania; email: petcutudor@gmail.com

vantaggi che ho avuto è stato di aver capito a vent'anni che la filosofia non dà nessuna risposta, e che perfino le sue domande sono inessenziali». La filosofia accademica si riduce a un sapere specialistico, erudito, fatto di nozioni e dottrine sofisticate, ma completamente slegato dalla complessità e dalla tragicità della vita reale. Se la filosofia è hegelianamente “pensiero della vita”, nelle università essa non assolve più tale compito, anzi si spegne, si inaridisce, si snatura: diventa sterile, autoreferenziale, nel migliore dei casi “pensiero della vita passata” e dunque “storia della filosofia”, “storiografia”, il che equivale alla morte della filosofia. Una prima caratteristica importante, a mio avviso, che caratterizza il filosofare di Cioran, è il fatto che egli riporta la filosofia al di fuori dalle aule accademiche, libera per così dire la filosofia dai lacci del pensiero astratto-speculativo e la affida alla singola esistenza, che è di per sé “coscienza infelice”. La filosofia, in altre parole, è una ricerca personale, una meditazione del singolo su di sé, un cammino privato che ciascuno compie, a partire dalla propria solitudine e dalla propria intima sofferenza. La filosofia diviene in Cioran atto terapeutico, cura dell'anima, consolazione dal “male di vivere”, non rigorosa (ma improduttiva) ricostruzione ermeneutica circa le filosofie del passato, bensì proficuo “esercizio spirituale”, soggettiva pratica filosofica, pensiero esistenziale. Un secondo aspetto, che mi sembra degno di nota, e che lo differenzia dai “filosofi di professione”, è la passionalità di Cioran, il suo fervore nella scrittura. Cioran non è mai mite, distaccato, spassionato, ma sempre emotivamente coinvolto, appassionato, in preda alla follia, guidato dal proprio demone interiore, o, per dirla con Kay R. Jamison, “toccato dal fuoco”. Cioran scrive sempre in uno stato di eccitazione febbrile, di inquietudine, di malessere, di “*cafard*”, e la scrittura è per lui un “mezzo di liberazione”, è il modo che gli è più congeniale per espellere l'angoscia che lo opprime. Cioran ricorre alla scrittura non come un diversivo di carattere estetico, ma per una necessità impellente di ordine psicoanalitico. Egli non descrive fatti esteriori, non racconta storie, ma “vomita” il proprio mondo interiore: le proprie ossessioni e il proprio stato d'animo costantemente lacerato, dilaniato. Come sappiamo, sin dalla giovane età, Cioran è affetto da stati depressivi, è organicamente malinconico, votato alla nostalgia, condannato alla noia. Pertanto, la prosa filosofica di Cioran si rivela un farmaco, un analgesico, un balsamo, anche per noi lettori. Per quanto riguarda l'influenza di Nietzsche su Cioran, non mi sembra così decisiva. I suoi punti di riferimento sono altri: Pascal, Baudelaire, Shakespeare, Dostoevskij. Sono questi gli autori che hanno plasmato la personalità di Cioran, sono questi i cardini attorno a cui si va costruendo il pensiero tragico di Cioran, il suo nichilismo estremo, che non sfocia come in Nietzsche nel concetto di “superuomo” (*Übermensch*), ma in quello

dell'uomo maledetto, condannato da sempre e per sempre a soccombere ai dardi beffardi del destino.

TP: *È lecito parlare di una dimensione mistica/spirituale del nichilismo di Emil Cioran? Non bisogna dimenticare infatti che il suo pensiero è stato influenzato anche da alcuni mistici, come ad esempio Meister Eckhart.*

AdG: Questo è un punto decisivo e di grande interesse: il rapporto tra Dio e il Nulla. L'esperienza di pensiero di Cioran, sin dagli anni giovanili, oscilla tra la costante ricerca di un Dio e il suo categorico rifiuto, tra l'esperienza mistica e il nichilismo assoluto. Teologia e ateismo si fondono e si confondono, dando vita ad una forma di fede laica, che vede nella solitudine dell'anima, e nelle sue più intime espressioni (preghiera, musica, scrittura), il luogo privilegiato dove "incontrare" Dio – o la sua idea. Influenzato dal pensiero pagano (Marco Aurelio, Giuliano l'Apostata) e affascinato dalle eresie cristiane (Bogomili e Catari), dallo gnosticismo (Basilide), dalla tradizione greco-ortodossa (Giovanni Climaco, Gregorio Palamàs), dai mistici (Meister Eckhart, Angelus Silesius, Jacob Böhme, Juan de la Cruz) e dalle sante (Teresa d'Àvila, Angela da Foligno), ma anche dalle religioni orientali (Buddhismo, Taoismo, Induismo), Cioran giunge ad una visione di Dio come "funesto demiurgo", senza tuttavia rinnegare la dimensione del "sacro" come elemento imprescindibile della sua tragica *Weltanschauung*. In tal senso, Cioran amava definirsi: "un nichilista di tendenze religiose". Anche il teologo e musicologo rumeno George Bălan, corrispondente epistolare di Cioran e autore di una monografia sul suo pensiero, riconosce in una lettera del 18 ottobre 1968 che Cioran è «uno degli spiriti più religiosi del secolo». Condivido quindi in pieno la sua affermazione e concordo sul fatto che "è lecito parlare di una dimensione mistica/spirituale del nichilismo di Cioran". Attenzione però: Cioran non crede in Dio, bensì nel nulla, nel "solido nulla" per dirla con Leopardi, nella nullità di tutte le cose, nella vacuità universale, nell'inermità dell'essere. I mistici medievali, come Meister Eckhart sono uomini di fede, teologi, credono nel Dio rivelato, nella manifestazione di Dio nella storia e al tempo stesso nella ineffabilità e inconoscibilità di Dio. In tal senso, il Nulla è l'altra faccia del Dio ignoto, del *Deus absconditus* e funzionale ad una teologia negativa che preferisce astenersi dal nominare l'innominabile. Cioran è lontano da una visione di tale fattura. Il nulla di cui parla Cioran non è il Nulla-Dio, ma il principio reale che attanaglia e sottende la vita. Il nulla di Cioran non ha niente a che fare con Dio, ma con l'assenza di Dio. Il concetto di Dio sorge successivamente, quando l'uomo sperimenta la tragicità della propria condizione, ma soltanto come palliativo della mente sofferente. In realtà, come ogni uomo, Cioran avverte il "sospiro religioso",

la tendenza o l'impulso ad oltrepassare sé, a trascendersi in vista di un Assoluto, che non esiste se non come frutto della nostra fervente immaginazione. Qui Cioran è senza dubbio in linea con il pensiero ateo di d'Holbach, Feuerbach, Schopenhauer o Freud. Secondo tale tradizione di pensiero, Dio non è altro che l'Essere supremo (immaginario), che l'uomo in quanto "coscienza infelice" si inventa come ultimo appiglio di salvezza nel fondo della propria solitudine. Quindi, quella di Cioran, per riprendere Sylvie Jaudeau, è una "mistica profana", una "mistica senza Dio", una mistica impregnata di nichilismo, dove il nulla è tutto e Dio una semplice invenzione, un'allucinazione, un "*nonsenso consolatore*".

TP: *La disperazione costituisce forse il concetto più importante della filosofia di Cioran. È possibile parlare di una dimensione "metafisica" della disperazione nel suo pensiero?*

AdG: La disperazione è l'assenza di speranza, è il sentimento della morte. Nei *Quaderni* Cioran scrive: «Ho la disperazione nel sangue; in me non è un sentimento o un atteggiamento, ma una realtà fisiologica, per non dire fisica. La disperazione è la mia fede, la mia fede innata». La disperazione non è un concetto astratto su cui è possibile disquisire o argomentare logicamente, con freddezza e distacco. La disperazione è un'esperienza vissuta, patita "in prima persona", e nel momento in cui la si vive, il soggetto è coinvolto in un turbine, in una corrente, in un vortice, dove non vede il fondo, dove non c'è un domani o una prospettiva. Di fronte a tale esperienza vissuta, per resistere ai duri colpi della vita e non soccombere, Cioran decide di scrivere la propria disperazione, di estrinsecare la propria depressione in un atto creativo. La sua prima opera, si intitola appunto "Al culmine della disperazione", ma tale criterio può essere esteso a tutti gli altri testi. Al centro della sua visione del mondo vi è un disagio, un dolore, un'angoscia. Cioran avverte il distacco dalla vita, la repulsione, la non-integrazione e in tutte le sue opere egli racconta di questa esperienza, di questo sentimento di scissione e di lacerazione, di questa inquietudine esistenziale, di questo "esilio metafisico". Per di più, la disperazione secondo Cioran conduce alla preghiera e al dialogo con Dio. Sempre nei *Quaderni* afferma: «La disperazione che non approda a Dio, che non vi cozza contro, non è vera disperazione. La disperazione è quasi indistinta dalla preghiera, e in ogni caso è la matrice di tutte le preghiere ».

TP: *Qual è la sua opinione per quanto riguarda il rapporto tra "sacro" e "profano" nella filosofia di Emil Cioran?*

AdG: Direi che, paradossalmente, il sacro, in Cioran, risiede nel profano. L'essenza del sacro è nel profano, il senso del divino è nell'umano:

soprattutto negli ultimi, negli estromessi, nei disadattati, nei diseredati, nei perdenti, nei falliti, negli squilibrati, nei suicidi. Dimentichiamo l'ortodossia cristiana fatta di funzioni religiose, di liturgie e preghiere, dimentichiamo la fede e il credo in un "Dio onnipotente, creatore del cielo e della terra". Qui siamo di fronte a un pensatore insolente, irriverente, provocatorio e blasfemo che accusa Dio (qualora un Dio esistesse, qualora vi fosse un Dio) del male del mondo. Ricordiamo ancora una volta che uno dei testi più importanti del pensatore rumeno-parigino reca come titolo "Il funesto demiurgo". Cioran su questo versante segue la setta eretica dei Bogomili, anzi si considera un "bogomilo del XX secolo". Il Dio di Cioran è un Dio maledetto, infimo, insulso. È un Dio macchiato dall'infamia e dall'ignominia di aver generato e originato l'essere e di non essersi accontentato del vuoto-nulla. Secondo Cioran, sarebbe stato meglio non essere mai stati, non essere mai nati e quindi non aver mai conosciuto la disavventura di essere stati gettati nel mondo, nella vita e nella storia. Quindi il divino è propriamente nell'uomo, nell'umanità dell'uomo: questa è, parafrasando Fabrizio De André, la "buona novella" dell'eretico Cioran, apostata-neo-pagano. Ai dotti e ai sapienti, egli preferisce i mendicanti e le prostitute. Qui dimora l'autentico volto di Dio, qui si manifesta il divino: nella condizione dell'estremo abbandono. È nell'esperienza del dolore, quando si è "al culmine della disperazione", ai piedi della croce, che il divino appare. Ma è solo un'idea della ragione, perché in fondo, nel fondo del nostro essere e della nostra solitudine, nessun Dio potrà salvarci e redimerci dal dolore. Per concludere questa mia risposta, farò riferimento a un episodio citato da Cioran in un'intervista concessa a Savater nel 1990. Parlando delle prostitute, afferma: «Una notte una di loro mi disse che suo marito era appena morto. Era giovane, bella. Mi disse che quando faceva l'amore con qualcuno vedeva il suo cadavere sul letto, vicino a lei. Bisogna andare nei bordelli per sentire cose così profonde!». Ecco, è questa la dimensione del "sacro" come *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*: nel sacrilegio, nella profanazione, nella "trasvalutazione di tutti i valori", nella trasfigurazione del dolore (la morte nel cuore) in delirio e follia.

TP: *Anche se la filosofia di Cioran ha optato per una visione nichilista, lontana dai valori presenti nel cuore del cristianesimo, credo tuttavia che la sua ermeneutica abbia una qualche eredità cristiana e a tale riguardo le chiedo di spiegarmi/ dirmi se una tale eredità esiste nell'opera del filosofo rumeno. È possibile discutere sui valori cristiani della filosofia di Cioran?*

AdG: Cioran proviene dal mondo ortodosso. Suo padre, Emilian Cioran, era un *pope* e sua mamma, Elvira Comaniciu, presidentessa dell'associazione delle donne di religione ortodossa. Il giovane Cioran frequenta assiduamente la biblioteca paterna a Rășinari, ma anche quella

dell'arcivescovo di Sibiu, di cui il padre era consigliere. Quindi, nella formazione e nella crescita spirituale di Cioran, non mancano certo le letture di teologia (comprese le vite dei santi, l'approfondimento della mistica, ecc.). Questi però matura, ben presto, una forte ostilità verso tutto ciò che è dogmatico e religioso. Pur riconoscendo la profondità della teologia ortodossa, Cioran si mostra insofferente verso la dottrina cristiana che presuppone l'idea di un Dio buono, Padre creatore, Essere supremo. Come già detto, Cioran opta per un Dio demoniaco, un Dio che non ha a cuore il destino dell'uomo, ma che oscilla tra indifferenza e compiacimento dell'umana sofferenza. È un Dio scellerato, così come è stato recentemente rappresentato dal regista belga Jaco Van Dormael nel film "*Le tout nouveau testament*" (2015), che si prende gioco delle sue creature, e che anzi prova un piacere sadico nel tormentarle e torturarle. Nelle sue opere Cioran si scaglia contro Dio, la sua "invocazione" diviene spesso "bestemmia", "preghiera arrogante". Cioran inveisce contro Dio perché sa che l'uomo è condannato *ab aeterno* e che esiste un destino tragico ad accumunare i mortali. Non si tratta della morte. La morte è solo l'episodio ultimo e risolutivo di un dramma più grande: la vita. Questa è la croce che ognuno porta sulle spalle, con ineffabile sofferenza. Nonostante la sua avversione verso l'impianto dottrinario cristiano, pur non credendo in Dio, e pur essendo lontano da ogni fede ecclesiale, è possibile riscontrare in Cioran (nella quotidianità dell'uomo) una particolare sensibilità verso il prossimo, che si manifesta nel sentimento della pietà, della solidarietà, della fraternità umana. È quella che il filosofo italiano Salvatore Natoli definisce un'"etica del finito". In ogni caso, non intravedo alcuna "eredità cristiana" nella filosofia di Cioran. Nella sua visione del mondo, marcatamente atea, i concetti di redenzione e salvezza sono del tutto esclusi. L'unico concetto che Cioran riprende dall'Antico Testamento è quello della Caduta e del Peccato originale. Questa è la stimmate nefasta che chiunque venga al mondo si porta addosso. Per concludere, vorrei utilizzare ancora una volta le parole dello stesso Cioran, che certamente chiariscono in pieno il suo punto di vista in merito alla religione cristiana. Ne *La tentazione di esistere* (1956) leggiamo: «Consumato fino all'osso, il cristianesimo ha smesso di essere una fonte di stupore e di scandalo, di scatenare crisi o di fecondare intelligenze. Non mette più a disagio lo spirito né lo costringe al minimo interrogativo; le inquietudini che suscita, come le sue risposte e le sue soluzioni, sono fiacche, soporifere: nessuna lacerazione promettente, nessun dramma può più aver origine dal cristianesimo. Ha fatto il suo tempo: ormai la Croce ci fa sbadigliare...».

Xiaohu MA *

Praktisch philosophische Orientierung in Heideggers hermeneutischer Ontologie

(Hongjian Wang, *Ontologie der Praxis bei Martin Heidegger*, Zürich: LIT Verlag 2020, 240 p.)

Keywords: Ontology, Hermeneutics, Heidegger, Praxis, Life

In seinem neuen Buch führt Hongjian Wang das Konzept der “Ontologie der Praxis” ein, um das frühe philosophische Denken Heideggers zu rekonstruieren. Meiner Ansicht nach ist die “Ontologie der Praxis” eine Verflechtung zweier Fäden: der eine ist eine Antwort auf Heideggers Problem der praktischen Philosophie, der andere ist eine alternative Formulierung, die auf Heideggers Ontologie des Lebens beruht. Der Erfolg der Idee der “Ontologie der Praxis” hängt also davon ab, wie diese beiden Fäden organisch miteinander verbunden werden können.

Beginnen wir mit dem zweiten Faden. Obwohl das Buch die “Ontologie der Praxis” diskutiert, widmet der Autor fast die Hälfte des Buches einer Analyse der Ontologie des Lebens: eine Diskussion der Grundlagen und Entwicklungsgeschichte der Hermeneutik der Faktizität und eine Diskussion von Heideggers philosophischer Methode der formalen Anzeige. Es stellen sich folgende zwei Fragen: (1) Ist die Ontologie des Lebens mit der Ontologie der Praxis gleichzusetzen? (2) Wenn die Ontologie des Lebens bereits eine Darstellung der frühen Philosophie Heideggers ist, welchen Sinn hat es dann, zusätzlich die Ontologie der Praxis einzuführen? Was trägt dieses neue Konzept zum Verständnis von Heidegger bei?

Die erste Frage wird vom Autor bereits in der Einleitung berücksichtigt. Sowohl die Praxis als auch das Leben werden in Opposition zur “Theorie” postuliert und sind daher “vorthoretisch”. In diesem Sinne sind sowohl die Ontologie des Lebens als auch die Ontologie der Praxis synonym mit Heideggers “vorthoretischer Philosophie”. Darüber hinaus analysiert der Autor in Kapitel 17 des Buches ausführlich, wie dieselbe Struktur sowohl die Ontologie des Lebens als auch die Ontologie der Praxis durchzieht: Die Tendenz, das Leben zu theoretisieren, wird mit dem Verhältnis von Theorie und Poiesis analogisiert, während die Unterscheidung zwischen alltäglichem und authentischem Leben als grundlegende Unterscheidung zwischen Poiesis und Praxis verstanden wird (Wang 2020, 163f.). Auf dieser

* Associate Professor, PhD, Xidian-University, Xi’an, China; e-mail: maxh03@163.com

Grundlage zeigt der Autor überzeugend die Identität der Ontologie des Lebens mit der Ontologie der Praxis.

Es ist erwähnenswert, dass für dieses Buch die Methode der formalen Anzeige eine wichtige vermittelnde Rolle spielt. Es zeigt sich, dass der Autor in der Skizze der Ontologie der Praxis im zweiten Teil sowohl bei der "Ontologisierung der Praxis" als auch bei der "Konkretisierung des Seins" an einer entscheidenden Stelle seiner Analyse auf die formale Anzeige zurückgreift, die er im ersten Teil thematisiert hat. Die formale Anzeige ist die dominante Methode von Heideggers hermeneutischer Ontologie, und der Autor argumentiert überzeugend, dass das Wesentliche der formalen Anzeige darin liegt, die Verallgemeinerung durch Konkretisierung zu ersetzen und damit eine neue Perspektive auf das Verständnis der Beziehung zwischen dem Allgemeinen und dem Konkreten außerhalb der traditionellen Philosophie zu eröffnen (Wang 2020, 84ff.). Dieser Punkt erinnert mich an Gadammers Formulierung des Grundproblems der philosophischen Hermeneutik, nämlich "das alte metaphysische Problem der Konkretion des Allgemeinen" (Gadamer 1993, 22). In diesem Sinne ist die Analyse der formalen Anzeige durch den Autor sehr innovativ und erhellend, und dies ist eine der Stärken des Buches.

Meiner Meinung nach hat der Autor fruchtbar für die Gleichwertigkeit von Ontologie des Lebens und Ontologie der Praxis argumentiert, sowohl in Bezug auf das Thema als auch auf die Methode, aber fraglich bleibt, inwiefern die Einführung der Konzeption der Ontologie der Praxis notwendig ist und was genau sie für unser Verständnis von Heidegger bedeutet. In diesem Buch gibt der Autor leider keine explizite Antwort auf diese Frage. Er weist lediglich darauf hin, dass die Ontologie des Lebens eine Rekonstruktion der frühen philosophischen Bestimmung Heideggers ist, während die Ontologie der Praxis eine Rekonstruktion seiner aristotelischen Interpretation darstellt. Indem er zeigt, dass beide dasselbe sind, erreichen bei Heidegger die Dekonstruktion der Geschichte der Philosophie und die Bestimmung der Philosophie eine Einheit. Dies ist natürlich noch keine zufriedenstellende Antwort.

In der Tat muss dies auf den oben genannten ersten Faden zurückgeführt werden, nämlich die Antwort auf die Frage nach Heideggers praktischer Philosophie. Dies ist ein kontroverses Thema, das in den letzten Jahren mit der Veröffentlichung von Heideggers *Schwarzen Heften* wieder in den Vordergrund der Diskussion gerückt ist. Der Autor versucht jedoch nicht, auf die aktuelle Herausforderung zu reagieren, sondern diskutiert das Thema im Hinblick auf die Grundprobleme der Heideggerschen Philosophie selbst. Wenn der Autor zur Beantwortung der Frage nach Heideggers praktischer Philosophie den Begriff "Ontologie der Praxis" verwendet, so impliziert dies meines Erachtens in der Tat eine

Neuinterpretation der “praktischen Philosophie”. “Praktische Philosophie” ist nicht mehr eine philosophische Disziplin im Gegensatz zur theoretischen Philosophie seit Aristoteles, sondern impliziert, dass die Philosophie selbst grundsätzlich praktisch ist, in dem Sinne, dass sie eine Darstellung der grundlegenden Eigenschaften der Philosophie ist. Das ist zugegebenermaßen richtig und macht einen wichtigen Hinweis aus, den uns die philosophisch-hermeneutische Tradition bringt. Damit lässt sich auch Gadammers wichtige späte Behauptung erklären, dass Hermeneutik nur als praktische Philosophie möglich sei (Wang 2020, 169).

Um diesen Punkt weiter zu argumentieren, führt der Autor im zweiten Teil des Buches ein Kapitel ein, das den Begriff der *οὐσία* bei Heidegger behandelt. Meiner Meinung nach ist dies eines der besten Kapitel des Buches. Die These des Autors ist, dass Heideggers Begriff des Seins in Aristoteles’ Begriff der *οὐσία* begründet ist und diesen transzendiert. Durch die Analyse des Autors wird deutlich, wie Heidegger *δύναμις* und *ἐνέργεια* als eine der vier Grundbedeutungen des Seins interpretiert, die nicht auf *οὐσία* als Kategorie reduzierbar sind. In seiner Interpretation von Aristoteles kann man sagen, dass dies für Heidegger ein weiterer Anknüpfungspunkt ist, der über die Aufdeckung der ursprünglichen Bedeutung von *ἀλήθεια* hinausgeht (Volpi 1989, 227). Es ist bemerkenswert, dass der Autor auch hier seine Argumentation mit dem roten Faden des Buches, der philosophischen Methode der Konkretisierung, verbindet, so dass wir die zentrale Bedeutung der Methode für Heideggers Denken nicht vergessen. Auf diese Weise wird die praktisch philosophische Ausrichtung von Heideggers hermeneutischer Ontologie in den Vordergrund gerückt.

Meine Sorge ist jedoch, ob dies aus einer anderen Perspektive ein Ausweichen vor der Kernfrage ist. Wenn wir praktische Philosophie nicht mehr im traditionellen Sinne verstehen, oder wenn wir sie auf die Ontologie der Praxis reduzieren, kann diese dann noch eine praktische Philosophie sein? Oder ist sie eher eine philosophische Theorie, d.h. eine theoretische Bestimmung der Philosophie? Gilt für den grundsätzlichen Aufbau des Buches, dass der Autor zwar Heideggers praktische Philosophie diskutiert, aber über spezifische Disziplinen der praktischen Philosophie, wie Ethik und Politik, schweigt? Darüber hinaus legt der Autor zwar nahe, dass Heideggers Ontologie der Praxis das Zeitalter der Technologisierung und des Nihilismus anspricht, aber er erklärt nicht, wie diese uns befähigen kann, die Welt der Technologie und ihre nihilistischen Tendenzen zu überwinden. Das führt uns zu der Frage, inwieweit uns Heideggers Denken Orientierung geben kann, oder ist es nur eine Ausflucht für die Pessimisten?

Wir können jedoch nicht leugnen, dass der Autor uns durch die Analyse in diesem Buch zumindest fruchtbar gezeigt hat, wie Heideggers praktisch

philosophische Orientierung aus seiner Ontologie hervorgeht und wie ersterer wiederum seiner Ontologie unterworfen ist. Gleichzeitig zeigt der Autor, dass gerade Heideggers Methodik eine Balance zwischen der praktisch philosophischen und der ontologischen Dimension ermöglicht. Dies ist der Beitrag des Autors zur Untersuchung des kontroversen und langjährigen Problems von dem Verhältnis von Heidegger und der praktischen Philosophie.

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Juan Rafael G. MACARANAS *

Minding the human being to become an ethical person

(Christopher W. Haley, *The Subject of Human Being*, Routledge Studies in Critical Realism, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 2019, 289 p.)

Keywords: Dialectical Critical Realism, Philosophy of Mind, Ethics, Phenomenology, Consciousness, Human Person

The author, Christopher W. Haley, is an independent scholar who has a unique and distinct way of presenting his topic. This book challenges reflective and critical thinking. The book title may appear easy to understand, but if one is to read thoroughly, the book has to be read twice or thrice to be fully grasped. Words are carefully used, and sentences were thoughtfully crafted. One has to understand layers of contexts to appreciate it. It may be a challenging book even for philosophy enthusiasts. One must have a good background in philosophy and the social sciences to easily follow his discussions. This is what makes the book unique, laudable, admirable, and interesting. It took me three rounds of reading to appreciate it better. Truly, one of the hardest books I have ever read.

Haley's treatment of the subject is methodical and systematic, a multidisciplinary approach in presenting "overlapping and converging points of agreement from philosophical, psychoanalytic, and socio-theoretical treatments of the self in relation to the social" (4). He divided the book into eight parts, and tackled each part comprehensively with conclusion, end notes, and with excellent bibliography. Each part can stand by itself.

Part one introduces the human being. In his words, the "human being cannot be defined in exclusive terms of being *as is*, whether historical, cultural, or social on the one hand, and certainly not biological, universal, or transcendental on the other" (1). This starting point sets the parameter for the subject of human being. It is a welcome discussion for every philosopher. Any objective characterization of the nature of human being must account for the individual, sociocultural, and universal facets of each

* Professor, PhD, De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde, Manila, Philippines; email: juanrafael.macaranas@benilde.edu.ph.

human being, and provide a theory of how the universal intersects with the concrete, local, idiosyncratic features of all peoples in all times” (1-2). In the succeeding parts of the book, one has to understand the “relations between what is objective and universal to human being and what is subjective and particular to human beings” (3). Thus addressing the time immemorial controversy of the subjectivity and objectivity of truth in philosophy.

Part two discusses philosophical materialism (14-77). The author explains epistemological and material realism. This part is the philosophical foundation for the following parts of the book. The concept of “realist philosophical ontology” is the basis, as it is the general orientation of “philosophical materialism.” Part three explains the ontology of consciousness (78-104). The author brought together the work Searle, Husserl and Sartre to formulate a theory of consciousness that transcends the dualist-reductionist antinomy. The author argues that “consciousness is real by the Dialectical Critical Realist (DCR) causal powers criterion of reality” (79). The dilemma here is the subjectivity of each philosopher about their accounts of consciousness. Philosophy of consciousness, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, and phenomenology, each defining in their terms, confront the nature of consciousness. Part four is about the ontology of subjectivity (105-143) and Part five clarifies the subject of psychoanalysis (144-165). Psychoanalysis seeks to find answers by investigating the interaction of conscious and unconscious elements in the mind. “The goal of existential psychotherapy is to help analysand come to awareness of core powers of human being, of one’s ontological capacities, and how one’s powers bear on the inevitable confrontation with the vagaries of life and death” (159). Part six elucidates the subject of structure (166-190), while Part seven explicates social ontology (191-236).

The last part, which is the Conclusion (237-283), is about applications of the subject to the ethical systems such as deontology, teleology, virtue ethics, etc. In every book review that I do, I always point out the pragmatic implication and relevance of the book. It is here that phronesis (practical wisdom) comes in. Indeed, the moral agent must know who he is and what he is doing to think, judge or act virtuously. Thus I entitled my review as “*Minding the human being to become an ethical person.*” This best describes what to me is the essence of the book.

Searle makes a claim that “human beings are essentially defined by their capacity to make speech acts and this is an ontologically objective fact about the world” (240). “Rather than a list of abstract rules and laws given by an authoritative universal decree, virtue ethics is an earthly project to guide self-direction (by employing practical wisdom or phronesis), to work toward achieving excellence in all practices (to pursue *arete*), to fulfill human potentials (to flourish as a human being, viz., achieve *eudamonia*)” (241).

Searle's account on Virtue ethics and or deontology explains duties, rights, obligations, and meanings. "The *will to flourish* as a *virtue ontology* is the origination of a value that advances the cause of *being* over *non-being* and *well-being* over *ill-being*" (245).

Haley also turned to Christian Smith's informed theory of personalism. "A conscious, reflexive, embodied, self-transcending center of subjective experience, durable identity, moral commitment, and social communication who as the efficient cause of their own responsible actions and interactions-exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to develop and sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the nonpersonal world" (262). His ethics of relationality is about our thriving with the world. The human flourishing for all is demanded by a recognition that to be a human being is to be a relational subject. Smith reminds us that "social theory must consider persons as conscious centers of experience and having dignity, and these essentials are emergent features of people and implicated in any discussion about the social world" (277).

The subject of human being is all about the nature of human existence. The book is the opus of philosophical anthropology that analyses the basic powers emerging from the mind, consciousness, intentionality, language, and speech acts theory as applied to the subject of human being. To appreciate it better, one must have good background on Dialectical Critical Realism. My prior knowledge of Roy Bhaskar, Edmond Husserl, Jean-Paul Sartre, Christian Smith and John Searle prepared me to enjoy reading the book. From human person to ethical person is a call to the shared responsibility of the sociocultural worlds we live.

If you want to test and challenge your philosophical reading, try this book. You might not understand at first reading due to the esoteric language used. But if you persist, it might blow your mind. It can be a good tool or textbook in Philosophy. This book is good for both the graduate and advance undergraduate studies. It challenges the reader to go deeper.

In future works or editions, the author might consider reaching out to a broader audience. If he could tone down the language and make it more accessible, that would be good for basic philosophy students or even non-philosophy majors. Otherwise, I salute the author for urging readers to go higher, testing the reader's persistence to read and research more to understand better. For now, this is for those who strive higher and seek academic engagement and challenges.

José Manuel CORREOSO-RODENAS *

Arts and Poetry

(Jaquero-Esparcia, Alejandro: *Poesía con fines didácticos sobre las artes. Génesis y recepción en la España de la Modernidad* [*Didactic Poetry about the Arts. Genesis and Reception in Early Modern Spain*]. Murcia: Editum Artes, 2019, 301 p.)

Keywords: Poetry, Arts, Aesthetics, Modernity

Since ancient times, the interrelation between arts and poetry has become one of the most fruitful topics in Western culture, and it had a particularly relevant implication during the Early Modern Period. Horace's motif of *ut pictura poesis* has served as a source of influence for both painters and authors for centuries, being the decades of the 17th and 18th centuries some of the key moments in its reception.

The recent publication achieved by the young Spanish scholar Alejandro Jaquero-Esparcia *Poesía con fines didácticos sobre las artes. Génesis y recepción en la España de la Modernidad* needs to be considered a milestone within the discussion of this influential and significant topic. It has come as the result of a research developed through years of archive analysis and artistic and literary pieces evaluation. The fact that it has been edited by Editum Artes (belonging to the Universidad de Murcia) acknowledges the value of the book, for this academic publisher has become one of the most prominent in the Spanish speaking world. As the title suggests, the monograph deals the evolution of the concept of didactic poetry during the Early Modern Era, having its climax during the 18th century with the production of Diego Antonio Rejón de Silva (1754-1796). In order to reach this point, Jaquero-Esparcia offers an extensive overview of the evolution of the genre in Europe since the late Middle Ages, where the first poems of this kind were originated, and through the moments of the Renaissance and the Baroque.

Along these chapters, Alejandro Jaquero-Esparcia analyzes aspects such as the transition from the Medieval handbook to the modern, professional didactic poem, how painters selected some of these ideas to be represented in their *oeuvres*, or how they fought to be considered as artists (liberal professionals) and not as artisans. These debates, along with some others, populate the pages of the book here reviewed, and they are presented as the core of the Modern artistic ideology, which culminated with the assistance

* Assistant Professor, PhD, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain; email: jcorreos@ucm.es

of the Enlightenment and the introduction of European intellectualism in the production of Spanish artists and theorists.

This is the long process that leads to what can be considered the central part of *Poesía con fines didácticos sobre las artes. Génesis y recepción en la España de la Modernidad*: the chapter in which the author explores the works of both the mentioned Diego Antonio Rejón de Silva and of Juan Moreno de Tejada (1739-1805), a prominent Spanish poet and engraver during the last decades of the 18th century. As the author states at the beginning of this section: “Se buscará la superación de las ideas barrocas por medio de un restablecimiento de los ideales generados durante el Renacimiento, pero auspiciados en un nuevo espíritu de progreso científico y una fe inalterable en el legado grecorromano” (187).¹

As it had happened with the previous sections, Jaquero-Esparcia starts this central one dealing with the 18th century by offering the general contexts into which he is going to disclose his ideas. This ambitious task is achieved by the representation of other European authors and artists who were also dealing with the interrelations of “the sister arts,” and who, sometimes, had a strong influence in the later development of enlightened ideas in Spain. For instance, names like Jean-Baptiste Dubos (1670-1742), Charles Batteux (1713-1780), Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781), or Edmund Burke (1729-1797), are included and their works on Aesthetics discussed. These inclusions prove how Alejandro Jaquero-Esparcia has conducted a thorough research, exploring many different sources which sometimes are not easily accessed due to their antiquity, location, or lack of modern editions. This introduction is closed with the inclusion of other names that worked halfway between the Enlightenment and the Romanticism (i.e. Count Leopoldo Cicognara -1767-1834-).

The second part of the section finally focuses on Spain the the concept of Aesthetics and didactic poetry produced there during the 18th century. To do that, the author begins by discussion one of the most influential changes that the spirit of the Enlightenment meant for Spain: the creation of the Royal Academies, specially the creation of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando [Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando] (1752), where the artists received academic and professional education, and where some of the most interesting and heated debates on Aesthetics were held. Interestingly enough, this particular fact has not received as much attention as it could be expected, so a deeper research is still needed, something that the author aims to pursue in the future.

The role played by this Academy is crucial, because both Rejón de Silva and Moreno de Tejada were, to some extent, disciples of what was taught and discussed there, and they were also the inheritors of the aesthetic ideas that were postulated as “valid” and of how they evolved during the century.

These ideas would later have a reflection in the didactic poems these painters and poets wrote during the second half of the century. The final pages of this section are devoted to the evaluation of these poems, on painting Rejón de Silva's and on engraving Moreno de Tejada's. These pages, in consequence, mean an outstanding exercise of multidisciplinary, for Jaquero-Esparcia has to control both artistic and philological ideas and concepts.

In summary, the importance of *Poesía con fines didácticos sobre las artes. Génesis y recepción en la España de la Modernidad* lies on different issues, but one of the central ones is the exploration of how the Spanish 18th century supposed the culmination of a centuries-long process in the understanding and valuing of Arts, didactic poetry, and the interrelation of both. Jaquero-Esparcia's analysis constitutes a landmark in a non-easy process that, often, scares Art Historians to different issues, but which is absolutely crucial for a complete comprehension of what Arts are in general and of what History of Art should be as an academic discipline.

Notes

¹ Artists will search for a surpass of the Baroque ideas by reestablishing the ideals that had been generated during the Renaissance. However, this would be supported by the new atmosphere of scientific progress and an unswerving faith in the Classical past.