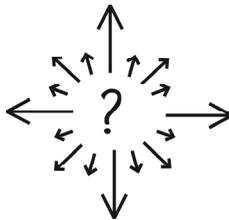


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I. HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

The Political Implications of Heidegger's Reading of the Allegory of the Cave

Georgios Petropoulos
(University College Dublin School of Philosophy)

Abstract

This paper draws a link between Heidegger's reading of Plato's allegory of the cave and his support for the National Socialist regime during the early 30's. Three interrelated suggestions are made: (1) That Heidegger's reading of the allegory of the cave is informed by his preoccupation with the imminent threat of nihilism. (2) That Heidegger's interpretation radicalizes his critique of the public sphere to the effect that it renders the latter irredeemable. (3) That the unbridgeable gap between philosophy and the public sphere commits Heidegger to the anticipation of a catastrophic event that will open up the possibility of genuine freedom.

Keywords: Heidegger; Plato; the allegory of the cave; National Socialism; twentieth-century German philosophy; nihilism; destiny of Being; existence; freedom; questioning; the public sphere

1. Introduction

The relationship between Heidegger and Plato is a topic that has attracted a fair amount of interest in philosophical scholarship. The earliest comment on such a relationship comes from Paul Friedländer's critique of Heidegger's assertion that Plato transformed the notion of truth from unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*) to correctness (*Richtigkeit*).¹ This last point, which constitutes the central claim of Heidegger's 1942 essay on *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*, has been challenged by numerous

¹ Paul Friedländer, *Plato: An Introduction*, trans. Hans Meyerhoff (New York: Harper, 1964).

scholars who have worked on the relationship between Plato and Heidegger. Notwithstanding their differences, Stanley Rosen,² Robert Dostal,³ and more recently Francesco Gonzalez,⁴ agree that Heidegger downgrades the ontological insights of Plato's philosophy and focuses only on the epistemological ones, which he happens to criticize.

Robert Dostal locates a tension between Heidegger's remarks about Plato's *epekeina tes ousias* in his early Marburg lectures and in his 1942 essay on *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*. Whereas in the Marburg lectures Plato's suggestion that Being is *epekeina tes ousias* is understood by Heidegger as pointing in the direction of a genuine encounter with Being as such, in his 1942 essay Plato's phrase is absent. According to Dostal, this absence is indicative of Heidegger's interpretation of Plato as the father of epistemology and the metaphysics of subjectivity.⁵ Dostal's argument for the downgrading of the ontological in Plato is correct as far as the 1942 essay goes. There is, however, an assumption underlying Dostal's account that does not do justice to the complexity of Heidegger's relation to Plato. Dostal assumes that the 1942 essay on *Plato's Doctrine of Truth* repeats and summarizes the main points made by Heidegger in his 1931-32 and 1933-34 lectures devoted in Plato's allegory of the cave.

This assumption has been rightfully challenged by Gonzalez who suggests that Heidegger's interpretation of Plato in the early 30's undermines the main thesis of the 1942 essay.⁶ Following Gonzalez's observation, this paper contends that Heidegger's texts from the early 30's are much more open to the ontological insights of Plato's philosophy than the 1942 essay. Contrary to Gonzalez, however, special attention is

² Stanley Rosen, *Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay* (London: Yale University Press, 1969), 144-145. See also *The Question of Being: A Reversal of Heidegger* (Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2002), 4 ff.

³ Robert Dostal, "Beyond Being: Heidegger's Plato." In *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments*, vol. 2, ed. Christopher E. Macann (New York: Routledge, 1992), 61-89.

⁴ Francisco Gonzalez, *Plato and Heidegger: A Question of Dialogue* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009).

⁵ Dostal, "Beyond Being: Heidegger's Plato," 73-74.

⁶ Gonzalez pays attention to the fact that in his 1931-32 and 1933-34 courses on Plato, Heidegger does not insist on the transformation of the essence of truth in the way that he insists on the 1942 essay on "Plato's Doctrine of Truth" (see Gonzalez, *Plato and Heidegger: A Question of Dialogue*, 112).

paid to Heidegger's ontological reading of the allegory of the cave and to how it serves the purpose of saying something about nihilism — the forgetfulness of Being — and the prospect of overcoming it.

The aim of this paper is to explore the political implications of Heidegger's determination to read the allegory of the cave as a story about the history of human essence. The Platonic resonance of Heidegger's political allegiance to National Socialism is neatly expressed in the "back from Syracuse?" greeting addressed to Heidegger by one of his Freiburg colleagues and quoted by Gadamer in his homonymous article.⁷ Nevertheless, not enough attention has been paid to the relationship between Heidegger's appropriation of Plato's allegory of the cave during the early 30's and his allegiance to National Socialism. This paper tries to make this relationship explicit by focusing on Heidegger's interpretation of the allegory as a story about human essence (*Wesen*) and the occurrence (*Geschehen*) of historical existence. Three interrelated suggestions are made: (1) That Heidegger's reading of the allegory of the cave is informed by his preoccupation with the imminent threat of nihilism, (2) that Heidegger's interpretation radicalizes his critique of the public sphere to the effect that it renders it irredeemable, and (3) that the unbridgeable gap between philosophy and the public sphere commits Heidegger to the anticipation of a catastrophic event that will open up the possibility of genuine freedom.

2. The Destiny of Being as Nihilism

In *Heidegger on Being and Acting*, Reiner Schürmann breaks down Heidegger's *œuvre* in three periods, each of which corresponds to a transformation of transcendental phenomenology. According to Schürmann's arrangement, the first stage of Heidegger's thought marks the transition from transcendental phenomenology to existential phenomenology. With this transition "the condition of our knowing and experiencing is no longer sought purely in man, but in his relation to the being of entities in their totality."⁸ The second transformation consists in the passage from the preeminence of *Dasein* to *Menschentum*, inaugurated

⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Back from Syracuse?" trans. John McCumber, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 15, n. 2 (1989), 427-30.

⁸ Reiner Schürmann, *Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 69.

by the “discovery” of destinal history. Such a transformation indicates that it is not *Dasein* that “opens up a clearing,” but that it is rather historical *aletheia* that constitutes human beings by situating them in a particular epoch of the *destiny of Being*.⁹ Finally, the third transformation is that from *humanity (Menschentum)* to *thinking (Denken)*. During this period, Heidegger suggests that the task of *thinking* is that of letting beings reveal themselves without manipulating them.¹⁰

In what follows, I argue that Heidegger’s reading of Plato’s allegory of the cave during the early 30’s constitutes an early expression of Heidegger’s shift from *Dasein* to the *destiny of Being*. Contrary to Schürmann, however, I suggest that the transition from *Dasein* to the *destiny of Being* — at least in its early formulation — reveals Heidegger’s preoccupation with an existential threat that Western humanity encounters, namely the threat of nihilism.¹¹ Heidegger’s first explicit reference to nihilism occurs in his 1935 lecture course published in 1953 under the title *Introduction to Metaphysics*. There, Heidegger describes nihilism as the cultivation of beings “in the forgetfulness of being.”¹² Although he will not use the word “nihilism” before 1935, Heidegger had already been developing a diagnosis of imminent nihilism since 1931. This becomes apparent, in the “preliminary considerations” of his 1931-32 lecture course *The Essence of Truth*. Notwithstanding the fact that the explicit aim of the course is to “consider the essence of truth” by going back to Plato’s allegory, Heidegger insists that the return to the originary Greek experience of truth as *aletheia* is prescribed to us by the *demands of the day*.¹³

⁹ Ibid., 73.

¹⁰ Ibid., 76.

¹¹ Schürmann’s suggestion is that, with the transition from *Dasein* to *Menschentum*, Heidegger’s thought shatters linear time and touches upon a historical *a priori* that is radically discontinuous and anarchic. Although I am sympathetic to such a reading of Heidegger’s late writings, it seems to me that the transformation from *Dasein* to *Menschentum* is not as straightforward as Schürmann presents it to be. This is to say that during the early 30’s Heidegger develops a narrative that renders Being and/or its forgetfulness an ultimate principle of cohesion that determines all possible praxis.

¹² Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 217.

¹³ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth: On Plato’s Cave Allegory and Theaetetus*, trans. Ted Sadler (London, Continuum, 2009), 1-5.

Heidegger does not go on to work out in full detail what the *demands of the day* are. He does, however, indicate that the allegory of the cave is a story about the awakening of the historical essence of human existence, which is at the present suffocated.¹⁴ As it is well known, Heidegger has a peculiar understanding of the words “essence” and “existence.” Already in *Being and Time*, he suggests that “the ‘essence’ of Dasein lies in existence.”¹⁵ One has to be attentive to the fact that Heidegger puts the word “essence” in inverted commas, thus expressing his discomfort with this philosophically laden term. Heidegger’s determination to challenge the traditional understanding of essence as *essentia* becomes clearer when one focuses on his understanding of existence. Existence for Heidegger is irreducible to mere presence; it is not something that all beings share. “Existence” is a term that Heidegger reserves for human beings only, as it names an *ek-stasis*, i.e., the stepping out of oneself toward Being. When Heidegger suggests, therefore, that human essence is at the present suffocated, what he is tacitly saying is that human existence — *qua ek-stasis* — is under threat.

The underlying danger necessitating a return to Greek thinking comes to a sharper relief in Heidegger’s 1932 summer course *The Beginning of Western Philosophy*. In the second part of this course, entitled “Interposed Considerations,” he attempts to give a more elaborate justification of the need to go back to the Greeks. He does so by drawing an analogy between the current state of humanity and a wanderer in an arid land who is about to die from thirst due to her distance from the source that she last drew water from.¹⁶

To better understand the implications of Heidegger’s story of the wanderer, one must first examine what he means by the threat of dying from thirst. As we have indicated, the wanderer symbolizes humanity.¹⁷

¹⁴ Ibid., 45, 59.

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 68.

¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *The Beginning of Western Philosophy*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 31 f.

¹⁷ Heidegger’s story of the wanderer deserves further examination, especially in relation to the contemptible comments that he makes about Judaism in his *Black Notebooks*. Is Heidegger appropriating here the stereotype of the wandering and rootless Jew? And how does this relate to his comments about the worldlessness of Judaism that we find in the *Black Notebooks*? (See Heidegger, *Ponderings*

But Heidegger is not saying that humanity — as a species — faces the threat of natural extinction. His suggestion rather amounts to the claim that humanity is in the process of forfeiting its transcendence toward Being and that, in this way, it is exhausting the resources of its freedom. By that time, Heidegger has developed a sense of freedom that goes hand in hand with the human openness to Being. Genuine “becoming free” amounts to a projective understanding of Being which nevertheless supposes a binding relationship to “what gives freedom,” namely the enigma that lies at the very heart of the question of Being.¹⁸ Freedom for Heidegger is a gift of Being to human beings. It is the mystery of Being that opens up the space for human freedom.

At this point, I should make clear that, according to my reading, during the early 30’s Heidegger’s thought takes the opposite path from the one suggested by Simon Critchley. Whereas Critchley calls for the need to focus on *Dasein*’s *thrownness* and *facticity*, I contend that during the early 30’s Heidegger prioritizes *Dasein*’s transcendence.¹⁹ “The

VII-XI, trans. Richard Rojcewicz, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2017, 76). These are questions that I examine in another paper and cannot adequately develop here. For the purpose of this paper, it suffices to say that it is indeed highly possible that Heidegger appropriates the anti-Semitic stereotype of the rootless Jew with the purpose of alerting his audience to the disastrous implications of the increased distance from the question of Being. Having said this, however, it is important to note that the wanderer that he describes in the 1932 summer course symbolizes not a rootless and worldless wanderer — the type of existence that Heidegger ascribes to the Jewish figure in the *Black Notebooks* — but a wanderer who remains rooted to the source, even when he has lost his orientation (Heidegger, *The Beginning of Western Philosophy*, 31). With the story of the wanderer, Heidegger seeks to say something about the predicament of Western *Dasein*. The closer Western *Dasein* comes to dying of thirst, the closer it comes to realizing its rootedness to the question of Being. The ostensible rootlessness of Western humanity derives from its originary relation to Being.

¹⁸ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 43.

¹⁹ Critchley suggests that one should focus on Heidegger’s account of *thrownness* and *facticity*, so as to rescue Heidegger’s thought from a heroism that accentuates his disregard for the plurality of human-being together (see Simon Critchley and Reiner Schürmann, *On Heidegger’s Being and Time*, ed. Steven Levine, London: Routledge, 2018, 139 ff). By suggesting that Heidegger prioritizes transcendence, I am not claiming that he abandons his account of thrownness. As a matter of fact, the story of the wanderer indicates that the wanderer is thrown in his predicament — the forgetfulness of Being. What is rather being suggested here is that Heideg-

essence [*die Essenz*] of humans consists in their existence. And this their essence is possible on the basis of transcendence."²⁰

If my reading is correct, Heidegger's reference to the peril of death relates to his sense of existence as a stepping out of oneself toward beings as a whole, which in turn implies a transcendence toward the question of Being as such. The peril of death marks, therefore, the peril of non-existence, provided, however, that we do not identify *existence* (*Existenz*) with *actuality* (*Wircklichkeit*).²¹ Heidegger links the danger of non-existence to the distance of Western *Dasein* from the spring that made this existence possible in the first place.²² The existence of Western *Dasein* is grounded in the occurrence of an understanding of Being, which in turn implies a transcendence toward the mystery of Being. Heidegger calls this process the *esteeming* (*das Würdigen*) of Being.²³ Without *Dasein*'s transcendence toward the mystery of Being, there is no understanding of Being and, without an understanding of Being, no comportment to beings, not even to ourselves as beings.²⁴ This esteeming of Being that, according to Heidegger, occurs for the first time in

ger's early thoughts on the destiny of Being are preoccupied with the danger of forfeiting transcendence. If transcendence is forfeited, then thrownness is forfeited, too. This is to say that with the suffocation of human existence, the thrown situatedness of Western humanity is not understood as the inevitable result of the self-withdrawal of Being, but rather transforms itself into reality and actuality. In other words, without transcendence thrownness is not understood as thrownness.

²⁰ Heidegger, *The Beginning of Western Philosophy*, 69.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 62. In his eagerness to determine the peculiar nature of existence and how it is at stake in the era of nihilism, Heidegger feels the need to draw a distinction between mere *human actuality*, on the one hand, and *human existence* on the other. Existence, he says, "signifies the mode of Being of humans." He continues, however, to say that existence does not apply to humans in general and as such: "Not all humans who are actual, were actual, or will be actual do 'exist,' have existed, or will exist — *in the sense* we understand existence" (*ibid.*, 64).

²² The word that could best describe this danger is the word "nihilism." Heidegger does not use this word in his 1932 lecture, but he devotes a section of his seminar to "the determination of the current situation by Friedrich Nietzsche," thus introducing the idea that the true meaning of Nietzsche's diagnosis of nihilism relates to the danger of non-existence (*ibid.*, 35).

²³ *Ibid.*, 59.

²⁴ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010), 122.

early Greek thinking, marks for him the transformation of human existence from mere actuality to being-in-a-world and historicity.²⁵ To put this last point differently, it is with the esteeming of Being that worldliness and historical existence happen. From this it follows that with the dis-esteeming/the forgetfulness of Being both of them are in danger.

Heidegger seems convinced that his time is one of high stakes, because Western *Dasein* has alienated itself from the questioning of Being to such an extent that it encounters the danger of plunging itself in a petrified reality (*status quo*) where there are no other possibilities apart from the ones available.²⁶ This is how Heidegger describes nihilism in *Introduction to Metaphysics*:

But where is the real nihilism at work? Where one clings to current beings and believes it is enough to take beings, as before, just as the beings that they are. But with this, one rejects the question of Being and treats Being as a nothing (*nihil*), which in a certain way it even “is,” insofar as it essentially unfolds. Merely to chase after beings in the midst of the oblivion of Being — that is nihilism. Nihilism thus understood is the *ground* for the nihilism that Nietzsche exposed in the first book of *The Will to Power*.²⁷

The crucial elements of the above passage are: (1) Heidegger’s remark that nihilism is at work when thinking clings to the familiar and treats Being as such (the unfamiliar) as nothing at all, (2) Heidegger’s claim that Being in its essential unfolding “is” *nothing*, yet not nothing at all. According to Heidegger, Nietzsche’s claim that Being is the emptiest of all concepts and therefore nothing at all is quite informative in revealing the oblivion of Being in modern thinking. This oblivion, however, is for Heidegger the culminating point of the spiritual decline of the West.²⁸ Much like in his story of the wanderer, decline is the result of a distancing from the source of our history.

In front of such a danger, Heidegger appeals to an understanding of existence in terms of a transcendence from that which is most familiar

²⁵ It is in his 1930 essay “On the Essence of Truth,” that Heidegger explicitly draws a link between the beginning of Western *Dasein*’s historicity and the Greek understanding of Being as *physis* (see Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, trans. William McNeill, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998, 145).

²⁶ Heidegger, *The Beginning of Western Philosophy*, 60.

²⁷ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 217.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 29.

(beings) to what is the most unfamiliar (Being). So, what is at stake here is not only a concealment of the essence of truth as unconcealment, but most importantly the concealment of human essence as existence. The threat of perishing signals the threat of plunging ourselves in an eternal *in-sistence*. Going back to his 1931-32 course on Plato, Heidegger explicitly states that, without experiencing this threat, the return to Plato's allegory of the cave is merely a façade.²⁹ If my reading is correct, it is the threat of nihilism that functions as the access point for understanding Heidegger's appropriation of the allegory. Having established that the *demands of the day* have something to do with the danger of non-existence, we can now move to the second part of this paper and examine how Heidegger molds Plato's allegory in a way that fits his account of nihilism.

3. The Four Stages of the Allegory of the Cave

Both in the lecture course of the winter semester of 1931-32 and that of the winter semester of 1933-34, Heidegger breaks down the allegory into four stages: (1) The situation of human beings in the cave; (2) the failed liberation within the cave; (3) the genuine liberation outside the cave; (4) the return of the liberated philosopher into the cave as a liberator. In the following, I provide a succinct reading of each stage, paying special attention to the transition from the first stage to the third one. I suggest that Heidegger appropriates the allegory of the cave in a way that raises to irreconcilable heights the tension between the first and the third stage. In doing so, I argue, Heidegger finds himself in need of a catastrophic event that will open up the possibility for genuine freedom.

3.1. The First Stage

Heidegger's interpretation of the first stage of the allegory resembles his account of *everydayness* (*Alltäglichkeit*), *fallenness* (*Verfallen*), and *inauthenticity* (*Uneigentlichkeit*) in *Being and Time*.³⁰ As Heidegger says, "the allegory depicts precisely the everyday situation of man, who, in so far as he does not possess any standard *other* than everydayness, cannot

²⁹ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 13.

³⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 219 ff.

see its strangeness.”³¹ The shackled prisoners of the allegory are immersed in a world, they comport themselves toward inner-worldly beings, but they are unaware of the world and of their *being-in-the-world* (*In-der-Welt-sein*). In other words, the prisoners are unaware of this modality of being that distinguishes human beings from stones, plants, and animals.³² Unawareness, however, does not imply complete absence of a world. This becomes clear in Heidegger’s claim that the cave dwellers relate to the essence of truth as *un-hiddenness* (*Unverborgenheit*), which means that the cave dwellers are already riveted to an un-hiddenness of Being — an implicit understanding of Being — that makes beings intelligible. It is the world that solicits their actions, and yet, they remain unaware of it. Like in *Being and Time*, Heidegger’s interpretation of the first stage of the allegory suggests that human beings have the tendency of becoming absorbed in the world, and “Being-lost in the publicness of the ‘they’.”³³ “The prisoners do not even know that they are in a ‘situation’.”³⁴

It is important, however, to remain alert to two important differences between Heidegger’s account of *everydayness* in *Being and Time* and its tacit re-examination in the early 30’s. One thing to bear in mind is that Heidegger’s later remarks about *everydayness* are informed by the first steps that his thinking takes toward the *history of Being* (*Seinsgeschichte*).³⁵ This means that the situation of the cave dwellers is not interpreted merely as a manifestation of the existential tendency of *Dasein* toward *falling*. The situation of the cave dwellers is rather interpreted as revealing something about the situatedness of human beings in a particular epoch of the *history of Being* — the era of imminent nihilism. The second point that demands our attention is that Heidegger’s focus shifts from *Dasein* (singular) to *Menschentum* and Western human-

³¹ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 22.

³² For a discussion of the difference between stones, plants, animals, and human beings with regard to the world, see Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 178. See also Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 137.

³³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 220.

³⁴ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 23.

³⁵ Heidegger uses this term for the first time in *Contributions to Philosophy*. However, one already finds traces of it in his lecture courses of the early 30’s. One such example is the use of the archaic *Seyn* instead of *Sein*.

ity in general. Heidegger is no longer interested in highlighting *falling* as an existential characteristic of *Dasein*. He is rather determined to examine how this characteristic deploys itself in an era when Western humanity has been the furthest removed from the question of Being. As Michael Inwood puts it, the allegory of the cave is for Heidegger a story that helps us “comprehend ourselves in our ownmost *Geschichte*.”³⁶

The aforementioned differences set a different tone to Heidegger's reading of *everydayness*. In the context of his analysis of the allegory of the cave, Heidegger is not aiming at disclosing *Dasein* as *falling* and *thrown projection*, but rather at showing how humanity can regain its *ek-sistence* by re-appropriating the question of Being. In other words, existence and transcendence become more important than *thrownness* and *facticity*, which is not to say that the latter become irrelevant.³⁷ Seen from the perspective of imminent nihilism, the first stage of the allegory touches upon the issue of a collective *falling* of Western humanity. In such a forgetful *falling*, Western humanity treats the present as immediately and unquestionably true.

During the early 30's, Heidegger understands the task of thinking as that of excavating the hitherto unquestioned ground of the world that we live in. Although *Being and Time*, as Carman suggests, can be read as a work that explores the possibility of “taking up a new, distinctive

³⁶ Michael Inwood, “Truth and Untruth in Plato and Heidegger.” In *Heidegger and Plato: Toward Dialogue*, ed. Catalin Partenie and Tom Rockmore (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2005), 87. In the introductory comments of his lecture course, Heidegger talks about the significance of a historical orientation to thinking, i.e., the significance of examining the buried tradition in which our present situation stands: “what is current today is confirmed as itself ancient” (Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 7).

³⁷ What Heidegger has in mind becomes clearer in his interpretation of Parmenides in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, wherein he draws a link between the Greek word *doxa* and the realm of *das Man*. Heidegger insists that the Greeks experienced the path of *doxa* as unavoidable. What is important, however, is that the Greeks recognized *doxa* as an unavoidable path on the grounds of their experience of “the sweeping storm on the way of Being” and “the terror of the second way to the abyss of Nothing” (Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 120). It is this experience that made the Greeks reluctant to take what appears as unquestionably true, and it is the distance from this experience that has transformed Western *Dasein* into a being that is satisfied with what is readily available and familiar.

relation to the social norms always already governing one's concrete possibilities,"³⁸ in the early 30's Heidegger's tone becomes increasingly alarmist. He finds no true liberating potential in the concrete possibilities of Western humanity. It is only by achieving a distance from what is unquestionably familiar that genuine historical thinking is enacted. And it is only in such an enactment that an authentic futurity opens up.³⁹

Going back to what was said above about Heidegger's peculiar understanding of existence, the prisoners at the first stage of the allegory are on the verge of non-existence, since they are alienated not only from their own *worldliness* (*Weltlichkeit*) but most importantly from their forgetfulness of the transcendence toward the *clearing* (*Lichtung*) of Being that grounds both their *Being-in-the-world* (ontological truth) and the availability of beings for ontic comportment (ontic truth).⁴⁰ If my reading is correct, the prisoners of the first stage symbolize Western *Dasein*, which is caught at the culminating point of nihilism, i.e., in an epoch in which Being reveals itself as irrelevant, void, not-question-worthy.

3.2. The Second Stage

The second stage of the allegory is the least commented by Heidegger. But, as I hope to show in this paper, it is far from being the least significant. The second stage of the allegory marks, for Heidegger, a sudden

³⁸ Taylor Carman, *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse and Authenticity in Being and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 143.

³⁹ "For in *genuine* historical reflection we take just that distance from the present which allows us room to leap out beyond our own present, i.e. to treat it just as every present as present deserves to be treated, namely as something to be *overcome*. Genuine historical return is the decisive beginning of authentic *futurity*" (Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 7).

⁴⁰ The word *Lichtung* is used for the first time in the 1930 essay "On the Essence of Truth." The important element introduced by this essay is the claim that untruth (concealment) is not the result of human limitation, but rather stems from the concealing essence of truth as such. Heidegger uses the word "mystery" to describe the originary concealment that belongs to truth as such (see Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 146 ff). With such a claim, Heidegger anticipates his turn from the concealing unconcealment of *Dasein* to the concealing unconcealment of Being as such.

event whereby one or some of the prisoners turn away from what has been readily familiar. Two important things happen at the second stage. First, the realization that truth has gradations, i.e., that things can be more or less unconcealed.⁴¹ Second, an implicit announcement of the difference between Being and beings.⁴² This later announcement carries with it the possibility of coming to the realization of the distinctive essence of human existence, namely, that human beings are more beingful (*seiender*) beings, because they are exposed to *beings as a whole*.⁴³ It is, however, the failure of the liberated prisoners to dig deeper into the question of Being and *aletheia* that constitutes the missed chance and, thus, the failure of the second stage.

The liberation of the second stage is sudden and unsettling. It causes insecurity and confusion and it prompts the liberated prisoners to the security and complacency of their imprisoned state. The liberated prisoner wants to return to a place “where no exertion is required, where he is unhindered, where nothing recoils upon him, where there is no confusion, and where everyone is in agreement.”⁴⁴ In doing so, the prisoner flees from *decision* and fails “to stand in the ground of his essence.”⁴⁵ But what does it mean for someone to stand on the ground of their essence? Heidegger’s answer is that it is to engage in an enactment of the ontological difference. This last point gives us a hint that Heidegger’s concern is not reducible to a desire to reach an ontological clarification of the difference between Being and beings. The failure of the second stage resides precisely in this lack of enactment: “the difference occurs in the *enactment* of the differentiation. To bring the differentiation to enactment would be being-human [*Menschsein*], existing [*Existieren*].”⁴⁶ So, existence is not achieved in the second stage. The liberated prisoner turns a deaf ear to the implicit announcement of the ontological difference and goes back to her insistent comportment toward beings.

At this point, it is worth mentioning a new element introduced by

⁴¹ “Truth and truth is not simply the same” (Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 25).

⁴² With their release, the prisoners have the chance to see what is closer to Being (*ἐγγυτέρω τοῦ ὄντος*).

⁴³ See Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 25 and Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 137.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 27.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 28.

Heidegger's 1933-34 reading of the allegory. Whereas both in the 1931-32 and the 1933-34 lecture course he insists that the prisoners of the second stage are not liberated to their true essence, in the latter he suggests that something happens in the second stage — "History [*Geschichte*] begins."⁴⁷ This is a crucial point to bear in mind, since it makes a significant difference on how we read the second stage of the allegory. If nothing but failure happens there, then the second stage is unnecessary for the occurrence of genuine liberation. If, nevertheless, history begins at the second stage, then notwithstanding the possibility of failure, the insecurity and confusion described at the second stage is not an arbitrary event, but rather a positive event toward the realization of existence proper.⁴⁸ I submit that, during the early 30's, Heidegger does indeed consider the confusion found at the second stage of the allegory as a necessary step toward genuine freedom. But I will develop this point in my discussion of the fourth stage of the allegory. Before doing so, however, it is necessary to say a few things about Heidegger's conception of true freedom, as deployed in his reading of the third stage of the allegory.

3.3. The Third Stage

Heidegger's understanding of genuine liberation is clarified in his discussion of the third stage of the allegory. Although his analysis of the third stage is quite elaborate and I cannot do justice to it in details, for the purpose of this paper I limit myself to highlighting three important features. First, Heidegger insists that the liberation that occurs at the third stage is not an easy one, since it requires a violent abandonment of what is readily familiar and an exposure to what is most unfamiliar.⁴⁹ Second, he makes clear that genuine freedom takes place in the act of *de-concealing* (*Ent-bergen*).⁵⁰ *Deconcealment* (*Entborgung*) is presented by Heidegger as a pre-modelling (*vorbildlich*) projection of Being that "first allows us to come closer to beings."⁵¹ Third, he claims that the

⁴⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 108

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 32.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 53.

⁵¹ Ibid., 45. Deconcealment is a fundamental act of human beings in the sense that it grounds the manifestedness of beings (see, Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*,

most genuine modality of *de-concealing* — namely, the *de-concealing* that at once reveals and transforms human essence — is the *de-concealing* occurring within the questioning stance of philosophy.⁵²

During the early 30's, Heidegger presents Plato as a transitional thinker who is, on the one hand, riveted to the primordial experience of truth as the interplay of concealment and unconcealment and, on the other hand, expresses the forgetfulness of fundamental concealment in treating untruth as *pseudos*. Heidegger rejects those interpretations that treat Platonic ideas as objective beings or categories of thinking.⁵³ His interpretation aims to distance itself from an understanding of ideas as *quidditas*, i.e., as static concepts that reveal the “whatness” or “the essential nature” of a thing. To be more precise, Heidegger attempts to put forward an interpretation of the meaning of the word *idea* that links it to what he called *pre-ontological truth* in his essay *On the Essence of Ground*. This pre-ontological truth is the unconcealment of Being that is irreducible to categories of theoretical thinking.⁵⁴ In other words, Heidegger suggests that the Platonic term *idea* points to the pre-ontological understanding of Being that “guides and illuminates in advance all comportment toward beings.”⁵⁵

According to Heidegger, the Platonic *idea* reveals something essential about the Being of beings, namely, that beings in their Being come to presence by entering into a form — an *idea*: “The seeing of the idea, i.e. the understanding of what-being and how-being, in short of *being*, first allows beings to be recognized *as* the beings they are.”⁵⁶ The *idea* constitutes the Being of beings in the sense that it provides the implicit criterion for distinguishing between beings and non-beings.

As for the Platonic *Good* (*agathon*), Heidegger explicitly states that it has no moral significance for Plato and that it is thus not to be understood as value.⁵⁷ Here, it must be mentioned that Heidegger's reading of the Platonic *agathon* in the early 30's is much more generous than his

55, and *Being and Truth*, 136).

⁵² The *de-concealing* that reveals Being as the most question-worthy.

⁵³ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 52.

⁵⁴ Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 104.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* See also Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 42.

⁵⁶ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 38-39.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

reading of it in the 1942 essay *On Plato's Doctrine of Truth*. Although Heidegger thinks that Plato's description of the *agathon* as an *idea* is symptomatic of Plato's confusion, his interpretation is quite generous since it focuses on Socrates' saying that the *agathon* is beyond the Being of beings. In the latter remark, Heidegger finds an echo of the irreducibility of the *agathon* to presence; he detects a struggle between the tendency to reduce the *agathon* to an *idea* and a tendency to think of the *agathon* as a self-withdrawing source of presence. This is to say that Heidegger finds in Plato's *agathon* an implicit announcement of a primordial concealment that lies at the heart of truth; a concealment that is irreducible to the negative conception of concealment as distortion caused by human beings.⁵⁸ The *agathon* is the enabling power (*dunamis*) that is ungraspable and intangible, "almost like nothingness and the void."⁵⁹ He goes as far as to describe the Platonic *agathon* in terms of a clearing (*Lichtung*), thus allowing the *agathon* to be understood as the self-withdrawing empowering power that opens up the possibility for an understanding of Being.⁶⁰

Given the above, the freedom that transpires at the third stage of the allegory is exhausted neither in the thematization of the understanding of Being that underlies ontic comportment nor in the possibility of a new understanding of Being. Although Heidegger identifies genuine human freedom with the pre-modelling projection of Being, he nevertheless suggests that the possibility of pre-modelling projection is not a possibility that human beings derive from their own resources. Becoming free presupposes an exposure to the primordial concealment, the withdrawal of which allows for the occurrence of a pre-modelling projection of Being. Freedom — the possibility of a projective understand-

⁵⁸ The understanding of concealment strictly in terms of distortion is for Heidegger an indication that concealment has fallen into forgetfulness: "Wherever the concealment of beings as a whole is conceded only as a limit that occasionally announces itself, concealing as a fundamental occurrence has sunk into forgottenness" (Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 149).

⁵⁹ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 39.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 43. According to Heidegger, the *agathon* is neither a being nor that which unconceals beings. Whereas the idea enables an orientation towards beings, the *agathon* is the space which grants the possibility of pre-ontological understanding. An inquiry into the *agathon* is an inquiry "into what grants being and unhidness" (*ibid.*, 79).

ing of Being — is a gift to human beings. In Heidegger's own words, freedom "receives its own essence from the more originary essence of uniquely essential truth."⁶¹ To be genuinely free, therefore, is to remain alert to that which gives freedom, namely the *agathon*, the *Lichtung*, the abysmal interplay of concealment and unconcealment that lies at the core of the truth of Being. Freedom, he says, is measured according to the depth of one's binding to what gives-free.⁶²

It is precisely this last point that distinguishes philosophy from other modalities of *de-concealing*/projective projection of Being. Heidegger gives the example of modern science as a case of pre-modelling projection of Being that does not sustain a binding relation to what gives-free. According to Heidegger, modern scientific practice is grounded on a projection that "*delineated* in advance what was henceforth to be *understood* as nature and natural process: a spatio-temporally determined totality of movement of masspoints."⁶³ But, although Heidegger takes modern science to be a case of human freedom, he claims that it remains unhinged from the source of freedom. Notwithstanding the fact that modern science is originally a case of freedom, its insistent preoccupation with beings signals the forgetting of "its original essential character of liberation."⁶⁴

Contrary to the pre-modelling projection of modern science, philosophy instantiates human existence in its fullest. In Heidegger's words: "Only by entering into the dangerous region of philosophy is it possible for man to realize his nature as transcending himself into the unhiddenness of beings. Man apart from philosophy is something else."⁶⁵ So, for Heidegger, true liberation occurs only from within the zone of philosophy. Genuine "becoming free" amounts to a projective understanding of Being which nevertheless supposes a binding relationship to that which gives freedom, and that which gives freedom is the mystery that lies at the very heart of the question of Being.

Already since 1930, Heidegger draws a link between the emergence of historical existence and the projective understanding of Being:

⁶¹ Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 144.

⁶² Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 44.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 45

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

History begins only when beings themselves are expressly drawn up into their unconcealment and conserved in it, only when this conservation is conceived on the basis of questioning regarding beings as such. The ordinary disclosure of beings as a whole, the question concerning beings as such, and the beginning of Western history are the same; they occur together in a “time” which, itself unmeasurable, first opens up the open region for every measure.⁶⁶

Heidegger suggests that Western history and the historical existence of humanity begin with the question: What are beings? Such a question is, according to Heidegger, not to be understood as a question about present beings. The question itself points to the surpassing of beings (*Dasein*'s transcendence) and the exposure to the mystery of Being as such. The simultaneity of the surpassing and the exposure to the mystery is what provokes the question about beings: *why are beings something instead of nothing?*

Heidegger's interpretation of the third stage of the allegory is concerned with the idea of historical existence and its inception in the questioning stance toward Being. His idiosyncratic interpretation of the allegory aims at drawing a link between the inception of historical existence and the fundamental stance toward Being, which nevertheless presupposes an exposure to the nothingness of Being, i.e., to the void that rages at the heart of the question of all questions. Such an exposure to the nothingness of Being is for Heidegger what marks the transformation from mere actuality to historical existence.⁶⁷ But this is not the only thing that Heidegger extracts from the allegory. The allegory tells us that it is only through the rekindling of a genuine confrontation with the mystery of Being that Western *Dasein* can overcome its destitution and

⁶⁶ Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, 145.

⁶⁷ “This beginning [the beginning of our spiritual-historical *Dasein*] is the setting out [*Aufbruch*] of Greek philosophy. Here, for the first time, western man raises himself up from a popular base and, by virtue of his language, stands up to *the totality of what is*, which he questions and conceives as the being that it is” (Martin Heidegger, “The Self-Assertion of the German University,” trans. Karsten Harries in *Review of Metaphysics*, 1985, vol. 38, n. 3, 467-502, 471-472). As it will become apparent in some of his later writings, the interpretation of *physis* as *upsurgent presencing* allows Heidegger to claim that in the Greek experience of *physis* one can find an awareness of the mystery of Being (see Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 121).

regain its proper existence.⁶⁸

The key point here is that the overcoming of destitution can be achieved only in the act of questioning as such. Liberation, he says, is a matter of doing and not of talking. It is a matter of taking a standpoint toward Being and its limit — nothingness.⁶⁹ The standpoint that Heidegger is talking about is, however, not a closed, dogmatic one. The standpoint of philosophy is one of incessant questioning and vigilance toward the self-withdrawal of Being. It is not a standpoint that guards itself against indeterminacy, but rather a standpoint that positively opens itself to indeterminacy and refuses to close off the enigma that gives freedom. The way I see things, philosophical questioning is for Heidegger a radical way of questioning, i.e., it is not a questioning that seeks an answer that would negate the act of questioning. On the contrary, genuine philosophical questioning aims at keeping the possibility of questioning open. In other words, philosophical questioning is the guardian of human freedom. Heidegger makes this goal explicit in his rectoral address when he claims that the world opened up by a return to the Greek experience of the impotence of our pre-modelling projection before the self-concealing totality of what is would be a world of *danger* and constant *decision*.⁷⁰ If my reading is correct, at that time Heidegger conceived of philosophy as the standpoint that will bring Western *Dasein* to its proper existence and historicity by alerting it to the Destiny of Being as self-withdrawal.

3.4. The Fourth Stage

Through my analysis of the third stage of the allegory, I have suggested that at that time Heidegger understands philosophical questioning as the pinnacle of human existence, i.e., as the standpoint that opens up Being without closing it off. But after raising philosophy to the highest of ranks in his interpretation of the third stage of the allegory, he makes some rather surprising claims in his discussion of the fourth stage. The most striking one is that, despite its liberating potential, philosophy is powerless when it comes to shaking the certainties of the cave-prisoners.

⁶⁸ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 7.

⁶⁹ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 52.

⁷⁰ Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," 473-475.

Heidegger suggests that, in order for genuine philosophy to become relevant, i.e., in order for the possibility of genuine liberation to emerge, an occurrence that shakes the complacency and self-certainty of the prisoners must first take place. His admission, however, that philosophy is powerless in the ontic realm deserves our attention, because it brings under new light the second stage of the allegory, namely the failed liberation.

Heidegger lingers on Plato's claim that the philosopher liberator will be mocked by the prisoners and might even be killed when he returns to the cave. Furthermore, he draws an explicit link between the impotence of philosophy and the possibility of being killed: "That the philosopher is delivered over to death in the cave means that philosophy is powerless within the region of prevailing self-evidences. Only in so far as these themselves change can philosophy have its say."⁷¹ Heidegger suggests that the remark about the death of the philosopher should not be read as a reference to the physical death of Socrates, the historical figure. He rather claims that death marks the fatal compromise of philosophy when applied to the public realm. "The *killing* consists in the fact that the philosopher and his questioning are suddenly transferred into the language of the cave dwellers."⁷²

Heidegger's point is profoundly anti-Socratic. If Socrates is this thinker who took the risk of ridiculing himself and even of dying with the aim of bringing philosophical thinking to the public sphere, Heidegger expresses his complete disregard for it. If philosophy is to remain true to itself, it must resist the public sphere. As he says, "it belongs to the essence of the philosopher that he is *solitary* [...]. He is all the more solitary because in the cave he cannot retreat. Speaking out from solitude, he speaks at the decisive moment."⁷³

The portrait of the philosopher that Heidegger paints is that of a lonely figure that listens only to the silent call of Being, waits for the circumstances to change, and seizes such an opportunity in order to drag the cave-dwellers into the question of Being. The philosopher does not liberate by conversing with the cave dwellers; he "does not try to per-

⁷¹ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 61.

⁷² Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 141.

⁷³ Ibid.

suade the cave-dwellers by reference to norms, grounds and proofs.”⁷⁴ What we encounter in Heidegger's description of the fourth stage of the allegory is an irreconcilable tension between the public realm as presented at the first stage of the allegory and genuine philosophical questioning as presented at the third one. Heidegger's account of the impotence of philosophy in shaking the certainties of the prisoners suggests that the role of philosophy is not to problematize the certainties of the public sphere, but rather to lead onto the path of genuine philosophical questioning those who have already challenged the certainties of their time and find themselves in limbo. Such a claim brings under new light the second stage of the allegory — the so-called failed liberation.⁷⁵

Although Heidegger is adamant in claiming that freedom is not achieved at the second stage, the tension between the first and the third stage of the allegory raises the question about the link between the two irreconcilable realms. Heidegger's insistence on the difference between the freedom achieved at the third stage and the liberation of the second stage does not preclude one from considering the liberation of the second stage as a necessary — albeit insufficient — requirement for true freedom. As a matter of fact, what I am suggesting here is that Heidegger's remarks about the impotence of philosophy to stir up the public sphere, combined with his conviction that Western *Dasein* is in risk of completely forfeiting its true existence, commits Heidegger to a catastrophic, apocalyptic view of the way to human freedom.

In order to better understand Heidegger's appeal to an event that shakes off self-evidence as a prerequisite for the revitalization of philosophy, we should return to the second stage of his interpretation of the allegory. At first sight, this stage merely informs us about a failed liberation of the prisoners, who lacking any guidance end up willing to go back to what was previously self-evident. Nevertheless, the fact that in Heidegger's interpretation the released prisoners find themselves encountering a gradation of truth indicates that at the second stage of the allegory, the self-certainties of the prisoners are to a certain extent shook. The prisoners want to return to the safety and the placidity of

⁷⁴ Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 62.

⁷⁵ Heidegger himself suggests that only when we will have an overview of all the stages of the allegory, will we be capable of understanding the structural significance of each stage (Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth*, 17).

their previous state precisely because they somehow find themselves liberated from it, albeit only temporarily.

The necessity of a moment of crisis (of unshackling) for the awakening of the question of Being is already apparent in Heidegger's discussion of *Angst* in *Being and Time*. Under the fundamental mood of anxiety, the *world* — on the ground of which *Dasein* performs its everyday activities — reveals itself as nothing and brings *Dasein* face to face with the question of its ownmost being and of Being in general. Nevertheless, in the early 30's Heidegger exhibits a desire to go a step further and interprets the moment of crisis in terms of a historical event that brings not merely one *Dasein*, but a whole nation in front of a *decision* that will determine the future of the West.

As we have already seen, Heidegger understands his time as a time of distress and confusion. Nevertheless, Heidegger is convinced that what is great in humans comes to fruition not in security and comfort but in such moments of distress and suffering. It is in such moments that we are called to think the depths of our historical existence. As the story of the wanderer indicates, the danger of dying from thirst is what makes us turn to the source of our historical existence. The significance that Heidegger ascribes to the experience of confusion, first for realizing the destitution of the present and then for finding a way out of destitution, reveals the unspoken significance of the second stage of Plato's allegory for the ascent out of the forgetfulness of Being.

In lectures given in 1934 after his resignation as Rector of Freiburg, Heidegger is still convinced of the significance of a historical crisis for the emergence of genuine questioning. Genuine questioning, he says, emerges out of the overpowering necessities of one's historical situation.⁷⁶ Although philosophy is responsible for liberating the prisoners toward genuine questioning, it remains hopeless with those prisoners that do not experience a historical crisis.

Notwithstanding the fact that Heidegger interprets the second stage of the allegory as a failed liberation, his claim that philosophy is powerless in shaking the self-evident tranquility of the prisoners indicates that the second stage of the allegory is not an indifferent and superfluous

⁷⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*, trans. Wanda Torres Gregory and Yvonne Unna (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009), 41.

stage. On the contrary, the failed liberation is essential for Heidegger's story of an ascent toward transcendence and freedom.

4. Conclusion

Enough evidence emerged from the above analysis to claim the probability of a direct link between Heidegger's political engagement and his interpretation of Plato's allegory of the cave. The sharp distinction that Heidegger draws between the first and the third stage of the allegory, i.e., the sharp distinction that he draws between the public sphere, on the one hand, and genuine, solitary philosophical questioning, on the other, makes him susceptible to putting his hope in an event that cuts short all discussion in a violent gesture, an event that pretends to open a path toward a radically different future.

This is the point where we have to pose the question of Heidegger's engagement with National Socialism. What is the philosophical underpinning of Heidegger's decision to put his faith in a regime that was far remote from his own philosophical concerns? I think that an answer to this question can be given if we pay attention to the unbridgeable gap that Heidegger creates between the public sphere and philosophy. This gap reveals the violent and confusing dislocation of truth that takes place at the second stage as a necessary bridge between the two.

I am not suggesting that Heidegger was naive enough to believe that National Socialism was heading toward a genuine philosophical questioning. What I rather want to highlight is that Heidegger's reading of the allegory of the cave suggests that, in order for philosophy to regain its status, it is in need of a violent exodus from the public realm — an exodus that philosophy itself cannot inaugurate. In other words, Heidegger's perception of the public realm as irredeemably fallen together with his conviction that philosophy is powerless to inaugurate change at the ontic level commits him to the view that philosophical questioning is in need of an extra-philosophical thrust.

As far as I can see, one would not be off the mark in suggesting that Heidegger finds in National Socialism this thrust that supposedly signals the end of a long tradition that has mired itself in sterile, nihilistic, and rootless politics. His recently published *Notebooks* corroborate this point. On the grounds of his inner conviction that his time is a time of *danger*, Heidegger interprets Hitler's rise to power in terms of a struggle against a petrified status quo. But Heidegger considers such a struggle valuable

only to the extent that it shakes previous certainties and gives to thinking a new impetus. He is by no means willing to give his blessings to a new National Socialist status quo. On the contrary, he is rather critical toward the slogans and catchphrases of the national socialists.⁷⁷

It is important to keep in mind that, when Heidegger says that the prisoners will most likely want to return to their shackles, he does not mean that they would want to return to the exact same shadows that they perceived prior to their liberation. What he rather says is that the prisoners will want to return to the security and the immediacy of shadows — whatever these shadows might be. This becomes apparent if we consider some of his remarks in the *Black Notebooks* regarding the danger that National Socialism will become a new status quo.

National Socialism is a genuine nascent power only if it still has something to withhold behind all its activity and talk — and only if it operates as strongly holding back and in that way has effectivity into the future. But if the present were already that which is to be attained and striven for, then only a dread of the downfall would be left over.⁷⁸

The solidification of a national socialist actuality, with its own slogans and catchphrases, would mark for Heidegger the forfeiting of the great chance to reawaken the question of Being and with it the historical essence of Western *Dasein*. It seems that the above-quoted passage from the *Black Notebooks* should be read together with Heidegger's interpretation of the allegory of the cave. Heidegger clearly sees a prospect in National Socialism. Nevertheless, he also makes clear that this prospect could easily go down the drain. To be more precise, the prospect of National Socialism depends on whether it will realize the innermost danger of the time or not. Not to realize this danger is for Heidegger to forfeit the prospect of the movement. Heidegger understands National Socialism as a movement that emerges out of historical necessity (the destitution of the West) and has the potential to bring the German people in front of a *decision* that will either liberate them or plunge them into the most dreadful downfall.

National Socialism carries, according to Heidegger, both a promise

⁷⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Ponderings II-VI: Black Notebooks 1931-1938*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 89.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 84.

and a threat. On the one hand, the promising prospect of National Socialism is that it may bring the German people back to their historical existence. The dangerous prospect, on the other hand, is that National Socialism may forfeit its liberating possibility and end up becoming a new certainty. But, if we go back to Heidegger's interpretation of the allegory of the cave, we are reminded that this dual possibility of *decision* and flight from *decision* opens up at the second stage of the allegory. As we have seen, the liberated prisoners of the second stage encounter the possibility of a *decision* from which they will most likely flee in search of the security of their imprisoned state. In doing so, they decide not to decide.⁷⁹

Given the above, one can securely say that Heidegger finds in National Socialism the embodiment of a struggle against the certainties of his time that prohibit genuine philosophical questioning. Heidegger's idiosyncratic National Socialism boils down to his attempt to reawaken a genuine philosophical questioning, which he links to the essence of human existence as transcendence. The struggle that National Socialism embodies in Heidegger's eyes could be transformed — provided that it does not lose its way — to a struggle against the oblivion of Being.

The emergence of National Socialism marks for Heidegger a sudden liberation accompanied by perplexity and insecurity. One way of proceeding from there is to attempt to create new certainties, i.e., to attempt to create a new status quo. Continuing with the analogy between Heidegger's National Socialism and his interpretation of the allegory, it can be said that the emergence of a new status quo would mark for Heidegger a return to the shackled state, where what appears is taken unquestionably as true. This way of proceeding constitutes for Heidegger a failed liberation since the possibility of posing the question of the essence of truth and the truth of Being is completely lost, and this is for Heidegger the innermost *danger* of his time. Another way of proceeding is that of engaging into questioning the essence of truth and thus intensifying uncertainty.⁸⁰

If my interpretation is correct, National Socialism marks for Heidegger the moment of a sudden liberation that nevertheless fails to guar-

⁷⁹ Even the flight from decision is for Heidegger a decision (see Heidegger, *Logic as the Question Concerning the Essence of Language*, 62).

⁸⁰ See Heidegger, "The Self-Assertion of the German University," 474.

antee a genuine liberation. National Socialism is an event in history that, if it is to fulfill its mission, must bring the Germans in front of a crucial decision: either to return to a restrictive understanding of truth and Being or to engage in genuine questioning.⁸¹ It is important, however, not to take the above concession apologetically. As Tracy Strong insightfully notices, Heidegger's insistence on the violent path of liberation is not unrelated to the violence of the National Socialist regime.⁸² The violence of the new regime that shakes off the self-certainties of the cave-dwellers is tacitly preferable, for Heidegger, to standstill, equilibrium, mediocrity, harmlessness, etc., which he considers as symptoms of the oblivion of Being.⁸³ One cannot fail to notice that Heidegger's understanding of tranquility and harmlessness as symptoms of the oblivion of Being tells us something about his understanding of the events of his time. Since tranquility and harmlessness signal the oblivion of Being, tension, crisis, and even suffering can be understood as harbingers of a renewed relationship to Being.

It is quite interesting to notice that Heidegger's critique of the National Socialist regime — notwithstanding the fact that it is to be found quite early in his *Notebooks* — is limited only to these elements (Nazi dogmatism, spiritual apathy, mediocrity, etc.) that betray a perversion of the highest aim of renewing the question of Being.⁸⁴ The only thing that interests Heidegger is to guide the impetus of the new regime toward genuine philosophical questioning. All actual suffering seems to be, for him, nothing compared to the suffering that a complete oblivion of Being would bring.

⁸¹ The new truth that National Socialism is striving for is therefore relevant for Heidegger only to the extent that it shakes previous truths. The new truth is merely a step toward decision; the decision to either open up a radically other future or close off the future by insisting on the absoluteness of this new truth.

⁸² See Tracy B. Strong, *Politics without Vision: Thinking without a Banister in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 311.

⁸³ Heidegger, *Being and Truth*, 74.

⁸⁴ Heidegger, *Ponderings II-VI*, 94, 112, 119.

Nietzsche's Reversal of Platonism and the Simulacrum

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Abstract

In this paper, I seek to show how both Baudrillard and Deleuze analyse simulacra and simulations in the spirit of Nietzsche's demand to "philosophize with a hammer" in order to reveal the hollowness of the idols that have traditionally founded philosophy. I start by arguing that Nietzsche overcomes Plato's affirmation of the super-sensuous world of Forms as a standard of truth by exposing the production of truth as an illusionary process. In his reading of Nietzsche's reversal of Platonism, Deleuze champions a radical reign of simulacra, because simulacra undermine the distinctions between models and copies, the true and the false, and the very foundations of Platonic thought. Both Deleuze and Baudrillard stress the inseparability of appearance and truth in simulacra. Yet, unlike Deleuze, Baudrillard does not celebrate the rise of the simulacrum. Systems of simulacra are self-referential and self-legitimising. Baudrillard's work seeks to challenge processes of simulation that try to create "effects" of the real ("hyperreality") based upon pre-conceived models.

Keywords: Baudrillard; Deleuze; Nietzsche; Heidegger; Plato; Platonism; simulation; simulacrum; hyperreality

1. Introduction

The subtitle of Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols* is "How to Philosophize with a Hammer" and the first target of Nietzsche's hammer is Plato's belief in super-sensuous Forms. For Deleuze, Nietzsche inaugurates a philosophy of the future for an era of simulacra.¹ From the 1960s on-

¹ Simulacrum is the Latin term for "statue" or "idol," and translates the Greek

wards, Deleuze publishes essays on the simulacrum and, although his analysis of the simulacrum proceeds in less historical fashion than Baudrillard (Section 4), Deleuze is close to Baudrillard in the sense that they both stress the inseparability of appearance and reality in simulacra. In this paper, I show how Baudrillard and Deleuze analyse simulacra in the spirit of Nietzsche's demand, as a cultural physician, to "philosophize with a hammer" in order to "sound out" all the hollow "idols" (such as Plato's super-sensuous Forms) through a process of "auscult(ur)ation."² Conflating the musical and the medical, Nietzsche emphasises that it is "eternal idols, ... [that] will be touched here with a hammer as with a tuning fork."³ What Nietzsche considers as "idols" are those unexamined prejudices that pretend to be truths and are worshiped as such. Nietzsche's method involves enfeebling the highest values and pushing them off their pedestals, reversing established hierarchies as preparation for their revaluation.

I start this paper (Section 2) with an outline of Nietzsche's "reversal of Platonism." In "On Truth and Lying in the Non-Moral Sense," Nietzsche regards the "pure drive towards truth" as an "effect" of deception and he exposes the production of truth as an illusionary process.⁴ I then move to Deleuze's view of Nietzsche's reversal of Platonism (Section 3) and Deleuze's affirmation of the simulacrum's disruptive power. For Deleuze, the simulacrum produces an "effect of resemblance" that simulates the real.⁵ Similarly, Baudrillard's work sketches the rise of the "hyperreal," which itself produces "effects of the real" in an "empty space of representation."⁶

Unlike Deleuze, Baudrillard is much more ambivalent about the

phantasma. The plural form is simulacra.

² Duncan Large, "Introduction," *Twilight of the Idols*, Friedrich Nietzsche, trans. Duncan Large (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, trans. Duncan Large (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 155.

⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, trans. Ronald Speirs (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 143.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (London: Continuum, 2004), 295.

⁶ Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. Ian Hamilton Grant (London: Sage Publications, 1993), 70.

simulacrum. Baudrillard is concerned with a constructed conceptual system that results in a world where the real (“defined in ego-psychological terms as something that is external and beyond personal control”⁷) is not represented (which requires a distance between copy and model) but is rather “simulated.” Images and signs are their own models; they precede reality due to the “precession of simulacra.”⁸ The logical and temporal relation between the image and the real has been reversed. Systems of simulacra are for Baudrillard self-referential and self-legitimising. They set the standard for their own evaluation. Before examining Baudrillard’s problematisation of simulation⁹ and simulacra, I first set the scene with an outline of Nietzsche’s challenge to Platonism.

2. The Reversal of Platonism

Nietzsche argues that Western epistemology has attempted to create a timeless foundation to guarantee knowledge and truth. The Judeo-Christian tradition and Platonic thought share a similar conception of “this world” (of appearances and images) as reflections of a higher and immutable reality. In what follows, I discuss the relation between the true and apparent within the framework of Nietzsche’s “reversal of Platonism” and, in Section 3, I move to Deleuze’s view of the simulacrum in the wake of Nietzsche’s reversal and, in Section 4, I turn to Baudrillard’s genealogy of the orders of images and of simulacra.

The mission of Nietzsche’s philosophy, according to Heidegger, is to overthrow Platonism: “the farther removed from true being, the purer, the finer, the better it is. Living in semblance as goal.”¹⁰ For Nietzsche, Plato’s Socrates devalues the mutable realm of appearances in favour of

⁷ Charles Levin, *Jean Baudrillard: A Study in Cultural Metaphysics* (Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall Europe, 1996), 200.

⁸ The word “precession” stems from the Latin verb *praecedere*, meaning to “happen before.” A precession must be clearly differentiated from a “procession.” A “procession” refers to a chronological, sequence-based approach to time. Simulacra do not proceed according to a linear sequence.

⁹ Simulation refers to a process, an action, a relation, whereas the noun “simulacrum” refers to the resulting product of this process.

¹⁰ As cited by Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two*, trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 154.

an immutable realm of Forms¹¹ (the realm of Forms is a phantasmagoria of an “another,” a “better” life, according to Nietzsche). In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche sees the task of philosophy as a “revaluation of values,” which entails a dismissal of the realm of Forms as a chimera.¹² Does Nietzsche merely elevate what Platonism denigrates (i.e., appearances, becoming)?

Nietzsche’s reversal of Platonism has been a central issue of debate in the treatment of his work and Heidegger argues that to reverse Plato’s thinking without re-evaluating its overall structure is to fail to overcome it in a radical way. Given Nietzsche’s rejection of Plato’s true world of Forms, Heidegger claims that the reversal must not simply affirm the world of appearances if it seeks to avoid repeating the structural missteps of Platonic thought. The realms of both essence and appearance must be abolished in the manner in which they are seen within Platonic thought, along with the hierarchical structure “above and below.”¹³ A “reversal” must involve the destruction of both the world of essence and the world of appearance.¹⁴

According to Heidegger, the language of opposed realms of being is metaphorical. Socrates’s discourse on the Forms in Plato’s *Republic* implies the existence of a *single* realm that reveals and shows itself in two ways. The distinction between two “modes of showing,” John Sallis maintains, “is more fundamental than the distinction between the intelligible and the visible.”¹⁵ The philosopher does not have access to a separate ontological realm, but rather penetrates the surface of a single realm of being and understands things as they are. For Heidegger, Nietzsche “completes”

¹¹ It must be noted that “forms” are introduced in Plato’s *Republic* without a formal argument for their existence.

¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley, trans. Judith Norman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 155.

¹³ Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volumes One and Two*, 201.

¹⁴ Heidegger critiques Nietzsche for being a metaphysician who only “inverted” the Platonic opposition between Being and Becoming by making Becoming, in the form of the endless flow of power, primary. Nietzsche awards Becoming the character of Being — that is the supreme will to power. I seek to show how Nietzsche overcomes the binary opposition in his attack of the Platonic tradition.

¹⁵ John Sallis, *Being and Logic: Reading the Platonic Dialogues* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996), 385.

the history of metaphysics through the inversion of Platonism.¹⁶

Alan D. Schrift¹⁷ rightly points out that Heidegger fails to acknowledge the extent to which Nietzsche breaks down privileged hierarchical relations. Nietzsche also reveals that the hierarchical opposition originates from the assignation of prior value that must be problematised. Concerning the genealogy of the “will to truth,” for instance, Nietzsche first inverts the Platonic order of truth over falsity; secondly, he delves into the origin of the positive value placed upon truth and he finds it “simply a moral prejudice to affirm truth over error or appearances.”¹⁸

Nietzsche targets the unquestioning value of truth, the ascetic impulse to eradicate insecurity to a supposed truth, in whatever form a supposition may take, even an anti-metaphysical one (science).¹⁹ Truth for Nietzsche is dependent on our interest in truth. In the “Third Essay,” paragraph 24, of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche says that the idea of “presuppositionless knowledge” is “unthinkable.”²⁰ A certain amount of “faith” is the precondition for any knowledge.²¹ Without a

¹⁶ The peculiarities of Nietzsche’s “inversion” of Platonism is the focus of the concluding chapters of Heidegger’s first lecture series on Nietzsche, *Nietzsche. Volume One. The Will to Power as Art*. Alan D. Schrift (1990, 44-45) says that “Nietzsche’s inversion of the Platonist hierarchy is made on *historical* rather than theoretical grounds. That is to say, Nietzsche’s inversion of the Platonist standards is grounded in history and the fundamental historical event of nihilism, that is, in the event of the highest values devaluing themselves. Nietzsche’s overturning of Platonism is thus the result of his inquiry into the history of philosophy as the history of the devaluation of the highest values (nihilism) [...]. Nietzsche’s inversion of Platonism must be understood in terms of the overcoming of nihilism: the Platonist affirmation of the super-sensuous has, as a matter of historical fact, given rise to our present nihilistic situation and, if nihilism is to be overcome, we must, therefore, overcome the affirmation of the super-sensuous as the standard of the true.” Alan D. Schrift, *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation. Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 1990). As we shall see in Section 4, Baudrillard’s phase of “simulation” and “hyperreality” brings Nietzsche’s analysis of nihilism up to date.

¹⁷ Alan D. Schrift, *Nietzsche’s French Legacy. A Genealogy of Poststructuralism* (London: Routledge, 1995), 22.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 112.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 112.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 112.

certain “faith,” knowledge lacks “a direction, a meaning, a limit, a method, a *right* to exist.”²² Knowledge cannot be free of such (perspectival) limits. Nietzsche concludes the “Third Essay” of *On the Genealogy of Morals* by saying that science is not the obvious opponent of the (Christian) “ascetic ideal,” because regarding the access to “truth,” it also rejects unstable forces.²³ The “ascetic ideal” is transcendent: like truth, it is something that does not bear the features of the sensuous world. A genuine alternative to the ascetic ideal “tentatively” puts the value of (super-sensuous) truth “into question.”²⁴

Nietzsche’s early work “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” shows how he overcomes the dualistic and hierarchical order between illusion and reality by exposing the production of truth as an illusionary process. In this text, Nietzsche claims that “truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions” and that truth is nothing more than a “mobile army of metaphors.”²⁵ Nietzsche begins this important text by focusing on the human intellect’s powers of deception and how this quality is crucial for human development. Deception (*Verstellung*) is the “means to preserve those weaker, less robust individuals, who, by nature, are denied horns or the sharp fangs of prey with which to wage the struggle for existence.”²⁶

Humans overcome their physical weaknesses by devising subtle, deceptive intellectual strategies. We also find this idea in Nietzsche’s story of the “slaves” in *On the Genealogy of Morals*. The slaves transform their physical weakness into strength through conceptual inventions such as “freewill” and “the subject.” In addition, for Nietzsche, “the priestly caste” devises “the ascetic ideal” precisely as a compensatory strategy for their physical weakness. As Nietzsche puts it in “Essay Three,” Section 13: “the ascetic ideal is a trick for the preservation of life.”²⁷

²² Ibid., 112.

²³ Lawrence J. Hatab, “How Does the Ascetic Ideal Function in Nietzsche’s *Genealogy*?” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, n. 35/36 Spring-Autumn (Penn State University Press, 2008), 114.

²⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 112.

²⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, trans. Ronald Speirs (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 146.

²⁶ Ibid., 142.

²⁷ Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 88.

Returning to his earlier text “On Truth and Lying in the Non-Moral Sense,” Nietzsche explains that a common feature of these “tricks” is that they are lies that the intellect produces to preserve itself by playing on the “surface of things” and producing favourable appearances.²⁸ Nietzsche regards such an “art of dissimulation” as necessary for the maintenance and development of human society.²⁹ Deception can take various forms such as self-deception and deception of others, which in both cases involves a deception about the nature of the world. For Nietzsche, we misunderstand the intellect if we ignore that it is an organ of the will, and that man does not exist in order to know.

The question remains: where did the desire for truth come from? Nietzsche here points to the state because “man out of need and boredom wants to live socially and herdlike, he requires peace and strives to eliminate from his world at least the crudest *bellum omnium contra omnes*.”³⁰ Peace entails something that looks like a step toward understanding the urge for truth. Nietzsche identifies a transition from concealment towards a general “peace treaty” that establishes a common set of rules to avoid the “*bellum omnium contra omnes*” (Hobbes’ expression for the “war of all against all” to describe the state of nature).³¹ The idea of universal truth was devised to enforce peace treaties, because the value of truth must be accepted by all.

This new concept of universal truth is an effect of the “legislation of language” (*Gesetzgebung der Sprache*), which creates a universal way of designating things that has “the same validity and force everywhere.”³² The legislation of language gives order to the chaotic world. The boundaries between truth and lie are the rules by means of which a community structures and maintains a sense of itself. For Nietzsche, any concept is formed by reducing particularity in favour of a predicable world.

In addition, Nietzsche claims that it is only through “forgetfulness” that we come to imagine the possibility of truth as a perfect fit with things-in-themselves.³³ We forget that the relation between our words

²⁸ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, 142.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 143.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

³² *Ibid.*, 143.

³³ *Ibid.*, 148.

and concepts, on the one hand, and things themselves, on the other, is purely a metaphorical relationship. Metaphors are not inferior expressions of a superior pre-linguistic reality. Instead, they produce a reality-effect that we call the “world,” which is then reviewed in terms of ideal truth and value.

Words are copies in images and sounds of “nervous stimulations” of the body and brain.³⁴ A metaphor is a translation from one realm to another; and Nietzsche will speak, in this context, of the differences between languages or the peculiarities of a particular language.³⁵ The arbitrary relation between words and things is obvious from the fact that different languages use different words to attribute various properties to the same objects.

Nietzsche reviews the relationship between metaphor and truth by regarding the “pure drive towards truth” as an effect of deception.³⁶ He calls into question (a) the moral interpretation of the difference between truth and error (that truth is something good and error something evil), (b) the metaphysical interpretation of the difference between truth and error (that truth represents a world of unchanging facts, and error, a world of becoming), (c) the logical interpretation of the bivalence between truth and error (truth is not opposed to error). In this skepticism, “error” becomes the metaphor for a world without vertical antitheses and oppositions between good and evil, being and becoming, beauty and ugliness.

Nietzsche’s essay “On Truth and Lying in a Non-Moral Sense” provides an account of the origin and meaning of language in the style of a fable that is still reflected in his mature views on language. For instance, in a later text, “Reason in Philosophy,” from *The Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche outlines the emergence of conceptual representation.³⁷ Reason requires that the real be other than what the senses bring forth, and reason demands that this other (Being/permanence) be conceptualised. Thus, the (merely) apparent world of sense experience, which reveals only becoming, is opposed to the real world (Being). “Being” is divided into true and untrue. Plato’s philosophy for Nietzsche revolves around this hierarchi-

³⁴ Ibid., 144.

³⁵ Ibid., 144.

³⁶ Ibid., 143.

³⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley, trans. Judith Norman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 167.

cally-based difference between true and apparent world.

The section on "Reason in Philosophy" is followed by "How the 'True World' Finally Became a Fable," which provides a brief account of a "history of an error." In six aphorisms, Nietzsche traces the trajectory of the "true" world, which was at first within grasp of thinkers, then promised to the faithful and then mobilised by the positivists; it then becomes unattainable, unknown, and finally useless. The "true" world is an idea that is no longer good for anything, not even obligating. The only thing worse than the "true" world and an all-encompassing regime of judgment (Platonic, Christian, Kantian, etc.), however, is finally not to have faith in any world.

The end of the longest error is the end of both truth and illusion — which is the "properly Nietzschean moment" as it represents the point of departure for interrogating the status of fiction.³⁸ Neither reality nor appearance triumph, because both share the same realm, the midday of philosophy eliminates any such distinctions in an immanence with no more shadows — in Deleuze's words, the "terrifying models of the pseudos in which the powers of the false unfold."³⁹

For Deleuze, modern philosophy must establish itself by reversing Platonism, as Nietzsche did in *Twilight of the Idols*. In his reading of Nietzsche's reversal, which will be discussed below, Deleuze champions a radical reign of simulacra, because the latter undermine the distinction between models and copies and the very foundations of Platonic thought. In the next section, I show how Deleuze seeks primarily to understand Plato's "motivations"⁴⁰ for banishing the simulacrum (the false pretenders) to the Idea. This search for the "motivations" overcomes the alleged "abstractness" of Nietzsche's reversal.⁴¹ I then discuss Baudrillard's simulacrum in Section 4.

³⁸ Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *The Subject of Philosophy*, trans. Thomas Trezise, Hugh Silverman, Gary M. Cole, Timothy Bent, Karen McPherson and Claudette Sartillot, ed. Thomas Trezise (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1993), 5.

³⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 128.

⁴⁰ Individual signs are unmotivated, so a linguist must try to reconstruct the system. It is the system alone which motivates individual signs.

⁴¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (London: Continuum, 2004), 291.

3. The Simulacrum and the Motivation for Plato's Method of Division

In the previous section, we saw how Nietzsche exposes the supposed truth behind language as a fiction. Concepts that supposedly refer to truth and reality are merely solidified metaphors that seek to provide categories for understanding. Nietzsche thereby sets the scene, as we shall see below, for Deleuze and Baudrillard's world of simulacra.

It is important to bear in mind that the simulacrum has long been implicated in the ancient theory of imitation (*mimesis*) and that it has also been part of the controversy concerning the legitimacy of images. Historically, simulacra have been regarded as equivalent to images, although in most cases their illusionary aspect is emphasised. The deceptive aspects of simulacra spring from their associations with the spheres of death and ghostly appearances.

The monotheistic prohibition against images that was philosophically supported by Plato's sharp critique of the image as "far removed from the truth" in Book X of *The Republic* would lead to the bloody wars during the Middle Ages and the Reformation. The Western world's rejection of the image took another turn in the 19th century with the arrival of Romanticism and Nietzsche. Nietzsche's philosophy, as we have seen, does not however merely champion illusion against Plato's critique of appearance, because for him the production of truth is an illusionary process.

The aesthetics of appearance makes its way to France thanks to the surrealist interest in the irrational, the unconscious, dreams, and phantasies.⁴² The simulacrum (singular) is in this sense related to the Greek *phantasma*, which the ancient theories of perception used synonymously with simulacrum or *eidolon*. As a product of *phantasia* or the imagination, *phantasmata* are associated with illusions and appearance, although to a lesser extent than with simulation.

The terms simulacrum and simulation become important within French theoretical discourse thanks to the Argentine poet Jorge Luis Borges as well as the artist and writer Pierre Klossowski who, in turn,

⁴² The surrealist poet and ethnologist Michel Leiris published in 1925 a range of poems entitled *Simulacra*; André Breton the programmatic mastermind of surrealism (along with Paul Éluard) published *Essais de simulation* in 1930.

influenced Deleuze and Lyotard. Roland Barthes regards the production of simulacra, that is to say the making of models, as the epistemological method of structuralism. Starting from the 1960s, Deleuze publishes essays on the simulacrum in Plato and Lucretius, which define a position close to Baudrillard's notion of simulation (Section 4). In Nietzsche's footsteps, both Deleuze and Baudrillard stress the inseparability of appearances and truth in simulacra.

Deleuze's reflections on the simulacrum are contained mostly in two texts: *Difference and Repetition* and the essay in his appendix to *The Logic of Sense*, namely "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy." In what follows, I focus on the latter text. For Deleuze, Plato's world of Forms is a Nietzschean idol, a myth constructed to legitimise Plato's ambition for philosophy as a path to truth. As Daniel Smith remarks, "[i]n the Platonic dialogues, according to Deleuze, myth functions as a narrative of foundation."⁴³ It is myth that makes the categorization of differences possible. Deleuze says the "myth constructs an immanent model or the foundation-test according to which pretenders should be judged and their pretensions measured."⁴⁴ Any truth-claim relies on myth and the production of truth is thus revealed as an illusionary process.

Smith explains that Plato created "the Idea of something pure, a pure quality. The Idea, as foundation, then allows its possession to be shared, giving it to the claimant (the secondhand possessor), on condition that the claimant pass the 'foundation' test."⁴⁵ Only the foundation itself, the Idea possesses something firsthand — for instance, only Truth is true and only Justice just. The Idea "is what objectively possesses a pure quality, or what is nothing other than what it is."⁴⁶

The claimant adheres to the object of the claim only insofar as it is "modelled internally on the Idea, which comprehends the relations and proportions that constitute the essence."⁴⁷ It is on this condition that the

⁴³ Daniel Smith, "The Concept of the Simulacrum: Deleuze and the Overturning of Platonism," *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol. 38, n. 1/2, 89-123 (2006), 95.

⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (London: Continuum, London, 2004), 293.

⁴⁵ Daniel Smith, "The Concept of the Simulacrum: Deleuze and the Overturning of Platonism," *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol. 38, n. 1/2, 89-123 (2006), 96.

⁴⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 29-30.

⁴⁷ Daniel Smith, "The Concept of the Simulacrum: Deleuze and the Overturning of

claimant can rightfully participate in the Idea. Smith claims that the “Platonic conception of ‘participation’ (*metechein*, lit. “to have after”) must be understood in terms of the role of this foundation: an elective participation is the response to the problem of a method of selection.”⁴⁸

The Platonic meaning of representation is clear: all well-founded pretensions are re-presentations of the Idea. Even the ultimate “well-founded pretension” is subordinate to the founding Idea. The Idea is appealed to only as a basis of what is not “representable” in things themselves.⁴⁹ Plato’s tripartite structure, according to Deleuze, involves the ground (the unattainable Idea that provides the foundation for participation), the quality of the ground (the object for the test of foundation) and the claimants to the ground (those who participate unequally in the object). Platonic division establishes a hierarchy among the most faithful copies of the original Idea, but it also includes images that are only illusions of the founding model (simulacra). The real Platonic division lies not in the distinction between original and image, but rather lies between two types of images (*idoles*); good copies (*icônes*) that faithfully follow the principle of internal resemblance, and bad copies or simulacra (*phantasmata*) that are false pretenders to the Idea.

Platonism seeks to banish the simulacrum to the “bottom of the Ocean,”⁵⁰ because its presence causes us to question the structure of the intelligible model and of the sensible copy. It even threatens to break down all foundations. The simulacrum thus indicates the way towards reversing Platonism. For Deleuze, Plato thus himself perceived the threat of the “simulacrum.” In the *Sophist*, Plato distinguishes between two types of imitation: likenesses or similitudes (Greek: *eikon*) and semblances or simulacra (Greek: *phantasmata*). Plato proposes (in the voice of the Stranger) that the “perfect example” of a likeness “consists in creating a copy [of a statue] that conforms to the proportions of the original in all three dimensions and giving moreover the proper colour to every part.”⁵¹

Platonism,” *Continental Philosophy Review*, vol. 38, n. 1/2, 89-123 (2006), 97.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 96.

⁴⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (London: Continuum, 2004), 296.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 293-6.

⁵¹ Plato, *The Sophist*, 235d-e, *Collected Dialogues*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen Series 71,

On the other hand, simulacra are improper and manipulative imitations. Plato's example is of "colossal" works such as sculptures at the top of temples, the upper parts of which were out of proportion and exaggerated. In such works, the imitation "only appears to be a likeness of a well-made figure because it is not seen from a satisfactory point of view, but to a spectator with eyes that could fully take in so large an object [it] would not be even like the original it professes to resemble."⁵² Simulacra fail to have the structural similarity that likenesses are said to have. As Deleuze explains, "simulacra are like false pretenders, built upon a dissimilarity, implying an essential perversion or deviation."⁵³ According to Deleuze, Plato is disturbed by the "non-productive" nature of the simulacrum as it

implies huge dimensions, depths and distances that the observer cannot master. It is precisely because he cannot master them that he experiences an impression of resemblance. This simulacrum includes a differential point of view; and the observer becomes part of the simulacrum itself, which is transformed and deformed by his point of view.⁵⁴

The simulacrum is built on an internal difference and is dissimilar to what it represents, but it still produces an "effect of resemblance."⁵⁵ This focus on "effects" underlines the future oriented, mutable aspect of the simulacrum. Identity and resemblance continue only as external effects of the internal differential dynamic of the simulacrum.

Plato rejects the simulacrum because it causes us to question the very notion of the model and the copy, and turns us away from the "good." In addition, the simulacrum generates confusion with regards to the possibility of selection and judgement. The simulacrum involves "the false as power, Pseudos, in the sense that Nietzsche speaks of the highest power of the false."⁵⁶ As a strange grey area, the simulacrum is neither a self-contained/containing ontology nor merely the reflection of an *a priori* ontology.⁵⁷

1961).

⁵² *Ibid.*, 236b; 979.

⁵³ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 294.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 296.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 295.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 300.

⁵⁷ Jonathan S. Boulter, "Partial Glimpses of the Infinite: Borges and the Simulacrum," *Hispanic Review*, vol. 69, n. 3, pp. 355-377 (2001), 360.

Deleuze sees a connection between Nietzsche's "eternal return" and the simulacrum, because both involve a subversion of any ideal difference between the copy and the original, the past and the future. Here, according to David Lane, Deleuze follows Klossowski in regarding "the eternal return as a parodic play of mimesis" that overcomes the primacy of an original model and the very notion of origin itself.⁵⁸ For Klossowski, the eternal return is the "simulacrum of a doctrine."⁵⁹ Klossowski writes "The simulacrum, in its *imitative* sense, is the actualisation of something in itself incommunicable and non-representable: the phantasm in its obsessional constraint."⁶⁰ Simulacra are *phantasmata*, i.e., impulses and affects. For Klossowski, "*mimesis* is not a servile imitation of the visible, but the simulacrum of the unrepresentable."⁶¹

Likewise, according to Deleuze, to affirm the simulacrum and the "chaodyyssey" (*chao-errance*) of the return is to deny Plato's transcendent plane of Forms, as well as "true being."⁶² Deleuze focuses on Nietzschean "becoming," which has no model and fulfils no end. He concludes that to "reverse Platonism" is to undermine the world of representation — the "twilight of the idols."⁶³

In Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*, we finally see that the "same and the similar no longer have an essence except as *simulated*, that is as expressing the functioning of the simulacrum [...] it is the triumph of the false pretender."⁶⁴ As David La Rocca rightly points out, however, it is

⁵⁸ David Lane, "Deleuze and Lacoue-Labarthe on the Reversal of Platonism: The Mimetic Abyss," *SubStanc*, vol. 40, n. 2 (2011), 105-126, 110.

⁵⁹ Daniel Smith, "Klossowski's Reading of Nietzsche: Impulses, Phantasms, Simulacra, Stereotypes," *Diacritics*, vol. 35, n. 1 (Spring 2005), 16.

⁶⁰ Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). Pierre Klossowski, *La ressemblance* (Marseille: André Dimanche, 1984), 76.

⁶¹ Smith ("Klossowski's Reading of Nietzsche: Impulses, Phantasms, Simulacra, Stereotypes," vol. 16, n. 11) claims that, unlike Baudrillard, Klossowski never doubts the real. For Klossowski, simulacra are no less real than phantasma or impulses. I agree with Butler (*Jean Baudrillard: The Defence of the Real*), who claims that Baudrillard's work focuses on the "real" as a problem and on how simulacra are responsible for the creation of a self-referential impasse. This will be discussed in Section 4.

⁶² Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 301.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

strange of Deleuze to insist on a “triumph” when the simulacrum is characterised by neutrality and horizontality.⁶⁵ A victory can only be proclaimed by defeating a rival (i.e., the icon and the copy).⁶⁶ To regard simulacra as “rising” and “affirming” themselves implies a power struggle, the “rights” of simulacra conflict with the removal of hierarchy.⁶⁷

I agree with La Rocca's view that the point of Nietzsche's “reversal of Platonism” is not the “triumph” of one system for another. As he says, the “simulacrum has not replaced the icon: both have become possible aspects of perception.”⁶⁸ In my view, Baudrillard, unlike Deleuze, is open to such an alternation. In what follows (Section 4), I outline Baudrillard's genealogy of images and simulacra, which involves both Plato and Nietzsche.⁶⁹ In her study on Deleuze, Claire Colebrook contrasts Deleuze's simulacrum with that of Baudrillard and she reads Baudrillard as “lamenting” the “loss of the real” in simulacra.⁷⁰ Colebrook claims that in Deleuze's world of simulacra “each event of life is already other than itself, not original, a simulation.”⁷¹

Without a doubt, the Baudrillardian stance towards the simulacrum is more ambivalent than the Deleuzean one.⁷² In my view, however, Rex

⁶⁵ David La Rocca, “The False Pretender: Deleuze, Sherman and the Status of Simulacra,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 69, n. 3 (Summer 2001), 326.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 326.

⁶⁷ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 299.

⁶⁸ David La Rocca, “The False Pretender: Deleuze, Sherman and the Status of Simulacra,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 69, n. 3 (Summer 2001), 327.

⁶⁹ Levin (*Jean Baudrillard. A Study in Cultural Metaphysics*, 82) calls Baudrillard a “perverse Platonist” and Julian Pefanis (*Heterology and the Postmodern: Bataille, Baudrillard and Lyotard*, 60) sees Baudrillard's work as “operating within, and on, the epistemological framework of [...] Platonic discourse.” Yet Pefanis quickly also moves from the Platonic parallel to a Nietzschean one. Baudrillard's position is close to that of Nietzsche, because, for both thinkers, “the sham world is the real world, whereas the real world is the world of illusion” (Pefanis, *Heterology and the Postmodern: Bataille, Baudrillard and Lyotard*, 60).

⁷⁰ Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (New York: Routledge Critical Thinkers, 2002), 98.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 99.

⁷² According to Sylvère Lotringer (“Remember Foucault,” 20): “Deleuze probably regretted praising the simulacrum after Baudrillard used it to cancel every dif-

Butler provides a more convincing analysis of Baudrillard than Colebrook: “Baudrillard’s [...] problem is how to think the real when all is simulation, how to use the real against attempts by various systems of rationality to account for it.”⁷³ Baudrillard seeks to challenge processes of simulation that try to bring about a real (“hyperreality”). Butler rightly claims that “Baudrillard’s point is that each system he analyses (and the work of any great thinker) creates its own reality, sets out the very terms in which it must be understood.”⁷⁴ Yet, in Baudrillard’s work, there is another side to any attempt to bring about the real in simulation, a side which is the ultimate resistance to simulation.⁷⁵

In what follows, I outline the “short” version⁷⁶ of the genealogy of images that Baudrillard provides in *Simulacra and Simulations* and, in the process, I discuss the parallels between Baudrillard’s account and Nietzsche’s *Twilight of the Idols*.

4. Baudrillard’s Simulacrum

In Section 2, we saw how Nietzsche questions the privileged (moral) status of truth over appearance and regards the “pure drive towards truth” as an “effect of deception.”⁷⁷ Nietzsche reverses Plato’s affirmation of the super-sensuous as a standard of truth by exposing the production of truth as an illusionary process.

In Section 3, we turned to Deleuze, for whom Nietzsche inaugu-

ference between the real and the referential, turning the entire system into Disneyland, a world-size simulacrum.”

⁷³ Rex Butler, *Jean Baudrillard: The Defence of the Real* (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 17.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁷⁵ Butler (*The Defence of the Real*, 53) explains that “[i]t is this real, excluded by any attempt to speak of it, that is the limit to every system — it is the Platonic paradox that Baudrillard means by the real.” The paradox first raised by Plato in his dialogue *Cratylus*. Derrida deals with Plato’s *Cratylus* in *Plato’s Pharmacy*.

⁷⁶ It is unclear, however, how the four-stage model outlined in *Simulacra and Simulations* relates to the three-stage model of *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Baudrillard’s “long” version of the genealogy of signs and simulacra is in *Symbolic Exchange and Death*. Baudrillard does not see a contradiction between the two models, because in his later text *Simulacra and Simulations* he refers to terminology developed earlier in *Symbolic Exchange and Death*.

⁷⁷ Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, 143.

rates a philosophy of the future for an era of simulacra. The simulacrum, according to Deleuze, produces an “effect of resemblance.”⁷⁸ It thereby completely undermines the distinction between the model and the copy. In this section, I turn to Baudrillard’s genealogy of images and simulacra. By generalizing the simulacrum to the whole societal realm, Baudrillard (like Nietzsche) emphasises much more than Deleuze that simulacra involve social rapports and power.

According to another critic, Christopher Norris, Baudrillard’s project is “a species of inverted Platonism.”⁷⁹ For Norris, “Baudrillard’s [...] discourse [...] systematically promotes the negative terms (rhetoric, appearance, ideology) above their positive counterparts.”⁸⁰ In the same vein, Drew A. Hyland says that one could see a kind of “reverse Platonism at work in Baudrillard. Instead of the supposedly Platonic degrees of reality metaphysics, we have a degrees of unreality doctrine.”⁸¹

Norris and Hyland do not, in my view, however, acknowledge the extent to which Baudrillard, like Nietzsche, breaks down privileged hierarchical relations altogether. Like Nietzsche, I show below that Baudrillard’s analysis of the simulacrum does not simply involve the triumph of appearances and the false. In Baudrillard’s view, there now only exists an “empty space of representation,” which produces “effects of the real.”⁸² Baudrillard calls this “the hyperreal.” Hyperreality is a self-referential world composed of pre-established models or codes of simulacra that are grounded in no other “reality” than their own. “Hyperreality” puts an end to distinctions between object and representation, thing and idea.

To understand the full scope of this development, it is necessary to see how Baudrillard’s work provides a theoretical link between structural linguistics and simulation. The precondition for any simulation is the disconnection from reality and this fits perfectly with the semiological paradigm. In Saussure’s theory of the sign, a word is a sign, and a

⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 295.

⁷⁹ Christopher Norris, “Lost in the Funhouse: Baudrillard and the Politics of Post-modernism,” *Jean Baudrillard. Sage Masters of Modern Thought*, ed. Mike Gane, vol. 1 (New York: Sage Publications), 364.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 364.

⁸¹ Drew A. Hyland. “Simulate This! The Seductive Return of the Real in Baudrillard,” *Subjects and Simulations: Between Baudrillard and Lacoue-Labarthe*, ed. Anne O’Byrne, and Hugh J. Silverman (Lexington Books: 2014), 28.

⁸² Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, 70.

sign consists of a signifier and a signified; the signifier is the sound pattern of the word, e.g., c-a-t, and the signified is the meaning of the word, “furry animal with whiskers,” which Saussure describes as a “mental image.” The referent is the thing, the physical cat, which is simply left out of his structuralist account.

Saussure’s contribution to the study of language was to show that the meaning of a word, the signified, is not determined by the referent — as Aristotle believes — but rather by its place in the system of signs and its relation to other signifieds: the meaning of a word is determined differentially or negatively, i.e., by its relation to other meanings. Saussure saw a relation of arbitrariness between signifiers, and between signifiers and their signified. The signification of words and phrases is based neither on verifiable facts nor on observations, so signification can only be expressed with a set of words or concepts that belong to a common language system.

For Baudrillard, in Saussure’s model of linguistic signification, there is no significance outside the system (of significance) to serve as its (transcendent) assurance of significance — or, of its truth, because meaning is determined internally in the system of language, not through an external relation between language and reality. As Baudrillard says in the chapter of *Simulacra and Simulations* entitled “The Precession of Simulacra”: “liquidation of all referentials [...] with their artificial resurrection in the systems of signs.”⁸³

The concept of simulation refers to two aspects: firstly to the disappearance of reality behind (its) signs and secondly to the “effect” of reality. The first aspect is connected with the semiological method and can be derived from its premises or alternatively its radicalisations. The second aspect is related to the production of culture (in the broadest sense). Baudrillard’s work therefore provides a theoretical link between semiology and simulation. Structural linguistics does not merely present us with a new theory of language, but rather describes the social reality of late modernity.

The concepts of simulacra, simulation and hyperreality serve Baudrillard as tools to analyze current society and its “crisis of representation.”⁸⁴ This crisis contains a dimension of historical depth that refers

⁸³ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 2.

⁸⁴ For more on the “crisis of representation” in relation to Baudrillard, see Pefanis (*Heterology and the Postmodern: Bataille, Baudrillard and Lyotard*, 61).

to a long history of images and signs. In *Simulacra and Simulations*, Baudrillard sketches four stages of the image:

1. It is the reflection of a basic reality. In this case, the real is represented by the image of the real, as a copy.
2. It masks and perverts a basic reality. Here the real is represented by an image that disfigures the real.
3. It masks the absence of a basic reality. At this stage, the real is replaced by an image, and the image conceals the fact that there is no reality. There is dissimulation or play: one pretends to have something (i.e., pretends not to have nothing, not to have no truth).
4. It has no relation to any reality whatsoever; it is its own pure simulacrum. In this final stage the image eliminates the referential relation altogether.

Baudrillard names the four orders of the image — the order of the sacrament, the order of the malefice, the order of sorcery, and the order of simulation. He differentiates between signs and images that dissimulate something (the first two stages) and signs and images that dissimulate that there is nothing (stages three and four).

For Baudrillard, as for Nietzsche, the point is that there are no essential things-in-themselves that are perspective-free. According to Paul Hegarty, Baudrillard's stages of the image indicate that "[t]here are always images, and the image removes the reality of whatever may or may not be there [...] [Baudrillard's] texts on simulation do not have a genuine reality as a necessary base, they deal instead with alterations in the perception of reality, and this perception is as much real as there is."⁸⁵ For Baudrillard, "the perspective of the human self, its self-identifications through images and objects, and its capacity to represent — produces the 'illusion' of the real world."⁸⁶ Illusion is not opposed to reality. "Truth, i.e., the true as constant, is itself a kind of semblance that is a necessary condition of life."⁸⁷ Both Nietzsche and Baudrillard, in my view, seek to overcome the hierarchical ordering between truth and illusion by exposing the production of truth as an illusionary process.

Baudrillard uses the example of religious iconography to argue that

⁸⁵ Paul Hegarty, *Jean Baudrillard: Live Theory* (London: Continuum, 2004), 51.

⁸⁶ William Pawlett, *Jean Baudrillard. Against Banality* (London: Routledge, 1999), 59.

⁸⁷ Alan D. Schrift, *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation. Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction* (London: Routledge, 1990), 50.

those iconoclasts who feel threatened by the images of God are the ones who recognise the real importance of religious simulations. Baudrillard accentuates the non-mimetic mode of simulation and he refers to simulation as the “divine irrelevance of images.”⁸⁸ Iconoclasts seek to destroy images “because they sense this omnipotence of simulacra, this facility they have of effacing God from the consciousness of men and the overwhelming destructive truth which they suggest: that ultimately there has never been any God, that only the simulacrum exists, indeed, that God himself has only ever been his own simulacrum.”⁸⁹ The implication of such “hyperreality” is that the supposed real, which they were once thought to be representations of, no longer exists. Images and signs precede reality due to the “precession of simulacra.” The logical and temporal relation between the image and the real has been reversed.

As already mentioned above, simulation for Baudrillard is a process that consists of coded signs (and images) that refer to other signs in a model, not to an external referent. The concept of simulation is often linked to computer technology and Baudrillard’s concept comes close to these cybernetic associations, but it is also used in a much more general way. As Charles Levin rightly explains, “[s]imulation refers to something deep but calculable in the real construction of actual technical, practical or social ‘spaces’. Simulation is not so much an attempt to resemble something in ‘appearance’ as to *reassemble* it from ‘within’, algorithmically.”⁹⁰ The hypothesis of simulation is that the world can only be grasped as a simulation. In his entry on “Simulacra,” in the *Baudrillard Dictionary*, William Pawlett correctly sees the influence of Nietzsche and Klossowski on Baudrillard’s theory of simulation.⁹¹ In addition, Pawlett claims that Baudrillard rejects a Platonic understanding of simulacra because Plato’s understanding of the simulacrum focuses on the issue of falsity. For Baudrillard, simulacra are certainly not false images because the simulacrum claims to be true. The simulacrum is that which hides the truth’s non-existence.

Baudrillard is therefore not in search of the truth “behind” simula-

⁸⁸ Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁰ Charles Levin, *Jean Baudrillard. A Study in Cultural Metaphysics* (Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall Europe, 1996), 191.

⁹¹ William Pawlett, “Simulacra + Simulacrum,” in *The Baudrillard Dictionary*, ed. Richard G. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 196.

cra. As Alexander Gungov rightly puts it, “a simulacrum is not simply a false ideology that can easily be criticised, unmasked, and abolished forever. [...] We live comfortably in a world organized by several prevailing codes, usually not suspecting this and being content with what we have available at hand.”⁹² To search for the truth is, according to Baudrillard, the intention of the critique of ideology. “Ideology corresponds to a corruption of reality through signs. It is always the goal of the ideological analysis to restore the objective process, it is always a false problem to wish to restore the truth behind the simulacrum.”⁹³ Any ideology critical⁹⁴ of representation, as Andreas Huyssen points out, “must continue to rely on some distinction between representations” — Baudrillard’s last stage of the image collapses distinctions and “the viability of any ideology critique.”⁹⁵

It must be emphasized, however, that Baudrillard’s work still very much seeks to challenge processes of simulation that try to generate “effects” of the real. Baudrillard’s work follows a strategy of reversibility, which according to Butler means that the “basic axioms of the system” under examination must be pushed “to the point where they begin to turn upon themselves, to produce the opposite effects from those intended.”⁹⁶ Reversibility is in tune with Baudrillard’s rejection of any notion of linear progress and his Nietzschean view⁹⁷ that systems have a built-in obsoles-

⁹² Alexander Gungov, “Simulacra in the Age of the New World Order,” *Proceedings of the Twenty-First World Congress of Philosophy*, vol. 2 Social and Political Philosophy (2006), 267.

⁹³ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 27.

⁹⁴ According to Charles Levin (*Jean Baudrillard. A Study in Cultural Metaphysics*, 203), Baudrillard seeks to eradicate all traces of a sociological theory of ideology: “the theory of simulation seeks to abandon the mind-body split in sociology and absorb the problematic of ideology into a more all-encompassing metaphysical account of social being.”

⁹⁵ Andreas Huyssen, “In the Shadow of McLuhan: Jean Baudrillard’s Theory of Simulation,” *Assemblage*, n. 10 (December 1989), 9.

⁹⁶ Rex Butler, “Reading in the Shadow of the Silent Majorities as an Allegory of Representation,” *Art and Artefact*, ed. Nicholas Zurbrugg (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 52.

⁹⁷ As Nietzsche (in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, 119) puts it: “All great things bring about their own demise through an act of self-sublimation: that is the law of life, the law of *necessary* ‘self-overcoming’ in the essence of life, — the law-

cence and that systems self-destruct by their very functioning.⁹⁸

According to Nietzsche's definition of "nihilism," the highest values cannot resist their own devaluation and subsequent revaluation — their reversal. Generally speaking, nihilism takes two forms in Nietzsche. The first is when life is judged lacking in relation to something super-sensuous beyond it, as in the case of Platonism or Christianity. In this case, truth, meaning, and value are derived from a transcendent origin. The second form of nihilism is when these higher values are devalued, as in the case of the Enlightenment. In this case, meaning and value are put into question.

For Nietzsche, any philosophy must decide how to deal with these two problems, which are integral to thought. Passive nihilism remains locked within the recognition that the world is without true foundation, ungrounded, and meaningless. Active nihilism, on the other hand, arises from the general insight that "the meaning and value of life depend on fictions that we must accept as true."⁹⁹

In Section 2, we saw how Nietzsche problematises the value of truth (without simply overturning the super-sensuous Platonic value structure, i.e., by privileging appearances). In the same way, for Baudrillard, as Butler rightly puts it,

the world can resemble itself, can realise itself, only because of or lead to an entirely 'other-worldly' explanation: the very difference between the world and itself, the real and its copy. It is this point — already two — at which absolute resemblance and absolute difference come together (death, symbolic exchange, seduction, reversibility, evil) that Baudrillard means by the real. It is this Platonic paradox — unrepresentable, unthinkable — that for Baudrillard is the most real thing in the world.¹⁰⁰

giver himself is always ultimately exposed to the cry: '*patere legem, quam ipse tulisti*' [Submit to the law you have yourself made]."

⁹⁸ In his entry on "Nihilism," Rex Butler (*The Baudrillard Dictionary*, 139) says "Nietzsche is one of Baudrillard's defining influences. He is one of the few thinkers whose presumptions are not turned against them," as Baudrillard did with Marx in *The Mirror of Production* and Saussure as well as Freud in *Symbolic Exchange and Death*.

⁹⁹ Rafael Winkler, *Philosophy of Finitude: Heidegger, Levinas and Nietzsche* (New York: Bloomsburg Publishing Inc., 2018), 105.

¹⁰⁰ Rex Butler, "Reading 'In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities' as an Allegory of Representation," *Art and Artefact*, ed. Nicholas Zurbrugg (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 62.

In the final phase of simulation there is no real to reflect or imitate, because simulation is a replacement. Simulation totalises the world in its own image. In the order of simulation, the model and its internal system of relations generate phenomena. Although science demands an end to mimetic as well as to mythical thought, Baudrillard shows that this rejection is deluded. The demand for direct access is mythical but also fatal.

For Baudrillard, the rationality of the Enlightenment produces “the orders of simulacra” that destroy it. As Baudrillard puts it in *Fatal Strategies*, the “real does not efface itself in favour of the imaginary; it effaces itself in favour of the more real than real: the hyperreal. The truer than true: this is simulation.”¹⁰¹ The real has become its own simulation. Political and cultural events are inextricably linked to their mode of (re)presentation. In the same way, processes of simulation mistake reality with their reproduction.

In his study “Nihilism and the Sublime Postmodern,” Will Slocombe rightly regards Baudrillard’s simulation as arising “from the Enlightenment desire to attribute Reason as the measure of all things, to quantify and control by scientifically replicating the Real under laboratory conditions.”¹⁰² Slocombe points out that simulation “is not an *escape* from Enlightenment rationality but the ultimate *culmination* of it.”¹⁰³

Baudrillard follows Nietzsche’s critique of the machinery that continuously revives the divine along with everything that gives meaning to a world and a humanity that finds itself moulded through the character of that meaning. As David Allison puts it, Baudrillard’s “oversaturated world of hyperreality [...] [is] for Nietzsche, precisely the entire symbolic of the religio-moral idiosyncrasy.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, trans. Philip Beitchman and W. G. J. Neislu-chowski (New York: Semiotext(e), 1990), 11.

¹⁰² Will Slocombe, *Nihilism and the Sublime Post Modern: The (Hi)Story of a Difficult Relationship from Romanticism to Postmodernism* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 69.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁰⁴ David Allison, “Iconologies: Reading Simulations with Plato and Nietzsche,” *Nietzsche, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science II*, ed. Babette Babiche (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 183; spelling modified.

5. Conclusion

According to Nietzsche, Plato devalues the mutable realm of appearances in favour of an immutable, transcendent, true world of “Forms.” Nietzsche does not simply invert the Platonic hierarchical order of truth over error or appearance, he also delves into the origin of the positive value placed upon truth and he finds it “simply a moral prejudice to affirm truth over error or appearances.”¹⁰⁵ In the wake of Nietzsche’s “reversal of Platonism” and the concurrent “twilight of the idols,” Deleuze and Baudrillard conceptualise simulacra and simulation not simply as a false portrayal (with no “real referent”). For Deleuze, the simulacrum is not derived from a prior identity. A simulacrum is dissimilar to what it represents, but it still produces an “effect of resemblance.”¹⁰⁶ This focus on “effects” is in tune with the future oriented, mutable aspect of the simulacrum. Identity and resemblance continue as external effects of the internal differential dynamic of the simulacrum. In Deleuze’s world of simulacra, “each event of life is already other than itself,” “not original,” a “simulation.”¹⁰⁷

Unlike Deleuze’s straightforward affirmation of simulacra, we have seen how Baudrillard’s work seeks to challenge processes of simulation that try to generate “effects” of the real. Hyperreality, for Baudrillard, is a self-referential world composed of models or simulacra grounded in no other reality than their own. By means of his metaphor of “the precession of simulation,” Baudrillard discusses how cultural models seem to circulate as “self-fulfilling prophecies.”¹⁰⁸ Social and geopolitical events repeat themselves in an endless cycle. In Baudrillard’s work, simulation is not about emancipation, as in the case of Deleuze, but about control.

¹⁰⁵ Schrift, *Nietzsche’s French Legacy. A Genealogy of Poststructuralism*, 22.

¹⁰⁶ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 295.

¹⁰⁷ Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze*, 99.

¹⁰⁸ Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*, 128.

II. POSTMODERN THOUGHT

Reticence

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Abstract

Words put us in contact not with our own mental images but with persons and things themselves. Yet we do experience the drive to break up and break out of language. Words condense encounters and events; they solidify, encrust the things upon which they are attached. Words empty of their meaning simply by being repeated. They also lose their edge, their force, their tone, their solemnity or their lilt and brightness. Conversation assimilates and generalizes, accumulates commonplaces, comforts and anesthetizes. When thought that discovers ignorance in itself assents to this ignorance, it can know an ecstatic plunge into darkness.

Keywords: Language; words; communication; voice; laughter; other minds; conversation; entropy; repetition; interpretation; ecstasy.

I resolved long ago not to seek knowledge, as others do, but to seek its contrary, which is unknowing. I no longer anticipated the moment when I would be rewarded for my effort, *when I would know at last*, but rather the moment when *I would no longer know, when my initial anticipation would dissolve into NOTHING* [...]. [T]his way of going in the wrong direction on the paths of knowledge — to get off them, not to derive a result that others anticipate — leads to the principle of *sovereignty* of being and of thought, which from the standpoint where I am placed at the moment has this meaning: that thought, subordinated to some anticipated result, completely enslaved, ceases to be in being *sovereign*, that only unknowing is *sovereign*. [...] The thought that comes to a halt in the face of what is sovereign rightfully pursues its operation to the point where its object dissolves into NOTHING, because, ceasing to be useful, or subordinate, it becomes *sovereign* in ceasing to be. — Bataille¹

¹ Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*, vols. II

1. The Voice that Makes Contact

What an extraordinary power, this power of the voice to put us in contact, not with our own mental images but with persons and things themselves! To enter into contact with someone whose physical body we see is not to conceptually grasp his or her identity and respect his or her boundaries and inner space. Greeting someone with “Hey man!,” the cocky tone of those words hail in that individual a man, not a student, a waiter, or a stranger. It is first by the tone of voice that we make contact and communicate. We catch on to the urgent, frantic, panicky, exultant, or astonished tone of the one who addresses us; her voice resounds in our own. To answer the frenetic tone of a young person who bursts into our office with the stentorian tone of settled and regulated officious life is, before we refuse to understand really what she will tell us, to refuse her tone — to refuse her.

We catch on to the purring of the kitten, the frantic cries of the bird, the snorting of the distrustful horse, the complaint of the caged puma. We pick up the tone of the blackbird marsh, the hamlet meditating in the Himalayan mountainscape, the shifting dunes under twilight skies. As our words form, the tone of these things and events resounds in our voice. The pacing and accents of our phrases express the muffled calm or the frenetic movement, the rhythm and periodicity or jerks and explosions of the things and events. Our words articulate the agitated tone of a column of ants, the syncopation of the workers unloading a ship, the purple majesty of the Pacific Ocean under dawning Madagascar skies. Our words articulate the tone of a cave, a cathedral, a dance, the pacing, the rhythms, the expanse, the silence.

Words put us in touch with things. “Come, I’ll take you out to meet the great whites!” the old fisherman tells us. As he speaks to us, our attention is drawn neither to images in his mind nor to images in ours, but to the sharks themselves. When we go out to the ocean with him, he shouts: “There they are!” and his words make us see them, shadows deep in the turbulent waters. He recognizes individual sharks whose bodies, whose ways he knows; he identifies a shark he has not seen before. We descend into the ocean with him and meet these very sharks that his words on the boat have introduced us to and presented to us. And when, now, we speak

of them, it is neither concepts nor images in our minds, but those very sharks that our words make present again to us.

The one who says with conviction “I am a dancer!” “I am a doctor!” has the conviction that the words that put forth what the dance hall floor and lighting are or what the surgical instruments are, are words that can be counted on about things that can be counted on. The properties and behaviors of things are retained in words. With words we stay in touch with things.

Words do not simply label things we see and touch; they invoke and reveal things. They bring out traits in the complexity of a thing, map out relations in the density of the setting, they focus our attention, lead us to see contexts, sequences, and interactions. They slow down and intensify the contact our bodies are making with things and events or accelerate them, turn them in new directions, focus the eyes and the hearing or let them drift. Chanting, intoning, blessing things, words enhance things, bring forth their glory. Insulting people, cursing events, words unleash forceful blows against them, mortifying them, wounding them.

Words work an artistry on things, that of metaphor and metonymy. They reflect qualities, halos, colors from other things onto this thing. They endow things and events with names, titles, nicknames.

2. The Urge to Silence the Overflow of Words

Philosophers, those free, that is idle, citizens in the merchant ports of ancient Greece, who spent their time conversing with one another and with foreigners, came to esteem this activity as noble. Language came to appear to them as the instrument for establishing the truth of nature, society, values, and to be distinctly human. Yet there has also been a succession of devoted and serious people who have run up against language as against a wall standing between them and reality. We have not been able to dismiss Zen Buddhists or Western mystics from the canonical figures of our culture, though we know less than ever what to do with them. Yet have not each of us, at different times, felt language, all of language, as an obstacle in our way?

We have recourse to the geology books that instruct us about the seven continents and the continental plates and drift, about the mountain ranges, glaciers and polar ice-caps, forests and rivers and the oceans that cover 70% of earth’s surface. We have recourse to the chemistry, physics, and biology books that inform us about the constitution and behav-

ior of inanimate matter and the 400,000 species of plants, 28,400 species of fish, 9,500 species of ants. But at a certain moment we feel such an urge to go see the tropical rain forest and see some of those 350,000 species of beetles. And once there, we feel an irresistible compulsion to stand silent in the misty forest, to snuff out the babble of names and explanations that buzz in our heads, to tune in to the cacophony of unnamable twangs and cries.

Because being the sole witness of but one mind, our own, being unable to perceive the invisible sensations and thought processes of another mind, is intolerable, we avidly listen to the words with which others express their intentions, ideas about things, feelings, and desires. There is a whole literature devoted to the conscious and unconscious psychic states, inhibitions, censorships that are revealed through words and slips of the tongue. There is a whole profession of counselors and therapists who urge us to be up front about sex with our dates, to talk with our lovers and spouses about our relationship, to explain our hurt feelings and frustrations with friends. But which of us have not felt a vehement need to stop all this talk, to just shut up about it all! To go for a ride and just look at the traffic and the crowds, to spend an evening just eating dinner and listening to some music.

Conversation assimilates and generalizes, accumulates commonplaces, comforts and anesthetizes. People who talk all the time strike us as shallow. Jean-Jacques Rousseau spoke with exasperation of thought and feeling slipping away while making conversation at a social gathering: "Its progress, more rapid than my ideas, forcing me almost always to speak before thinking, has often suggested to me stupidities and ineptitudes that my reason disapproved and my heart disavowed at the moment they escaped from my mouth, but which, preceding my own judgement, could not be reformed by its censure."² Launched into conversation, the words, sequences, anecdotes, repartees, and the civilized, witty but polite, and entertaining, rhetoric that governs them scuttle on, and pull us from any real thoughts we may have and from the uneasiness, attractions, desires, lusts, anxiety, mounting pleasure of our bodies. When someone in flesh and blood confronts us, we immediately feel uneasy, anxious, some stirrings of lust rise up at the sight of this flesh, this

² Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes. Tome 1: Les Confessions: Autres textes autobiographiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), 1033.

skin warm and sensitive; we at once start talking, uttering conventional greetings, make commonplace remarks about the weather and the traffic, ask a question that leads to a neutral line of conversation. And in doing so we feel ourselves taking a distance, starting a ping pong game of language across that distance, keeping the individual flesh and blood reality of the other at a distance.

“Know thyself!” Socrates instructed. “The unexamined life is not worth living!” he warned. There are whole sections on self-analysis and character management in bookstores. Which of us has not taken up some of the books of psychoanalysis and set out to apply it to ourselves, analyzing our childhood, our states of depression, our frustrations, our relationships, our goals? I have a good friend, a very intelligent, very successful lawyer, handsome, charming, likeable, who, during a bout of depression after his wife suddenly dropped him for an unemployed Greek she met in Greenwich Village, went to a psychotherapist for help. Seven years later he was still going, six times a week. I finally asked him why, since he is so intelligent and successful and surrounded by devoted friends and available women, he felt the need for so much medical help. He said that he had found psychoanalysis itself fascinating, the unending dredging up, inspecting, interpreting of dreams, fantasies, long-forgotten incidents from childhood. Do not most of us not only get bored by this exorbitant attention to minute events in our own little ego, but find the verbalization of the stream of consciousness positively exasperating? We feel a compulsion to silence it all, to just look at things and engage in activities without this inner commentary.

We have known what it is like to live in the complete absence of words. As infants we reached out to make contact with what was being offered to us or what we saw at a distance, reached out to kiss our mother or to suckle her breast; we covered our face, pushed our hand back from something being offered to us. Then we came to use sounds to refer to things, first to joyously acknowledge, or to demand, their being given or to joyously acknowledge, or to demand, their being gone, then to acknowledge or demand individuals and details. The sounds came to designate meanings detached from things, in the absence of things. This at first global, and then increasingly articulated system of signs and their meanings extended a grid between us and the whole of our environment.

3. Words that Level Things

You glance about the room; it would take the rest of the day to put in words all that was visible in that one glance. Words condense encounters and events. They delimit patterns, cut out, divide, oppose. What we possess with words are the skeletons of things in chains. To retain for ourselves and for others the lilting melody of a blackbird, the charm of the Indian village in the High Andes, we assemble words that designate features, that isolate relationships, that contrast and negate. In bringing out connections between things, words overlook the force with which things are concentrated in themselves. However completely a building or a person has been described to us, the moment we face that building or are face to face with that person, there is shock, astonishment, and discovery.

Words which condense the complex colors of a pheasant or an evening cloud, which drag over upon situations names and classifications from other situations only the general lines of which are remembered, enable us to pass over things and situations. Once an animal we came upon is labeled and classified, what it is doing identified, the animal seems summed up, encapsulated, its nature and behavior made transparent in a concept. Once a person gets categorized, once a situation gets defined in some words, we withdraw from all the strands that we felt pulling on us in different directions; our mind moves on to somebody else or back to our own business.

In each of us the streaming of tones, the patterns, the sounds, the density, resistance, and resilience of things, are folded in with expectations and fears, thoughts, fantasies, and feelings; each of us is an organism and locus of a process of integration. When we formulate pieces or segments of our experience in words, the words are common words, formulating recurrent patterns accessible to anyone. "Each word exchanged, each line printed, establish a communication between two interlocutors, leveling what until then was a divergence in information," Claude Lévi-Strauss says.³ Formulating the pieces or segments of our experience in words is a process of disintegration, reduction to inertia, entropy.

For a sound to count as a word, abstraction is made of its material qualities — the tone and pitch of voice, the pacing, resonance, and tim-

³ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (London: Penguin, 2012), 413.

bre with which it is uttered, as abstraction is made from vertical or Palmer-slanted when it is written and from the Courier 10 or 12 typeface when it is recorded on a computer screen. It is as a repeatable form that a sound or visual pattern can function as a word. It can then be taken to signify a meaning which is taken to be the same whenever, wherever it is invoked by that word.

There is really no first occurrence of a word in a language: from the first it was formed as repeatable. And a word does not really die out; if its use becomes obsolete, it can always be understood by scholars and can be revived by writers who put it back into use.

Every name survives its owner: Elsbeth's husband Julius Benway is dead, but his name is still there, intact, functioning as it did when he was alive. Indeed, when he was alive, his name functioned as it will when he is dead. The name is situated in a sphere of deathlessness and designates its bearer as though he were not at the present moment of his lifetime. Each statement survives its object: nothing changes in the meaning or the truth of the statement "Elsbeth went to Reno and got a face-lift" after Elsbeth returned to the Hamptons, nor after she died.

Words thus solidify, encrust the things upon which they are attached. Once something is named a "porcupine fish," a "mongrel dog," a "rogue lion," a "shack," a "professor," or a "wife," it, he, or she is barnacled, plasticized by that name. Words are immortal, Hegel said, but they kill the things they take hold of. They are pyramids, he said, markers which stand solid and still over things, but what they enclose are corpses. Even as the voice fixes its word "weed" on a plant, the plant is pushing its roots afar, preparing to open its buds, to give birth to offspring. The word orders the eyes so that they do not see all that. The word "slum" is a funnel put over the eyes so that they do not see the old woman exhausted by labor preparing to die surrounded by her disconsolate husband, the child being born as full of as unpredictable visions and talents as any child in the most opulent of gated communities, the birthdays being celebrated, the living room walls covered with photographs as precious as the most exalted of memories.

4. The Weakening of Words

Sounds uttered as words are repeatable. Words are indefinitely repeatable, but words empty of their meaning simply by being repeated. They lose their edge, their force, their tone, their solemnity or their lilt and

brightness, and their meaning. We got stuck in a foreign airport for ten hours, with nothing whatever to do to while away the time, and so sat down to reread the novel that so gripped us reading it on the plane, and found it already so flat we could not get through the first chapter. The most universally accepted principles, judgments, and values are the most empty of meaning. “Thoughts thought too much no longer think anything,” Maurice Merleau-Ponty wrote.⁴ What is emptier than the watchwords “freedom,” “democracy,” “justice,” “virtue”? The things and events encrusted with words lose their sheen and edge and become empty of meaning. As Emil Cioran writes,

Words too much repeated weaken and die. The mind would need an infinite dictionary, but its means are limited to a few words trivialized by use. Thus what is new requires strange combinations, requires words put to unexpected functions: originality reduces to the torture of the adjective and the suggestive inappropriateness of metaphors [...]. A word foreseen is a dead word; only its artificial use breathes into it a new vigor, and then people adopt it, use it, and soil it. The mind has to be precious if it is to exist at all. [...] What we call our life by contrast with life itself is an incessant creation of fashions with the help of speech used artificially; it is a proliferation of futilities, without which we would expire in a yawn. [...] If man invents new physics, it is not so much to reach an explanation of nature as to escape the boredom of a universe understood, habitual, vulgarly unreduceable, to which he arbitrarily attributes many dimensions, like the adjectives we project on an inert thing which we are tired of seeing and putting up with as it was seen and endured by the stupidity of our ancestors or our immediate forebearers.⁵

In order to maintain interest in ourselves, we had to concoct new metaphors — spirit, soul, child of God made in the image and likeness of God, consciousness, *Dasein*, being-in-the-world, nihilation, now the brain as a biological computer. These strange new words jolt the mind and make it see itself as new and astonishing. But all these metaphors undergo the fatality of all words that get used too much; they become dead metaphors, trivialized and sterile. In the nineteenth century, the Romantics used the

⁴ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. & trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 119.

⁵ Emil M. Cioran, *A Short History of Decay*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Arcade, 2012), 89-90.

moon and consumption (tuberculosis) to make the poet appear mystical and governed by fate. Now use these words in a poem and you make yourself ridiculous. Cioran foresees the time when we will have exhausted the possibilities of the dictionary, and we will no longer see ourselves as something new and astonishing in the material universe; and be confronted with our life as commonplace, trivial, and boring.

5. Servile Words

The word that designates an entity or event continues to do so when that event has passed or that entity transformed or destroyed. The word is a safeguard against loss. Discourse is a continual operation of appropriation, of possession. Appropriation, possession is not an innocent activity of keeping things near us, protected and flourishing under our care.

People who live by words — academics, novelists, television anchormen and talk show hosts, comedians — call what they do “work.” A derisible attribution, when one compares what they do with what telephone linemen, road construction workers, plumbers, factory workers in Haiti, and peasants in China do. Yet though just talking is withdrawal from real work and writing, as we say, requires leisure, there is something in the nature of discourse that makes it akin to work.

Work begins when we detach something — a stick, a chipped stone — from the continuity of our environment and envision how it could be put in another place, foresee how its solidity could convey our force so as to detach something further. The passage of time is a constant reminder of irrevocable loss. The future is grasped as a compensation for decay and disintegration of things in the environment.

The worker detaches himself from the continuity of his environment, and makes of himself a tool. He isolates his eyes, his hands and arms from the whole of his body that rests in itself and uses them as causes to produce effects, implements to reach ends. His senses cease to be disinterested; his consciousness is directed by an anticipation of the future.

His mind is made to serve; it is driven by a movement that turns it to the beyond, the absent, the future. It experiences its present and presence as wanting, failing. His mind makes itself a means for an end that incessantly moves further. The state of mind in which its present and presence are subordinate to future results is a state of servility.

To begin to speak is to launch a trajectory of time. To utter a noun is to anticipate the verb and the verbal complement that will make up a

statement. A statement calls for a sequel, another sentence that qualifies it, that builds upon it, draws out a consequence, that evokes an objection to it, justifies it or supplies evidence for it. As the task or goal gives its sense to a tool, so the verb and verbal complement gives its sense to the noun and the clarification or justification gives its sense to the statement. And as the tool and the manipulation have to be continuously lined up with the task, so grammatical rules have to regulate the progression of words in the statement and logical rules the progression of its clarification or justification.

Words subordinate each thing and event that presents itself to something further, to something absent, to utility, to a goal. To put words on things and events is already to make them serve.

Each of the words has its sense and its use by contrast with other words. One can be satisfied with a statement, one can be satisfied, for practical purposes, with a clarification or justification. But one remains aware that to require that one's statement be taken as true commits one to clarifications of justifications to which there is no end. Discourse is a cadence of projects, initiatives and of the advance representations of initiatives.

There is no last word, there is no System, no Absolute Knowledge, no Unified Theory of Everything; nowadays theorists, but already Socrates, praise and prize this situation, this unquenchable restlessness of the spirit. Each of its states become vulnerable and dependent. But is it not an inmost experience of servility, the mind driven by a force that makes every present and every presence serve, makes them subordinate to future, absent states that when they are reached will be subordinated to further absent, future states?

6. In the Labyrinth of Language

Pursuing statements as they open upon more statements, questions, objections, may lead us further afield in the outlying world. But words and statements can also keep us within language. To specify the meaning of a word we name the words with which it contrasts, and to specify the meaning of those words we would have to name the constellations of other words with which they contrast. To really pin down the meaning of a word, we have to determine the meanings of other words, and to determine their meaning we have to pin down still other words. The question "what does that mean?" leads us on and on until all meanings hover before us and vacillate.

This woman I met and danced with in a bar in Cairo came to bed with me. I spent the day asking myself if she will come again. The next night she again agreed to come to my room and to spend the night with me. The next day I am bothered by the question what does this mean? Is she really drawn to me? Is she faking orgasm? Is she playing some sort of game with me? Does she expect presents, money, does she want to tie me to her so that I will bring her to America? Is she aiming for some kind of triumph in seducing a white man, an American? And what about me? Is this a serious affair, which I will have to explain to my wife when I get back? Infidelity means violating my marriage vows to my wife. But what does marriage really mean? And what does having a wife, what does saying "my wife" mean? I seem to have arrived at a point where every question about the meaning of words leads to just asking about the meaning of other words, a place where there are no facts, just interpretations of interpretations. The way the question "What did this semester I took off from school and hitch-hiked across the country mean to me?" leads to "What is the meaning of my staying in school?" "What is the meaning of the life I am leading here?" And, finally, "What is the meaning of life?" which now hovers over me as vaguely menacing and unanswerable demand.

In Witold Gombrowicz's *Cosmos*, the narrator comes back to his lodging to find a sparrow hung by the neck on a length of wire in the garden. Somebody did this. What does it mean? Is he being spied on? Followed? With what intent? Then inside he notices what looks like an arrow vaguely marked on the ceiling. Before long, he sees or thinks he sees signs everywhere. August Strindberg's *Inferno* invokes an individual haunted by the specter of meaning which is everywhere, equivocal and requiring interpretation. The existence of this floating, unfixable, realm of meaning obsesses him, makes unanswerable demands on him, beseges him, until he can no longer leave his room.

7. The Cruelty of Words

Demanding words, oppressive words. Abrasive words, stinging words, biting words, cutting words. Words constrict us, lacerate us, humiliate us, sicken us, mortify us.

Words order, organize the landscape about us, and orient, direct, order our thoughts, our reveries, our plans, our decisions. Are not order-words verdicts, death sentences? When a father orders his son "You will

do this,” “You will not do that,” he is cutting off a trajectory of life. The son who obeys will cut others down in turn (when the new employee zealously attends to the regulations and orders, the other employees feel he is restricting their space for manoeuver). Death is not only a limit, an end, in time; it is also a limit in space. One ceases to move across space. And every order-word limits the space in which we live. The father orders his son: “Don’t touch that.” “You keep out of there.” The cue that orders the talk of the group, pack, gang, milieu, “society,” or rational community, scientific discipline or technological team and orders one’s entry into a practicable space threatens exclusion and effacement from it. The one who is ordered to speak in his own name is being isolated, cut apart, cut down.

And while the words someone utters hardly disturb the air and vanish from it without leaving a trace, they do not depart from the one who puts them out. They crystallize inside the fibers of the brain, gagging the youthful surges of wonder and awe which first discovered the epiphany of the sparkling and ephemeral unlabeled things in the world. “Thoughts thought too much no longer think anything.” A philosopher’s words, no doubt because they are the most abstract, extending over the broadest sweep of things, are the least troubled by emergences, births, mutations, etiologies, and small deaths among those things. At the end of his life a philosopher’s soul has nothing but principles, convictions, deep inner cuts that have long solidified, his mental life constricted and enfeebled by so many self-inflicted scars.

8. At the Limits of What Words Say

We can feel a nostalgia for the time before the network of signs elicited our initiations and the advance representations of our initiatives. But the practice of discourse itself eventually reaches an understanding of the transitional character of its component entities and arrangements, and the abstract character of the most exacting and detailed verbal representations. The understanding that represents, appropriates, possesses things with words discovers how it has lost contact with them, senses how beyond all its explanations and systems there is an unknown universe out there, discovers ignorance in itself. It is language itself that leads us to the depths and to the frontiers beyond which its words no longer take hold, where our mind finds itself empty, open upon nothing words can grasp.

In moments of austere lucidity, the thought that discovers ignorance in itself assents to this ignorance, plunges into it, sacrifices itself. It lets go in an ecstatic plunge into darkness. No longer subordinate to some anticipated result, its ecstasy is the ecstasy of being an utterly self-propelled and sovereign movement.

9. Black Holes in Language

“Language as a whole,” Georges Bataille writes, “is ended only by the word God, — or by words with a *sacred* meaning, ultimately devoid of intelligible meaning (hence of any meaning), or by the prohibition of their use.”⁶ Sacred words are black holes in language. But in the Judeo-Christian West today the word “God” is very much in use. The term “God” no longer designates the ineffable, but, in theology, an absolutely substantial reality and, in the practice of believers, an indestructible reality invoked in times of death, natural calamities, and war. American money, the now global means of exchange in the world of work and economy is stamped with the words “In God we trust.” The name of God has become commonplace and has lost its transgressive power, because God, like any other object, has come to represent a substantial reality that we can attain and use.

The words then that are “sacred” — separate and separating — words which function as black holes where meaning comes to an end, words whose use is prohibited — are the words we call “profane.” The word “shit” designates waste cast out; the word “fuck” when used as a profanity designates not the reproductive and pleasurable sexual act but a nonreproductive release of energies that humiliate the one who is penetrated and violated in his or her integrity. We use these words to reject explanations and justifications. These words are not only aggressions against the machinery of the working world and against the self-determination of persons but verbal aggressions against language.

Discursive language requires the domestication of the violent elements that threaten meaning. The preeminent instance of violence is death. In order to contain its transgressive potential, death must be given a meaning; it is taken to signify sleep or passage to another life. But the bald word “dead” erupts in this talk as an utterance signifying nothingness.

⁶ Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*, vols. II & III, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone, 1991), 382.

But there are also forms of language that are noninstrumental, not efficacious factors in projects and work, not themselves forms of work, and not instruments of communication.

There is, there has been from the beginning, poetry. Poetry is not the construction of extremely refined and precise accounts of things, events, and mental states. Poetry is allusive and elliptical; its most subtle and precise phrasings put one in the presence of reality in its material singularity by making one feel not how much there is still to be said about the most familiar things, events, and mental states, but how all that has already been said and what is here being said reveals the presence of the most familiar things, events, and mental states as abysses of the unappropriated and unrepresentable. Poetry retains a sacred character which the language of religiosity has lost. There is an unavowed kinship between poetry and profanity. Poets recognize the poetic character of inner-city street talk. Though the world of work and power maintains writers to produce hymns of religious and military glory and songs of everlasting love for the longings of youth, the poets write their seductive contemplations of the outcast and the abject.

In fact, does not something like an opacity, a black hole lurk in all words? At the kitchen window, we see and say: A spider is spinning its web. There is no question but that these are the right words. But at the core of those words — spinning, web — is there not an opacity, where the words are not simple windows upon the spider out there and its web, where the words do not simply diagram the inner structure of those things, but where the words themselves take form like opaque things? *L'araignée file sa toile*. There is something inexpressive in the words as brief and passing things.

10. The Writer and His Written Words

As we distinguish hymn-writers for churches, armies, and political campaigns and successful song-writers from poets, so we distinguish the producers of texts and of information from those identified with the barren word “writers.”

To be sure, writers write meaningful words, and do so with a meticulous care and rigor that spoken conversation never has. But writers write of things unknown and unseen by their readers, things their readers will never encounter. The words only point to things and events in their irremediable absence.

Though the writer is the sole concrete reality upon which they are suspended, the writer himself disappears in his writing. One forgets oneself, one even loses sight of one's intention in starting to write; one becomes attentive only to the way the explanation has to be developed, the way the description has to be completed, the way the story has to be told. Kafka said he became a writer when he no longer wrote "I." There is a specific sober euphoria in the writer who thus divests himself of his identity. As the writer writes, he exists as the source of these words that leave him and which he can never recuperate, not even in reading them himself. Writers do not read their own books. They will indeed go over the manuscript, ruthlessly striking out phrases that were put in willfully, then attentive for the words that the language and the thought of the text themselves require. When the book is published, the writer cannot really read it for its sense.

The writer is not indulging in "self-expression"; it is the reader who speaks in the writer, who maintains in the writer the course of the discourse intended for him. Without the reader awaiting the words of the writer, the reader who thus loves the written text and will forget the author, without the presence and insistence of the reader the writer could write nothing. For a reader, the writer is just someone he or she has not met and most likely never will. The writer's name, identity, and personal history do not change anything of what the reader reads. As the reader reads, he or she loses sight of his or her room, his or her wants and practicable projects, his or her own emotional and vocational history. The writer and the reader are but two voices in the dark, the writer's voice reaching his reader perhaps after years, what the reader has to say, how he responds to the writer's voice never reaching him.

11. Ecstasies

We can experience this empty state of mind, gaping open upon nothing words can grasp, as a state of confusion and anxiety. But when thought that discovers ignorance in itself assents to this ignorance, plunges into it, and sacrifices itself, it can know an ecstatic plunge into darkness. There are many moments, and many forms of such ecstasy.

Thought is not only a succession of initiatives relating, connecting, elaborating concepts, elaborating phrases. There is a phase of raw exposure to things and events, a phase of hesitation, finding oneself disconcerted, bewildered, when thought is in suspense, immobile.

Thought weighs down on the things, and the weight of things weighs down on thought. This pondering is not an intentionality, and not a reflexive movement. It is a letting oneself undergo the impact of this thing or event.

There is in the heart of a thing a concentration, there where it is. But at the same time to be there is to be exposed. A stone is there, posited, in position, posed, positive. A tree, rising from the ground, is exposed to the sun and to the winds and the storms and chainsaws. Its roots in the ground are exposed to the moisture, funguses, moles, rocks that shift, the spade that cuts. An orchid flower blossoming in a crotch of that tree is at the disposal of the orchid plant, of its inclination to nourish that blossom, its inclination to propagate itself. The blossom is inclined toward the light. It spreads its throat and frilled petals. Something that takes place, that comes to pass, diagrams a certain direction. There is innocence, youth, and adventure in things.

The thought pondering things and events, exposed to the impact of their weight, is lifted off them by the movement of discourse positing terms, relating, connecting, elaborating them, elaborating phrases. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry cherished the rare moments of maximum focusing, centering, and integration. He knew them as a pilot in night-flying: then he found himself wholly given over to his task, no distractions, no marginal preoccupations, all his sensibilities alert, his thoughts one with his body. Saint-Exupéry described these times not only as times of maximum intensity, but also times of supreme exhilaration. And a sense of really existing — he felt himself really existing in a sense everyday life does not give. This focused and integral mobilization of all his powers did not put him in possession of a segment of reality immobilized in its presence, but instead to the rush of the wind, the flickering and streaming terrestrial and celestial lights, the flow of the night. The maximum focusing, centering, and integration of our sensibility and perception reveals how illusory is appropriation.

When an anticipated conclusion of an explanation or a narrative breaks into nonsense, when a painstaking construction or operation abruptly self-destructs, one is left with the naked things, condensed in themselves. Before the breakdown of meaning into absurdity, the collapse of efficacious work efforts, one can be left with a wretched sense of impotence. But one's forces now cut off from work, free, can sense their powers to dance intoxicated over the naked things with peals of

laughter. Laughter is sovereign pleasure, pleasure of a gratuitous release of energies.

Tears and grieving disconnect the future and recognize that the force and meaning of the past has come to an end. The forces of life hold on with strength and will to the present in all its irrevocable loss, inconsolable with words and projects. Tragic art holds humans in thrall to losses that they themselves have not known.

It is not first in speaking informatively to another that we cease to deal with him or her as an instrument or obstacle, and recognize his or her subjectivity. It is in laughter and tears that we have the feeling of being there for the others. We do not laugh alone and for ourselves alone. In a foreign airport, the language of passengers we do not understand makes them strangers to us. Then a designer-dressed matron comes stalking about giving orders, then whap! suddenly slips on the polished floor and her voice stops in the thump of her ass. Our laughter rebounds in the laughter of the others about us and theirs in us, and we understand their laughter and understand them and understand they are people of our kind. Laughter breaks out as a current of intense communication between oneself and someone on the sidewalk you pass who is looking at a kitten trying to catch hold of a ball and tumbling over itself. We do not weep alone and for ourselves alone. Weeping opens the heights and the depths that enable us to see the pain and death of all that lives. If we can weep over what we have done it is because we can weep with others who weep over us.

Music and dance, that movement that is not going anywhere, that relaunches itself of its own rhythms, break completely with the purposiveness of work. Comedy celebrates the reversal of hierarchies, and intoxication makes all utterances absurd and all activities farce. Feasting breaks with the eating for the sake of nourishment and consumes gratuitously the resources gathered by work. Combat, contests, and play discharge our forces without achieving results. The ecstasy in them is the reverse of the appropriative movement in work and in discourse; their inner movements are expropriative and exhilarating, disconnections of the present from the directives of the past and concerns for the future. Eroticism — individual or disindividuating, spiritual or sensual, delicate or corrupt, cerebral or violent — issues in orgasm, that generalized laughter of the organism.

The Other Side of Peirce’s Phaneroscopy: Questioning and Analogising Phaneron without ‘Being’¹

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Abstract

Research on Peirce’s phaneroscopy has been done with and through the paradigm or the conceptual schema of “Being” — what has been critiqued by post-structuralist philosophers as the metaphysics of Being. Thus, such research is either limited to attempts to define “phaneron,” or to identify whether *there is* a particular and consistent meaning intention behind Peirce’s use of this term. Another problematic characteristic with such a way of engaging with phaneroscopy is the very anonymity of the schema of “Being.” While all scholars admit to the universality of “phaneron,” rarely, if ever, do we see an account of how such universality can be instantiated. In this paper, I attempt to engage with phaneroscopy differently. Instead of presenting a better version of what phaneroscopy *is*, or making arguments about what is the case with phaneroscopy, both of which are ways of philosophising with “being,” I attempt to enact phaneroscopy. This would mean to undertake to follow Peirce’s instructions for the phaneroscopist and report the findings. Based on the latter, I shall analogise phaneron with the possibility of understanding. Finally, instead of having a conclusion which would imply an intention of making a case, and thus closure, I shall open up the

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possibility of further dialogue by raising some additional questions concerning how phaneroscopy has thus far been represented.

Keywords: Charles S. Peirce; phaneron; phaneroscopy; pragmatism; metaphysics of presence; the Other; Nietzsche; Irigaray; feminism

1. Introduction

The vast majority of the research on phaneroscopy, important as it undoubtedly is, reveals two problems. First, it interprets “phaneron” through the paradigm of “Being” which, according to Peirce, is nominalistic — Peirce was against nominalism.² Thus, such research is either limited to attempts to define “phaneron,” or to identify whether there is a particular and consistent meaning intention behind Peirce’s use of this term.³ Second, while all scholars admit the universality of phaneron, rarely, if ever, do we see an account of how such universality can be instantiated.

In the first part of this paper, I address these issues. In the second part, I attempt a different interpretation of “phaneron.” Thinking without “Being” does not aim to reach a definition, a conclusion or what the case is. If phaneroscopy is released from the orthodox way of thinking about what *is*, what there *is*, or any other form of what has been referred to as the metaphysics of presence,⁴ then phaneron could be analogised with the possibility of understanding. We can justify this analogy by enacting what Peirce requests us to do: replicate his experiments, report and compare our findings with others. Finally, instead of having a conclusion which would imply an intention of making a case, and thus closure, I shall open up the possibility of further dialogue by raising some additional questions concerning how phaneroscopy has thus far been represented.

² Two indicative passages where Peirce expresses his feelings concerning the tyranny of nominalism, not only in philosophy but also in everyday life as a way of thinking, are CP 4.1 and CP 4.5.

³ Gary Fuhrman, “Peirce’s Retrospectives on His Phenomenological Quest,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 2013, vol. 49, n. 4, 490-508.

⁴ See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1998).

2. Peirce's (In)Decision: Indefinite Decision⁵

Let us start with Peirce's much cited definition of phaneroscopy: "Phaneroscopy is the description of the *phaneron*; and by the *phaneron* I mean the collective total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind, quite regardless of whether it corresponds to any real thing or not."⁶ If we ask in whose mind this presence is taking place, where and when, then Peirce says "I reply that I leave these questions unanswered, never having entertained a doubt that those features of the phaneron that I have found in my mind are present at all times and to all minds."⁷ This universality, this "phaneron" makes no claim for the kind of being for whom (such) presence (it) is; be they blind or of whatever ethnic persuasion, sex(uality), gender, age, etc. That means that the phaneron, or the features of the phaneron, must be objective or objectively given in the sense that they should be present and/or presented to everyone. This is another way of saying that if everyone were to describe, to report about what is present in their mind, their reports would have some universal features, or would have overlapping points. "Indeed, he [anyone] must actually repeat my observations for himself, or else I shall more utterly fail to convey my meaning than if I were to discourse of effects of chromatic decoration to a man congenitally blind."⁸ We could thus say that phaneron is blind to differences.

Using the possibility of blindness as a starting point for the investigation of the phaneron is critical. This decided indecision allows Peirce *to look for* and *look after* rather than *look at* the phaneron as "the collective

⁵ As we shall shortly see, one of the traditional ways of thinking that Peirce questions, and which he does not allow for the phaneroscopist, is thinking with the principle of non-contradiction. To follow such a thinking, we employ linguistic schemata and wordplay both of which allow for nuances and possibilities of meaning to come forth; meanings which as possibilities would otherwise be left concealed and marginalised in the tyranny of Being.

⁶ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce, Vol. I-VIII* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), CP 1.284. Citing from the *Collected Papers* and *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings: 1867-1893* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), I will be using the canonical referencing style (CP and EP) respectively. Referencing with pages will refer to various other collections.

⁷ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce* (New York, NY: Dover Publications, 1955), 141.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 74-5.

total of all that is in any way or in any sense present to the mind, quite regardless of whether it corresponds to any real thing or not.”⁹ There are certain implications for this. First, we have to dispense of the definite article. Phaneron is indefinite with respect to whom “it” is presence for. Phaneron is indifferent to our differences be they physiological, psychological, or historical. However, since we are starting from a particular starting point, the particular being of the phaneroscopist that we are, the question comes to be *how* to achieve this universality as phaneron. Phaneroscopy “scrutinizes the direct appearances, and endeavours to combine minute accuracy with the broadest possible explanation.”¹⁰ Thus, the question is not what the phaneron *is*, but how we are to understand the universality of phaneron, which must be familiar to everybody. Let us follow Peirce through the principles of phaneroscopy and scrutinise.

3. Minute Scrutiny

Following the traditional way of engaging with Peirce’s phaneroscopy we shall start with Peirce’s so-called hierarchy of sciences. In this hierarchy, mathematics is placed as the foundation giving its principles to phaneroscopy:

This classification, which aims to base itself on the principal affinities of the objects classified, is concerned not with all possible sciences, nor with so many branches of knowledge, but with sciences *in their present condition*, as so many *businesses of groups of living men*. It borrows its *idea* from Comte’s classification; namely, *the idea that one science depends upon another for fundamental principles*, but does not furnish such principles to that other.¹¹

First, this hierarchy could not be taken as foundational precisely because it reflects the contemporary conditions, i.e., the time of Peirce’s writing. If it were to be taken as foundational and immutable, such decision would clash with Peirce’s strong adherence to the principle of fallibility according to which no established and eternal truths exist. For Peirce, everything evolves, there is synechism in the world and, thus, such a hierarchy cannot be taken as absolutely foundational — it has pragmatic rather than ontological value.

⁹ Ibid., 75.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ CP I.180; emphases added.

Second, the sciences at the time, and to a large extent today, are not carried out irrespectively of one's self-preservation. To occupy oneself with the investigation of truth "for some ulterior purpose, such as to make money, or to amend his life, or to benefit his fellows, he may be ever so much better than a scientific man."¹² Here Peirce's worries parallel those of Plato and Nietzsche with respect to the professionalization of the sciences. To what extent can any science be a business for making a living without itself being compromised by that end? "Relatively," says Peirce, "knowledge even of a purely scientific kind has a money value."¹³

Finally, the third reason concerns the idea that a foundational science can provide its principles to other sciences without itself being dependent on the other sciences for its own. Now, this is an idea borrowed from Comte. Again, it is an *idea* and not a fact or an absolute truth. But is "idea" itself a proper fit for phaneron? Any kind of "idea" is particular and thus impertinent for an investigation of phaneron. Peirce writes:

[P]hilosophers have quite commonly used the word idea in a sense approaching to that which I give to phaneron. But in various ways they have restricted the meaning of it too much to cover my conception (if conception it can be called), besides giving a psychological connotation to their word which I am careful to exclude. The fact that they have the habit of saying that "there is no such idea" as this or that, in the very same breath in which they definitely describe the phaneron in question, renders their term fatally inapt for my purpose.¹⁴

The term "idea" as it is being used is *fatally inapt* for phaneron. We have also seen earlier that phaneron cannot be something definite or particular. Thus, no idea will be able to take us to phaneron. No idea is pertinent for phaneron, even the idea of "Being" which feels like an empty conception — or no thing in particular.¹⁵ Every idea is not only particular, but a particular habit — and phaneron is exhausted neither in an idea nor in a habit. To say "there is" or "there is not" is a habit. Thinking with "Being" is therefore a habit.

For Peirce, thinking or conceiving is an act carried out through signs and signs are tools we use in order to perform actions. The habit of speaking

¹² CP I.45.

¹³ CP I.120.

¹⁴ CP I.285.

¹⁵ CP I.53; CP I.548.

is a habit of performing an action. This is not just a Humean reiteration that thinking relies on a customary association of ideas. This thesis is much stronger. It is akin to Nietzsche's thesis that thought is nothing more or less than habits or addictions of doing or making things.¹⁶ Does this mean that mathematical reasoning is also such a habitual thinking?

Let us go back to the classification. "Peirce's classification of the sciences stipulates that mathematics is the most fundamental of all sciences for the reason that it is the only one that is completely groundless, unsupported by any other science, and independent of worldly experience."¹⁷ Indeed, Peirce writes that mathematics is rigorous, consistent, yet, groundless. But this groundlessness belies irresponsibility. The groundlessness and independence is not some ultra-transcendental form of the book of the universe. Peirce states explicitly: "Mathematics studies what is and what is not logically possible, without making itself responsible for its actual existence."¹⁸ It is a tool in the sense that "mathematical reasoning is a *logica utens* which it develops for itself, and has no need of an appeal to a *logica docens*."¹⁹ Mathematics is not a "closed book" as some "family of minds" take it to be.²⁰ It is very rigorous and consistent because it is utterly ideal. The principles of mathematics are not to be deliberated. Once set, everything follows from them objectively irrespectively of idiosyncrasies. Once axioms are set, everything follows in one way only. Mathematical thinking is a train of thought. But so is man's reasoning overall, "a train of thought."²¹ Just like in the case of a railway train, once the tracks for a course are set, there is only one way to go. The direction is determined by the tracks, always already. But how are these tracks, these principles set? Are the principles universally obvious? If "phaneron," as we saw earlier in Peirce's definition, refers to "the collective total of all that is, in any way or in any sense present to the mind,"²² could they be characterised as phanera?

¹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Random House, 1989).

¹⁷ André De Tienne, "Is Phaneroscopy as a Pre-Semiotic Science Possible?" *Semiotiche*, 2:30 (2004), 1.

¹⁸ CP I.184.

¹⁹ CP I.417.

²⁰ CP I.570.

²¹ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 54.

²² CP I.284.

Peirce himself writes that his whole work is but a mathematical treatise, rigorously following from some basic axioms. But when it comes to these axioms, Peirce states “my book will have no instruction to impart to anybody. Like a mathematical treatise, it will suggest certain ideas and certain reasons for holding them true; but then, if you accept them, it must be because you like my reasons, and the responsibility lies with you.”²³ The responsibility lies with us. We can either decide to accept them or not. And this is also the case for any form of mathematical reasoning. Peirce seems to be following Berkeley and Erasmus in that, when it comes to formulating axiomatic principles, there is no transcendentalism involved, but just responsibility.²⁴

But of late mathematicians have fully agreed that the axioms of geometry (as they are wrongly called) are not by any means evidently true. Euclid, be it observed, never pretended they were evident; he does not reckon them among his *κοιναί έννοιαι* [common concepts/concerns], or things everybody knows, but among the *αίτηματα* postulates, or things the author must beg you to admit, because he is unable to prove them.²⁵

If the axioms of arithmetic mathematics²⁶ *are not by any means evidently true*, on what grounds do we use them for describing phaneron? This seems to leave little room to think phaneron according to arithmetic mathematics or the hierarchy. Those things that the author must beg you

²³ CP I.11.

²⁴ Or folly; for Erasmus mathematics just like the sciences “crept into the world with other the pests of mankind, from the same head from whence all other mischiefs spring” [*sic*]. Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), 63. Berkeley’s admonition, however, is closer to that of Peirce, as we shall see. For Berkeley, mathematics, though producing statements with rare clarity and consistency according to its own rules and principles, and though “their way of deduction from those principles clear and incontestable... there may be certain *erroneous maxims* of greater extent than the object of Mathematics, and for that reason not expressly mentioned, though tacitly supposed, throughout the whole progress of that science.” George Berkeley, *The Works of George Berkeley* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), 324; emphases added.

²⁵ CP I.130.

²⁶ Although this phrase might seem awkward today, still, it is necessary in order to remind us that the inceptual meaning of “mathematics” is a way of learning not a way of learning only with numbers, that is, arithmetically — see Liddell and Scott relevant entry <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljsj/#eid=66639>.

to admit reveal an ontological thinking that is not necessarily *phaneron*. Peirce seems to suggest what Agamben calls “two ontologies.” Before saying *what there is*, there seems to be principles which we have tacitly allowed as a criterion based on which the “there is” will take place. Before the ontology of *what there is*, there is another ontology of “letting be.”²⁷

Yet, the most important reason for which Peirce cannot mean traditional mathematics as a foundation for analysing *phaneron* is his attitude towards the principle of non-contradiction and the principle of excluded middle that is derived from it. Setting the principles of any science is an event. And for Peirce, as Sandra Rosenthal aptly put it, “the independently real as a continuum of events is precisely that to which neither the law of noncontradiction nor the law of excluded middle is perfectly applicable.”²⁸ A phaneroscopist “will be sure sooner or later to become entangled in a quarrel with the principle of excluded middle.”²⁹ Mathematical reasoning in the modern sense excludes the middle. We, as phaneroscopists, shall quarrel with it, and with logical entailment, we shall quarrel with such mathematics.

Perhaps, Peirce’s mathematics is rigorous and consistent reasoning in another sense. Nearly all Peirce scholars talk about the emphasis that Peirce puts on logic. But this logic is not the mathematical logic that we take today as the valid and proper way of thinking. As Joseph Ransdell carefully observes, what we refer today as logic would be classified as

²⁷ Giorgio Agamben, “What Is a Commandment?” in <https://waltendegewalt.wordpress.com/2011/04/01/giorgio-agamben-what-is-a-commandment> (2011; Accessed November 20, 2017).

²⁸ Sandra Rosenthal, “Peirce’s Pragmatic Account of Perception: Issues and Implications” in *The Cambridge Companion to Peirce*, ed. Cheryl Misak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 193-213, 206. It is thus very difficult to follow Houser’s and Bellucci’s conclusion that there is an isomorphism between experience and arithmetic mathematics, i.e., mathematics in the colloquial sense. We could conclude that experience actualises a mathematical structure with the proviso that we are responsible for this actualisation. As Husserl admits in *Ideas I*, if we had not learnt to count in (particular) numbers, it is highly unlikely that the world would reveal itself arithmetically. Francesco Bellucci, “Peirce on Phaneroscopical Analysis,” *Journal Phänomenologie* (2015), 56-72. Nathan Houser, “La structure formelle de l’expérience selon Peirce,” *Études Phénoménologiques* (1989), 77-11. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy (First Book)*, trans. F. Kersten (Hingham, MA: Kluwer, 1983).

²⁹ CP I.434.

logic in the narrow sense in Peirce.³⁰ “There are still other operations of the mind to which the name ‘reasoning’ is especially appropriate, although it is not the prevailing habit of speech to call them so.”³¹ Analogously, this other sense of mathematical reasoning could be the foundation of phaneroscopy but will imply operations of the mind which we do not have *the prevailing habit of speech to call them so*.

Let mathematics *be* in the ancient literal *semeiosis*: the way of *mathesis*, that is learning.³² If we disentangle mathematical reasoning from arithmetic, from numbers, which by the way is our creation, then *mathesis*, will be animated by our desire as “the true scientific *Eros*.”³³ *Eros* is not love, but what precedes the materialised/realised question. Peirce calls it the first principle of reason: *desire to learn*.³⁴ The desire to learn starts with questioning. Untainted by any authorities, this *ἔρωσ* (*eros*) takes its authentic meaning as a continuous rhythm of questioning (*ἔρώ-τησις*) which is not *arithmetic*. It questions the rhythm of life. Numbers, however, are a system with a determinate rhythm asynchronous to life:

Numbers are merely a system of names devised by men for the purpose of counting. It is a matter of real fact to say that in a certain room there are two persons. It is a matter of fact to say that each person has two eyes. It is a matter of fact to say that there are four eyes in the room. But to say that if there are two persons and each person has two eyes there will be four eyes is not a statement of fact, but a statement about the system of numbers which is our own creation.³⁵

This creation is a technology — *devised* for a particular purpose. But this technology belies particularity: “*science of the eye*.”³⁶ Mathematical reasoning

³⁰ Joseph Ransdell, “Is Peirce a Phenomenologist?” in: <http://www.iupui.edu/~arisbe/menu/library/aboutsp/ransdell/PHENOM.HTM> (1989) Accessed October 16, 2017.

³¹ CP I.608.

³² See von Fritz and Snell: “B. Snell has shown that *μαθεῖν* and its derivatives originally mean a knowledge, a skill, or also an attitude which is acquired by training, by being brought up in certain ways, or by practical experiences — as, for instance, when a man “learns” to be cautious or even “learns to hate.” Kurt von Fritz, “NOΥΣ, NOΕΙΝ, and their Derivatives,” *Classical Philology* (1945), 223-242.

³³ CP I.620.

³⁴ CP I.135.

³⁵ CP I.149.

³⁶ CP I.34; emphasis added.

as reasoning with numbers is, as all thinking, notational. That is, it is a system of names, signs, revealing a *logica utens*, a tool. And this tool requires eyes and hands. Mathematical reasoning with numbers like algebra and geometry are indeed powerful instruments — one could even say that it is magical. As Peter Skagestad mentions, Peirce has shown how “the specific material quality of a sign enables the precise kind of reasoning it makes possible.”³⁷ Any instrument, any tool requires a particular manipulation for a particular end. But this particularity is not consistent with the generality of phaneron. If mathematics in Peirce’s hierarchy of sciences is to be taken as first which amounts to being foundational, then it cannot be the kind of mathematics that is restricted to numbers with a particular aim. The aim must be universal.

Let the mathematics of Peirce be mathematics of desire, responsibility, and justice. This mathematical reasoning is *just* as ethics (is). There is almost an exact parallelism between them. They bear the same logic; they are homo-logous, that is, analogous to each other. One is the counterpart of the Other. Two sides of one shield. The “ideals of good logic are truly of the same general nature as ideals of fine conduct.”³⁸ Therefore, we could take mathematical reasoning as foundational not as applying numbers to life to calculate it, but by being rigorous and consistent in the sense of an unlimited desire to learn which is represented through responsible and just questioning with no particular aim.³⁹ Hence,

if there are really any such necessary characteristics of mathematical hypotheses as I have just declared in advance that we shall find that there [are], this necessity must spring from some truth so broad as to hold not only for the universe we know but for every world that poet could create. And this truth like every truth must come to us by the way of experience.⁴⁰

After all is said and done, “nothing is truer than true poetry.”⁴¹ The poet is rhythmic mathematician rather than an a-rhythmic one. Peirce

³⁷ Peter Skagestad, “Peirce’s Semeiotic Model of the Mind.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Peirce*, ed. Cheryl Misak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 241-256, 252.

³⁸ CP I.333.

³⁹ Again, Peirce seems to approximate the ancient way of philosophizing which did not rely on quantification; see W. J. Verdenius, “Science grecque et science moderne,” *Revue Philosophique de la France et de l’Étranger* (1962), 319-336.

⁴⁰ CP I.417.

⁴¹ CP I.315.

talks about mathematics without numbers: “The common definition, among such people as ordinary schoolmasters, still is that mathematics is the science of quantity. As this is inevitably understood in English, it seems to be a misunderstanding of a definition which may be very old.”⁴² Mathematical reasoning is rhythmic; it is just about universal life and experience. Peirce appears as the first *bio-logist* — the first scientist of life.

So far, we have seen that we could not rely on or re-lie with the traditional mathematical reasoning to approach the universality of phaneron; those elements which Pierce takes to make up phaneron and which are present to everyone with no exception. Objectivity is, as Nietzsche was claiming during the same period in an untimely manner,⁴³ justice, as something common to all. This objectivity is not an object conceived in a nominalistic way — it cannot be captured with “is” or “being.” It is universal in the sense of being versed by all, uni-versed.

Therefore, we cannot rely on any hierarchy because any such classification compromises justice. We need a just classification symphonious to all, one which brings all together, i.e., one (ac)cording (to) all — in all senses of according. Therefore, we need another passage to phaneroscopy, an other Peircean passage to follow:

The student’s great effort is not to be influenced by any tradition, any authority, any reasons for supposing that such and such ought to be the facts, or any fancies of any kind, and to confine himself to honest, single minded observation of the appearances. The reader, upon his side, must repeat the author’s observations for himself, and decide from his own observations whether the author’s account of the appearances is correct or not.⁴⁴

Let us put into praxis what Peirce recommends. Let us enact and then report.

4. Question and Analogy as the Universal Tools for Phaneroscopy

Peirce starts with an analogy with chemistry. De Tienne advises to “bear in mind the importance of the chemical analogy, which explains why Peirce was for a while tempted to call his new science by the name of

⁴² CP IV.231.

⁴³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁴⁴ CP I.286.

'phanerochemistry.' It was with the eyes of the trained chemist and mathematician that he wanted to observe the phaneron."⁴⁵ We have *seen* how the eyes reveal a particular logic — which, by the way, has been criticised by all pragmatists.⁴⁶ Let us look for and look at De Tienne's quotation where Peirce talks about the importance of chemical elements and their valences and see how he goes on:

Why do I seem to see my reader draw back? Does he fear to be compromised by my bias, due to preconceived views? Oh, very well; yes, I do bring some convictions to the inquiry. But let us begin by subjecting these to criticism, postponing actual observation until all preconceptions are disposed of, one way or the other.⁴⁷

Peirce never denies that we all have presuppositions and that there is no objective presuppositionless way of knowing or doing science. The only thing that allows us to reason in an authentic scientific manner is to question those presuppositions and preconceptions, even those that we are accustomed to think or have been brought up to believe that are definitively true, like $1 + 1 = 2$. So, how can we account for the importance of this analogy? Does Peirce talk at random?

I fear I may be producing the impression of talking at random. It is that I wish the reader to "catch on" to my conception, my point of view; and just as one cannot make a man see that a thing is red, or is beautiful, or is touching, by describing redness, beauty, or pathos, but can only point to something else that is red, beautiful, or pathetic, and say, "Look here too for something like that there," so if the reader has not been in the habit of conceiving ideas as I conceive them, I can only cast a sort of dragnet into his experience and hope that it may fish up some instance in which he shall have had a similar conception.⁴⁸

By casting a sort of dragnet in order to find a similar conception, an analogy. Peirce questions his habitual ways of thinking and proliferates analogies.

⁴⁵ André De Tienne, "Is Phaneroscopy as a Pre-Semiotic Science Possible?" 13; see also Francesco Bellucci "Peirce on Phaneroscopic Analysis."

⁴⁶ Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

⁴⁷ CP I.289-90.

⁴⁸ CP I.217.

Thinking, that is using signs, consists in habits of use. It is these habits that the questioning disturbs. And this questioning within his writing is not reducing the Other in order to try to find them afterwards in a particular schema of what is supposed to be there according to what he takes it to be the common sense in which they partake. The Other is always already there as the possibility of being questioned: Peirce writes, and the Other questions through Peirce. The Other is there in the form of questioning. The presence of the Other is not felt with the eyes of a chemist or a mathematician in the arithmetic way. The Other becomes a critical blind eye on the self, he is trying to “duplicate himself and observe himself with a critical eye.”⁴⁹ To allow for phaneron, Peirce fallows (his) being critically.⁵⁰ The constant presence of the blind representation attests to that. Peirce attempts (to) the blind who *pierces* Charles Sanders’ thinking, the writer with vision, or even perhaps the envisioned writer. He creates shocks for himself, he attempts self-criticism, he is letting tell of his Other:

Unfortunately, to be cocksure that one is an infallible reasoner is to furnish conclusive evidence either that one does not reason at all, or that one reasons very badly, since that deluded state of mind prevents the constant self-criticism which is, as we shall see, the very life of reasoning. Congratulations, then, from my heart go out to you, my dear Reader, whom I assume to have a sincere desire to learn, not merely the *dicta* of common sense, but what good reasoning, scientifically examined, shall prove to be. You are already an unusually good logician.⁵¹

The very life of reasoning is constant self-criticism. Questioning and *looking for* and *looking after* reasons *for* rather than looking *at* reasons *that* explain in the modern (common) sense. This is another form of mathematical reasoning through justice and responsibility in doing justice to the Other through self-criticism. In the end, “nothing can be more

⁴⁹ CP I.626.

⁵⁰ Although “fallow” usually means to leave a piece of land uncultivated or inactive for a certain period of time, we are using an older sense whereby “fallow” means plough in order to sow — see the relevant entry in www.OED.com. Since we are trying to follow Peirce in a way that does not mimic the paradigm of Being, also known as the Metaphysics of Presence, creating relations through all rhetorical devices comes to supplement the logic of “logical” argumentation.

⁵¹ CP II.123.

precious to a sincere student than frank and sincere objection.”⁵² The scientific spirit is always questioning, “demands reasons” echoing Nietzsche, while “the rest demand faith.”⁵³

Before we proceed, we need to make another observation. Keeping the rhythm, the flow of questions coming through, we are compelled to see “family resemblances”⁵⁴ with some feminist reasoning which “continues to interrogate,”⁵⁵ to keep questioning itself. Luce Irigaray writes one passage according to her point of view, writing (as) woman, just like Peirce’s writing (as) a man of vision. A passage is written and immediately *after*, another passage comes to pass a question on it as a whole inspired by the Other. The order is not of expropriating the Other. The Other is not grasped and asphyxiated. The Other is not categorized according to what seems evident to oneself. The Other is neither seen nor gazed upon, not captured by an eye/I. The Other is not re-garded. It is the Other who regards the self. The Other is not looked at, the Other is *looked for* through an extension of (the one of the) self; there is a quest for the Other through questioning oneself. This is an extension of oneself, a quest(ion) towards the Other. It is an effort of resisting oneself in being blind toward the Other. It is a move toward the tempo of the Other, an *attempt* to touch their course of experience.⁵⁶ An “effort — for one cannot simply leap outside that discourse — to situate myself at borders and to move continuously from the inside to the outside.”⁵⁷ And since the properly Other is missing in writing, it is writing that invites the Other as an interlocutor who questions at the borders.⁵⁸

⁵² CP I.570.

⁵³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, trans. R. J. Hollingale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 108.

⁵⁴ CP I.29.

⁵⁵ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 119.

⁵⁶ When Husserl decides to set phenomenology as the *Critique of Knowledge*, the possibility of the knowledge of the possibility of knowledge, it is the Other as deaf and blind who come to help him. Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. Lee Hardy (Leuven: Kluwer, 1999), 30; 46.

⁵⁷ Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 122.

⁵⁸ An anastrophe: “to turn back on our path to question ourselves about where we are already situated.” Luce Irigaray, *To Speak Is Never Neutral*, trans. Gail Schwab (London: Continuum, 2002), 7. This questioning allows for the creation of a new epistemic space,

As Margaret Whitford notices, in the writings of Irigaray there is a dual purpose; “she wishes to occupy the position of analyst and analysand simultaneously.”⁵⁹ Just like Peirce who states and questions in order to verify or question a statement further. The quest starts with *what there is* according to one’s logic and continues as a dia-logic, a dialogue through questioning. Pierce does not only see(k) to find what the universal elements of phaneron *are*, but also, to have them versed by all, universally.⁶⁰ To use Merleau-Ponty’s phrase, questioning as we try to reach the Other provides a “second openness”⁶¹ to the world. At the same time that it limits my own view of the world; it enlarges it with another possibility — with extra eyes/Is. Without quarrelling with the principle of non-contradiction we cannot see how limiting a subjective view is at the same time enlarging it. If we keep the schema of what the world *is*, the schema of Being and *episteme*, which by the way amount to the same, the Other fallows my limited schema to allow for an addition, an enhancement. Only with myself, one I, I can only look at what is for me. With questioning myself, I can extend this look by looking for the Other, another I. And with the Other present, phaneron comes to be the possibility of meaning in an indefinite dialogue with an indefinite Other; and its mathematics: questioning.

one which includes the otherness of the Other as fundamental for *episteme* rather than reducing or neutralizing the embodiment of the Other as non-important based on abstract and/or moralistic rules. See Luce Irigaray, “Perhaps Cultivating Touch Can Still Save Us,” *SubStance*, 40:3, (2011). This “vigilant self-critical process of interpretation of our own limitations” in Irigaray is, as Oliver underscores, not sacrifice but an “acknowledgement” to the other as Other even in loving relationships. See Kelly Oliver, “The Look of Love,” *Hypatia* (2001), 56-78, at 72, 73.

⁵⁹ Margaret Whitford, “Luce Irigaray and the Female: Imaginary: Speaking as a Woman,” *Radical Philosophy* (1986) 3-8, at 8.

⁶⁰ This is different from creating an objective phenomenological vocabulary which does justice only to a particular set of people as Atkin’s argues. Richard Kenneth Atkins, “Toward an Objective Phenomenological Vocabulary: How Seeing a Scarlet Red is Like Hearing a Trumpet’s Blare,” *Phenom Cogn Sci* (2013), 837-858, at 838. Phaneron, if it is “obvious phenomena” (CP I.127), it must be obvious to all.

⁶¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York, NY: Routledge, 1962), 59.

5. Questioning Peirce's Experiments: Testing and Reporting

Having made these observations, let us follow Peirce and try to find those *a priori* elements of phaneron. Peirce sometimes calls them categories and, as such, phaneroscopy could be called a "doctrine of categories."⁶² The fundamental *a priori* features of phaneron according to Peirce are the three indecomposable elements that he calls Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness. Peirce uses various words to describe these three categories which he hypothesises as the indecomposable elements of phaneron. The main cluster for each category is as follows. Firstness: feeling, presence, quality, possibility, chance, life. Secondness: (brute) fact, reaction, (brute) force, absolute last, haecceity, existence. Thirdness: thought, law, learning, habit, representation, idea.

To engage with them we shall report on an experiment that we repeated according to his instructions: the door experiment. We put our shoulder against the door. There is a two-sided consciousness of resistance and effort. This is Secondness, brute fact. However, Secondness is not the above proposition "The brute fact... ." The proposition along with the thought that precedes it is *about* (a) brute fact as felt; it is a representation of it, not a representation of the same. The medium of representation is Thirdness — a thought about a brute fact, a representation of it. It is the course itself as (having been) felt which is the brute fact; it is what it is, "it *just* is."⁶³ The justness, the exactitude of fact *is* past/passed as having been felt. This "is" is force or forces (having been) felt as compulsion. "Force is compulsion; and compulsion is *hic et nunc*."⁶⁴ Secondness is all about tensed presence. Firstness, then, would be the possibility of feeling forces. The possibility of coming into presence, which is always passed through Thirdness; the ways to represent the just passed/past. Secondness is a junction of forces, therefore an event: "The event is the existential junction of *states* (that is, of that which in existence corresponds to a *statement* about a given subject in representation) whose combination in one subject would violate the logical law of contradiction."⁶⁵

Let us compare this phaneroscopic report with another one. Atkins gives us the example *of* a perception *of* a black phone: "When it comes

⁶² Joseph Ransdell, "Is Peirce a Phenomenologist?" 1.

⁶³ CP I.145.

⁶⁴ CP I.212.

⁶⁵ CP I.494.

to a feeling of some thing, say, my black phone. First, we have a feeling of my black phone, namely the black itself. Second, we have the brute fact of the black phone. The black phone and I stand in a dyadic relationship of ego and non-ego.”⁶⁶ For Atkins qualities like “red” are first.⁶⁷ Let us proceed, as Peirce has advised, that is, by analyzing “the phaneron by separating the decomposable from the indecomposable elements,”⁶⁸ i.e., by questioning them.

Let us start with “the perception of the black phone.” This perception presupposes vision. Can it be an obvious phenomenon,⁶⁹ phaneron for the blind? No. For the blind *there is not* a black phone, whereas for a person with ocular vision *there is*. To take color sensations as first featuring phaneron would belie a democratic implicature — to borrow a Gricean term — of vision. Atkins’s statement would be true, universal, phaneron, only insofar as one starts with the brute fact of the ones who see with their eyes; only if the indefinite community of phaneroscopists as a community of scientists had eyes like ours. This is neither universalisable nor conformable to minute accuracy.

Peirce gives numerous examples with color sensations. But he is very careful to say that sensation is not “feeling” and, thus, not quality, not Firstness. A sensation of blackness is not part of the indecomposable elements of phaneron but supersedes it. Sensation is a combination of feeling (Firstness) and medium (organ of perception): “That quality is dependent upon sense is the great error of the conceptualists.”⁷⁰ Sensations are idiosyncratic because they depend on the particularity of each sensation. Feeling as part of phaneron cannot be a particular sensation, a modality of sense which implies a (prior) classification of sense. “The blind man from birth has no such feelings as red, blue, or any other colour; and without any body at all, it is probable we should have no feelings at all.”⁷¹

⁶⁶ Richard Kenneth Atkins, “Broadening Peirce’s Phaneroscopy: Part One,” *The Pluralist* (2012), 1-29, 13.

⁶⁷ Richard Kenneth Atkins, “Direct Inspection and Phaneroscopic Analysis,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* (2016), 1-16, 7.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶⁹ CP I.127.

⁷⁰ CP I.422.

⁷¹ CP VII.586.

Atkins's statement that "qualities like *red* are Firsts"⁷² is true only if the standard of the analysis is the principle of the majority. We could call redness a phenomenon in the classical sense, but not an indecomposable element of phaneron. Christopher Hookway, for instance, appreciates that color perception is neither universalisable nor conformable to minute accuracy. He states that "[u]nless we think that all inquirers must possess visual apparatus like ours or that they will inevitably encounter creatures that possess such visual apparatus, [...] colour propositions cannot be true and that their objects are not real."⁷³ Phaneroscopically, the black phone can neither be black nor phone, nor black phone. Phaneroscopically, *there is* and *there is not* a black phone on the table. The presuppositions of sensing through vision or through *particular* parts of the body as organs of perception linked to distinct senses presuppose distinctions that cannot be universalisable, not even *prima facie*. De Tienne writes that "L'esse du phanéron est son *percipi* [...] et le *perceptum* ne se détache pas du percipiens."⁷⁴ Let us combine this Berkeleyan thesis, to which Peirce adheres, with the axiom of phaneron being present to any mind whatsoever.⁷⁵ Since there are *percipientia* with no vision, does it not follow that the feeling as Firstness, as indecomposable element of phaneron cannot be a color sensation? And if one wants to start with color phenomena, would that not mean that color must be decomposed based on those who do not *sense* it?

In addition, thinking of color sensations as Firstness belies a nominalistic habit. Peirce says: "If we say 'The stove is black,' the stove is the **substance**, from which its blackness has not been differentiated, and

⁷² Richard Kenneth Atkins, "Broadening Peirce's Phaneroscopy: Part One," *The Pluralist* (2012), 1-29, 7.

⁷³ Christopher Hookway, "Truth, Reality, and Convergence," *The Cambridge Companion to Peirce*, ed. Cheryl Misak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 127-148, 131.

⁷⁴ André De Tienne, "Quand l'apparence (se) fait signe," *Recherches Sémiotiques* (2000), 95-144, 99.

⁷⁵ In *Touching Jean-Luc Nancy*, Derrida accepts Irigaray's critique of the senses which ends up giving primacy to the sense of touch. He traces this conception to Berkeley by reformulating and advancing on his thesis that we are always already in touch with the world. The distinctions that come from the senses are not distinctions based on identity but on distance. And this distance is felt when perception takes a metonymic register by privileging particular parts of the body. Bodily-wise, we never get out of touch with the world.

the *is*, while it leaves the substance just as it was seen, explains its confusedness, by the application to it of *blackness* as a predicate.”⁷⁶ The perception of the phone as that of the stove already includes the color quality; it is part of the experience. Peirce seems to be following Berkeley again. A substance is the sum total of its qualities. Nominalists (following Aristotle) divide a substance between essential (primary) and accidental (secondary) qualities through some (techno-logical) medium. For instance, John Locke⁷⁷ used the microscope to arrive at the universal. But Berkeley said that what we see through the microscope could still be said to have phenomenal qualities. What would be the difference? The microscope or any other kind of medium do not change the quality of the *percipium*, they only enhance the quantity of the quality — we still use our eyes. Color is indeed a quality, albeit not a phaneroscopic quality. Color quality refers to the experience of those who use their eyes to see. In *one sense*, it is accidental and not essential.⁷⁸ In *another sense*, the blind sense, it is neither, it simply *is* not. What it would be, where it would “inhere,” would be in the subjective discourse of a definite, particular group of scientists who have eyesight. That is, a particular sense which implies nominalism through and through.⁷⁹ Or, to analogise with Irigaray, a hom(m)osensual exchange.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ CP I.548.

⁷⁷ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Hazleton: Pennsylvania State University, 2013).

⁷⁸ CP I.527

⁷⁹ Again, Peirce comes in contact with Nietzsche. For Nietzsche physics “is one way of interpretation, an interpretation driven by sensualism. Eyes and fingers speak in its favor, visual evidence and palpableness do, too: this strikes an age with fundamentally plebeian tastes as fascinating, persuasive, and *convincing*—after all, it follows instinctively the canon of truth of eternally popular sensualism. What is clear, what is ‘explained’? Only what can be seen and felt — every problem has to be pursued to that point.” Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1966), 22. For other points of contact between Nietzsche and Peirce, see Ciano Aydin, “Beyond Essentialism and Relativism: Nietzsche and Peirce on Reality,” *Cognitio* (2006), 25-47 and Rossella Fabbrichesi, “The Body of the Community: Peirce, Royce, and Nietzsche,” *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* (2009), 1-10.

⁸⁰ In most of her works, Irigaray analyzes the exchanges of the same sex which are conditioned on a certain homosexual tendency, and the pleasure derived thereof,

Let us go back to what Peirce underscored: "That quality is dependent upon sense is the great error of the conceptualists."⁸¹ Let us explore this anew. Quality is not dependent upon sense. De Tienne, for instance, agrees that "le phanéron ne se limite pas à ce qui apparaît à nos sens."⁸² But later he takes sensations such as pleasure and pain as indecomposable elements, thus as feeling. The thesis that feeling is not limited in sensations goes so far for Peirce as to say that "as for pleasure and pain, which Kant and others have represented to be of the essence of feeling [...] we certainly do not think that unadulterated feeling."⁸³ And he later underscores that "no feeling could be common to all pleasures and none to all pains."⁸⁴ Feeling is not a sensation "which is entirely contained, or superseded, in the actual sensation."⁸⁵ Any sensation could be a quality of feeling, i.e., the way we qualify our feeling at a particular time. However, these qualities are not exhausted in sensations.

Feeling is not being sensed. Qualities of feeling can be realized in ways other than sense. Peirce's example is telling: "I can imagine a consciousness whose whole life, alike when wide awake and when drowsy or dreaming, should consist in nothing at all but a violet colour or a stink of rotten cabbage."⁸⁶ We can also add feeling pain *in the sense* of being heart broken. When one hears from their partner that their relationship is over, nothing is felt in the ear which senses the vibrations of the air. The (quality of) feeling which overwhelms the body and becomes untranslatable and un-locatable is not a sensation, it does not involve immediately the functional body. The abysmal pain of heartbreak is not a sensation but a quality of feeling.⁸⁷ Whereas qualities can be realised or actu-

hence hom(m)osexual. Here, we are analogizing this phenomenon with respect to knowing as an exchange between people with the same senses, hence hom(m)osensual.

⁸¹ CP I.422.

⁸² André De Tienne, "Quand l'apparence (se) fait signe," 98.

⁸³ CP I.333.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 81.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Like Wittgenstein's "imponderable feeling," where everything is felt in the sense of the unusual. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Great Britain: Basil Blackwell, 1953). Or, we could use Ratcliffe's expression of "existential feeling." Matthew Ratcliffe, *Feelings of*

alised as particular bodily sensations, they can also be realised otherwise:

for example, this or that red is a feeling; and it is perfectly conceivable that a being should have that color for its entire consciousness, throughout a lapse of time, and therefore at every instant of that time. But such a being could never know anything about its own consciousness. It could not think anything that is expressible as a proposition.⁸⁸

Before something is sensed it can only be a possibility of sense, a quality that can be sensed according to the sense for which it becomes a sensation. But to say that red is a quality or possibility of sense comes *after* having been affected with similar red and/or other color experiences — otherwise, we *could never know anything about* it. We *could not think anything that is expressible as a proposition*. Here, we can see how Peirce follows Hegel in “a strange costume,” as he avows.⁸⁹ A quality of feeling is what it is not. It has to be resisted somehow in order to be able to come into consciousness and thus be spoken about.

We said that to talk about qualities of feeling comes *after* creating some sort of rupture in feeling. We should explore this further and observe how it correlates with Peirce’s statement of the “Manifestation of Firstness.”⁹⁰ In this paragraph, Peirce talks about freedom and the “idea of” freedom. An idea or a concept includes something having been negated and represented, whereas in modern logic we trace its meaning through an ideal opposite-negative. Peirce underscores: “To love and to be loved are regarded as the same concept, and not to love is also to be considered as the same concept.”⁹¹ We cannot talk about freedom unless there is that which resists it. To talk about freedom as Firstness we put the negative, the idea in the background “*or else we cannot say that the Firstness is predominant.*”⁹² Therefore, absolute Firstness is not only unthinkable, but, also, it makes no sense — in any sense.

Absolute Firstness would be a purely monadic state unrelated to

Being: Phenomenology, Psychiatry and the Sense of Reality (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁸⁸ CP I.310.

⁸⁹ CP I.42.

⁹⁰ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 79; CP I.302

⁹¹ CP I.294.

⁹² *Ibid.*

anything else, “a suchness *sui generis*.”⁹³ If Firstness is freedom and no otherness is to be found to negate it, then Firstness is no thing in particular, thus everything. That is why *freedom can only manifest itself in unlimited and uncontrolled variety and multiplicity*. It is pure positivity as *measureless variety and multiplicity*.⁹⁴ An object cannot be Firstness as it is contained in a relation with a subject. No unity is in Firstness even if it is a determinable concept-less and unschematized appearing as a Kantian intuition. Unity implies otherness as Secondness. To approximate absolute Firstness, Peirce attempts an analogy: it would be like being in a “confused dream,”⁹⁵ or a pure quality like a state of feeling in a slumberous condition.⁹⁶ An absolute Firstness is sense-less possibility: “For as long as things *do not act upon one another* there is no sense or meaning in saying that they have any being, unless it be that they are *such in themselves that they may perhaps come into relation with others*.”⁹⁷

Therefore, in talking about freedom some negation is implied — some negation of life, of freshness, of freedom, even if it is only in the background. Such negation can be taken as reaction, resistance or relation, thus as Secondness. Not being in any relation is being free. But then Peirce qualifies that by saying that “it is not in being separated from qualities that Firstness is most predominant, but in being something peculiar and idiosyncratic.”⁹⁸ Because Peirce talks of the manifestation of Firstness, the latter can be construed as non-mediated, i.e., immediate and uninterrupted, non-negated, non-reacted, unchanging presence. It could be a “manifold” of sense without beginning and end: Life. It is not even a Kantian intuition but a constant intuiting. Much closer to Nietzsche, this constant intuiting comes to be a chaos as a multiplicity of forces as “formless unformulable world of the chaos of sensations — another kind of phenomenal world, a kind of “unknowable” for us.”⁹⁹ This formless unformulable is not that there is no feeling but that there is no particular feeling. While alive, we are always al-

⁹³ CP I.303.

⁹⁴ CP I.302.

⁹⁵ CP I.175.

⁹⁶ CP I.303.

⁹⁷ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 76; emphasis added.

⁹⁸ CP I.302.

⁹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1968), 307.

ready in contact with the world as Berkeley underscored. There is a continuous contact with the world, an uninterrupted course, and that is the course of life: “all that is immediately present to a man is what is in his mind in the present instant. His whole life is in the present. But when he asks what is the content of the present instant, his question always comes too late. The present has gone by, and what remains of it is greatly metamorphosed.”¹⁰⁰ This uninterrupted course, this chaotic, formless unformulable feeling is not a phaneric flow or, as De Tienne calls it, “courant phanéronique”¹⁰¹ or “phanéron vécu.”¹⁰² This peculiar and idiosyncratic flow is Firstness *composing* phaneron not phaneron. Phaneron requires the question, the instant of “asking.” To describe it poetically, it is the question of/as an Other which, like a witch, spells out the present; the question of/as an Other opens the door to the present. Let us question again the door experiment. This experiment is conducted in two ways: “Standing on the outside of a door that is slightly ajar, you put your hand upon the knob to open and enter it. You experience an unseen, silent resistance. You put your shoulder against the door and, gathering your forces, put forth a tremendous effort.”¹⁰³ And also

You get this kind of consciousness in some approach to purity when you put your shoulder against a door and try to force it open. You have a sense of resistance and at the same time a sense of effort. There can be no resistance without effort; there can be no effort without resistance. They are only two ways of describing the same experience. It is a double consciousness.¹⁰⁴

First, we have a hand and then a shoulder. Why change? Obviously, the hand, the shoulder, the foot, the tongue are all parts of a living body. We could push a door left ajar with any of these parts. The universal is the living body. There is no need to privilege the hand that grasps the knob — or a particular masculine part of the body that becomes the head of the interpretation. Peirce immediately escapes a possible psychoanalytic charge. Neither hand nor fingers; neither grasping a knob nor fingering the door. There is another justice here which is sexual.

¹⁰⁰ CP I.306.

¹⁰¹ André De Tienne, “Quand l’apparence (se) fait signe,” 121.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁰³ CP I.320.

¹⁰⁴ CP I.324.

Perhaps, by not privileging any part of the body, Peirce invites women in the indefinite community of phaneroscopists as scientists.¹⁰⁵ Phaneroscopy goes beyond sexual differences because it is living justice: just living body and door. (My/Our/Your/His/Her/Any-body's) living body against the door to open it reveals a "two-sided consciousness"¹⁰⁶ of effort and resistance. It does not matter how much the resistance is or how much effort is put. The brute fact is that anyone who would be found in this experiential setting would agree that the course of the experience is the same. Why? Because it is logical. A logic that is not a logic of the hand or a logic of the head — or the I/eye. It is a logic of embracing, of hugging, of inviting every living body in dialogue. Whereas classical phenomenology brackets, phaneroscopy unbrackets. Peirce has pierced his vision and now pierces his sex. We could easily say about Peirce what Derrida says about Lévinas: Peirce attempts a "masculine point" of view but "a point of view that goes blindly (with no view) into this place of non-light."¹⁰⁷ And this non-light is the no ledge of the blind and the feminine that Peirce does not have but requests, *looks for*, in order to arrive at the universality of phaneron.¹⁰⁸ He asks, quests, looks for by questioning himself as the Other that he is not. The no ledge of justice is knowledge away from anything particular — beyond being. Peirce's philosophy allows pure science to coincide with pure justice.

What we have to question now is this two-sidedness. Peirce says that effort and resistance are only two ways of describing the same experience. This experience of "touching" has come in handy and has been used plenty of times to describe consciousness as two-sided in classical phenomenol-

¹⁰⁵ There is no particular sexual body or a body with a particular structure implied in Peirce's thinking. Peirce touches on Simone de Beauvoir's critique: "there are conditions without which the very fact of existence itself would seem to be impossible. To be present in the world implies strictly that there exists a body which is at once a material thing in the world and a point of view towards this world; but nothing requires that this body have this or that particular structure." Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), 36.

¹⁰⁶ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, 76.

¹⁰⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Adieu to Emmanuel Lévinas*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 39.

¹⁰⁸ We could risk saying with Putnam that phaneron has to be multiply realisable. Hilary Putnam, *Representation and Reality* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988).

ogy. But can it do justice to all experience without *shouldering* life? From Husserl all the way to Merleau-Ponty there is a hand “touching and being touched” — with the exception of the quest(ion)ing caress of Sartre.¹⁰⁹ For Husserl, the hand touching and being touched, the two-way directionality of consciousness is instantaneous. There is no interval between the hand touching and the hand being touched. Merleau-Ponty changes a bit, displaces as Derrida put it,¹¹⁰ this Husserlian example. The hand that touches *passes into* a hand being touched depending on the direct(ed)ness of the constituting conscious body, its attention. Now, for Peirce, the two-sided consciousness seems to lack this *passing into* since we have a sense of resistance *and at the same time* a sense of effort. These are supposed to be two ways of describing the same phenomenon.

Let us start with the obvious phenomenon. To talk about it, it is obvious that the reversibility from effort to resistance requires thought to be represented. While Secondness, it requires reversing, and this reversal is a re-versal that can only be attained by thought as a medium. That means, simply, that we are already within the world of representation if we reflect on it — even while it is happening. As such, it would be a Thirdness in Secondness precisely because the forces are being evaluated, reflected upon during the act.¹¹¹ The reversal would be a thought on feeling and not the unadulterated feeling as being felt in the course of its uninterrupted course of action — Firstness. And such reversal cannot only be Secondness since Secondness is absolute last. Therefore, if it were in any way singled out, that would involve some Thirdness. But to what extent is this Thirdness involved? How far does its jurisdiction extend? Does this also mean that the very possibility of feeling the reaction requires some kind of Thirdness too?

Let us inspect two additional reports by Peirce about the change of perception. One is about his experience of being “seated calmly in the

¹⁰⁹ Sartre was the first to argue that “to touch and to be touched, to feel that one is touching and to feel that one is touched — these are two species of phenomena which is useless to try to reunite by the term ‘double sensations.’” Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Hazel E. Barnes (Washington: Washington Square Press, 1993), 304.

¹¹⁰ Jacques Derrida, *On Touching Jean Luc Nancy*, trans. Christine Irizarry (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹¹¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Webdeleuze* (<https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/73>), Accessed 10/17/2017.

dark” when “the lights are suddenly turned on”¹¹² and the other is about a shadow which turns out to be a snake “while [...] putting my mare into her stable, in the dusk of the evening.”¹¹³ Both are used to describe the two-sided consciousness, the polar sense. The shock as Secondness is Peirce’s coming into contact with another existence, another force.¹¹⁴ Existence is manifested in Secondness through shocking resistance upon our determination, our will. Something compels us by clashing with us, with the course of our life. This interpretation aligns well with the experience of the blind who get shocked through their stick and uncover existence, as Merleau-Ponty explained.¹¹⁵ It is through shocks and vibrations that the extended touch of the blind, analogous to sight provides information about what there is. “Secondness, strictly speaking is just when and where it takes place and has no other being.”¹¹⁶ What is, *there and then*, for whatever living body is just force: indeterminate, indefinite force that compels, that is, shock which surprises. Such compulsion is blind, it is a blind force.

What is left to examine is what Peirce calls “*saltus*.” If the instant has two sides, the polarity that allows it to be connected to the past and the future to create a junction, then there is a passage or *saltus* not as a process of change but as change itself, of difference. But for there to be a change there must be a possibility of change, a Firstness. The difference requires “some thing” that allows the passing from the *before* to the *after* in the sense of connecting them together. The *saltus* is like a shock, some kind of disturbance, an interruption. The question is whether the very possibility of this interruption requires Thirdness. Here lies all the controversy about whether phaneron includes some kind of representation as Thirdness or not; whether some sort of Thirdness is involved in *enabling*, in allowing for the two-sided consciousness. Since Thirdness or thought is also habit, one could say with the spiritualists, with whom Peirce was well acquainted, that only *in virtue of* a previous habituated sense, could a crisis, a shock, a breaking of the habit can occur. This is a phaneroscopic observation from Ravaisson: “habit remains for a change

¹¹² CP I.381.

¹¹³ CP II.22.

¹¹⁴ CP I.328-9.

¹¹⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 166.

¹¹⁶ CP I.532.

which is not longer or is not yet.”¹¹⁷ The question now is how is the very first habit constituted?

Habit, representation, thought or custom fall under Thirdness. This Thirdness comes from the Other; the indefinite Other, the community, who introduces us into particular ways of thinking and doing. We are introduced into ways of doing things and these ways are the manipulation of signs. This is the very meaning of custom. We learn how to think, which is a way of doing, based on the culture to which we belong — broadly construed. The student who learns axiomatic principles resists them says Peirce. They question them.¹¹⁸ But this resistance is overpowered by the teachers’ and the parents’ force. Phaneroscopically, we are forced into ways of doing. The question comes *after* some kind of thought, some kind of habit is established. Rosenthal writes that “interpretive activity begins at the primordial level of the formation of repeatable content which can activate habits of anticipation.”¹¹⁹ In a sense, this is true. But the primordial habits are the ways in which we learn as we grow up under the care of Others. We are already brought up within recipe of doing things, already within a system of meanings, a language-game, *a logica utens*. In one sense, Secondness cannot take place if there is no Thirdness. However, that does not mean that Thirdness *causes* Secondness. Thirdness is this “uncommon gift,”¹²⁰ which the Other gives us.

6. The (Im)Possibility of Phaneroscopy

In one of his papers, De Tienne explores the reasons why phaneroscopy has not been followed and advanced in the same way as other phenomenological approaches. Yet, he claims that the “practice of phaneroscopy is thus not separated from truth-reaching activities [...]. The descriptive propositions formulated in phaneroscopy are neither true nor false: they state what *seems*, not what *is*, nor what *could be* the case.”¹²¹ But, as we tried to show in this radical hermeneutic of phaneroscopy, the latter does

¹¹⁷ Félix Ravaisson, *Of Habit*, trans. Claire Carlisle (London: Continuum, 2008), 25.

¹¹⁸ CP I.657.

¹¹⁹ Sandra Rosenthal, “Peirce’s Pragmatic Account of Perception: Issues and Implications,” 2006.

¹²⁰ CP I.657.

¹²¹ André De Tienne, “Is Phaneroscopy as a Pre-Semiotic Science Possible?” 17.

not (make) deal(s) with propositions but with bodies — any-body. Phaneroscopy deals with another truth, not just the truth of scientists. Apel defines “truth” in Peirce as the agreement of an “indefinite community of interpretation [...] as the transcendental subject of valid cognition.”¹²² Truth comes to be an intersubjective relation manifested in a community “as the dialogue of all rational beings” with the possibility “in principle of coming to consensus about meaning and truth within the frame of the infinite dialogue of the indefinite community of interpretation.”¹²³ A dialogue not only about truth, but about the truth of truth as well.

But how is this consensus or agreement felt, how is it enacted? What is its Secondness like? Peirce says that truth “(if there be any truth) shall be part of the existential fact and not merely of thought.”¹²⁴ Indeed, phaneroscopy is impossible insofar as truth is looked for as a transcendental beyond. Phaneroscopy as a quest of understanding cannot start without the coming into contact with an indefinite Other in their own terms — by questioning. The schema or paradigm of Being, which we have been habituated into is, as Irigaray underscores, anonymous.¹²⁵ The desire to learn is stifled in this anonymity or is directed towards particular aims or enacted within particular principles (*logica utens*) wherein pure *logica docens* (“Critic Greek {kritiké}”¹²⁶) does not take place; questioning as “the great truth of the immanent power of thought in the universe is flung away.”¹²⁷ Truth as phaneron comes to be justice and requires the presence of the Other, their embodied existence, not their representation. The Other does not only play the role of the principle of verification, as Apel reads Peirce. The Other is required in order to initiate any quest to knowledge. It is the Other who questions for knowledge to begin. The only presupposition of phaneroscopy is the welcoming of all Other questions: it presupposes a space of expressing Otherness in embodied dialogue.

¹²² Karl-Otto Apel, *Selected Essays. Volume One: Towards a Transcendental Semiotics*, trans. Eduardo Mendieta (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1994), 127.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 128.

¹²⁴ CP I.409.

¹²⁵ Luce Irigaray, *Sharing the World* (London: Continuum, 2008).

¹²⁶ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Commens: Digital Companion to C. S. Peirce* (<http://www.commens.org/dictionary/term/logica-docens>, 2017). Accessed December 28, 2017.

¹²⁷ CP I.349.

III. PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE

Dichotomous Food-Drug Interpretations in Nutritional Science and Western Medicine

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Abstract

In this paper, I identify and examine various interpretations of the food-drug relationship within nutritional science and Western medicine that I classify as “dichotomous.” I argue that there are detectable patterns of interpretation within nutritional science and Western medicine that resemble one another to the extent that they ought to be considered as part of a cluster of dichotomous interpretations. Applying the concept of hermeneutic circle, I illustrate the ways in which these interpretations both influence and are influenced by experiences of edible things as foods or drugs. Further, these experiences serve to reinforce or challenge prejudices regarding the relationship between the ontological categories of “food” and “drug.” To illustrate this point, I discuss the role of dichotomous food-drug interpretations in undergirding skepticism regarding the possibility of food addiction and the legitimacy of continuum-based knowledge systems such as Ayurvedic medicine.

Keywords: Philosophy of food; philosophy of medicine; hermeneutics; biomedical ontology; drug

1. Introduction

In this paper, I identify and examine various interpretations of the food-drug relationship within nutritional science and Western medicine that I classify as “dichotomous.” I argue that there are detectable patterns of interpretation within nutritional science and Western medicine that resemble one another to the extent that they ought to be considered as part of a cluster of dichotomous interpretations. Applying the concept of hermeneutic circle, I illustrate the ways in which these interpretations both influence and are influenced by experiences of edible things as

foods or drugs. Further, these experiences serve to reinforce or challenge prejudices regarding the relationship between the ontological categories of “food” and “drug.”

Many of the dichotomous interpretations discussed below (unless noted otherwise) endorse a reductive, biochemical understanding of addiction, recognizing “an underlying biopsychological process that addictive disorders are hypothesized to share.”¹ On those views, if food consumption does not involve those same biopsychological processes, then food is not addictive. This, in turn, reinforces a dichotomous interpretation of the food-drug relationship on which drugs are potentially addictive, while food is not.

While some dichotomous interpretations tend toward reductivism, not all reductive ontologies are dichotomous. I do not claim that there is any necessary connection between reductivism and dichotomous interpretations or that either of these is inherently problematic. Rather, my occasional references to reductivism and holism provide a more fine-grained understanding of the nuances of different interpretations and their relationships with one another.

2. Ontology in the Philosophies of Medicine and Food: A Brief Overview

Among the ontological issues within the philosophy of medicine, the nature of disease has perhaps received the most attention. What is a disease, and what do people mean when they employ this term? Furthermore, how should the concept of disease be distinguished from the concept of health? As Jeremy R. Simon asks, “are [diseases] real entities or not, and, whether real or not, what exactly are they?”² Simon goes on to examine and assess a variety of views on the ontology of disease. Potential realist positions on disease include (1) the view that diseases are separate entities from diseased persons, (2) that they are “bundles” of signs and symptoms, (3) that they are “states” of the body, and (4) that

¹ Aviel Goodman, “Neurobiology of Addiction: An Integrative Review,” *Biochemical Pharmacology* 75 (2008): 266.

² Jeremy R. Simon, “Medical Ontology,” in *Philosophy of Medicine*, ed. Fred Gifford (Oxford: North Holland, 2011), 65.

they are bodily processes.³ Realists have defended the existence of diseases by reference to the success of treatments based on the use of categories of disease. Anti-realists, on the other hand, have claimed that diagnostic methods are often purely pragmatic. While diagnosing a patient as having a particular disease works in terms of allowing successful treatment, this is not necessarily indicative of diseases as extant entities.⁴ “Useful” explanations do not equate to “true” explanations on this view.

In her book *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*, Annemarie Mol emphasizes the importance of evaluating multiple ontological perspectives within the medical field. Rather than there being a single, ready-made ontology that is simply given to us,

ontologies are brought into being, sustained, or allowed to wither away in common, day-to-day, sociomaterial practices. Medical practices among them. Investigating and questioning ontologies are therefore not old-fashioned philosophical pastimes, to be relegated to those who write nineteenth-century history. Ontologies are, instead, highly topical matters. They inform and are informed by our bodies, the organization of our health care systems, the rhythms and pains of our diseases, and the shape of our technologies. All of these, all at once, all intertwined, all in tension. If reality is multiple, it is also political.⁵

Mol enumerates various components of clinical practice which one can view through multiple ontological frameworks. The very possibility of multiple ways of understanding what something *is* underscores the need to describe and assess different ontological schema.

Here, I would like to add another important component of medical practice not mentioned by Mol, and one that is largely absent within the philosophy of medicine: the ontology of medicinal substances. While scholars and practitioners have developed and applied philosophical examinations of views on the patient, the body, disease, health, and the institutional structures of Western medical practice, very little philosophical work has been done on the nature of medicinal substances.

Medical practitioners and information technologists sometimes employ the phrases “drug ontology” or “pharmaceutical ontology” to refer to a

³ Ibid., 69.

⁴ Ibid., 97.

⁵ Annemarie Mol, *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 6-7.

semantic network of information on topics such as drug uses, interactions, and chemical relationships with other drugs. In opposition to static, single-perspective taxonomies, ontologies synthesize information from multiple perspectives and connect concepts with one another across a variety of contexts.⁶ Drug ontologies are one of many emerging categories of biomedical ontologies, and serve a variety of functions in medicine and business such as overcoming information overload in pharmaceutical research,⁷ assisting physicians and pharmacists in making decisions regarding drug prescriptions,⁸ and identifying opportunities for pharmaceutical companies to in-license products from other companies.⁹

What does it mean to say that a particular substance is a drug? While the aims of drug ontologies (in the above sense) are not explicitly philosophical, programmers must make decisions regarding the specification of terms and related concepts. For example, when creating the drug ontology “DrOn,” Hogan *et al.* defined drugs as “material entities with a special purpose: not every tablet or ointment is a drug. Drugs are used in medicine to diagnose, prevent, treat, and/or study disease.”¹⁰ While the authors use the phrase “drug product” to reference “the output of a production process,”¹¹ technical work on drug ontologies leaves open larger philosophical questions such as: Must a substance be synthesized from natural components to be a drug or can other substances such as foods also be appropriately counted as drugs? Need food and drug be seen as two separate kinds? What are the different ways of viewing the relationship between these categories and what are the vir-

⁶ Stephen P. Gardner, “Ontologies — Semantic networks of pharmaceutical knowledge,” *Drug Discovery World*, accessed November 9, 2019, <https://www.ddw-online.com/informatics/p148342-ontologies-semantic-networks-of-pharmaceutical-knowledge.html>.

⁷ Daniel L. Rubin, Nigam H. Shah, and Natalya F. Noy, “Biomedical ontologies: a functional perspective,” *Briefings in Bioinformatics* 9, n. 1 (2007): 87.

⁸ C. Broverman, J. Kapusnik-Uner, J. Shalaby, and D. Sperzel, “A concept-based medication vocabulary: an essential requirement for pharmacy decision support,” *Pharmacy Practice Management Quarterly* 18, n. 1 (1998): 1.

⁹ Gardner, “Ontologies.”

¹⁰ William R. Hogan, Josh Hanna, Eric Joseph, and Mathias Brochhausen, “Towards a Consistent and Scientifically Accurate Drug Ontology,” *CEUR Workshop Proceedings* (2013): 69.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

tues and vices of these perspectives? In the present work, I hope to shed some light on possible answers to these questions.

Despite the extensive amount of research and argument on various topics under the purview of food ethics, philosophers have devoted comparatively little attention to ontological issues related to food. In Lisa Heldke's article "An Alternative Ontology of Food: Beyond Meataphysics," Heldke advocates for a nuanced approach to food ethics by problematizing the absolutist tendency of viewing particular foods as "unambiguously" good or bad.¹² This tendency, Heldke argues, can lead to people rendering both violence and compassion invisible in cases that are more complicated than they often acknowledge. Heldke uses examples of food ethics scenarios that people typically take to be absolutely acceptable or reprehensible, drawing out the complex relations that are involved in food production. For example, even vegetables grown in a home garden are still connected in some way to the perpetuation of violence within larger food systems and the world if they rely on pesticides and plant food.¹³

Heldke elaborates on the relationship between metaphysics and ethics by arguing in favor of an alternative ontology of food: the interpretation of foods as "loci of relations" through which we can gain insight into the complex processes and practices involved in food production.¹⁴ This would allow for people to make food choices based on whether the relationships that constitute a particular food are morally acceptable, rather than simply determining what category of substance a food is a member of, and plugging that knowledge into a ready-made equation (e.g., "meat = bad, non-meat = good"). An ontology of relations does appear to more accurately capture the complex nature of food, though it also entails some sacrifice of the simplicity and ease which can be afforded by ethical frameworks undergirded by substance ontologies.

In his article "What is a Recipe?" Andrea Borghini considers realist, constructivist, existentialist, and naive approaches regarding the nature of recipes before settling on the constructivist account. An important question that he raises here is whether or not the identity of a recipe depends on the presence of specific ingredients and the implementation of specific

¹² Lisa Heldke, "An Alternative Ontology of Food: Beyond Meataphysics," *Radical Philosophy Review* 15, n. 1 (2012): 67.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 67.

methods of preparation. A “hard-core realist” account, for example, would require these things for a given dish to count as an instantiation of a particular recipe.¹⁵ However, there are also a number of cases where a recipe’s ingredients and procedures change over time, sometimes out of necessity. For example, synthetic rubber bases, rather than chicle, are typically used in the production of chewing gum. Whipped cream is often made using a mixer instead of being crafted by hand.¹⁶ In these cases, it still seems possible for the recipe to be instantiated, despite changes regarding the presence of particular ingredients and procedures. Borghini argues that the identity of recipes require a performative utterance by the cook (e.g., “This is falafel”), and that this utterance must also be tempered by acquaintance and apprenticeship regarding other dishes that instantiate the recipe.¹⁷ The identity of recipes, on this view, also rests on authenticity and the recognition of recipes as open-ended or subject to spatio-temporal change.¹⁸ Through his work, Borghini emerges with a constructivist theory of food identity and recipes that takes into account the possibility of change over space and time, as well as the importance of collective judgment and culinary experience, while also leaving open the possibility that not all foods will adequately count as authentic, and not all dishes will be proper instantiations of particular recipes.

In the introduction to his edited volume *The Philosophy of Food*, David M. Kaplan makes a compelling case for the exploration of food metaphysics while sketching out some conceptual terrain related to interpretations of food and drugs:

We presuppose some conception — however vague — of what food is whenever we eat or identify something as food. Different conceptions can have real consequences for our health, the environment, and the economy. Metaphysics makes these implicit assumptions explicit by examining the very notion of what food is and what property or properties make something food. The answers to questions concerning the nature of food are not at all obvious. Nor are the answers to other metaphysical questions about the difference between natural and artificial food, the identity of food over

¹⁵ Andrea Borghini, “What Is a Recipe?,” *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 28 (2015): 723.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 724.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 719.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 736.

time (from raw to cooked to spoiled), the difference between food and an animal, or the difference between food and other edible things (such as water, minerals, or drugs).¹⁹

Our presuppositions about what food *is* directly impact our food ethics. Yet, as Kaplan discusses above, answers to questions regarding the nature of food and how (or whether) food is distinct from other edible things are not obvious. One of the categories of edible things that Kaplan includes in his discussion is “drugs.” It is within this intellectual space of edible things that I situate this paper and undertake a philosophical examination of the food-drug relationship within nutritional science and Western medicine.

3. Clusters of Interpretations: Justification and Caveats

I organize interpretations of the food-drug relationship into two clusters which I term “dichotomous” and “continuum-based.” Before proceeding, it is important to note my justification and caveats for this organizational schema.

My justification for organizing food-drug interpretations into two main clusters is that members of each cluster exhibit sufficient similarities such that I have found it useful to evaluate them as a group. While there is sometimes major variation in theoretical, historical, and cultural context regarding the worldviews in which particular interpretations are embedded, there are also relevant commonalities among these interpretations that I am able to illuminate by considering them in tandem. My reflection on these commonalities has influenced my strategy of grouping them into clusters of interpretations as well as choosing the aforementioned names that I use to designate these two clusters from one another. Specifically, “dichotomous” interpretations exhibit a tendency to interpret the categories of food and drug as existing in a dichotomous relationship with one another, such that people utilizing this approach (consciously or not) also tend to interpret individual edible things as either food or drug. In contrast, “continuum-based” interpretations exhibit a tendency to interpret the categories of food and drug as lying on a continuum or spectrum, rather than existing as separate ontological categories. People utilizing this ap-

¹⁹ David M. Kaplan, “Introduction: The Philosophy of Food,” in *The Philosophy of Food*, ed. David M. Kaplan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 3.

proach tend to interpret individual edible things as lying somewhere on a food-drug continuum, acknowledging that some things may be closer to one end of the continuum than another.²⁰

These characterizations of dichotomous and continuum-based interpretations are structurally similar, evincing the hermeneutic nature of experience in general, and of the conceptualization and experience of edible things in particular. Our way of understanding the relationship between the general concepts or categories of food and drug influences our experiences of particular edible things as either food or drug, or as lying on a food-drug continuum. Furthermore, exemplifying the dynamic relationship between parts and wholes in shaping our understanding, our experiences of particular edible things in turn influence our general conceptual perspective on the relationship between the categories of food and drug. Prejudices of various sorts inflect this part-whole relationship, and our understanding of the way that food and drugs relate to one another is both historically-effected and open to change over time in light of new experiences and ways of thinking. Thus, the two clusters of interpretations that I identify and examine are not rigid, exhaustive divisions, but are instead permeable, practical distinctions.

There are also some important caveats to keep in mind regarding this strategic distinction. First, while it is useful and illuminating to distinguish these two clusters of interpretations, it is also important to resist collapsing the different interpretations within each cluster into a single perspective. As mentioned above, each particular way of interpreting is uniquely situated, and the reader should keep this in mind while also being open to the commonalities among interpretations.

Second, in focusing on a particular interpretive mode within a given field (e.g., a reductive approach within nutritional science), I do not mean to imply that this is the only or even the dominant way of understanding the food-drug relationship within that field. In fact, part of my aim in describing

²⁰ In articulating the basic characteristics of dichotomous and continuum-based approaches, I refer to “people utilizing” these approaches rather than “proponents” or “apologists” of these approaches to indicate that many people operate within these interpretive modes without conscious awareness that they are doing so. Indeed, a central goal of this project is to uncover and present these ways of seeing *as* interpretive modes that are open to philosophical examination and critique.

and examining various dichotomous and continuum-based interpretations is to open pre-existing debates to philosophical reflection. These debates are rooted in philosophical questions regarding what food and drugs *are*, the various ways that the food-drug relationship can be interpreted, and the need for evaluating different interpretive modes to this end.

4. Nutritionism and Functional Foods

Within the past decade or so, there has been a small but growing body of literature offering critical perspectives on ideology within the scientific study of food and nutrition, as well as assessments of technological advancements in food production and the incorporation of “extra” components within foods that are taken to have physiological or even medicinal benefits. In addition to theorizing about foods with these added components, scientists have also recently raised concerns that people may be miscategorizing unadulterated edible things as food, when perhaps they are actually drugs.

While scientists obviously acknowledge the addictive potential of many drugs, the possibility of food addiction has been a controversial and heavily debated topic in the nutritional sciences. These perspectives are largely predicated on a dichotomous interpretation of the food-drug relationship, whereby people interpret food and (edible) drugs as belonging to distinct ontological categories.

The philosopher and social theorist Gyorgy Scrinis coined the term “nutritionism” to refer to a reductive approach to food that has proliferated within Western nutritional science and which has been adopted by the food and diet industry to bolster often misleading and problematic marketing claims. Scrinis sees the rise of the production and marketing of products such as functional foods as one aspect of the larger trend that he refers to as the “medicalization” of food: “a pharmaceutical model in which direct and precise effects on particular bodily functions are attributed to single, isolated nutrients and food components.”²¹ While Scrinis traces the medicalization of food back to the nineteenth century, he argues that functional foods have led to a new iteration of this paradigm where scientists are now intentionally engineering foods to obtain particular

²¹ Gyorgy Scrinis, *Nutritionism: The Science and Politics of Dietary Advice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 197.

health benefits in tandem with food companies marketing those products as having benefits above and beyond the provision of nourishment.²²

Scrinis proceeds to critique the current perceptions and regulatory status of functional foods by questioning their alleged benefits, where people making and defending related health claims have merely extrapolated these from nutrients that they have analyzed in isolation from the whole foods to which they have been added.²³ While Scrinis makes a salient point in this regard, for the purposes of my project I discuss this example in order to consider the ontological perspective undergirding the very idea of functional foods and the related medicalization of food. The claim that food needs to be engineered to be appropriately considered medicinal rests on a dichotomous interpretation of the food-drug relationship. On this view, some foods may be healthier than others, but food “on its own,” so to speak, cannot be medicine.

Further, even when certain foods may be considered “naturally functional foods” (though Scrinis points out that such identification is less common than reference to nutritionally engineered foods as functional foods), the nutritionist ideology undergirding this label still implies that a so-called “natural” food is functional by virtue of specific isolated components that it happens to contain. That is, even in the absence of human engineering, people operating within this worldview are only interpreting foods as “medicalized” because they contain components that provide health benefits beyond the nourishment that one would expect from food in general. On this view, which is also ideologically connected to advocacy for and proliferation of dietary supplements, those components that people judge to be extra-beneficial or medicinal can be isolated, manufactured and sold separately as having health benefits that are not tied to their presence within food. Edible things cannot be both food and medicine. At best, food contains extractable medicinal components and can be intentionally engineered to contain such components.

Pre-empting Scrinis’ critical reflection on functional foods, Kaplan argues that a key concern about functional foods that deserves attention is that “their medicinal properties blur the boundaries between food and drugs.”²⁴ Adopting the term “medical foods,” Kaplan laments the lack of

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 199.

²⁴ David M. Kaplan, “What’s Wrong with Functional Foods?” *Journal of*

regulatory oversight of these products, the absence of a clear method for regulatory bodies such as the FDA to legally distinguish “medical” from “functional” foods, and the unfair and unreasonable burden of proof which falls on consumers regarding the demonstration of product safety.²⁵ The nature of these regulatory bodies (in particular, Kaplan focuses on the FDA) plays a role in emerging concerns regarding the creation, distribution, and marketing of functional foods. Further, the very term “medical food” indicates a possible perspective on the relationship of food and medicine in cases in which food could not already be considered medical or medicinal in nature. A continuum-based interpretation of the food-drug relationship, on the other hand, may lead someone to claim that the term “medical food” is redundant, at least in certain cases.

The claim that functional foods blur the boundaries between food and medicine entails that there is already some sort of boundary *to be blurred* in the first place, not only legally but ontologically and conceptually as well. Given that people most often use the term “functional foods” to refer to foods that are engineered to contain particular beneficial components (rather than foods that “naturally” contain such components), even perspectives that view functional foods as calling into question the relationship between food and drug often assume that there is a historical separation between these categories which has now been problematized as a result of technological advancement. This dichotomous perspective on the food-drug relationship undergirds philosophical reflection on this topic, in addition to reflections from medical experts and practitioners. In their commentary “Functional foods — blurring the distinction between food and medicine,” Harri Vainio, MD, and nutritional physiologist Marja Mutanen write:

The difference between foods and medicines is becoming increasingly blurred. For thousands of years, food was fuel. It powered the manual labor that built the pyramids, laid railroads and constructed towns. But now, when we have learned more about the relationship between diet and health over the past 50 years, this traditional concept of food has tended to change. [...] Now, as we enter the new millennium, the foods of the future are emerging. Rather than taking out certain food ingredients, we are beginning to engineer such new foods or food components that would hopefully protect ourselves against disease. The main idea is that these new

Philosophical Research 32 (2007): 177.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

products, sometimes called “functional foods,” will be powerful tools that consumers can use to safeguard themselves against disease.²⁶

While Vainio and Mutanen go on to express regulatory and efficacy-related concerns along the lines of those articulated by Scrinis and Kaplan, their commentary contains two fascinating presuppositions regarding the food-drug relationship that are worth articulating and examining.

First, their writing reflects a view according to which food and medicine have been distinct throughout the course of human history, until both ways of thinking and technologies have progressed to a point where we are now able to merge food and medicine. This does not necessarily entail that we can now consider the line between food and medicine to be “blurred” in an ontological sense; rather, the authors appear to imply that humans are now simply able to add medicinal components *to* food through a process of engineering, such that people can treat and prevent ailments by ingesting food infused with medicine. For example, the authors discuss margarine (most notably, the Finnish brand Benecol) that has been enriched with the steroid compounds phytosterol or phytostanol to maintain healthy cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. While Vainio and Mutanen observe that “there are well-known ways of maintaining optimal cholesterol levels that do not require the purchase of specially fortified foods,” they subsequently remark that “natural ways of optimizing cholesterol are not the easiest, and some people feel that they are far too complicated. For this group, functional foods may provide a helping hand in the form of palatable, easy-to-use products.”²⁷

In trying to get clear on their view of the food-drug relationship, consider an analogous example: when people try to get their dogs or other companion animals to take medicine, they often resort to tactics such as wrapping prescription pills inside of sliced cheese or bread. Thus, food and drugs are combinable, and one could even say that drugs can be “hidden” in food. This interpretation does not entail that food and drugs are no longer ontologically distinct, but that we are now able to combine members of these two categories, facilitating the ingestion of medicine by treating food as a sort of conduit.

²⁶ Harri Vainio and Marja Mutanen, “Functional foods — blurring the distinction between food and medicine,” *Scandinavian Journal of Work, Environment & Health* 26 (2000): 178.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 179.

Vainio and Mutanen claim that “[f]or thousands of years, food was fuel.”²⁸ While people no doubt looked to food and eating as a necessary way of supplying energy to the body for the sake of activities such as manual labor, the authors make sweeping generalizations in implying that this is what food *was* for all peoples, and that this is the only or central way in which people interpreted (or should have interpreted) food prior to the emergence of functional foods. Food has been something more than fuel (e.g., medicine, intoxicant, aphrodisiac, a source of pleasure, a source of meaning) for many groups of people throughout history, and people today continue to have other reasons for seeing food as drugs without needing to refer to functional foods and the technological advancements that make their existence possible. Thus, this interpretation of food as “fuel” or “nourishment” is one of multiple ways of understanding what food *is*. I am not arguing for the outright rejection of the view that food is only or chiefly fuel, but rather encouraging openness to alternate possibilities regarding food-drug interpretations.

5. Concerns Regarding the Miscategorization of Food and Drugs

In addition to the tendency of debates and perspectives in nutritional science on the nature of functional foods to evince underlying dichotomous interpretations of the food-drug relationship, some concerns regarding the way that other edible things are (or should be) classified also indicate a predilection for the view that food and drugs exist in a dichotomous relation to one another. Some recent work implies the possibility that there are certain edible things which may be better classified as a drug rather than as a food. These views are influenced by the current controversy regarding whether or not food can legitimately be said to be addictive in the same way as drugs.

Chocolate is a prime example of an edible thing which some have speculated may be better classified as a drug than as a food. Ronald Ruden, MD and freelance writer Marcia Byalic begin their book *The Craving Brain* with the provocative and subtle suggestion that chocolate is one more illicit drug among others: “‘Gotta have it’ is the driving thought of an addict. [...] A drink, a drag, a hit, a line, a pill, another

²⁸ Ibid., 178.

piece of chocolate.”²⁹ In the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, Kristen Bruinsma and Douglas L. Taren also adopt this quote from Ruden and Byalic as the opening line for their article “Chocolate: Food or Drug?” Bruinsma and Taren speculate briefly on the potentially problematic boundary between food and drugs, raising the question “Can chocolate be classified as a drug?” and providing some intriguing evidence to substantiate this possibility.³⁰

One empirical observation in support of the reclassification of chocolate as a drug is that it contains phenylethylamine, a compound which is structurally and pharmacologically analogous to amphetamines, including 3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), the central active compound in the street drug known as “ecstasy” or “molly.”³¹ Chocolate also contains the stimulants caffeine and theobromine, as well as lipoproteins which work on the brain’s cannabinoid receptors, “mimicking the psychoactive effects of cannabinoid drugs such as heightened sensitivity and euphoria.”³² Human subjects research on the effect of chocolate consumption in curbing cravings has also yielded notable results. For instance, while many subjects have reported that they can curb cravings for “sweets” through the consumption of other high-carbohydrate foods such as bread and potatoes, people were unable to curb specific cravings for chocolate in the same way.³³ Studies in this area indicate that the potentially addictive properties of chocolate and the inability to curb chocolate cravings through the consumption of other foods may set this substance apart in a way that renders it more similar to a drug. Finally, aside from entertaining the possibility of seeing chocolate as a drug in the illicit/addictive sense, Bruinsma and Taren also draw on studies that show the potential for chocolate to be used for the purposes of what they refer to as “self-medication,” particularly re-

²⁹ Ronald Ruden and Marcia Byalic, *The Craving Brain* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2000), 1.

³⁰ Kristen Bruinsma and Douglas L. Taren, “Chocolate: Food or Drug?” *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 99 (1999): 1249.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 1251-52.

³² *Ibid.*, 1252.

³³ Judith Rodin, Joan Mancuso, Jennifer Granger, and Edward Nelbach, “Food cravings in relation to body mass index, restraint and estradiol levels: a repeated measures study in healthy women,” *Appetite* 17 (1991): 177-85.

garding the treatment of magnesium and serotonin deficiencies.³⁴

While Bruinsma and Taren's work raises interesting ontological and hermeneutic issues, the authors themselves do not anticipate and reflect on the philosophical underpinnings of their own views. The authors' framing of their project does, however, indicate that they are operating within an interpretive mode that presumes a dichotomous relationship between the general categories of food and drug. From here, the question is raised in the examination of chocolate as a kind of edible thing: is it a food or is it a drug? What the authors are not bringing to the foreground of their research (though the question does appear to lurk beneath their empirical observations) is that this is an ontological question, and a question about the appropriate interpretation of chocolate for clinical and health-related purposes. Specifically, which of these is the category within which chocolate truly fits? This perspective assumes a dichotomous relationship between the categories of food and drug.

Other recent work in nutrition and medicine also reflects and reproduces dichotomous interpretations of the food-drug relationship. For instance, in their article "Phytoestrogens: food or drug?" Lucia Bacciottini *et al.* take a pharmacological approach to examining and reporting on effects of consuming phytoestrogens. Phytoestrogens are natural estrogen molecules found in a variety of fruits and vegetables.³⁵ Recent studies have indicated an association between phytoestrogen consumption (which includes the molecular categories of flavonoids, lignans, coumestans, and stilbenes) and numerous health benefits, including increased cardiovascular health, cancer prevention, alleviation of menopausal symptoms, and improvements in cognitive function.³⁶ This data suggests that foods high in phytoestrogen should be considered health foods and that scientists should be pushed "to isolate the active molecules to be used as new potential drugs."³⁷

The authors' language further signals the extent to which dichotomous interpretations of the food-drug relationship have been embedded

³⁴ Bruinsma and Taren, "Chocolate," 1253.

³⁵ Lucia Bacciottini, Alberto Falchetti, Barbara Pampaloni, Elisa Bartolini, Anna Maria Carossino, and Maria Luisa Brandi, "Phytoestrogens: food or drug?" *Clinical Cases in Mineral and Bone Metabolism* 4 (2007): 123-4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 126.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 129.

in contemporary scientific discourse. Rather than interpreting the phytoestrogen-containing foods themselves as lying along a food-drug continuum, Bacciotini *et al.* latently embrace the view that specific components within foods can (and should) be isolated from their nutritional context and synthesized. Thus, such components should be seen as drugs after undergoing these processes, but the whole edible thing of which the component is a part should be seen as food on this view.

6. Food Addiction Controversy in Nutritional Science

The debate over whether food is addictive and whether “food addiction” is a legitimate medical condition is informed by underlying hermeneutic commitments regarding the nature of the food-drug relationship. Those who view the food-drug relationship as dichotomous also tend to hold the view that the category of “food” does not contain edible things that have the property of being addictive. Drugs can potentially be addictive and addictive potential is seen as a distinguishing feature of many drugs. In contrast, those who hold that food, or at least some foods, can be addictive appear to base this perspective on an interpretation of the food-drug relationship as continuum-based. Indeed, as Marcia Pelchat observes in the *Journal of Nutrition*, “Most of the evidence for or against food addiction in humans focuses on similarities between food craving and drug craving.”³⁸ Debates over the possibility and implications of food addiction are taking place within and across disciplines. Clearly, discussion and research on this issue is vital for the future of nutritional science, as the addictive potential of food could necessitate the rethinking of key concepts such as health and safety in the context of dietary choice.

Advancing research on the food addiction debate, Rebecca L. Corwin and Patricia S. Grigson present an overview of recent contributions to this topic within nutritional science. Corwin and Grigson advance the view that certain highly palatable foods, while not addictive *per se*, can *become* addictive due to patterns of consumption.³⁹ This leaves open

³⁸ Marcia Levin Pelchat, “Food Addiction in Humans,” *The Journal of Nutrition* 139 (2009): 620.

³⁹ Rebecca L. Corwin and Patricia S. Grigson, “Symposium Overview — Food Addiction: Fact or Fiction?” *The Journal of Nutrition* 139 (2009): 617.

the possibility that edible things need not be interpreted in a specific way (e.g., interpreted as strictly addictive or non-addictive; *or* interpreted as strictly a food or drug) in *all* contexts, and that more or less appropriate interpretations are context-specific, rather than being strictly dependent on the presence or absence of particular intrinsic properties.

In reflecting on the “pervasive, yet controversial” concept of food addiction, Corwin and Grigson provide a brief but insightful summation of the basis of some skepticism regarding the plausibility of the concept. One problem with making a scientifically rigorous determination of the addictive properties of foods is that “everyone eats. How can a label of ‘addictive’ be applied to that which supports life itself?”⁴⁰ This concern is rooted in a perspective according to which foods are simply food, drugs are simply drugs, and never the twain shall meet. The authors’ worry can be clarified by examining it in the form of a *modus ponens* argument: If something is essential for sustaining life, then this at least casts doubt on the possibility that it could be addictive. Food is essential for sustaining life, thus it is at least doubtful that it could be addictive. On such a view, one could only become addicted to something which is not required for survival. People who hold this view, then, interpret drugs as being inessential for the support of life, and this perspective is accompanied by the acceptance of the addictive potential of at least some drugs. Corwin and Grigson’s work is relevant for the current discussion due to the rhetoric that they employ in assessing the concept of “food addiction.” The authors propose that “some foods are more addictive than others, especially foods rich in fat and/or sugar.”⁴¹ However, the authors distance themselves from the view that food (including high-fat and high-sugar foods) could be addictive based on the presence of intrinsic properties of the food itself. Rather, according to Corwin and Grigson, “these foods [...] are not addictive, *per se*, but become so following a restriction/binge pattern of consumption.”⁴²

While this could be defended as a legitimate perspective on the nature of addiction (i.e., that food or other edible things can become addictive based on patterns of consumption), the rhetoric that the authors utilize to further describe and defend their approach tends to insinuate that

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

they do not take food to be *really* addictive because (according to the authors) it is not *intrinsically* addictive. Corwin and Grigson argue that “even highly palatable food is not addictive in and of itself,” and that “it is the manner in which the food is presented (i.e., intermittently) and consumed (i.e., repeated, intermittent ‘gorging’) that appears to entrain the addiction-like process.”⁴³ The authors’ treatment of food addiction as a phenomenon that is really only “like” or “similar to” actual addiction further illustrates the pervasiveness of dichotomous interpretations of the food-drug distinction within the academic and scientific discourse. On this view, ingestible things that are truly addictive are addictive “in and of themselves.” Drugs and food are differentiated from one another based on the intrinsic addictive potential of drugs, and food is only interpreted as addictive in a loose, metaphorical sense.

People often refer to a food as “addictive” when they really enjoy it and would like to continue eating it, especially when it elicits a craving that makes it difficult for the eater to cease consumption. Restaurants and snack brands have long capitalized on and satirized the possibility of food addiction for marketing purposes. One example is the Michigan chain HopCat’s famous “crack fries,” which were recently renamed “cosmic fries” after critiques that the restaurant was making light of drug addiction.⁴⁴ On a dichotomous approach to the food-drug relationship, whereby drugs are further interpreted as potentially addictive and food is interpreted as non-addictive due to its role in sustaining life, the concept of an “addictive food” is at best a potentially useful albeit inaccurate analogy and, at worst, it is misleading and comes into contradiction with the nature of food itself.

7. Dichotomous Food-Drug Interpretations in Western Medicine

There are identifiable dominant trends in medical thought and practice that presuppose a substantive divide between the categories of food and drug. My support for this claim focuses on Western medicine’s recent

⁴³ Ibid., italics mine.

⁴⁴ Melody Baetens, “HopCat announces new name for controversial ‘crack fries,’” *The Detroit News*, January 14, 2019, <https://www.detroitnews.com/story/entertainment/dining/2019/01/14/hopcat-new-name-controversial-crack-fries/2574177002/>.

turn to privileging anthropogenic synthetic substances as medicinal drugs, while not considering substances interpreted as food to also count as drugs, even in cases involving synthetic medicinal drugs that were originally derived from plant (or animal) materials.

While the possibility that some food can also appropriately be interpreted and used as medicine is generally considered a “fringe” idea within Western medicine, this consideration itself is also a product of history, and there was a time before the denigration of the concept of “medicinal food” was widely accepted. As Jin-Ming Kong *et al.* observes, “[f]or centuries, medicine in the West meant herbal medicine.”⁴⁵ The Western use of plants as medicine can be traced at least as far back as Hippocrates (460-377 BC). Use of “traditional plant drugs” as part of Chinese and other Indigenous medical systems pre-dates Hippocratic medicine by thousands of years and remains an important part of these and other approaches to health today.

According to Kong *et al.*, “[d]uring the eighteenth century, as scientific knowledge progressed, a dichotomy in medicine developed between practitioners of herbal medicine and regular physicians.”⁴⁶ It is worth pausing briefly to consider the specific language employed here by Kong *et al.* The historical development of this “dichotomy in medicine” maps on to the relationship between “continuum-based” and “dichotomous” food-drug interpretations. On one side of this dichotomy in medicine are those who engage in the interpretation and utilization of at least some foods (e.g., particular plants) as medicines, who do not interpret “food” and “drug” as discrete ontological categories, and who subsequently do not interpret edible things disjunctively, as either food or drugs. On the other side of this dichotomy are those who *do* see these categories as fundamentally separate, especially given the emergence and proliferation of pharmaceutical chemistry in the 19th century. Early examples of the new drugs developed during this period include the isolation of morphine from opium poppies and the isolation of salicylic acid from various plants such as the willow tree.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Jin-Ming Kong, Ngoh-Khang Goh, Lian-Sai Chia, and Tet-Fatt Chia, “Recent advances in traditional plant drugs and orchids,” *Acta Pharmalogica Sinica* 24 (2003): 8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Nutritionist ideology is closely connected with a dichotomous approach to the food-drug relationship, especially the nutritionist view that edible things are best understood in terms of their component parts. On this view, plants and other foods may contain what we could refer to as “proto-drug” compounds, which must be isolated and synthesized to create true “drugs,” whereas whole plants are interpreted as folk remedies. Whereas not a necessary consequence of dichotomous interpretations, this way of thinking allows for the possibility of delegitimizing continuum-based knowledge systems. Advocates of dichotomous interpretations to the food-drug relationship sometimes consider traditions such as Ayurvedic medicine as part of a larger category of “alternative medicine.” By contrast, contemporary Western medicine is considered the default standard of medical knowledge. In a sense, “medicine” just *is* “Western medicine” on this view, and any other approach is either inefficacious or has not yet been subsumed within the category of medicine (i.e., not enough legitimate scientific research has confirmed its efficacy), a decision that must be made by the scientific/medical community (evoking Kong *et al.*’s discussion of “regular physicians”). In the context of veterinary medical practice, veterinarian David Ramey and philosopher Bernard Rollin write:

Science-based medicine is not the only possible model available to veterinary practitioners. However, we believe it is the only possible model that preserves the unique, protected, licensed, and privileged position of veterinary professionals, because science appears to be the only objective source of knowledge that is acknowledged by virtually all elements of society [...]. It is not necessarily the case that alternative therapies have no value; neither is it the case that established treatments are always perfect or that science is infallible. Yet, to abandon scientific validation as the gold standard of therapeutic efficacy is to invite chaos.⁴⁸

This quote illustrates both the conditional openness and epistemic prejudice of Western medicine, wherein there is a monolithic standard of what counts as “proof” and wherein “chaos” is the alternative to honoring this standard.

It is worth noting that this stance on the need for evidence-based gatekeeping often stems from a genuine concern for safety and efficacy.

⁴⁸ David W. Ramey and Bernard E. Rollin, “Ethical aspects of proof and ‘alternative’ therapies,” *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 218 (2000): 344, 345-346.

To be sure, there is good reason behind the endurance of the phrase *caveat emptor* in the context of health and healing, and there is a long history of fraud and peddlers of phony “snake oil” panaceas. The very concept of “quackery” already implies a mastery of deception, of crafting and hoisting a hermeneutic lens onto the patient/spectator through which they interpret innocuous (or worse, harmful) substances as drugs. Characterizing the perspective of the twentieth-century antiquackery crusader Dr. Arthur J. Cramp, medical historian Eric Boyle writes: “The quack claimed to cure diseases he simply could not. He lied about the contents of the remedy he promoted. He made promises that could not be kept.”⁴⁹ One of the most recent examples of this interpretive distortion is the emergence and promotion of pills that purport to provide UV protection equivalent to lotion-based sunscreen. The FDA addressed the public on this issue in a May 2018 statement:

Today we sent warning letters to companies illegally marketing pills and capsules labeled as dietary supplements that make unproven drug claims about protecting consumers from the harms that come from sun exposure without meeting the FDA’s standards for safety and effectiveness. These companies [...] are putting people’s health at risk by giving consumers a false sense of security that a dietary supplement could prevent sunburn, reduce early skin aging caused by the sun, or protect from the risks of skin cancer.⁵⁰

There is just cause for the exercise of caution and careful verification and consideration in admitting something as a member of the category of drugs and endorsing related interpretations of that thing. This point should not be hastily minimized, because public health and well-being are at stake, as well as public trust in the state’s concern for its interests. Within an economic system that incentivizes exaggerating claims as far as legally possible (or beyond this, as in the case of the “sunscreen pills”) to sell more products and maximize profits, these

⁴⁹ Eric W. Boyle, *Quack Medicine: A History of Combating Health Fraud in Twentieth-Century America* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2013), xvi.

⁵⁰ Scott Gottlieb, “Statement from FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb, M.D., on new FDA actions to keep consumers safe from the harmful effects of sun exposure, and ensure the long-term safety and benefits of sunscreens,” *U.S. Food & Drug Administration*, May 22, 2018, <https://www.fda.gov/newsevents/newsroom/pressannouncements/ucm608499.htm>.

stakes are exponentially higher. This point not only applies generally to substances that are deceptively presented *as* drugs, but also more specifically to *foods* that are presented (deceptively or earnestly) as drugs.

8. Alternative Medicine and Skepticism of Non-Western Approaches

A critical approach regarding what should adequately count as a drug is key in justifying the employment of the concept “drug” at all, lest everything ingestible be interpreted as a drug, rendering the concept meaningless. Further motivation for some degree of strictness in ontological boundaries (i.e., between “drug” and “non-drug”) also lies in providing a corrective to incentivized deception and coercion. But this caution can be overdone as well, leading to too strong of a prejudice against differing interpretations. This prejudice is exacerbated when our interpretations become invisible to us. Instead of seeing our interpretations *as* interpretations, our tendencies are in the direction of assuming our experiences to accurately track real features of the world, that the world “as it is” is *given* or *present* to us, and that we can know that it is given to us. When we fail to remind ourselves of the interpretive nature of experience, we not only run the risk of failing to see our own interpretations as interpretations, but we may also fail to see others’ interpretations as interpretations. We may fail to entertain the interpretive lenses of others as legitimate and possible ways of experiencing, understanding, and acting in the world, and which merit respect and consideration through dialogue. The idea that there is a single correct interpretation which must be imposed over all others, even when partially or largely rooted in a legitimate concern (e.g., for safety and efficacy of edible things marketed and sold as drugs), cannot be actualized without the silencing of other voices on this issue. In the context of enforcing strict boundaries around acceptable and unacceptable interpretations of something as a “drug” or “medicine,” this dogmatism may result in the uncritical delegitimation of other knowledge structures and interpretive modes.

Western medicine sometimes recognizes efficacious proto-medicines (e.g., plant compounds) and practices. However, even these are interpreted as yet-to-be part of the corpus of real medicine. The potential chaotic scenario that Ramey and Rollin anticipate in the previous section is one where “anything goes,” the free market determines the nature of medical practice, and “the public could be victimized by un-

founded exaggerated claims, glitzy advertising, anecdotes, and non-testable testimonials.”⁵¹ While caution is warranted, it is debatable whether a total *laissez faire* free-for-all is the only alternative to the domination of current mainstream Western medical perspectives.

Dichotomous interpretations of the food-drug relationship in Western medicine do not necessarily call for the outright rejection of any potential *usefulness* of foods or other “alternative” remedies, but they do often view these approaches with skepticism. All alternative medical practices certainly do not necessarily require a continuum-based approach to the food-drug relationship. However, Western medicine typically lumps in continuum-based interpretations from various traditions (e.g., Ayurveda and traditional Chinese medicine) in the large and nebulous category of “complementary and alternative medicine” (CAM).

Housed within the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH), whose goals include conducting research and disseminating “objective evidence-based information on complementary and integrative health interventions.”⁵² The center defines complementary and alternative approaches in negative terms, where complementary medicine is the use of “non-mainstream” practices *in addition to* “conventional medicine” and alternative medicine involves the use of non-mainstream practices *in place of* conventional medicine.⁵³ Integrative approaches involve the incorporation of conventional and complementary practices within mainstream health-care. Of importance here is the center’s statement that “NCCIH generally uses the term ‘complementary health approaches’ when we discuss practices and products of non-mainstream origin.”⁵⁴ Given the acceptance and championing of mainstream Western medical ideology, in emphasizing this language (rather than adopting, for instance, “alternative medicine” as the standard terminology) the NCCIH actively *de-emphasizes* the possibil-

⁵¹ Ramey and Rollin, “Ethical aspects of proof,” 344.

⁵² “NCCIH Facts-at-a-Glance and Mission,” *National Center for Complementary and Integrative Medicine*, last modified September 24, 2017, <https://nccih.nih.gov/about/ata glance>.

⁵³ “Complementary, Alternative, or Integrative Health: What’s In a Name?” *National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health*, last modified September 24, 2017, <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/integrative-health>.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

ity of adopting “non-mainstream” medical approaches *in place of* mainstream medicine. Recognizing this point helps to clarify the conceptual terrain of Western medicine and its current tendency toward dichotomous interpretations of the food-drug relationship.

As mentioned above, CAM is taken to consist of myriad forms of non-mainstream medicine, which the NCCIH divides into the two main categories of “natural products” and “mind or body practices.”⁵⁵ The category of natural products includes the use of food for medicinal purposes, and includes various products such as “herbs (also known as botanicals), vitamins and minerals, and probiotics.”⁵⁶ The NCCIH observes that “[r]esearchers have done large and rigorous studies on a few natural products, but the results often showed that the products didn’t work.”⁵⁷ Indeed, some companies may be ripping off consumers by making unverified claims about the efficacy of natural products.

This framing is echoed in the American Academy of Pain Medicine’s (AAPM) official position statement on complementary and alternative medicine, wherein the academy applies and interprets part of the American Medical Association’s *Code of Medical Ethics*: “it is unethical to engage in or to aid and abet in treatment which has no scientific basis and is dangerous, is calculated to deceive the patient by giving false hope, or which may cause the patient to delay in seeking proper care.”⁵⁸ In no place does the AAPM statement recommend further research on the potential efficacy of non-mainstream methods of pain management, instead focusing on expressions of concern.⁵⁹

A final example illustrating Western medicine’s tendency towards dichotomous interpretations of the food-drug relationship can be seen in the NCCIH’s dissemination of information on Ayurvedic medicine, a traditional form of medicine in India predicated on a continuum-based approach to the food-drug relationship, including the medicinal use of

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ “AAPM Position Statement on Complementary and Alternative Medicine,” *The American Academy of Pain Medicine*, accessed February 13, 2018, <http://www.painmed.org/files/aapm-position-statement-on-complementary-and-alternative-medicine.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

plants such as ginger and turmeric root in treating inflammatory ailments. As evinced in the two “key points” of the NCCIH piece (quoted below), the mainstream Western medical perspective on Ayurveda is largely one of skepticism and concern:

• *Is Ayurvedic medicine safe?*

Ayurvedic medicine uses a variety of products and practices. Some of these products — which may contain herbs, minerals, or metals — may be *harmful, particularly if used improperly or without the direction of a trained practitioner*. For example, some herbs can cause side effects or interact with conventional medicines. Also, *ingesting some metals, such as lead, can be poisonous*.

• *Is Ayurvedic medicine effective?*

Studies have examined Ayurvedic medicine, including herbal products, for specific conditions. However, there are not enough well-controlled clinical trials and systematic research reviews — the gold standard for Western medical research — to prove that the approaches are beneficial.⁶⁰

The NCCIH frames its discussion of Ayurvedic medicine thus: if readers only take away the two most important points from this piece when learning about and considering Ayurveda, these points should be regarding the potential harms of this ancient knowledge tradition. Further, even in cases in which certain herbal products are potentially medicinal, these are considered under-researched within the mainstream medical and scientific communities.

Concern regarding certain iterations of Ayurvedic practice, or at least what is referred to as Ayurvedic practice, has some grounding in empirical data. A 2005 study of the components of USA- and Indian-made Ayurvedic medicine purchased on the internet found that one-fifth of the medicines analyzed contained detectable levels of lead, mercury, or arsenic.⁶¹ While apologists of Ayurveda have argued that the toxicity of some products is a result of a lack of supervision and flaws that can

⁶⁰ “Ayurvedic Medicine: In Depth,” *National Center for Complementary Health and Integrative Medicine*, last modified April 7, 2016, <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/ayurveda/introduction.htm#hed1>.

⁶¹ Robert B. Saper, Russell S. Phillips, Anusha Sehgal, Nadia Khouri, Roger B. Davis, Janet Paquin, Venkatesh Thuppil, and Stefanos N. Kales, “Lead, Mercury, and Arsenic in US- and Indian-Manufactured Ayurvedic Medicines Sold via the Internet,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 300 (2008): 915.

be traced back to commercialization, medical doctor Robert M. Saper *et al.* claim that all of the metal-containing products in their study “exceeded 1 or more standards for acceptable daily metal intake,” and that “[s]everal Indian-manufactured [Ayurvedic] medicines could result in lead and/or mercury ingestions 100 to 10,000 times greater than acceptable limits.”⁶² In a recent article in the *Indian Journal of Gastroenterology*, Cyriac Abby Philips *et al.* note that “Ayurvedic and herbal medications (AHM) are known to cause varying degrees of liver injury that range from asymptomatic liver failure requiring liver transplantation. [...] Hepatotoxicity and heavy metal analysis of AHM have been shown in studies ranging from case reports to large patient series.”⁶³ The authors of this article end their discussion by calling for further regulation and supervision regarding Ayurvedic herbal medicine.

There is clearly some evidence for concern regarding the safety and efficacy of products marketed as Ayurvedic. Understanding this evidence within the broader context of skepticism of “alternative” medicine also sheds lights on more sweeping judgments of Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medical knowledge. This is not simply an issue of so-called “medicine” that does not fulfill its purported purpose, but which further harms the person ingesting it. Taking the evidence against certain aspects of Ayurvedic medicine into account, it is not a far reach to see how this skepticism is extended into a more specific skepticism regarding the possibility that certain foods, on their own, can also appropriately be counted as drugs.

Concerns arising from this literature are further bolstered by the discovery of over 300 fake Ayurvedic doctors in the suburbs of Mumbai in 2018.⁶⁴ On September 26, 2017, members of the Ayurveda Medical

⁶² *Ibid.*, 920.

⁶³ Cyriac Abby Philips, Rajaguru Paramaguru, Adarsh K. Joy, K. L. Antony, and Philip Augustine, “Clinical outcomes, histopathological patterns, and chemical analysis of Ayurveda and herbal medicine associated with severe liver injury — A single-center experience from southern India,” *Indian Journal of Gastroenterology* 37 (2018): 10.

⁶⁴ “Cop bust racket, worried that 300 fake Ayurvedic doctors practise in Mumbai’s eastern suburbs,” *Hindustan Times*, February 20, 2018, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/cop-bust-racket-worried-that-300-fake-ayurvedic-doctors-practise-in-mumbai-s-eastern-suburbs/story-FbEnAqFs6T8Zmytwr4syJ.html>.

Association of India united in observation of “Anti Quack Day,” opposing and raising awareness of unlicensed Ayurvedic practitioners.⁶⁵ From a consumer perspective, a number of Ayurvedic medicine brands market their products using claims that are vague and misleading. The company Patanjali, for instance, implores customers to consume their brand of honey and “remain healthy forever.”⁶⁶ Skepticism of Ayurvedic medicine is compatible with broader concerns regarding quackery in the medical community. Western medicine’s default interpretation of Ayurveda as inferior carries over into a critique of continuum-based interpretations of the food-drug relationship and the upholding of a dichotomous interpretation whereby an edible thing should only be appropriately interpreted as a drug if it is given clearance based on scientific data demonstrating its safety and efficacy.

It would be imprudent to neglect potential harms in a discussion of Ayurvedic medicine, but it would also be similarly imprudent to neglect consideration of the potential side effects of synthetic pharmaceutical drugs when considering prescribing them to a patient. The framing of Ayurvedic medicine, the classification of various non-mainstream approaches as alternative/complementary medicine, and the skepticism regarding non-mainstream interpretations of medicine and the food-drug relationship serve as evidence for the degree to which dichotomous interpretations of food and drugs are entrenched within mainstream Western medicine. The above expressions of nutritional and medical ideology illustrate the widespread deference to these interpretive modes as default positions, as gold standards for what counts as medical knowledge. On this view, there may be bits and pieces of efficacious theory and practice in non-Western and non-mainstream traditions, but these should be viewed with caution — often because they are under-researched within mainstream medical science — and should never be used in place of, but at best as a supplement to, “conventional” medicine. On this view, the category of “medicine,” and of “drug” more generally, refers specifi-

⁶⁵ “Form anti-quackery cells to bust fake ayurvedic medics,” *The New Indian Express*, September 26, 2017, <http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2017/sep/26/form-anti-quackery-cells-to-bust-fake-ayurvedic-medics-1662681.html>.

⁶⁶ “Patanjali Honey,” *Amazon*, accessed October 30, 2018, <https://www.amazon.in/Patanjali-Honey-500g/dp/B01H71288Q>.

cally to synthesized compounds, perhaps originally derived from edible things (e.g., plants or bread mold), but markedly and ontologically distinct from these origins.

9. Conclusion

While dichotomous approaches are currently dominant in interpreting the food-drug relationship, this observation on its own is not an endorsement or rejection of this cluster of interpretive modes. Rather, unearthing the often-implicit assumptions and presuppositions of these views creates the space for assessments that are both more open and critical. It is a step towards bridging the “gap of mutual incomprehension” that too often develops around specific debates, such as those regarding the plausibility of the concept of food addiction. As historian Matthew Smith writes in his exploration of the history of food allergy, “arguments about the relationship between food and health have always been passionately fought, partly because of the many interests involved, partly because the science involved is complex and often interdisciplinary, but also because we all believe that we are experts about what we eat.”⁶⁷ It is my hope that this work contributes to the development of a more explicitly historical and interpretive understanding of our experiences and views regarding the food-drug relationship, placing a few planks toward genuine dialogue between conversation partners on these issues.

⁶⁷ Matthew Smith, *Another Person's Poison: A History of Food Allergy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 14.

IV. BOOK REVIEW

Christos Hadjioannou (ed.), *Heidegger on Affect*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019, 294 pp., €103.99. ISBN 978-3-030-24639-6

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In *Heidegger on Affect*, Christos Hadjioannou gathers recent and relevant philosophical contributions on topics at the intersection of Martin Heidegger and “affect.” “Affect” is selected as the best all-encompassing English word to refer at once to *Stimmung* (mood) and *Befindlichkeit* (disposition or attunement). Each of the twelve chapters presents and discusses a topic within the realm of affectivity, including contributions from some of the most eminent Heidegger scholars. All of the authors also provide their own translations of the key terms Heidegger uses to think the affective realm. Rather than unnecessarily muddying the waters, this editorial decision works well for each of the contributing authors, allowing them to develop their analyses, so to say, in their own terms. The contributions increase the philosophical attention paid to emotion and affect in Heidegger’s thought and make Heidegger’s unique terminology more accessible to the English-speaking scholarly community.

Mahon O’Brien’s opening chapter provides a grounding in Heidegger’s thinking on affect by drawing attention to Heidegger’s writings on nothing and nothingness. In referencing the 1935 *Introduction to Metaphysics*, as well as the iterations of Heidegger’s inaugural “What is Metaphysics?” lecture, O’Brien argues that Heidegger’s thought about “nothing” continues the analyses begun on anxiety/angst in *Being and Time*, thereby demonstrating the presence of a connection between these two periods of Heidegger’s work.

In the following chapter, Thomas Sheehan recapitulates the call for a “paradigm shift” in Heidegger studies that he had already put forward in *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (2014). He also situates his own contribution as an extension of Heidegger’s 1955 “What is Philosophy?” lecture. Briefly, Sheehan argues against the predominant tendency in Heidegger studies to understand Heidegger’s lifelong con-

tribution to philosophy as a reflection on the question of being. According to him, Heidegger's contribution was rather an attempt at defining the human project of meaningfulness or intelligibility. After resituating transcendence and intentionality within his own narrative arc, Sheehan argues convincingly that Heidegger's analysis in the 1955 lecture demonstrates that *πάθος* (*pathos*, emotion) might indeed be the "thing in itself" or, in Heideggerian terminology, the facticity of *Dasein*.

Niall Keane provides the next contribution by focusing on Heidegger's thinking of Aristotle's rhetoric in the 1924 lecture course, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*. Keane argues that one of the keys to understanding *Being and Time* and the interplay of actuality/possibility therein is a reading of the 1924 lecture course, where Heidegger finds in Aristotle the "jolt" provided by conversational *pathos* (rhetoric) in our everyday speaking and interacting with others.

Hadjioannou's own chapter singles out Heidegger's analysis of angst as a pivotal departure from Husserl's phenomenology, which Hadjioannou describes as being committed to "mental evidentialism." According to this schema, Heidegger would be a quasi-evidentialist because he "repeatedly juxtaposes the kind of evidence supplied by angst with the kind of evidence supplied by the apodictic certainty of ordinary intuition" (p. 96). In short, the crux of the difference between Husserlian and Heideggerian phenomenology might be found in affect.

Daniel Dahlstrom provides a well-warranted critique of Heidegger's account of affect by examining a number of points in *Being and Time*, wherein mood or emotion is remarkably absent. While scholars are correct in acknowledging the debt owed to Heidegger's analysis of angst in *Being and Time*, Dahlstrom notes that it is understanding (*Vertsehen*) rather than disposedness (Dahlstrom's preferred term for translating *Befindlichkeit*) that receives most of Heidegger's philosophical attention, to the detriment of affect.

Denis McManus seems to answer Dahlstrom's call by providing a unique reflection on authenticity and the role of "owned emotion." McManus presents three models, including the all-things-considered judgment model, that provide insight into the possibilities of what authentic emotion might look and feel like in our lived experience.

The chapter by Katherine Withy marks a notable shift in the collection. Withy successfully argues in favor of translating *Befindlichkeit* as "finding" and, in retranslating the word, ends up transforming the tra-

ditional understanding of Heidegger's account of affect. While not attempting to reinscribe a duality that both Heidegger and Withy reject, Withy's contribution ascribes a markedly more active or actant quality to "finding" that occurs as an answer to at least two types of "calling" (there can be others, too): vocational and solicitous.

Andreas Elpidorou and Lauren Freeman provide a continuation of their ongoing and insightful scholarship into Heidegger's writings on boredom. They conduct a thorough analysis of Heidegger's concept of profound boredom in contrast to what they term state boredom and trait boredom, thereby weaving together contemporary psychological and philosophical perspectives on boredom.

Daniela Vallega-Neu also presents an extension of her ongoing project on Heidegger's non-public "poetic" writings that began in the 1930s. Building on her existing scholarship, which includes her book *Heidegger's Poietic Writings: From Contributions to Philosophy to The Event* (2018), Vallega-Neu presents an interesting reflection on "grounding attunements" and their relationship to truth and errancy (with an innuendo to Heidegger's politics), as well as bodily dispositionality.

In the next chapter, Tatjana Noemi Tömmel finds, in Heidegger's thought, an account of love that emerges not from his published writings or lecture courses, but in tandem with and in parallel to his correspondence with Hannah Arendt and his wife, Elfride. In short, Tömmel provides evidence that angst is not the only emotion that can help *Dasein* "find itself" or "be itself" — love can also serve as a fundamental mode of attunement.

François Raffoul locates a specifically ethical relation within the phenomenon of being "thrown" in a mood as described by Heidegger. This ethical response to finding oneself in a particular mood, as Raffoul suggests, encourages human beings to take responsibility for their "facticity and finitude of existence" (p. 248). A highlight of Raffoul's contribution is his suggestion that disposition or attunement (his translation of *Befindlichkeit* in this context) is synonymous (or equiprimordial) with relationality and therefore suggests the always already ethical comportment.

Jan Slaby and Gerhard Thonhauser conclude the collection with an analysis of Heidegger's account of affectivity in relation to questions of politics. In Heidegger's reflections on boredom, as well as in the

speeches delivered during his fateful term as Rector of the University of Freiburg, Slaby and Thonhauser find an intriguing standpoint from which to gain an ontological perspective on “political affect.” Given Heidegger’s own troubled lived experience with politics and the impact of his thought on recent French accounts of political life, the authors find Heidegger’s thought on affect unsatisfying for greater engagement with democratic politics.

In his introductory remarks Hadjioannou notes the significance of affective phenomena in Heidegger’s thought and the lack of a collection of essays on this important theme. *Heidegger on Affect* successfully fills this gap in the literature and all of the contributions enrich contemporary scholarship in this area of Heidegger studies. I cannot do justice to all of the insights provided by each of the contributors and would recommend anyone interested in this area of Heidegger studies to read the collection from cover to cover. Finally, my hope is that this volume marks only the beginning of a flourishing of philosophical work on the theme of Heidegger and attunement.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Master’s Program in Philosophy Taught in English at the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”

General Information

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” was founded in 1888 following the best patterns of European higher education. Sofia is the capital city of the Republic of Bulgaria, which is a member of the European Union (EU). Sofia University is the highest-ranking university in Bulgaria. The MA Program in Philosophy taught in English at the University of Sofia provides instruction in all major areas of Western Philosophy, but the Master’s thesis can also be written on a topic from Eastern Philosophy. The program consists of 10 mandatory courses and 2 electives, so it leaves enough leeway for the student’s own preferences. The degree is recognized worldwide including in the EU/EEA and Switzerland, the USA, Canada, Russia, Turkey, China, the Indian Sub-Continent, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Courses Offered

Philosophical Anthropology, Ethics, Axiology, Philosophical Method, Truth and Meaning, Philosophy of Intercultural Relations, Social Philosophy, Continental Philosophy, Philosophy of Culture, Logic in the Continental Tradition, Theories of Truth, Existential Dialectics, Philosophy of Subjective Action, Phenomenology.

Faculty Members

All faculty members teaching at the program are approved by the Bulgarian State Highest Assessment Commission. They feature successful teaching experience in this country and abroad and are well published in Bulgarian and English.

Duration of Studies

Two semesters of course attendance plus a third semester for writing the Master’s thesis. There are also opportunities for distance learning.

Requirements

Bachelor's degree in any field of the humanities, social science, science, or professional disciplines. No tests or application fee are required (for citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland applying for a state scholarship €16 fee is charged and an interview is held). No previous degree in philosophy is needed.

Tuition Fee

- 1) For citizens of the EU/EEA and Switzerland: €850 per school year.
- 2) For international students: €3850 per school year.

Financial Aid

- 1) EU/EEA and Swiss citizens are eligible for state scholarships carrying a 60% tuition waiver plus a monthly stipend beginning from the second semester.
- 2) American citizens are eligible for Fulbright Graduate Grants. For more information, see www.fulbright.bg. It is possible for American citizens to use sources of governmental financial assistance (please contact the Program Director for details).
- 3) Canadian students are eligible for financial aid in the form of governmental student loans from the province where they are permanent residents.
- 4) Turkish students are eligible for financial aid within the Erasmus+ Student Exchange Program.
- 5) Chinese students are eligible for financial aid within the bilateral Chinese-Bulgarian Cultural Agreement. For more information, contact the Chinese Ministry of Education.
- 6) Russian students are eligible for financial aid within the bilateral Russian-Bulgarian Cultural Agreement. For more information, contact the Russian Ministry of Education.
- 7) Students from the Ukraine, Belarus, and the other CIS countries, the Indian Sub-Continent, Latin America, and the Middle East receive financial aid in the form of inexpensive dormitory accommodation (about €50 per month including most of the utilities) plus a discount on public transportation and at the university's cafeterias. The same type of financial aid is available for the citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland, American citizens, Canadian nationals, Western Balkans citizens, students from Turkey, and Chinese students.

Application Deadlines

To start in October: July 31.
To start in February: November 30.

Student Visa Matters

Sofia University in cooperation with the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science provides the necessary documents for student visa application to all eligible candidates, except those from the EU/EEA and Switzerland.

Cultural Life and Recreation

The city of Sofia is the most ancient European capital after Athens. The cost of living there is one of the lowest in Europe. As the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia features a rich cultural life. There are a number of concert halls, museums, dozens of art galleries, and many national and international cultural centers. The streets of Sofia are populated by cozy cafés and high-quality inexpensive restaurants offering Bulgarian, European, and international cuisine. Sofia is a favorable place for summer and winter sports including skiing on the nearby mountain of Vitosha. More about Sofia can be found at <http://www.sofia-life.com/culture/culture.php>. You can also follow Sofianite and Bulgarian news at <http://www.novinite.com/lastx.php>.

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Doctoral Program in Philosophy Taught in English at the University of Sofia “St. Kliment Ohridski”

General Information

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” was founded in 1888 following the best patterns of European higher education. Sofia is the capital city of the Republic of Bulgaria, which is a member of the European Union (EU). Sofia University is the highest-ranking university in Bulgaria. The PhD Program in Philosophy taught in English at the University of Sofia provides instruction in all major areas of Western Philosophy, but the PhD thesis can also be written on a topic from Eastern Philosophy. The program consists of 6 mandatory courses and 2 electives, so it leaves enough leeway for the student’s own preferences. The degree is recognized worldwide including in the EU/EEA and Switzerland, the USA, Canada, Russia, Turkey, China, the Indian Sub-Continent, Latin America, and the Middle East.

Courses Offered

Psychoanalysis and Philosophy, Applied Ethics, Epistemology, Philosophy of Science, Social Philosophy, Philosophy of Projectivity, Philosophy of Intercultural Relations, Epistemology, Continental Philosophy, Philosophy of Language, Philosophy of Culture, Time and History.

Requirements

Master’s degree in any field. No previous degree in philosophy is required.

Checklist

CV, two letters of recommendation, standardized tests scores are NOT required. No application fee (for citizens of EU/EEA and Switzerland a €32 fee is charged and an entrance exam is held).

Tuition Fee

1) For EU/EEA & Swiss students:

in residence: €1450 per school year.
extramural: €2440 per school year.

2) For international students:

in residence: €6500 per school year.
extramural: €3300 per school year.

Other Fees

Dissertation Defense Fee: €1700.

Duration of Studies

In residence: 3 years. Extramural: 4 years. There are opportunities for distance learning.

Financial Aid

1) EU/EEA and Swiss citizens are eligible for state scholarships carrying a 60% tuition waiver plus a monthly stipend beginning from the second semester.

2) American citizens are eligible for Fulbright Graduate Grants. For more information, see www.fulbright.bg. It is possible for American citizens to use sources of governmental financial assistance (please contact the Program Director for details).

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