

**ANNALS**  
**OF THE**  
**UNIVERSITY OF BUCHAREST**  
**PHILOSOPHY SERIES**

**2 0 1 2**

**Number I**

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## *HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE*

### **NATURAL HISTORY AND THE MEDICINE OF THE MIND: THE ROOTS OF FRANCIS BACON'S *GREAT INSTAURATION***

DANA JALOBEANU<sup>1</sup>

#### *Abstract*

Francis Bacon founded his grand-scale project of a *Great Instauration* on what he has claimed to be a new and reformed natural history. This claim has been often taken for granted by Baconian scholars. This paper investigates some possible roots of Baconian natural history and discusses a number of features common to Bacon's conception of natural history and to other natural historical writings belonging to the same cultural context: the Neo-Stoic and Protestant revival of late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century England. My investigation focuses on one of the characteristic features Baconian natural history shares with other natural historical writings belonging to this cultural milieu, namely the claim that an empirical study of nature has moral and therapeutic benefits for the human mind.

**Keywords:** natural history, medicine of the mind, Francis Bacon, Pierre de la Primaudaye, Simon Goulart, Seneca.

#### **1. Preliminaries: Bacon's Project**

Francis Bacon's project of the Great Instauration aimed both at a reformation of the received knowledge and at a general reformation of the practitioners of this novel philosophy. This grand scale project was to be achieved by putting together two intellectual disciplines: natural history and natural philosophy. More precisely, Bacon urged the students of nature to start building the foundations of the new philosophy, namely a comprehensive natural history, a storehouse of facts and data gathered together for the future common use of many generations. On this foundation, the philosopher would first impose an ordering system, allowing classifications and first order generalizations. Natural history properly digested into 'tables of discovery'

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<sup>1</sup> University of Bucharest. The research for this paper has been supported by the ERC Starting Grant *Medicine of the mind and natural philosophy in early modern Europe. A New Interpretation of Francis Bacon*, a grant commonly held by Warburg Institute, London, and New Europe College, Bucharest.

would then be the material of *inductio*: the procedure of extracting axioms of increasing generalization and putting them to work in the interpretation of nature. The whole procedure is notoriously difficult and was subject of various interpretations, simplifications and misconceptions in the past 300 years.

One of the most obvious difficulties in Bacon's plan is epistemological. For Bacon, the human mind is fundamentally flawed and distorted, so much so that it cannot record genuine facts of nature. The mind 'brings its own idols' and applies them to the interpretation of nature. The intellect is "unequal to cope with the subtlety of things".<sup>2</sup> Even if (some of) the natural history is gathered together, the process cannot take off mainly because the art of classifying facts and extracting axioms is highly obscure and probably unfinished<sup>3</sup>. Or, at least, it is exposed in an unfinished book, the *Novum Organum*, whose aphorisms are giving, at best, hints about how to proceed in the process of building up a natural philosophy on the foundations of natural history. Moreover, again in Bacon's own words, the interpreter of nature has the same diseased mind: the idols cannot be completely eradicated and 'the doctrine of idols cannot be reduced to an art' (i.e. a sort of mechanical and propaedeutic defensive procedure that would allow us to get rid of our inbuilt errors once for all). Instead, a continuous discipline is advocated, a discipline of the mind described in medical and moral terms. In a series of papers, I have claimed that the medical vocabulary and the medical analogies so present in Bacon's texts are worth taken seriously<sup>4</sup>. They are, at least in part, derivative from a larger cultural context, the Renaissance context of *medicina mentis*.<sup>5</sup> If read in the

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<sup>2</sup> Francis Bacon, *Cogitata et visa* in Benjamin Farrington, *The Philosophy of Francis Bacon*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966, 88. For citing Bacon's works I have adopted the following solution: I will refer to the 'standard' edition, *The Oxford Francis Bacon* whenever available (see the list of abbreviations at the end of this article) by abbreviating it OFB followed by the volume number and page. When not available, I will refer to the edition realized by James Spedding and his collaborators, abbreviated as SEH, followed by the number of the volume and page (see the list of abbreviations at the end of the article).

<sup>3</sup> Graham Rees, "Introduction" in OFB XIII, xvii-lxxx.

<sup>4</sup> Dana Jalobeanu, "Francis Bacon's natural history and the Senecan Natural Histories of Early Modern Europe", *Early Science and Medicine* 1-2 (2012) 197-229; Dana Jalobeanu, "The Philosophy of Francis Bacon's natural history: a research program", *Studii de știință și cultură* 23 (2010a): 18-37; Dana Jalobeanu, "From natural history to early modern science: the case of Bacon's 'Histories'" *Analele Universității București* 60 (2010b) 23-33; Dana Jalobeanu, "Experimental philosophers and doctors of the mind: the appropriation of a philosophical tradition", *Naturel et surnaturel. Philosophies de la nature et métaphysique aux XVI-XVII siècles*. Eds. Vlad Alexandrescu, Robert Theis. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2010, 37-63.

<sup>5</sup> On the more general context of the seventeenth-century *medicina mentis* see Sorana Corneanu, *Regiments of the mind: Boyle, Locke and the Early Modern Cultura Animi Tradition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012; Dana Jalobeanu, "The Philosophy of Francis Bacon's natural history"; Dana Jalobeanu, "Experimental philosophers and doctors of the mind". More particularly, aspects of a practical and therapeutic philosophy in general and of a more empirical and experimental philosophy in special have been recently discussed by Jeremy

appropriate context, Bacon's works gain supplementary levels of meanings and his apparently failed epistemological project regains some of its initial depth. Which is, however, this 'appropriate context'? In this paper I will try to reconstruct, in part, the historical background involved in this cultural and philosophical project of reforming, restoring, or medicining the mind.

## 2. Medicine of the Mind: Moral and Therapeutic Aspects of Natural Philosophy in Bacon's Writings

Francis Bacon shared with many of his contemporaries the general claim that a careful and complete investigation of nature has moral and therapeutic benefits for the human mind. The claim that natural philosophy can act as *medicina mentis* is widespread at the end of the sixteenth century. Sometimes, this is no more than a general reference to the ancient tradition, a commonplace topic in all the philosophical traditions of the Renaissance. In Bacon's case, the claim is more specific. On a more general level, natural philosophy is often presented as a general program for 'medicining the mind';<sup>6</sup> a thorough and elaborated training leading to mending the traditional prejudices and errors inbuilt in the mind,<sup>7</sup> enlarging the powers of the intellect and effecting a substantial transformation of the whole human being.<sup>8</sup>

On a more specific level, throughout his later writings, Bacon offers another candidate for medicining the mind and that is natural history.<sup>9</sup> Besides providing the materials for induction, natural history is constantly presented as a good exercise for the mind to keep a constant contact with nature, i.e. escape the limited and distorted perspective of a 'private experience', keep the idols in-check, record 'facts' undistorted by private beliefs and contribute, in this way,

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Schmidt, *Melancholy and the Care of the Soul*, Ashgate: Aldershot, 2007 and Rhodri Lewis, "A kind of sagacity: Francis Bacon, the *Ars Memoriae* and the Pursuit of Natural Knowledge." *Intellectual History Review* 19 (2009): 155-175.

<sup>6</sup> Dana Jalobeanu, "Idolatry, Natural History, and Spiritual Medicine: Francis Bacon and the Neo-Stoic Protestantism of the Late Sixteenth-Century", *Perspectives on Science* 21 (2012): 207-226.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, SEH, III 394.

<sup>8</sup> In the earlier polemical tracts, Bacon pictures a discipline of the mind that would do the preliminary work, clearing the 'distorted mirror' of its shadows and demons before any proper knowledge can be transmitted; in NO and later works, the two steps intermingle and it is impossible to clear the mind first and gather knowledge subsequently. The idols cannot be eradicated. Instead, the philosopher is on a continuous fight against his own limits, errors and passions. On the radical nature of such a transformation of the whole human being see OFB VI.9.

<sup>9</sup> Natural history "constitutes a solid and eternal basis of true and active philosophy; this is which gives the first spark to the pure and real light of nature; and whose genius being neglected and not propitiated, has caused us to be visited most unhappily by that host of spectres and kingdom of shadows which we see fitting about among the philosophies, afflicting them with utter bareness in respect of works." (*Descriptio Globi Intellectualis* SEH V. 508)

to the advancement of knowledge.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Bacon sometimes claims that recording natural histories is the only way opened to knowledge.

Bacon's natural histories are packed not only with 'facts', observations, reports and descriptions of experimental set-ups, but also with lists of epistemological, practical and moral benefits of experimentation, observation or recording of natural histories.<sup>11</sup> Such is the repetitive iteration of the beneficial effects the *negative* or *inconclusive* experiments have upon the human mind: they are correcting our prejudices, help us fighting moral pride and self-love; they are cultivating humility and charity (OFB XIII. 53). Such is the insistence on the importance of recording observations that are contrary to our expectations: they fight against the common human tendency to cultivate sciences-as-one-would. *Repeated experimentation* does not only provide useful clues as to the variation or law-like behavior of observed phenomena, but has also therapeutic benefits in exercising our attention, patience, humility and constancy. Even recording a thorough natural history of a specific topic can be a therapeutic practice: the mind is kept in check, attached to the matters-of-fact, prevented to fall prey to its own fancies and desires.

In the general preface to *Historia naturalis and experimentalis* (1622), Bacon goes even further, urging his followers 'to cast aside thoughts of philosophy' altogether until 'a tried and tested natural history has been collected and constructed' (OFB XII 7). Here, natural philosophy in general and the very act of theorizing is said to lead to fabulation: constructing 'fictions of worlds at will, worlds like tales' (OFB XII 8-9) products of 'the cells' of one's own 'phantasy'. Natural history is therefore contrasted with the corrupted and idolatrous natural philosophy (OFB XII 9). The latter always tends to build self-sufficient and fanciful worlds of imagination; the former is a sane and therapeutic practice that will keep the mind in safe contact with nature.<sup>12</sup>

In short, Bacon sees natural history as able to treat some of the diseases of the individual mind, like the constant tendency to produce science-as-one-would, or the hasty generalization so dear to some temperaments. It is also able to treat some of the diseases of the time, like sectarianism, idolatry, superstition of all kinds. Natural history is a good way to free the mind from its slavery to

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<sup>10</sup> In fact, natural history is the only way to knowledge: "For these things are neither examined nor described for their own sake, but in fact there is simply no other alternative open to the human intellect [sed nulla prorsus alia patet Intellectui humano via]" (OFB VI. 7).

<sup>11</sup> Epistemological: experiments of light; experiments are like the letters of the alphabet (they seem useless in themselves but they are the most useful thing in the world, they are necessary for any kind of discourse, DO, SEH III. 30). Practical and moral benefits: OFB XI. 41-42.

<sup>12</sup> "We should beg men again and again to set aside for a while or at least discard these fickle and wrong' headed philosophies which have put theses before hypotheses [*Theses hypothesis anteposuerunt*], led experience captive and exulted over God's works; and to read through with due humility and reverence the volume of creatures, and dwell and reflect on it, and, purged of opinions, to study it with a pure and honest mind." OFB XII. 11.

one theory/doctrine or another. Of course, natural history is only the first step in a more complex process of learning and reformation. It is also a *universal procedure*, applicable to everything: we can construct a natural history of the heavens, but we can also construct a natural history of the affections, or a natural history of the political realm.

### 3. Natural History: a Puzzling Category

What is Bacon's natural history? It is foremost a practice or a set of practices built upon a set of methodological rules (concerning the construction of experiments, recording the data and observations, formulating results and questions for further study, drawing conclusions etc.) It is also a vehicle of teaching and learning, the first knowledge to be gained in the more complex process of exploring the nature and medicining the mind. In numerous places Bacon claims that it is a *new* kind of natural history, reformed and purged of the traditional errors commonly shared by all the others (SEH IV 29).

Interestingly enough, very few interpreters contested Bacon's claim. Unlike other topics in Bacon's studies, there has been a general agreement until recently as to the novelty of Bacon's natural history. Baconian natural history was seen as a break in the existing tradition of Humanist natural history (Rees, 2007) or as a creative borrowing from this tradition (Findlen, 1997). More recently, Deborah Harkness (Harkness, 2007) accused Bacon of plagiarizing an existing experimental and empirical discipline of natural philosophy and appropriating it for his own political purposes.

Such interpretations have a common assumption: namely that there was, at the end of the sixteenth century, a tradition – or a discipline – of natural history<sup>13</sup>. More recent studies have however undermined this assumption<sup>14</sup>. They have shown that one can rather talk about *natural histories*; often build upon divergent

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<sup>13</sup> Despite their differences, both Paula Findlen and Brian Ogilvie see natural History as a Humanist discipline: erudite, eclectic and bookish, born at the confluence of a Plinian tradition with the Aristotelian tradition of natural history. I have discussed and criticized this presupposition in a recent paper: Dana Jalobeanu, "Bacon's natural history and Senecan natural histories of Early Modern Europe". See Paula Findlen, "Francis Bacon and the Reform of Natural History in the Seventeenth Century." *History and the Disciplines: The Reclassification of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*. Ed. Donald R. Kelley. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1997, 239-260; Brian Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006. For a slightly different view see William B. Ashworth, "Natural history and the emblematic world-view." *Reappraisals of the Scientific Revolution*. Eds. David Lindberg and Robert Westman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, 303-332.

<sup>14</sup> For example Gianna Pomata, „Praxis Historialis: The Uses of Historia in Early Modern Medicine“. In Siraisi, Nancy and Pomata, Gianna (eds.), *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge/MA: MIT Press, 2005, 105-146.

meanings of the word *historia* and having different representations of the place of natural historical research on the map of learning<sup>15</sup>.

This paper aims to unearth one such ‘tradition’ of natural history, in many respects similar with Bacon’s. It consists of eclectic and encyclopedic writings investigating the natural world with the purpose of educating the mind and treating the traditional diseases of the Fallen humankind. My examples will consist of writings coming from the same cultural milieu: the Huguenot or Calvinist French milieu of the second part of the sixteenth century. I am talking about writings that were rather popular in the second part of the sixteenth century, belonging to authors that were well known in England and translated into English before 1600<sup>16</sup>. What my examples have in common is that they offer descriptions of the natural world/natural histories as part of a more general moral and therapeutic program. They also display a tendency to emulate Seneca’s *Natural Questions*, or, more generally, Seneca’s views on using natural philosophy for the cultivation of the mind.

I am proposing the name “Senecan natural histories” to describe such writings.<sup>17</sup> They share a number of claims. They claim, for instance, that the study of nature is just a part of a more general program of cognitive and moral reformation. They see such a program as being empirical, tentative and non-systematic, with a strong practical dimension, anti-speculative (often explicitly equating speculative philosophy with idolatry). What such tracts have in common is the emphasis on the introductory and therapeutic component of a natural philosophy in service of natural theology. They also claim to be polemic tracts against enemies of religion sometimes denominated “Epicures” and “Atheists”. They are, in other words, militant treatises in a fight of the true Protestant cause against all sorts of enemies labeled idolatrous and irreligious. Such an anti-speculative, militant and Anti-Atheistic stance is familiar to the student of early modern period. It is, however, surprising to discover it in tracts coming from the second part of the sixteenth-century, at least half a century before the *libertinisme erudite* became an issue in the intellectual circles. Also surprising is another common feature of such tracts: they stress the importance of the philosophical community for improving the morals and for medicining the mind.

#### 4. Pierre de la Primaudaye’s *French Academy*

My first example is a massive project of encyclopedic knowledge introduced as a ‘school’ of wisdom aiming at a complete reformation of the

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<sup>15</sup> See also Dana Jalobeanu, “Bacon’s natural history and Senecan natural histories of Early Modern Europe”, and Roger French, *Ancient Natural Histories: Histories of Nature*. London: Routledge 1994.

<sup>16</sup> Denise Carabin, *Les idées stoïciennes*. See also Jaqueline Lagree, “Simon Goulart et Sénèque, ou comment butiner?”, *Stoïcisme et christianisme à la Renaissance*. Rue d’Ulm : ENS, 2006. 131-144.

<sup>17</sup> Dana Jalobeanu, “Bacon’s natural history and Senecan natural histories of Early Modern Europe”.

mind. In its final form (printed in Geneva in 1608) it had 4 thick volumes dealing respectively with what La Primaudaye calls 'moral philosophy', 'human philosophy', 'natural philosophy' and 'Christian philosophy'.<sup>18</sup> There are more than 2000 pages of miscellaneous theories, facts and opinions about almost everything: from the critique of the universities and the traditional system of learning to the institution of manners, from a thorough exposition of the Creation to the careful description of the anatomy and workings of the brain, from a harsh moral and religious critique of the Epicures and Atheists to a detailed theory of winds. It is staged as a dialogue between four would-be philosophers that are trying to escape the troubles of the world, while advancing together on the road to wisdom and virtue. They assemble in a garden (hence the name 'academy') and devote a good number of days to philosophical discussions supposed to form the character, temper the passions and improve the faculties of the mind.<sup>19</sup> The setting is very similar to another famous best-seller, a book defining in many ways the Neo-Stoic revival, namely Justus Lipsius' *De Constantia*. However, in its first form, the French Academy dates from 1577, so a good number of years before Lipsius' own bestseller, published only in 1584. Both are written in the form of a philosophical dialogue. However, while Lipsius' book features a mature philosopher and his disciple, La Primaudaye's 'school of wisdom' is theatrically set as a dialogue between four equally advanced disciples, struggling together on their road to wisdom. The four are given stage names: they are called *Aser* (Felicite); *Amana* (Truth), *Aram* (Highness/Excellency); *Achitob* (Brother of goodness). In a literary fashion, La Primaudaye pictures his characters as undergoing a process of intellectual and moral formation. The four young gentlemen aspiring to better themselves through learning in common the precepts of moral philosophy (in volume I) evolve to true philosophers discoursing about the natural world, and end up exhorting the true 'Christian philosophy' in the fourth volume, in the language of educated Divines.

The French Academy is a book commonly associated with the Stoic revival of the late sixteenth century France<sup>20</sup> and with the growing popularity of

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<sup>18</sup> Complete title : *L'Académie Française: Distinguée en Quatre Volumes traitans I. De la Philosophie Morale; II. De la Philosophie Humaine; III. De la Philosophie Naturelle; IV. De la Philosophie Chrestienne, Par Pierre de la Primaudaye, Escuyer, Seigneur dudit lieu et de la Barrée, Gentilhomme ordinaire de la Chambre de Roy, revue et corrigée de nouveau, pour Pierre et Jaques Chouet*, Genève, 1608. In what follows I will mainly refer to the complete English edition, published in London in 1618. I will use the following abbreviations for the subsequent quotes and references from La Primaudaye's works: I will quote the year of the edition, followed by the page.

<sup>19</sup> The French Academy is organized on 'days' and chapters. Each of the volumes has 100 chapters.

<sup>20</sup> As it has been shown, this Stoic or Neo-Stoic revival was loosely concomitant with the second part of the religious wars; the unsettling political climate giving rise to a growing interest in the Stoic literature on consolation and the moral use of philosophy, including natural philosophy. See Denise Carabin, *Les idées stoïciennes dans la littérature morale des XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (1575-1642).

'French academies'<sup>21</sup>. It went through a large number of editions in French and was translated more than once in English, Italian and German<sup>22</sup>. It was widely read and stood probably as a source of inspiration and basic encyclopaedic references for philosophers and divines.

*The French Academy* has a number of striking similarities with Bacon's program for the reformation of knowledge. It introduces a school of wisdom dedicated to the study of *natural philosophy* as a form of *medicina mentis*, a 'certaine remedy and sound medicine for every vice and passion', 'able to enrich and cloath us with reason' (La Primaudaye, 1618, 16). It is a societal project devised in a theatrical fashion to include the reader among the students of this philosophical school. It is build, like Bacon's, on the presupposition that the fallen intellect, contaminated by affections<sup>23</sup> and wandering from the right path,<sup>24</sup> is unable, by itself, to reflect the light of nature.<sup>25</sup> Hence the need of a discipline, a life in common, the shared values of a community of like minded explorers, living in common, glorifying God, cultivating the charity, (La Primaudaye, 1618, 20) sobriety, chastity and friendship.

In stressing the communal values of his Academy, La Primaudaye emphasizes the same tension between the universality of the message and the elective character of the training we find in Bacon. The teaching of the Academy is a teaching for everyone, but what is advocated is a way of life, a complete transformation of the human perspective. Since the mind is corrupt and prone to idolatry, the project of reforming it is bound to be a life-long exercise, (La Primaudaye, 1618, 19-20) while the driving force is likely to be the Christian duty and not the real hope to achieve an improved and undistorted state of mind (or virtue). What kind of regimen or therapy is efficient in this

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Paris: Honoré Champion, 2004; Adriana Mccrea, *Constant minds: Political virtue and the Lipsian paradigm*, Toronto, 1997.

<sup>21</sup> Francis Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth-Century*. London: Routledge, 1989 (3<sup>rd</sup> edition); Robert J. Sealy, *The Palace Academy of Henry III*. Geneva: Droz, 1981.

<sup>22</sup> See Dana Jalobeanu, "Idolatry, Natural History, and Spiritual Medicine: Francis Bacon and the Neo-Stoic Protestantism of the Late Sixteenth-Century", and Karl Heinz Drochner, *Darstellung eininger grundzuge des literarischen werks von Pierre de la Primaudaye unter besonderer Berücksichtigung biographischer und quellenkundlicher Studien*, Berlin, 1960.

<sup>23</sup> It is worth noting that Bacon and La Primaudaye work with a very similar (medical) theory of passions represented as clouds and 'distempers' that are darkening and deforming the 'mirror' of the intellect. La Primaudaye (1618, 12).

<sup>24</sup> La Primaudaye, 1618, 13: 'it is proper to every man's understanding, not to hold a steadfast and sure way in seeking out the truth, but to wander aside into divers errors (as a blinde man walketh in darknesse) and to fill itselife rather with lies, and with a continuall desire and curiositie of the new, unprofitable, and superfluous things, than to content it selfe simplie with the truth, insomuch that finally it misseth of all'.

<sup>25</sup> Compare with Bacon's ways of describing the intellect as being contaminated by affections, a mere uneven mirror or an "enchanted glass" (SEH IV 431, SEH III 394-5). For a comparison see La Primaudaye, 1618, Advertisement to the reader, and also pages 6-7.

battle? Both La Primaudaye and Bacon are eclectic in their choice: examples and precepts might play a role in the struggle against passions, in the culture/cultivation of the mind. However, they are not enough. To the classical spiritual exercises of the Stoic moral philosophy they both add, as a better therapy and a healthier regimen of life, the *study of nature*.

The second volume of Pierre de la Primaudaye's *Academie françoise* is called a 'natural history'.<sup>26</sup> It is introduced as a continuation of the first, a more advance stage in the school of wisdom, this time a school of nature; the mind is supposed to learn from 'examples' and relevant stories told by the creatures of God about the beauty and order of the universe. Or, rather, about an essential part of the Creation, a privileged 'picture' or mirror' designed by God in the body and soul of man.<sup>27</sup>

The study of nature continues with a study of the Universe in the 3<sup>rd</sup> part of the *French Academie* (1608) – which is called natural philosophy (but is, in fact, a fairly traditional Renaissance cosmography). The purpose of this study of nature is twofold. On the one hand, natural philosophy describes 'the world...a shadow of the brightness of God', 'like a great booke of Nature and naturall Theologie' and therefore is a good way of learning about God. On the other hand, the study of nature is a school for those in search of *medicina mentis*.

This worlde is unto us a learned schoole, wherein the praise of God doth preach itselfe. It is a goodly large and rich shop, wherein this soveraigne and most excellent workman layeth open all his works, to this end, that he might be known by them. It is a temple, wherein there is no creature so little, but it is as it were a similitude and resemblance of the creator thereof, to shew and manifest him unto us. In a word, it is a Theatre, where the divine essence, his justice, his providence, his love, his wisdom have their working by a wonderful virtue in every creature (La Primaudaye 1618, 334),

Not only that the study of nature will turn our eyes to God, but the 'text' of nature has a privileged status since 'all creatures contained in the universe are like so many preachers and general witnesses of the glory of the Creator'. Natural history serves therefore a double purpose: it is in fact natural theology, a discourse about God from his works. (La Primaudaye 1618, 334, 336, 338). It is also part of the *medicina mentis* in more than one sense. Natural history begins with the study of man and is said to provide the essential elements of self-knowledge. This study has important therapeutic features: while surveying the

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<sup>26</sup> The complete title reads: *Suite de l'académie Françoise en laquelle il est traite de l'homme et comme par un histoire naturelle du corps et de l'âme, est discours de la création, matière, composition, forme, nature, utilite et usage, de toutes les parties du bastiment humain et des causes naturelles de toutes affections, et de vertus et des vices; et singulièrement de la nature, puissances, œuvres et immortalité de l'âme*, Paris, 1583 (first edition 1580).

<sup>27</sup> The English edition makes this explicit from the very beginning. In striking 'preface to the Christian Reader', we are told that this book is a mirror destined to be used in the same pedagogical fashion taught by Socrates and Seneca, for the cultivation of the mind.

universe and listening to the ‘natural preachers’, our mind escapes the passionate and bounded individual perspective, reorganizes its cognitive and moral content and manages to get to a different level of understanding.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, this exercise has better chances to succeed in the case of Christian philosopher than in the case of the ancients (La Primaudaye 1618, 336). Unlike the ancient philosophers, the Christian philosopher has the help of God’s grace and the help of God’s second book (La Primaudaye, 1618, 337-8): reading the book of nature can be always assisted by a parallel reading of the Scriptures.

‘Natural history’ or ‘natural philosophy’ are sometimes used indistinctly in La Primaudaye’s volumes to designate the study of nature. It is however clear that he is talking about an empirical discipline. The study of nature is based on experience: we should simply turn our eyes to the reading of this book of Nature and ‘our eares to heare these naturall preachers’. We should study the body of man as in an ‘anatomy’ and we should inquire into the workings of the soul starting from its ‘visible effects’ it has on the body. We should ‘measure ourselves’ with the ‘measure of our own nature’ (La Primaudaye, 1618, 337). We know ourselves because we study the workings of the body; there is no faculty with which one can contemplate the workings of the mind (La Primaudaye, 1618, 410-1). Hence, the natural history of man is an empirical study of the human body, its workings and in functions, in search for the effects of the inner/hidden actions of the soul. Similarly, the natural philosophy/cosmographical description of the universe, is an ‘anatomy’ of the world in search for the testimonies of Divine interventions.

The major premise behind this approach is, however, that there is a very serious link and ‘collaboration’ between the mind and the body; that the actions of the mind are ‘manifested’ in the brain and that the faculties of the mind are modified by the composition, anatomical structure and functioning of the brain. Such a great ‘agreement’ between body and soul means that there has to be a serious agreement between the ‘corporeal’ and ‘spiritual’ medicine (La Primaudaye, 1618, 456): in fact, it is difficult to say whether they are two disciplines or one and the same.

And as there are divers mixtions of bodily qualities, so there are sundire sorts of temperatures and complexions of the body, and consequently of soules in regardes of their faculties and affections. *Therefore also there is great agreement between corporeall and spirituall Physicke.* For this cause the Physicians both of the bodies and soules of men are to follow almost one and the same methode, and observe a like order in their arte and practise, every one according to the subject propounded unto them; in so much what the one doth unto the body, the other is to deale so with the soule... (La Primaudaye, 1618, 456)

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<sup>28</sup> This is very similar with the ‘standard’ spiritual exercises as advocated by Seneca in his *Naturales Quaestiones*. See for example Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones*, preface to Book I and preface to Book III.

What we learn from natural history, therefore, is that we need one regimen of life, one kind of medicine that is both a corporeal medicine and a *medicina mentis*. Who are the doctors of the body or the doctors of the soul? Here La Primaudaye is adamant: there is no better doctor than each of us; the real purpose of all this study is to learn how to treat ourselves, how to devise a proper regimen of life ('material' and 'spiritual') while progressing on the way to wisdom.

There is also another striking similarity between the two projects of Bacon and La Primaudaye: the claim that natural history is a remedy against idolatry and superstition. By directing our gaze to nature, the mind is protected from vain theories and superstitious beliefs. By keeping the mind in a continuous activity of studying natural world, the intellect is less prone to fall prey to its own distempers (Bacon's idols) or to the alluring fancies invented by one sect or another. It is also less prone to invent and imagine. In both cases, the production of natural history is strongly associated with a particular faculty of the soul, namely memory. For Bacon, there is a one-to-one correspondence between natural history and memory (SEH III, 221, 300; SEH I 469). For La Primaudaye, history in general, the product of human memory, has to be the first step to knowledge and is the first of sciences in a general map of learning (La Primaudaye 1618, 32-33). Its introductory character is supported by the strong role given to memory in the process of learning or the very process of knowledge (La Primaudaye 1618 36-38, 417-8). The memory is the faithful scribe, the Chancery of the mind (La Primaudaye, 1618, 417-8); the trustful recording of all events past and all the judgment of reason.<sup>29</sup> It is only natural therefore that the whole knowledge begins with a natural history of man (body and soul), followed by a natural history of the universe (La Primaudaye, 1618, 14).

Which natural history? Here things are getting complicated, because La Primaudaye's second volume does not resemble any of the known traditions of natural history. It is not a Plinian natural history; in fact, La Primaudaye is highly critical of Pliny and charges him with all sorts of accusations of heresy, Epicureanism and Atheism. It is not the kind of natural history one can find in Aristotle's *Historia animalium*. It is not Humanist and philological natural history; indeed, La Primaudaye hardly quotes any authority at all besides the Scriptures in the whole 400 pages of his second volume. Meanwhile, the second volume is staged, unlike the first, in a very polemical atmosphere. The philosophical school is at war this time: a war against the common enemies of the age, superstition, idolatry and Atheism. More precisely, the Epicures and Atheists:

My companions, I greatly bewaile the miserie of our age, wherein so many Epicures and Atheists live, as are daily discovered amongst us in all estates and callings. True it is, that the disagreement in matters of Religion amongst them that beare the name of Christians, is very great, and causeth much trouble in the Church: neverthelesse I doubt

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<sup>29</sup> La Primaudaye is heavily quoting Seneca and other Stoics on this in volume I.

not but that agreement might soone be made, if the word of God only might be the judge of true and false religion (La Primaudaye 1618, 331).

In a general sectarian war, however, La Primaudaye does not attack the religious enemies (Catholics, other Protestant ‘sects’) but the ‘philosophical’ sect of Epicures,<sup>30</sup> i.e. clever manipulators of philosophical doctrines denying the immortality of the soul, claiming that the world is made of matter and governed by chance, denying divine Providence and the authority of Scriptures. They are said to possess learning and ‘poison’ human minds (La Primaudaye 1618, 332); they gain adepts and open schools; theirs is an open threat that needs to be met and neutralized. They are said to be everywhere but especially at the courts of Princes; they are also ‘signs’ of the general decay of times, proofs that the end of the world is near (La Primaudaye 1618 332-3). And it is against these enemies that La Primaudaye’s natural history is directed: not so much to refute and persuade them but to expose their falsehoods in public and offer counter-alternatives to a heretical natural philosophy. (La Primaudaye, 1618, 332).

Fighting this war is difficult because such adversaries do not recognize any of the established authorities. What they do recognize (or claim to do so) are the argument of reason and proofs taken from the study of nature.

I have heard them say sometimes, that they would give credite to naturall Philosophy in those things wherein the causes are proved by their effects. Now if we take this course to prove unto them a godhead, his providence, his future judgement, and the immortalitie of the soule, which way soever wee turne our selves, either upward or downward, on the right hand or on the left, we shall find testimonies everywhere, which they may not in any way reject. For we have nature, the necessity of causes, proportions and similitude, the life, decency and dignity of man, the goodness of God, all which with one common consent, and as it were with one voice do teach and cry, that there is one God creator and governour of the whole world, and that the soul of man cannot be mortal (La Primaudaye 1618, 332-3)

Hence natural history; a natural history introduced as a school of nature where the student has to learn to listen to the ‘natural preachers’ glorifying the beauty and order of the world,<sup>31</sup> while ‘arming oneself’ with ‘all the reasons and testimonies we have in nature against the Epicurean doctrine’ (La Primaudaye, 1618, 333).

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<sup>30</sup> Said to be more dangerous than the disputes among the Christians; La Primaudaye, 1618, 331-2

<sup>31</sup> La Primaudaye, 1618, 334. “This world is unto us a learned schoole, wherein the praise of God doth preach it selfe. It is a goodly large and rich shop, wherein this soveraigne and most excellent workman layeth open all his works, to this end, that he might be known by them. It is a temple, wherein there is no creature so little, but it is as it were a similitude and resemblance of the creator thereof, to shew and manifest him unto us. In a words, it is a Theatre, where the divine essence, his justice, his providence, his love, his wisdome have their working by a wonderful virtue in every creature, even from the highest heaven into the centre of the earth.”

## 5. Context and Sources: Medical Histories

Nothing can be more remote from a 'Humanist natural history'. La Primaudaye does not collect curious facts and wonders, make little use of analogical thinking, emblematic association or literary connections. Although encyclopaedic in nature and displaying a large number of anatomical and historical facts, the second volume of *The French academy* is silent on the sources and quotes extensively from Scriptures. Although displaying a serious knowledge of Galen's anatomical writings and case studies, La Primaudaye does not offer specialized medical knowledge. The natural history has an introductory character; it is not knowledge for the natural philosopher or the doctor, but knowledge for every student of (human) nature; a thorough description of the structure and functions of the body in its relation with the mind.

Through a number of features, La Primaudaye's natural history resembles another kind of writings well known at the end of the sixteenth century, belonging to a 'medical tradition' of natural history. They are *historia anatomica* or *historia medica*: anatomical descriptions of human body, its organs and their functions (but without a general causal explanations attached to it)<sup>32</sup> and case histories. As Gianna Pomata has shown, by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century *historia* became a key term in the medical writings as part of a reappraisal of the epistemological use of *historia* (Pomata, 2005). *Historia anatomica* or *historia medica* are *sensata cognitio*: knowledge based on sense-perception and observation (as opposed to knowledge derived from principles or causally organised).<sup>33</sup> This ancient meaning is conflated often with the Aristotelian meaning of natural history: as preliminary, introductory, descriptive knowledge of individuals, without a causal explanation.

Meanwhile, the works belonging to this 'medical tradition' are not devoid of moral (and sometimes religious) meaning: they can be moralizing anatomies<sup>34</sup> or moralizing histories of man.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Here are some examples: Benedetti, Alessandro. *Historia corporis humani sive Anatomice*, 1502 ; Du Laurens, Andre. *Historia anatomica humani corporis*. Frankfurt: Matthew Becker, 1599; Bauhin, Caspar. *Anatomica corporis virilis et mulieribus historia*, 1609; Banister, John. *The historie of man, sucked from the sappe of the most approved Anatomistes, in this present age*. London, 1578. See also BLAIR, ANN. "Historia in Theodor Zwinger's *Theatrum humanae vitae*." *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe*. Eds. Giana Pomata and Nancy B. Siraisi. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005, 269-96.

<sup>33</sup> *Historia* is meant in the sense of observation, that is, a knowledge proceeding from one's own direct experience of collected from trustworthy reports of what was experienced by others in the course of time. This was one of the current meanings of the term at the end of the sixteenth century. See Pomata, Giana. "*Praxis Historialis*: The Uses of *Historia* in Early Modern Medicine." *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe*. Eds. Giana Pomata and Nancy B. Siraisi. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005. 105-146; Jalobeanu, Dana. 2012 (forthcoming).

<sup>34</sup> Alberti, Salomon. *Historia pranquaque partium humani corporis*. Wittenberg, 1583.

## 6. Using Medical Literature for Confessional Purposes

In fact, such moralizing anatomical descriptions have been used, in the sixteenth century, more than once as weapons in the confessional war. It is the case of La Primaudaye too. Or rather, it is the case with La Primaudaye's major source. Because, as K. Drochner has shown a while ago, the actual content of the second and third volumes of the French Academy draws heavily from an earlier source, one of the benchmarks of the Huguenot theology: Pierre Viret's *Instruction Chrestienne*, 1564.<sup>36</sup>

Pierre Viret (1511-1571) was sometimes called 'the forgotten reformer'.<sup>37</sup> In the sixteenth century his intellectual profile is comparable with that of Calvin whose friend and collaborator Viret was for most of his life. He was the most popular preacher in sixteenth century France, founded two of the first reformed academies, was directly involved in some of the grim episodes of the religious wars, and published a large number of books that went through a considerable number of editions in French, Latin and English.<sup>38</sup> His *Instruction Chrestienne* was one of the important theological works of the Reformation. Unlike Calvin, however, Viret was not a systematic thinker: his works are brilliant pamphlets and satires, interesting sermons, scholarly eulogies or encyclopedic sources of information. They are also scattered, non-systematic, badly organized, always re-circulating materials from one edition to the other and very difficult to follow. The *Christian Instruction* went through a number of different editions announcing a different number of volumes, chapters or ordering of the chapters. In 1564, in its 'final form' the book announces three volumes on the title page but contains only two (the third volume was never published). The second volume of this work is the one that was carefully studied, copied and rewritten by Pierre de la Primaudaye. Its title: *Exposition de la doctrine de la foy chrestienne, touchant la vraye cognoissance et le vray service de Dieu ; et la Trinite des personnes en l'unite de l'essence divine : et en la manifestation d'iceluy en la creation tant du grand que du petit monde, et en sa providence de toutes les creatures, et principalement en la nature humain*, Geneva, 1564. In his dedication to the faculty of medicine of Montpellier, Pierre Viret introduces his work as one of natural theology, written for the learned (philosophers and physicians) to provide helps and 'medicines' the human mind in its path to God.

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<sup>35</sup> Pomata, *Praxis historialis*; Jalobeanu, "Francis Bacon's natural history and the Senecan natural histories of early modern Europe".

<sup>36</sup> Drochner, *Darstellung*. For a more detailed discussion see Dana Jalobeanu, "Idolatry, natural history and spiritual medicine".

<sup>37</sup> See George Bavaud, *Le réformateur Pierre Viret: sa théologie*. Genève: Labor et Fides, 1986.

<sup>38</sup> *The first part of the Christian instruction*, translated into English J. Shutte, 1565, A Christian Instruction, 1573.

The book is a dialogue between a teacher and his pupil, describing what Viret calls an 'anatomy' of the created world and an 'anatomy' of the body and soul (as elements of the Created world).<sup>39</sup> Drochner has made an extensive list with long paragraphs that are almost identical in Viret and La Primaudaye. What he didn't do was to compare the significant differences between the two. What we don't find in Viret is exactly the Stoic setting of La Primaudaye's school of wisdom: the two characters of the dialogues are in a strict teacher to pupil relation, the pupil (Nathaniel) learning in a very traditional fashion by memorizing and accepting whatever the teacher (Phillipe) has to say. The purpose of the lesson is to learn more about the body, soul and the world; for this purpose, the 'objects' of learning are shown as in an 'anatomy'. Interestingly enough, there is no mention to natural history and all the references to philosophy and the philosophers are critical references. Unlike the ancient philosophers, the true Christians have access to the truth; at least the elect, those who can read the Book of Nature in a special way, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Like La Primaudaye, Viret is extremely polemic against idolatry and superstition, seen as bodily diseases of the imagination. Idolatry is a disease produced by the very mixing of passions with reason. The mind follows a general tendency to believe what is in accordance to our desires. As a result, the judgment errs and our will follows our imagination. This is the reason, Viret claims, that our times are so full of Epicures and Atheists (Viret, 1564 II 403-4). However, it is worth noticing that idolatry is a philosopher's disease. It does not come from the basic unreasoned affects but from an over-activity of the mind that tries to prove by false reasons its own fancies: the heretical and idolatrous Epicures are masters of argumentation and hair splitting. They are assembling masterful arguments from old books to prove the conclusions they already have in the same ways the ancient Jews were masterfully assembling arguments against Christ's resurrection (Viret, 1564, II 404ff). One needs a sound mind and the help of powerful 'medicines' to resist the argumentation of 'Epicures'. This leads to a long discussion about the similarities between the true scientia (producing sound unwavering knowledge) and faith (producing the same) and the way in which the two can act as 'helps' and 'medicines' of the mind. From this perspective, the whole project of drawing an 'anatomy' of the mind, body and the world can be seen as a response to the growing danger of 'idolatry'.

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<sup>39</sup> "Je conioin en ce volume, le livre de nature, avec le livre écrit des lettres divines, & la philosophie & theologie naturelle, avec la supernaturelle: & monstre comment les creatures & choses visibles & corporelles, sont similitudes & images des choses invisibles & spirituelles, & comment par la connaissance des unes nous pouvons monter à la connaissance des autres, voire jusqu'à Dieu le createur & le souverain bien de tous. Mais le plus surquoi je me suis arresté, c'est en la consideration de la creation & composition & nature tant du corps que de l'ame de l'homme, *duquel j'ai fait comme une anatomie, non seulement au regard du corps, mais aussi de l'ame d'icelui.*" (avant propos, np).

La Primaudaye's influential book, *The French Academy* can therefore be seen as a repackaging of Viret's 'anatomy' in a Stoic/Senecan context and with a more ambitious moral and pedagogical program attached to it. It is, I think, a programmatic attempt to put together the Senecan form of the medicine of the mind with the very core of Protestant/Huguenot theology. In this attempt, the medicine of the mind serves as a weapon in a war: a war against 'idolatry'. A philosophical war in which, as I've tried to show, the empirical study of nature – under the name 'natural history' – plays a major role, still insufficiently explored.

### 7. "Senecan Natural Histories": Do We Have a Genre?

One common move in the revival of Stoicism was to make Seneca's works acceptable for Christians by presenting them as mere exercises of virtue, eclectic when it comes to doctrine and useful regardless the theoretical errors they contain. When it comes to Seneca's physics, that meant to emphasize Seneca's own claims that his physics is not self-sufficient but it is a mere exercise of the mind engaged 'outside of herself', with Nature and with God.<sup>40</sup> True, *Naturales quaestiones* are claiming that the world will end in a final and fiery conflagration, that the Deluge is still to come, or that comets are celestial bodies floating in the continuum of pneuma. But these claims are coached in the language of a provisional natural philosophy; they are simply the best knowledge one can get from the sources available at a certain moment. In fact, throughout the *Naturales Quaestiones* Seneca emphasizes the provisional character of his collection of histories, theories and exercises of the mind (Jalobeanu 2008; Jalobeanu, 2012 forthcoming). The real work is to come and is left to the future generations of students of nature to do their own explorations and reach their own conclusions. There are a good number of arguments in Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* to read the whole work as a natural history (French, 1994; Jalobeanu, 2012 forthcoming). And the work was read in such a way by its sixteenth century students.

Another way to go in this process of reviving the Stoic doctrines was to emphasize the utility of Senecan physics in the sectarian and philosophical debates and the importance of his moral conclusions for the present. Seneca's own arguments against doctrines and the dangers of enslaving the mind to a theory were widely used in sixteenth century polemics.

My second example is another practically unknown book of the late sixteenth century coming from the same milieu. Judging from the title is a translation of Seneca's works. *Les oeuvres morales et meslees de Seneque, tradutie de latin en francois et nouvellement mises en lumiere*, Jean Arnauld,

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<sup>40</sup> Seneca, *Naturales Quaestiones*, preface to book I, preface to book III.

Geneva, 1606.<sup>41</sup> It is a work in three volumes that went through at least four editions in 10 years. The composition of the three volumes seemed to have changed from one edition to the other, as it was often the case at that time, especially when we have to deal with a composite collections containing works by Seneca, fragments of the early Stoics, fragments from Epictetus and Diogenes Laertius, other fragments from Roman Stoics, a lengthy life of Seneca and an extended and scholarly introduction into Stoic philosophy with a special emphasis on Stoic physics.

The author of this composite edition is much better known as a leading Calvinist than as a Humanist scholar. His name is Simon Goulart. Simon Goulart (1543-1628) was educated in law and theology (in Paris) converted to Calvinism, survived the night of St. Bartholomew, fled to Geneva and began a second a more successful career. Towards the end of his life (and after the death of his good friend Theodore Beza) he became the Head of the Company of Pastors of Geneva (1608-1628). He wrote an enormous number of works: pamphlets, sermons, consolation literature, poems; and he was also well known as a translator of Seneca, Plutarch or Justus Lipsius.

Goulart's edition of Seneca is extremely interesting and was, so far, subject to very little scholarly attention.<sup>42</sup> However, my purpose here is limited: I will only discuss a number of peculiar features of its third volume (1606), dedicated to Stoic physics. The volume begins with an introduction to Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones*, *Sommaire de la philosophie naturelle ou meteorology de Senèque, comprise en sept livres, intitulez Les Questions naturelles*. The focal point of the introduction is to explain that Seneca's project was not to write a systematic natural philosophy (like Aristotle), but something different. The importance of *Naturales Quaestiones* did not reside in the theories contained (many of which are erroneous and contrary to the Christian faith) but in the very method used for the exploration of nature. Seneca collected and discussed various philosophical opinions without endangering the 'public peace'. Moreover, his explanations of nature were and still are useful because they prevent people to fall prey to 'Democritian philosophy'. The real importance of Seneca's *Naturales Quaestiones* is that they are refuting the Epicureans 'il fait le process aux Epicuriens et Atheistes & elevent l'ame hors de la terre'; therefore 'il refute la felonnie ingratitude des Atheistes & libertins'(Goulart, 1606, 359).

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<sup>41</sup> See Lagree, Jacqueline. "Simon Goulart et Sénèque, ou comment butiner?", *Stoïcisme et christianisme à la Renaissance*. Rue d'Ulm : ENS, 2006, 131-144. The British Library has an unidentified third volume of the third edition of this work, published in 1606.

<sup>42</sup> With the notable exceptions of Lagree 2006 and Graves, Amy. "Les épreuves du Huguenot et la vulgarization du stoïcisme: Simon Goulart, Jean de l'Espine et Sénèque", *Stoïcisme et christianisme à la Renaissance*. Rue d'Ulm: ENS, 2006, 117-130.

The same line is taken in the second part of the volume, in an extended introduction into Stoic philosophy *Ample discours sur la doctrine des Stoïques, nommément sur celle de Senèque, dressée par le traducteur des livres et traités précédens* (hereafter AD). Simon Goulart emphasizes the utility of the Stoic/Senecan doctrine in a time of troubles, idolatry and irreligion. Despite their mistakes, the Stoics offered sets of exercises for cultivating virtues, sets of arguments for fighting against Atheism and irreligion and a true school of virtue. Goulart offers a summary of Seneca's views on education, comparing favorably such a 'program of studies' with the pour education offered by the universities.

A large part of the AD is devoted to a summary of Stoic physics: the shape and structure of the universe, theory of elements, and the theory of soul (and body). Goulart draws a general account of Stoic's opinions about the physical world. They are often in contradiction to one another; and each time this happens, Goulart emphasize the fact that the true utility of his summary is not to adopt such erroneous opinions but to understand this way of studying nature with a moral and religious purpose. He claims that behind their diversity all Stoics agreed upon the fact that the Universe is governed by a divine Providence (Goulart, 1606, 344, 352, 360) and that the true purpose of studying nature is to habituate the mind with the contemplation (Goulart, 1606, 347) and understanding of its works (Goulart, 1606, 345).

As it is packed together, the third volume of Goulart's edition of Seneca shares a number of features of the 'Senecan natural histories': it advocates the importance of an eclectic reading of the book of nature with an emphasis on pedagogy, learning, forming good habits of the mind, leading the mind to God through a contemplation of his Creation. It is highly critical of doctrines and speculative philosophies, with a strong emphasis on finding the arguments to fight the Epicurean doctrine(s). It emphasizes the utility of a careful reading of Seneca's Natural Questions and other Stoic fragments about Nature (despite their divergences) for moral, therapeutic and religious purposes.

### **Conclusion**

If read against this background of a Neostoic revival and a shared growing interest in a certain Senecan natural history, Bacon's project look considerably different than the one painted so far by canonical histories of philosophy or histories of science. It is less a spectacular and singular failed attempt to reform the human being and more a novel approach in a specter of similar approaches with similar purposes and similar methods. Common to all these attempts was a certain understanding of natural history as an empirical study of nature with moral, theological and therapeutic value. It is this concept of natural history, I claim, that Bacon appropriated, used and eventually

transformed in his project of building up a new natural philosophy. Consequently, only by exploring this relatively forgotten background, the historian of the future can uncover the depth and originality of Bacon's project.

### ABBREVIATIONS

- OFB, *Advancement of Learning*, ed. by Michael Kiernan, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2000 (OFB IV).  
*Philosophical Studies c.1611-c.1619*, ed. by Graham Rees and M. Edwards, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1996 (OFB VI).  
*The Instauration Magna Part II: Novum Organum and Associated Texts*, a cura di Graham Rees and Maria Wakely, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2004 (OFB XI).  
*The Instauration Magna Part III: Historia Naturalis et Experimentalis: Historia Ventorum and Historia Vitae et Mortis*, a cura di G. Rees and M. Wakely, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2007 (OFB XII).  
*The Instauration Magna: Last Writings*, a cura di Graham Rees, Clarendon Press, Oxford 2000 (OFB XIII).  
SEH F. Bacon, *Works*, ed. by James Spedding, Robert L. Ellis and D. D. Heath, 14 vols, London 1857-1874 (repr. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1962).

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## **SOME ASPECTS OF THE ANCIENT MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE DURING THE BEGINNING OF CHRISTIAN ERA IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE**

**MIHAELA POP<sup>1</sup>**

### *Abstract*

Medical knowledge is one of the most interesting domains of intellectual history. In Europe its development and evolution is based mostly on the Greek contribution, especially on Hippocrates' and Galen's works. Our intention is to get a synthetic image of medical thought during the Middle Ages and to show how Galen's contribution was interpreted over a time span of more than 1200 years. In this article we will make some introductory remarks on Hippocrates' and Galen's thought and then will try to review some main aspects of the medical thought and institutions in the Byzantine Empire. We shall examine medical theories, physicians and their works, hospitals and medical instruments, as well. In a later article we hope to show some Jewish and Arab influences on the medical thought of the Western Medieval life.

**Keywords:** medicine, medical knowledge, diagnosis, medical treatment, illness, medical learning.

For almost 1500 years beginning with late Antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages Galen's thought exercised an overwhelming influence over the entire medical activity. Our attempt to trace the extent of this influence in a few pages is by no means an easy task, especially if we take into consideration the vast bibliography dedicated to it. Consequently, our paper will try to provide a synthesis assuming the inevitable risk of not offering complete and detailed explanations for each aspect discussed in the text.

Galen was a renowned doctor who lived during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. He was born in Pergamon and studied in various cities of the Roman Empire. His father, a well-known architect in his town, insisted that his son should get a thorough education, including philosophy. This parental decision helped Galen acquire not only a professional, but also a wider knowledge, based on logic, ontology, and ethics. As a consequence, Galen became familiar not only with Aristotle's works, but he was also able to comment on Plato's thought. After completing his studies in Smyrna and Alexandria, Galen returned to Pergamon, where he accepted to treat the wounds of the gladiators who fought in the arenas

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<sup>1</sup> University of Bucharest.

of those times. This was a great opportunity for Galen to extend his science of human anatomy. After 162 he went to Rome where, due to his celebrity and deep knowledge, he became the personal doctor of Emperor Marcus Aurelius and of his son, the future emperor Commodus.

Why Galen's thought was so important and how did his works survive during the Middle Age? These are the questions to which we shall try to find an answer in what follows.

Galen's thought is based mainly on that of Hippocrates. In fact, considering his role in reviving the interest for the Hippocratic medical school of Ancient Greece, Galen could be regarded as the great Commentator of the Hippocratic *corpus*.

Hippocrates (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) thought that human body could be understood only if taken as a whole. Thus for him, treating an illness meant treating the entire body. This theory was based on *physis* regarded as an inner energy capable of generating and maintaining this unity by means of various biological components, especially by the balance of humors. A healthy condition resulted from a balanced state of humors, whereas any imbalance could generate unhealthy physiological processes. Under the influence of the Pythagorean philosophy, Hippocrates also established a strong, harmonious connection between the microcosm and the macrocosm, between the harmony of the human body and that of the universe. Drawing on the philosophical theory of the four primordial material elements and on the theory of the balance of the opposites, he also worked out a theory of the four humors: blood, phlegm, yellow and black bile, and of the two pairs of opposing qualities: wet/dry and warm/cold. The humors responsible for the good functioning of the human body and soul were the following fluids: *blood* (humid and warm), *phlegm* (humid and cold), *yellow bile* (dry and warm) and *black bile* (dry and cold) and each one was dominant in a balanced humoral combination. This specificity determined a temperamental typology of human beings: 1.sanguine, 2.phlegmatic, 3.choleric and 4.melancholic. Any quantitative excess or deficiency in a certain humor could generate sickness and thereby lead to a degradation of the normal condition, or the *just measure* (which was an Aristotelian concept), and to its replacement by an abnormal state or disorder.

The doctor had the difficult mission to reestablish the balance of humors, which was a sign of a healthy condition. He had to provide the correct diagnosis, which was the most important part of his duty. In his *Aphorisms*, Hippocrates shows that although the diagnosis could look like an oracle prognostication, it was in fact based on attentive observation and profound knowledge. The doctor was to take into consideration not only the appearance of the body but external factors such as winds, places, waters, airs, food, living conditions as well. The diagnosis was a real *gnosis* that involved profound and

vast knowledge. The doctor was supposed to be a rational and learned person, as Roger French points out in his study.<sup>2</sup>

The Hippocratic *corpus* had been put together gradually over a long period (430-330 B.C.). In fact, what was, as a rule, taken to be the Hippocratic *corpus*, consisted of a collection of texts of medical knowledge and wisdom synthesized in the works of many authors over a broad period of time, which also included components of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. Aristotle thought that each living being had a fundamental purpose (*telos*), namely to reach the entire capacity of its form. His research on nature (*physis*) dealt with the four primordial elements and their qualities and drew the attention to the fundamental role played by movement (*kinesis*), which covered all processes of becoming (*genesis*) and destruction (*phthora*). His theory of the four main causes, especially the teleological or final cause, was another theory applied to the study of nature and living beings. Aristotle was also deeply interested in sensitivity and its role in the process of cognition. All these topics, meticulously studied in his *Physics* and *Meteorology*, are doubled by experimental observation. R. French considers that Aristotle himself used to practice dissections on animals, as he considered that direct experience was necessary for a correct understanding of a natural process.<sup>3</sup> In this respect a host of examples can be found in the *History of Animals*. On the contrary, his *Parts of Animals* focuses mostly on theoretical aspects, such as principles, general concepts, and philosophical conclusions. The study of the human being was by far seen as the most significant and complex. Two aspects seemed to be particularly relevant: the study of the soul as *nous* (rational thinking) and the study of the human body. Thus, philosophy and medicine were connected as they both pointed out that, in order to get correct answers, both rational thought, based on experience, and a rigorous system of concepts and principles were necessary. In his *Parts of Animals*, Aristotle also underlines the role played by the inductive syllogism in medical knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

During the Hellenistic period, above all during the Ptolemaic age (3<sup>rd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> centuries B.C), Alexandria was one of the most important centre of medical studies. Doctors used to practice dissections, especially on animals. The study of anatomy was well developed and human skeletons were used for classes. According to Celsus<sup>5</sup>, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C, there were two famous doctors, Herophilus (330-260) and Erasistratos (315-240), who practised not only dissections, but also vivisections, on human beings. Apart from the cruelty of such an action, vivisection had a special scientific reason, namely to observe the real functioning of various organs inside the body. Herophilus, who had knowledge of the nervous

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<sup>2</sup> Roger French, *Medicine before science*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 28.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 30.

system and the brains, was able to distinguish among certain classes of nerves. Herophilus was the disciple of Praxagoras of Cos, one of Hippocrates' disciples. This explains the fact that Alexandria became the first centre where the Hippocratic *corpus* had its first commentaries, as R. French claims<sup>6</sup>.

Galen (129-200 A.D.), too, studied in Alexandria after some preparations in Smyrna and Corinth. His practical experience was considerably enlarged during his appointment as a doctor for gladiators in Pergamon, where he had the opportunity to see and heal many open wounds and to increase his knowledge on anatomy and physiology. He could also apply Aristotle's general principles and theories. By 162, when he came to Rome, he was confronted with various medical schools, each one with its own medical theory. A first opposition could be seen between rationalists or dogmatists and empiricists. The former were strongly in favor of Aristotelian conception, based on logic and rational thought, while their opponents stressed the importance of empirical or practical medicine. This ancient opposition, which was influenced by Aristotle, went back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. two other groups appeared: the Methodists, whose thought was based on the philosophical theory of atoms, and the Pneumatics, who tried to combine the theory of humors with Stoic logic. Each school had different theories on various internal organs and their functions.

The empiricists refused to accept that the body could be perfectly intelligible, by that meaning that rational knowledge could be applied to reestablish health. Celsus wrote about the debates between the empiricists and the rationalists during the 1<sup>st</sup> century. The empiricists were against vivisection, considering it extremely cruel and useless. The rationalists, on the other hand, pleaded for the positive aspect of such a practice, claiming it could contribute to a better understanding (as the body is intelligible) by means of rational thinking. To acquire more knowledge about the body and its organs was to find out how it functioned. This point of view was a medical expression of the Aristotelian theory of the final, teleological cause.

Galen manifested a deep interest in the functioning of the brain. He supported the Platonic theory advanced in the *Timaeus* according to which the soul was inserted in the body by a divine force, the *Demiourgos*, who planned the unity between soul and body in a rational way. That was why the body could be intelligible. A first proof was to demonstrate that the brains and the nervous system controlled the entire body and its functioning. In his work *De locis affectis*, Galen describes a case when a patient who had been operated on his throat remained dumb even if his larynx had not been injured. Galen thought that the only explanation for this strange situation was that the laryngeal nerve had been affected during operation.

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem.*

As R. French mentions, Galen had also a rich knowledge of respiratory mechanics. One of his teachers, Pelops had taught him the functioning of the diaphragm muscle and the role of intercostals' muscles. In 163, in Rome, Galen was challenged by his competitors to perform a public demonstration of his knowledge in front of all the medical schools. He proved that he was able to control the body (the voice) by pressing the nerve responsible for vocal sounds. This way he also demonstrated that he was a learned and a rational doctor. Galen also suggested that his position differed from Aristotle's, who claimed that that which produced the voice was the heart or the vital centre of the body. By his demonstration Galen seemed to plead in favor of Plato's theory about the fundamental role of the brains as centre of the soul and of the nervous system. Here there is a significant aspect that deserves to be recalled: the body could be understood, that is, was intelligible, because it was created by a rational divinity, which Galen named *Demiourgos* (as Plato) but also *physis*,<sup>7</sup> which controlled the entire matter of the body.

An interesting example used to prove this strong body-soul connection is the following: Galen thought that the nerves controlling the basic stimuli as hunger or thirst had to connect the brains to the internal organs and the mouth. It was a very long way and they needed some points to reinforce their capacities: these points were the ganglions. This new theory was based on the knowledge Galen had inherited from one of his former teachers, Eudemus, an Aristotelian philosopher. Eudemus used to apply the Aristotelian theory of causes. Thus, the ganglions were considered the result of an efficient rational cause by Galenus.

Another example of such theoretical applications was fever, which was believed to be a heating process. A local consequence of the excess of heat, fever first affected the heart and afterwards spread through the arteries into the entire body. Fever outburst was considered an expression of an imperative need of the body to clear away heat excess. The solution Galen proposed was bleeding, as he thought that in such circumstances blood itself was heated up and blood pressure increased too much. The empiricists argued that bleeding was a dangerous method and had a different theory. In their view bleeding, which presupposed the evacuation of blood from the veins, enabled the *pneuma* (the spirit), which flowed through arteries, to pass from arteries to veins and this could have dangerous consequences for the patient's life.

In this wide field of debates Galen considered it opportune to revive the medical interest for Hippocrates' works and theories.<sup>8</sup>

According to French<sup>9</sup>, this revival had several reasons:

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<sup>7</sup> This Greek word was usually translated in Latin by *natura* especially in his *De usu partium corporis humani*.

<sup>8</sup> The Hippocratic *corpus* contains currently 11 works and the Galenic *corpus*, 16 works. It seems that initially the Hippocratic *corpus* consisted of up to 60 works.

<sup>9</sup> R. French, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

- the texts of the Hippocratic *corpus* were written in an antiquated Greek, which needed to be “updated” in accordance with the new, contemporary knowledge and terminology;
- many texts, like Hippocrates’ *Aphorisms* for example, were not very precise and needed many explanations and interpretations;
- to these two reasons we could add a third, personal reason: by offering a new interpretation, Galen could insert his own knowledge thus obtaining a certain *auctoritas* due to this textual “neighborhood” with the *Father* of medical thought.

A significant text for this new interpretation is *On the Opinions on Plato and Hippocrates*, which was a kind of Prolegomena to Galen’s own theories. Here Galen reasserts the Platonic idea that the soul was situated in the brains, and not, as Aristotle claimed, in the heart (as principle of life). Thus, for Galen, it was the brains that were the bodily centre of life. In his commentaries to the *Aphorisms*, Galen insisted on the fact that medical diagnosis should not be identified with oracular or magic prognostication or prediction. Diagnosis was based on a vast and profound rational knowledge, capable to provide proofs and to rationally demonstrate any medical decision. He also pleaded for a deep knowledge of the specific organ to be treated, in opposition to Hippocrates, who thought that the medical healing should take into consideration the entire body, as a unity. The fact that Galen re-oriented the entire medical attention towards the sick organ made possible the development of specific cures, which are bound to take into account specific data of that organ (position into the body, role, functions, specificity, etc.). As Kate Kelly notes<sup>10</sup>, this way of thinking had positive consequences for medical thought.

On the other hand, Galen’s theory on blood circulation significantly delayed medical progress. The sanguine system and its functioning were at the core of an important debate, which separated the medical schools of thought. The Egyptians had been the first to study the system of blood vessels. Plato records it in his *Timaeus* 70AB and Aristotle in his *Parts of animals* III, 4, 665b-666a. According to the Greek philosophers, the heart was the source of blood, which the lungs were able to absorb as a sponge. Galen was the one who established how the blood system functioned but he did not consider the heart as its centre. Instead, he maintained that the heart generated the vessels and made possible the circulation of *pneuma* (spirit) through the entire body, while the lungs had no role in blood circulation. Galen had no clue about the oxygenation process in the lungs. He thought, as all the doctors of ancient and medieval times did, that the blood passed directly from the veins to the arteries through a porous wall situated between the ventricles of the heart. In fact, this theory,

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<sup>10</sup> Kate Kelly, *The History of Medicine. The Middle Ages. 500-1450*, Facts on Files, New York, 2009, p. 25.

which was already present in Aristotle's *History of Animals* III, 3, 513b, persisted up to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when William Harvey (1578-1657) established the correct structure of the blood system and its circulation through the entire body. Actually, as Elinor Lieber<sup>11</sup> remarks, it appears that the first correct description of the blood transfer through lungs from the right to the left side of the heart belongs to an Arab physician, Ibn an Nafis, who lived during the 13<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Kelly also mentions this.<sup>12</sup>

During the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D., Galen's works and its numerous commentaries formed a real *corpus*, which was consolidated around 600 A.D., when it became the medical *Canon* for many centuries. The corpus survived despite the difficult circumstances such as the decline of the Roman Empire, the fall of Western Europe, the emerging of the Eastern part of the empire as the first Christian, Byzantine Empire. Given the historical events one can easily see why, for several centuries, the Galenic tradition was preserved better in the East the Mediterranean world.

### **The Galenic Tradition in the Eastern Mediterranean World**

During the first centuries of the Christian era, medical thought developed in the entire Eastern region of the Mediterranean Sea. A prominent place in this universe appeared to be held by Alexandria. Medical thought was generally based on the works of Hippocrates and Galen, but there were also other physicians, who offered specialized knowledge in therapy, anatomy, physiology, mental illnesses, women's specific illnesses, and pharmacology. At the same time, the theoretical side of this domain applied many philosophical theories, especially those of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics. For instance, among the methods of diagnosis there were those used by Plato: abstraction (*aphairesis*) and division (*diairesis*). The latter was successfully employed particularly in organ or symptoms description. If the subject was blood diagnosis, the elements studied were smell, degree of heat, blood consistency, pulse rhythm, force, the diastolic/systolic periods, blood pressure, number of heart beatings, their regularity, etc. If the subject was urine diagnosis the analysis took into account color (there were even diagrams ranging from blue, black, dark red to various nuances of yellow), smell, density, sediments, etc.

Medical teaching consisted basically in the perpetuation of the Galenic commentary tradition and in the interpretation of ancient texts. The study began with an inquiry into the meaning of the terms in a wide range of texts, it would

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<sup>11</sup> Elinor Lieber, "Asaf's Book of Medicines. A Hebrew encyclopedia in Greek and Jewish medicine, possibly compiled in Byzantium on an Indian model", in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 38/1984, Washington DC, pp. 233-250.

<sup>12</sup> K. Kelly, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

continue with an examination of every meaning within its context and it would end with a review of commentaries on these terms written by famous commentators. Through this multi-layered analysis the student became able to reach a correct interpretation of the text. Surviving manuscripts do not mention many names of teachers. Sophronius of Jerusalem, who wrote a text *The Miracles Made by Saints Cyrus and John* recalls a certain Gesius, professor of medical knowledge who lived during the 7<sup>th</sup> century. His name is also mentioned in the 10<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine Encyclopedia *Souda*.<sup>13</sup> The doctors and professors who taught medical thought were named *iatrosophoi*.<sup>14</sup>

Among the most famous physicians who lived and wrote commentaries on the Hippocratic and Galenic works we can mention Rufus of Ephesus, whose name is already in Galen's works. In his *Bibliothèque*, Patriarch Photius (10<sup>th</sup> century) speaks of the texts written by Dioscorides, a physician of the first century A.D. A philosopher who lived in Alexandria in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Philoponus, who wrote commentaries on Aristotelian works, dedicated large chapters to medical knowledge, especially in his commentary to *De anima*. The Galenic works were also known to Aristotelian commentators such as Alexander of Aphrodisia (3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.) or Neo-Platonists such as Marinus or Proclus (5<sup>th</sup> century). Oribasius was another famous physician who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century and whose works on medical knowledge were inserted afterwards in the medical *corpus*. He wrote a *Synopsis*. Oribasius considered Galen's works to be the medical thought *par excellence*. He also mentioned Ruphus of Ephesus. Other names of these centuries could be Soranus, Paul of Egina, Magnus of Nisibis, Nemesius of Emessa. Magnus and Nemesius seem to have been Nestorians. We have to add here the Nestorian school of Emessa, which was very interested in medical studies. Their doctrine concerning the human nature of Jesus Christ made the study of the body a religious imperative.

In the 6<sup>th</sup> century mention is made of Alexander of Tralles, a Byzantine physician who had a good knowledge of therapeutic methods. In his texts Procopius of Cesarea, Emperor Justinian's historian, gives many details about medical activities, hospitals, and medical treatments applied in the Byzantine world of his time.

During the 10<sup>th</sup> century the interest in the preservation of ancient knowledge became part of a cultural plan elaborated by a well-known emperor-philosopher, Constantine VII Porphyrogenetus. Constantine coordinated the collecting and re-writing of ancient manuscripts in a more fluent writing style. The manuscripts were organized thematically according to the fundamental cultural domains: law, political thought, military art (tactics), philosophy,

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<sup>13</sup> John Duffy, "Byzantine Medicine in the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries. Aspects of Teaching and Practice" in *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 38/1984, pp. 21-27.

<sup>14</sup> *Iatros* = physician, doctor; *sophos* = wise man.

theology, literature, agriculture, and medical thought. *Iatrika* was the medical encyclopedia while *Souda* was a philosophical one. Constantine Porphyrogenetus was the author of three works on political and administrative issues. The most famous is *The Book of Ceremonies*.

The 11<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Michael Psellos gives us numerous details about the medical treatment applied to Emperor Romanus III and about the medical knowledge of his time. Psellos himself was very interested in the study of medicine and wrote a poem, *Ars medica* (1373 lines) as well as a dictionary of all the diseases commented in ancient works<sup>15</sup>.

### **The Church Interference**

When, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Christian religion was officially accepted in the Roman Empire by Constantine the Great, medical thought began to have more and more problems. Thus, in 480 Diadocus of Photicea considered that the hope for recovery should not be directed towards a physician, whose knowledge was limited, but towards God Almighty. Subsequently, the idea of paying too much attention to the body began to be interpreted as a kind of weakness of the religious belief. Similar ideas were to be expressed by Pope Gregory the Great by the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

Step by step, the Christian Church tried to replace the authority of the physician. While the practical and rational knowledge of the physician concentrated on the body, the religious authority of the Christian doctrine made use of the image of Jesus Christ as Savior, whose teachings promised to heal the soul. Hence, the concept of *Christus medicus* (*Soter* in Greek) began to acquire an ever growing importance. Instead of thinking of the ephemeral body health, the Christian believer was asked to subordinate the pains of this body to a more important purpose, namely the preparation of the soul for the Last Judgment and for its redemption. The hermit's ascetic life became the most appreciated way of living. Meanwhile, those who practiced medicine found out that their activities began to be suspected of connections with pagan, or even heretical, beliefs. Under the circumstances, as a measure of protection, many physicians began to include in their prescriptions not only medical potions, but also instructions about prayers to be recited during the medical treatment. An example is Alexandre of Tralles (6<sup>th</sup> century). V. Nutton believes that the attitude promoted by the Church was not something previously unknown. The Stoics, too, had pleaded for self-restraint. Their doctrines encouraged the noble character of those who suffered bodily pains without complaining. To this Stoic heritage, the

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<sup>15</sup> Vivian Nutton, "From Galen to Alexander. Aspects of medicine and medical practice in late Antiquity", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 38/1984, Washington DC, pp. 1-21.

Christian religion added the concept of pain as a Gospel of Redemption<sup>16</sup>. Tertullian, for instance, thought that famine or epidemics were the visible manifestations of God's will. Athanasius of Sinai wondered whether it was necessary to avoid illness and pains if sent by divine will. Thus, during these first Christian centuries, there was an evident transfer of individual authority from the ancient *iatrosophos* and his medical knowledge to the Christian priest or monk representing the Christian Church and religious Biblical knowledge. This made it possible for the somatic explanation of an illness to be replaced by a religious one.

Various esoteric, Gnostic beliefs, magic, spells, and heretical attitudes inherited from the Hellenistic period perpetuated during the first Christian centuries. In this imaginary universe, illness became the image of a universal battle between good and evil, between angels and demons. These various beliefs seemed to corrode even the Christian religion, especially during the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, when holy images (icons) acquired such an important role in the Christian life that they began to be worshiped for themselves and not as a means of access to divine grace. Icons came to be considered similar to pagan idols. The reaction of the Byzantine emperors, which was the decision to condemn any cult of holy images, generated an entire religious movement known as iconoclasm.

During this period various pagan beliefs coexisted with idolatrous Christian attitudes. Correct attitudes encouraged the proliferation of pilgrimages to shrines of various healing saints like Symeon Stylites, who practiced a very rigorous asceticism on the top of a very high column, Saints Cyrus and John, or Saint Tecla. During the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries the phenomenon of pilgrimage to certain healing places also encouraged a wide diffusion of amulets, spells, and prayers for health. For example, at the shrine dedicated to Saint Tecla in Seleucia, archeologists discovered little amulets representing two eyes and a text: "O, Mighty God, help me! And fulfill my hopes". The amulets contained the image of the sick organ. Theodore of Cyrus wrote "Christians come to pray for their health to the altars of Christian martyrs and they bring images of eyes, legs, hands, made of gold and wood."<sup>17</sup> This dissemination of magic beliefs was also possible due to the fact that medical teaching as well as other fields of knowledge lost their ground, particularly after the decision of Emperor Justinian (529) to close all schools whose teacher was not a Christian. Thus, after 550 A.D, what used to be the cultural *auctoritas* of the Antiquity, based on the rational and humanistic knowledge in its ancient meaning, began to crumble

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> A. D. Vakaloudi, "Illnesses, Curative Methods and Supernatural Forces in the Early Byzantine Empire (4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D.)", in *Byzantion*, Bruxelles, XXIII/2003, pp. 172-200) and also Gregory Vikon, "Art, Medicine and Magic in Early Byzantium", *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Washington, 34/1984, pp. 65-86.

down. Its place, especially in the rural areas, was gradually taken over by Christian dogmas as well as by a number of beliefs and magic practices.

Another aspect deserves to be mentioned here in connection with medical knowledge. Most of the time, we tend to focus exclusively on highly educated physicians, such as those above. However, highly educated physicians were not many in these centuries. There is another side of medical knowledge, which was represented by so-called *healers*. Common figures in small communities such as little villages and cities, these played a mixed role: they were familiar not only with many practical medical aspects but also with magic rituals. The connection between the two sides of social life was quite normal, especially in the rural regions. Healers survived throughout the Middle Ages and even long after, their presence in the Balkan and Carpathian areas being attested as late as the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Medical Practice – Hospitals

It is generally accepted that one of the most significant Christian contributions to the social life of the first centuries was the doctrine of charity. From the Christian point of view, in the context of medical life, the hospital was regarded as a shelter for all the members of the community. During the Roman rule, hospitals hosted military men and the servants of the aristocratic families. Jewish hospitals, on the other hand, had a quite different role, being destined to the pilgrims who travelled to Jerusalem.<sup>18</sup> Christian authorities extended significantly the number of social categories treated in hospitals, which came to be the poor, the homeless, the old, the insane, the handicapped and, obviously, the sick. This is evident if we analyze the Greek words for hospital. *Nosokomeion* designated the hospital as an institution for treating ill persons (*nosos* = illness) while *xenones* meant an institution that provided shelter to those who did not belong to the community (foreigners, those who were having their religious pilgrimage). In addition there was the *ptochotropheion*, a shelter that offered food and bed for a short period of time.

Historical evidence documents the construction of many hospitals, especially beginning with the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Thus, during 344 - 358 a hospital was built in Antioch. In 370 Saint Basil of Caesarea insisted in favor of a new hospital outside the city walls and so did Saint John Chrysostom in Constantinople, Saint Ephrem of Edessa and Fabiola, Bishop of Rome, for their cities.

As Timothy Miller remarks,<sup>19</sup> it was influential and wealthy aristocrats that funded Byzantine hospitals. There were also charitable societies, who protected, nourished, and paid for the treatment of sick persons. Step by step,

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<sup>18</sup> V. Nutton, *art. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>19</sup> Timothy Miller, "Byzantine hospitals", *D.O.P.* 34/1984, pp. 54-63.

the hospital became an institution distinct from the asylum or the hospice. Its objective was to cure the sick. At the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> century the Byzantine Empire counted numerous hospitals. In Constantinople there were at least five or six hospitals: Sampson, Euboulos (built in 450), Saint Irene of Perm (built in the same period), Narses (built during the 6<sup>th</sup> century under the reign of the emperor Mauritius), Saint Panteleimon and Christodotes, both built after 600 A.D., and the Irene (built after 787 by the empress Irene, who succeeded to put a temporary end to the iconoclastic battle against the holy images). During the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the iconoclast emperor Theophilus (829-842) founded another hospital. In 1136 one of the largest and most renowned Byzantine hospitals, Saint Pantokrator, was built in Constantinople. But Constantinople was not the only town to have hospitals. It seems that each town, even the small ones, had their own hospital. Hospitals were also erected in Crete, Nicomedia, Antioch, Thessaloniki, and Nicaea. By the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century there are no more documents attesting new constructions of hospitals. There were also hospitals in the rural parishes and in the nearby important monasteries, such as the hospital of the Grand Lavra on Mount Athos, built in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

The people who worked in these hospitals were not always the same. At the beginning, monks and people who had dedicated their lives to asceticism had accepted to work there. As hospitals became larger, those who worked inside became more specialized and trained. A hierarchic structure was established especially after the imperial decision of Valentinianus I in 370 A.D. In the 8<sup>th</sup> century, in his writings, Theodore of Studios, a famous theologian who fought against the iconoclastic movement, speaks of at least three levels of responsibilities. These ranged from the head of the doctors (*protarchos*), to doctors responsible for each section of the hospital (*archiatroi*), and to young doctors, practitioners and students. There were also clinics that solved the simple cases and selected those who were to be sent to hospitals for extended treatment.

Doctors were supposed to work in hospital seven days per week over a period of six months. Their wages were not very impressive but during the other six months of the year they were allowed to practice their profession independently, which helped them increase their income significantly.

The most important hospitals became so famous that, beginning with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, more and more people of high society came to be treated there. According to the historian Zonaras, during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, there was a well-known physician, Aktouarius, who worked in the hospital *Xenon Magnaura*. One day, accompanied by two other colleagues, he transferred Emperor Alexius I, who was in a critical condition, from Palace Magnaura to the hospital situated in its proximity.<sup>20</sup> This detail reveals the important role that doctors and hospitals played in the Byzantine Empire, especially in large cities. In fact, the Byzantines, especially the aristocrats, were very proud of their hospitals.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 55-58.

Theodore Metochites, an important political figure of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and also a great scholar of his times, expressed his pride saying that the Byzantine hospitals were the most obvious proof of the cultural development of the Byzantine world.

### Medical Instruments

Only a very small number of surgical instruments have survived. In his *Epitome VI*, Paul of Aegina (7<sup>th</sup> century) mentions almost 120 surgical operations and their instruments. It seems that Byzantine doctors practiced successfully mastectomy, extirpation of certain tumors, and bladder operations. Three groups of medical instruments were found: 1. A group of bronze instruments from the 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries were discovered near Korinthos, which included a scalpel, a probe, spatulas, a kind of fork used to widen an open wound; 2. Another group, of 56 nicely decorated instruments was discovered in Cairo. 3. The Ustinov group, named after their former owner, the Russian baronet Ustinov, was discovered in Palestine. Lawrence Bliquez notes<sup>21</sup> that, judging by their inscriptions, some of these objects could be very old, going back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

In a 9<sup>th</sup> century text, written by a certain Leon, there are descriptions of 40 operations, including trepanations and limb amputations, and of 150 medical instruments. Bliquez also mentions two manuscripts, the 9<sup>th</sup> century *Codex Parisinus Latinus* 11.219, containing a list of 65 instruments and the 11<sup>th</sup> century *Laurentianus Grecus* LXXIV-2, containing a list of 89 instruments. Another 10<sup>th</sup> century text records a separation of Siamese twins at the upper level of the abdomen. One of the two children was already dead before the operation and the other survived only three days. General anesthesia was used only in special cases. According to Bliquez,<sup>22</sup> dissection on human bodies was practiced during the entire period of the Byzantine Empire on corpses of people who had suffered death penalty. Simon the New Theologian tells us that autopsies were also performed. Surgeons knew how to implant certain prostheses. Quite frequently, the operations were public. John Chrysostom says that doctors wanted to prove by these public operations that sick persons could be cured by rational knowledge.

### Pharmacology

In addition to diagnosis, equally important in medical activity was the manner in which the patient was healed. A profound knowledge of substances

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<sup>21</sup> Lawrence Bliquez, "Two Lists of Greek Surgical Instruments and the State of Surgery in Byzantine times", *D.O.P.*, pp. 187-204.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 199.

and their quantities was needed in order to prepare the correct medication. Jerry Stannard says<sup>23</sup> that the Byzantine medical texts employed quotations from ancient works of Democritus, Dioscorides or Posidonius. Over 450 plants were used. To these other medical substances were added, extracted from insects, arachnids, crustaceans, wine, vinegar, olive oil, butter, cheese, or bread. Diets were in strict connection with calendar and astrological predictions. Byzantines doctors like Diocles of Charistos (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) or Theophrastus had inherited the ancient knowledge mentioned by Homer in *Odyssey*, X, 304-316. Some of the doctors had studied the properties of these substances. Theophrastus wrote a *Historia plantarum* and *De causis plantarum*. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. Nicandrus of Colophon wrote two poems about toxicology, *Theriaca*. Researchers suspect that for his poems Nicandrus employed an older work of Apollodorus about toxic substances collected from serpents, insects, scorpions, etc. In the first century A.D. Dioscorides of Anazarbos wrote a fundamental work of pharmacology, *Materia Medica*, which later became a real *Canon* in the field and was used for nearly 1800 years. More than 600 plants are listed in this work. Galen himself wrote about drugs made of either of a single substance or containing various combinations of active substances. He provided lists of drugs connected to sick organs and to types of diseases and indicated antidotes. Drugs were made taking into consideration heat, moisture, taste, smell, or even touch. Quantity was also very important.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, in reply to the demand made by Emperor Julian the Apostate, Oribasius succeeded to create a *Synopsis* of all the works written by Galen. It seems that the corpus contained 70 books, 40 of which have survived to this day. This *Synopsis* proves the interest for Galen's teaching. Oribasius combines 450 drugs that he found in Galen's works with some others from Dioscorides. The result is an immense list of 600 medical drugs.

Other physicians interested in pharmacology were Priscian, who lived at the imperial court of Gratian (375-383) and Hesychius of Damascus, who lived during the same century. A famous 7<sup>th</sup> century pharmacologist was Theophilus, who wrote a book on *The Structure of the Human Body* and two others about urine and excrements and their role in the diagnosis. Another renowned physician of the same period was Paul of Aegina, who wrote 7 books dedicated to the study of drugs, in which he gives 600 plants.

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## TO AIM REALITY: THE LANGUAGE ISSUE IN QUANTUM PHYSICS, PHENOMENOLOGY AND NEOPATRISTICS

MIHAI-DAN CHIȚOIU<sup>1</sup>

### *Abstract*

There are some instances when the ways to the reality could be described as *ultimate*. These kinds of experiences seek to reach a non-mediate and an effective access to reality (no matter how reality is understood are described). They are attempts to overpass the mediation provided by the normal human functions in the act of knowledge (the mediations offered by imagination, by theoretical explanations, by the normal ways of sensing reality) carried on in rather exceptional situations, in exceptional contexts, by exceptional people. Here are not only the mystical experiences (hesychasm), but also some philosophical enterprises (phenomenology), and none less some experiments in sciences (quantum physics). But if these experiences are possible and effective, a very difficult task is to express them, to communicate them to others.

**Keywords:** reality, phenomenon, language.

Our understanding of what is called ‘reality’ has undergone not only with the evolution of Modern science, but it was always discussed and often questioned. In the European Modernity doubt was not on the question if we really talk about an objective and independent reality (with a few exceptions), but on how we know and represent the reality. This is unlike in the Eastern traditions and philosophies of Oriental origin or inspiration, which tended to deny the existence of something beyond subjective impressions. An investigation on the recent changes in semantic notion of reality can discuss only the first type of reference to reality. These changes are due to the difficulties encountered in signifying reality as well as in the finding of a truthful access to it. In science the paradox is that the refining of experimental strategies of investigating reality has led to questioning the validity of scientifically experiments and the true nature of reality. That happened in quantum physics. But I think that there are two other types of investigation in

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<sup>1</sup> Romanian Academy, Iași Branch. Acknowledgement: This paper was made within The Knowledge Based Society Project supported by the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed by the European Social Fund, and by the Romanian Government under the contract no. POSDRU ID 89/1.5/S/56815.

which the nature of reality has been directly or indirectly put under discussion, namely phenomenology and Neoplatonistics. I consider that these two perspectives offer investigating ways that can be compared with the experiment in science. What appears to be common in these three ways of targeting and investigation reality is the need for major adjustments in underlying semantics of terms used when is described what is beyond the subject's capacities. And this happened in all three horizons in the Twentieth Century. And this should be seen more than just changes in methodology or conceptual definition of reality, but a major shift in its understanding.

Aiming reality, understood as the result of donation, became a major task once with the philosophical turning made by Phenomenology at the beginning of the last century. And this turn brought exceptional difficulties in naming the intimacy of phenomenon, and especially of the phenomenality of phenomenon. For Edmund Husserl phenomenology seeks a radical approach, beyond all theoretical initiatives. The main question is whether what was designated as the conditions of presence may reach the point where the whole being is accessed, beyond the limits fixed by metaphysics. With other words, in what context the phenomenal act it is fulfilled without any condition or reserve? But the quest for restoring objectivity in the Husserlian phenomenology marks an extreme difficulty, that one to remain faithful to his own attempts. Husserl describes the field presence beyond all limits, bringing the notion itself to dissolution, because it also reproduces the constitutive metaphysical determination of presence, the objectivity. Phenomenology denounces unnatural orientation of thought and intuition, so that its own relation to reality requires reorientation from objects to the underlying acts. We naturally tend to consider things like having actual presence and forming the reality, but in fact should be considered that we omit, the acts<sup>2</sup>. In this way phenomenology takes a radical step to overcoming modern explanatory paradigms: these described reality as the sum of objectual. The return to things involves the turn (re-turn) of thinking to intuition. Returning to things impose that thinking to re-conduct her words to their intuition. The checking of statements requires their resumption starting from the effective realized intuition, given, starting from acts. It is obvious here that there is a method that can be described as radically intuitive, which would be explicitly separate and apart from ontologies outlined in modernity<sup>3</sup>. Intuition, without reason or condition, precedes the theories of donation as the theory of theories. This approach is an attempt to suspend any mediations in the search for returning to things, is the reorientation of thinking back to intuition.

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<sup>2</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *Réduction et donation. Recherches sur Husserl, Heidegger et la Phénoménologie*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vol. 2, trans. J. N. Findlay (New York: Routledge, 2001), 163.

Here is a strong difficulty in language, because Husserl try to make language proper in describing an access to phenomenality that should suspend any mediation.

This attempt to provide objectivity in the research of the phenomenon's phenomenality was later criticized by Martin Heidegger. He will notice also that phenomenology's goal does not coincide with the phenomenality, this being the reason for he parted the Husserlian phenomenological method of investigation. For Heidegger, the discussing on being is nothing else than a way to criticize objectivity pursued by Husserl's phenomenology. But neither Heidegger never fulfilled what he had proposed in his phenomenology, because *the phenomenon of being*, even under attenuated figure of ontological difference, it is not shown, it is not never revealed, nor for what he called 'phenomenology of unapparent' never exceeded its programmatic status<sup>4</sup>. The Heideggerian need for a more radical 'reality outlet' is to be found in the claim that phenomenology can exceed the actual truth, and this principle can be put, ultimately, against phenomenology already made. Actual experience of reality is attributed to intuition, more or less, intuition is only in the presence of world's objects, in the front of the world itself. The metaphysics of presence is fulfilled in absolute appearance, the world is intuition of a whole. But this last statement takes much further the difficulties in finding appropriate linguistic formulations, that's why Heidegger will make appeal to the mystical and poetical terminology. On this way can be understood this phenomenological statement of a possible presence without intuition. This understanding will be later developed in the thinking of Jean-Luc Marion. It is a statement of exceptional importance in supporting the existence of a presence here and now that escapes intuition: this possibility was a major topic in quantum physics as well as in Neoplatonism. It is important to observe the phenomenological turn that happened beginning with Heidegger: phenomenology no longer deals with the knowledge of phenomena, but with the knowledge of their mode of occurrence; it is no more concerned with the foundations of science, but with the understanding of phenomenality<sup>5</sup>. What appears is accepted not because appears, but because it is in a stable instance as original; phenomenality can be always suspected that it can provide only an appearance. The self-donation 'in person' is the only correct way to describe the phenomenon, because it only satisfies the requirement of *being direct, of permanent presence and of immediate presence, giving to the conscience everything what can appear in its eyes*. But the phenomenon can be defined other way than a permanent presence, as Heidegger stressed. The phenomenon donates itself starting from its proper visibility, is not reducible to the presence of a conscience. Possible deviations from phenomenality show, in fact, that

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<sup>4</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *Réduction et donation*, 90.

<sup>5</sup> Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time: Prolegomena (Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 183.

there is a *phenomenon's initiative on its own to achieve visibility*. Visibility is not represented, it appears. After Heidegger, the phenomenon originates itself in reaching to visibility of not-yet-visible, involving the principle of unapparent appearance. The phenomenon doesn't mean no more a particular object but some game of the unapparent in appearance. Consequently, phenomenology is for bringing into apparition not only the unapparent, but also the game of apparent and unapparent in apparition. Provided that the phenomenon is open in its own mystery, becomes possible to characterize the being with the title of phenomenon. Phenomenology is on the unapparent as the being to appear, it is not perceptible in the horizon of presence as a common sense phenomenon<sup>6</sup>. It is not phenomenal what, being visible, may become visible, thus becoming a being but, paradoxically, is phenomenal what invisible as such, becomes visible in the mode of present being.

When discussing about reality, but mostly when aiming the nature of reality through language, the contemporary physics encountered also a serious difficulty. The reality described by the classical physics is an independent one, that is: the measurements do not interfere with the phenomena. This thesis became the central thesis of any kind of modern science and this was also the meaning of the objectivity. The fundamental assumption is that the world is basically *matter*, a myriad of simple elements, atoms or particles which are all in a relationship by the means of fields. But certain levels of reality, specifically the quantum levels, cannot be subjected to the classical explanation given by the science founded by logical formalism, so that arose the need to resort to alternative explanatory models. In the third decade of the last century appeared a serious breach in the paradigm of the physical realism. As Bernard d'Espagnat indicates, in quantum physics arises now the question of the real nature, of what is called 'Something' in a rather negative language. The role assigned to that 'something' suggests the presence of an integrity, of a whole, a thesis totally unknown to the classical physics. The theory of the quantum field refutes the perspective of the classical physics, mainly because the particles no longer play the role of constitutive material of the universe; the only reality which can be conceived that it would constitute the basic reality is the 'something'. There are concepts such as the non-reparability and the non-localization in indicating this reality model. The theory of non-reparability states that strictly speaking there is no distinct object. Our senses do not reveal the real constituency of the universe. There appear dramatic differences from the classical vision over the world, it is now required a holistic vision, as well as the necessity to renounce to the objectivist language. This major change of vision has multiple consequences, one of the most radical ones being the need to use a different language. It is not just about an adaptation of the concepts by which the physicists work in

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<sup>6</sup> Marion, *Réduction et donation*, 93.

modeling their theories but a change in the overall world vision. The status of what is called 'phenomenon' in physics became indeed problematic. The ultimate nature of phenomenon was linked with the concept of *real*. The most radical meaning of the reality notion is called *real*, as it is about the reality independent from mind<sup>7</sup>. There has been made another difference between 'reality' and 'real', taking into consideration the fact that the reality would be what enters the field of our experience and power of actual or virtual investigation, whereas real is what reality would be beyond this possibility of knowledge. In connection with this kind of distinction, the concept of 'ultimate reality' was formulated, by which there is designated the limit, the border that our knowledge with all the handy possibilities has over the real at a certain historical moment. The ultimate reality does not have a certain content, but it is always constituted from the stage of human knowledge in a historical time.

The reference made by d'Espagnat about the possibility of some different kinds of human experience to attain a knowledge of the nature of 'something' indicates the cognitive and discursive possibilities given by poetics and mystics. This statement can be verified by the openings offered by the spiritual experience as it is described by the Eastern Christian tradition. But the understanding of exceptional value of patristic experiential way of understanding of reality was relatively late, at the mid of Twentieth Century. At that time authors like Dumitru Stăniloae or George Florovsky indicated that the authentic dimension of Christian Spirituality cannot be put into the descriptive frames resulted from Modern cultural horizon. But, in the same time, this renewal of the patristic message was accompanied by an opening to the values and the paradigms of the Late Modernity. For example, Dumitru Stăniloae quotes often Martin Heidegger in his commentaries to patristic texts. The reference to the most recent philosophy of that time actually means the recognition gave by these representatives of this movement to the change of perspective brought by Phenomenology, Existentialism, and Hermeneutics. These authors mentioned above drew attention on the synthetic and direct patristic understanding which stands under the sign of intuition; giving the consciousness of higher meanings and purposes of nature. Following the Church Fathers, Stăniloae affirms that the rationality of the world has multiple virtualities, and it is especially malleable, contingent. Here also lies the essential difference from previous understandings of the world's rationality, especially because now it's the wo/man who uses and reveals the world's rationality.

Dumitru Stăniloae talks about a human growth through things, for God's loving intentions are progressively revealed through things. In this context, one can talk about the progress of both human spirit and of the world via

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<sup>7</sup> Bernard D'Espagnat, *On Physics and Philosophy* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 28.

relationships among things<sup>8</sup>. These statements by Stăniloae are a very important understanding of what patristic tradition, and particularly the Christian East, proposed on the topic of the world's rationality. Stăniloae's texts, just like the patristic writings, must not be made to fit the narrow canons that rationalism imposed to the modern acceptance of theology. Stăniloae explicitly argued for the need to recover an integral way of knowledge, a discourse that would go beyond fragmentariness and be able to meet the recent challenges that research has posed. The rationality described by the Christian East implies a plasticity of existence that must always be considered, yet without omitting the data of the person. What humans do entails consequences such as their ability to better master and manipulate reality, following progress in knowledge; yet the true consequences refer to bringing to existence certain potentialities of the world that otherwise could have never become manifest. This interaction with reality, with its degrees, leads to another type of experience, which can be called interpersonal, or, put it differently, the experience of communion. So, the nature of reality receives a different and very interesting understanding in this vision. The reality description is much more complex, because the world is described as a dynamic place of interaction. The reality has plasticity or capability of a continuous subtle change at its deepest level. The nature of phenomenon is seen as the result of a two instances co-presence, a created one but also a non-created, and here are the most difficult aspects of Eastern Christian understanding of phenomenon. Dumitru Stăniloae understood well the stake of this difficulty, and for this reason promoted, at the middle of the twentieth century, the recovery of the work of Gregory Palamas, a Byzantine theologian and thinker from the fourteenth century. In a famous controversy, Palamas defended a vision of reality that implies the presence of the uncreated in the natural world. Stăniloae insists that for Palamas, the act of knowledge has the dimension of a relationship, is understood as a dynamic process and not as an essential view of a stable nature. In terming his unmediated experience of God a vision of 'light', the language is understood as a 'pointer', and not descriptive. In the Palamite language the terms 'light' and 'darkness' as both appropriate: light indicates the supreme positive character of the experience, and darkness indicates its radical transcendence vis-à-vis everything else we know<sup>9</sup>. When talking of *ultimate personal reality*, we cannot speak with exact precision but only by the way of symbol, image and analogy. It is unavoidable an amount of ambiguity. Usual language, while conceptualizing created beings' experience of God, must also pay attention to its own shortcomings. A decisive term in explaining the non-essentialism of the Palamite doctrine is *energeia*, which Gregory Palamas takes over from Aristotle.

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<sup>8</sup> Dumitru Stăniloae, *Teologia Dogmatică Ortodoxă*, [Orthodox Dogmatic Theology], vol. I (București: E.I.M.B.O.R., 1996), 249.

<sup>9</sup> Gregory Palamas, *Triads*, 2. 5. 1, transl. Nicholas Gendle (London: Paulist Press, 1983).

In order to create a distinction between essence or nature, and person or hypostasis, Palamas does it cautiously because the vocabulary of that time was too deeply marked by the essentialist categories of the Greek philosophy. When discussing about *energeia*, Palamas states that it is a natural symbol, and not a created one. If *energeia* or the divine light has this meaning, then what we call a natural phenomenality, or reality, has a much enlarged signification. We find in phenomenon the presence and the intentionality of a Person and that as a *natural dimension*. This description the reality is constituted by the experience in the most radical way: the ultimate reality is the human experience of uncreated energies. Any statement that would aim at something beyond the content of this experience, such as the direct knowledge of an essence, is rejected. In the same time the gnoseological pessimism is rejected: the Supreme Personal Reality is not non-cognoscible due to its transcendence, because it makes itself known by these manifestations.

As we can see, there is a serious issue in expressing the nature of reality once there are attained the limit situations in knowledge. I gave here what I consider to be the most relevant examples of such situation, these instance being, maybe, at the same time the three major ways of approaching and understanding reality: mystics, philosophy and science. The question is if we can describe this 'last instance' approach as being similar in the three perspectives. I think it is not, because of the very different methodologies and interests. Their closeness is rather asymptotic, but can never be an identical path in the quest for nature of reality. But I think also that a real and effective opening between these kinds of experimental/experiential knowledge can be made by concrete researchers at a certain time, it is not something valid in abstract, gaining a theoretical permanent value. That's is because there is necessary to find concrete linguistic bridges between different ways of designating a concrete experience/experiment of reality.



## PERSON, ANTHROPOMORPHISM, IDOLOLATRY

SAVU TOTU<sup>1</sup>

### *Abstract*

The iconoclastic controversy has been covered extensively and from many perspectives. The multitude of theoretical perspectives and of views expressed in relation to the highly complex subject of holy imagery is well known to the experts from this field (whose multiple approaches, of a theological, philosophical, historical or aesthetical nature, support a high variety of analytical outlooks). The presentation of the relevant aspects concerning the notion of “person”, from the theological perspective of the icon, and of the relevant theological aspects concerning anthropomorphism, as the main source of idololatry described through *the relation between image and word*, could comprise one of the analytical frameworks applied to the iconoclastic controversy.

I have chosen this approach based on the criticism expressed by a Greek theologian and iconologist against the general views of Russian iconologists and theologians (Uspensky mainly), who distinguished between the meaning and the content of the icon. In the context of ideological “dispute”, I will attempt to re-evaluate several aspects of the iconoclastic controversy, while aiming to emphasize how significant it is to appropriate the image to the word, from a philosophical perspective, but most importantly from the perspective of the theology of the icon, in order to understand idololatry as the result of applying philosophical thought to a strictly religious issue.

**Keywords:** person, icon, word, anthropomorphism, idololatry.

Although from a theological stance<sup>2</sup>, the dogma of honoring icons was established during the 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council of Niceea (787), the “Triumph of Orthodoxy” will not be spoken about until the Council of Constantinople, in the year 843. Still, the victory over iconoclasm “did not mean the disappearance of heresy”<sup>3</sup>. Iconoclasm has survived, in various forms, until today (a way of saying...“forever”). Modern thought, especially the contemporary philosophy of Cartesian inspiration<sup>4</sup>, has deepened the misunderstanding of the *symbolic*

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<sup>1</sup> Romanian Academy, Iași Branch.

<sup>2</sup> I will open the door to the complicated history of this controversy only to present the importance of certain theological points of view expressed in the defense of the icon in various contexts.

<sup>3</sup> Leonid Uspenski, *Teologia icoanei în Biserica Ortodoxă* (București: Editura Anastasia, 2009, p. 193).

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Durand covers this topic brilliantly in *L'imagination symbolique* (P.U.F., 1964) and in *Essais sur les sciences et la philosophie de l'image* (Hatier, 1994)

*function* of thought, by aggressively promoting “direct thought” (positive), in spite of “indirect thought” (allegoric and symbolic).<sup>5</sup> To cover the *mechanisms* of symbolic thought would prove a far too ambitious goal for this study, although I do want to point to the importance of this aspect in order to better understand the *stakes* of this attempt<sup>6</sup> to bring to your attention the risk of falling into a different *positivism*, one far more dangerous than the one incriminated by Gilbert Durand.<sup>7</sup>

The French philosopher characterized the Byzantine iconoclasm as an “accident” generated by the Christological issue surrounding the understanding of Christ’s double nature, which had direct implications over the way in which one would understand the “icon-image”.<sup>8</sup> In Durand’s terms, we are dealing with a “rigorist” iconoclasm created “by omission” and by an alleged defense of the symbol’s “purity” from the confrontation with an “excessively anthropomorphic realism” supported by the supporters of the icon. The “excessive”, “insidious” iconoclasm promoted by contemporary Cartesian thought will lead, according to Durand, to a “double hemorrhage of symbolism”, one which reduces *cogito* la cogitation, thus creating the scientific universe, and another that aims to depict the “inner being of consciousness”, thus leading to “phenomenologies robbed of transcendence”, where the ontological is no longer evoked or invoked, while the phenomenon matters only as “distant truth”, a “reduced truth”. The result?!... *O world in which the icon takes the face of the “art object” and nothing more!...*

The issue at hand is therefore represented by the danger of reducing the icon to an “art object”. Of this sort of “truth” we will talk in the hereby article, of a truth hidden deep in the plies of a thought tributary to the “image-phenomenon”, one closely related to the anthropomorphic understanding of the Unseen. I will illustrate this by analyzing the thesis of Georgios Kordis, a Greek theologian and iconologist,<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Which doesn’t mean that the “theology of the icon” could be covered extensively through such interpretations. Understanding the *meaning* of the icon on a rational level (in this case the image-icon being related to the symbolic image) is beneficial, although *only* in a negative determination. In the case of theology of the icon, “indirect thought” only has a negative meaning because another is the *understanding* of the religious “symbol”.

<sup>6</sup> I am talking about an attempt to describe this phenomenon in order to present its importance for the *understanding* of the holy image as being radically different from the pagan one.

<sup>7</sup> The references to the study of Gilbert Durand don’t have a direct relation to the subject of the article, but I will repeat myself in saying they are important for comprehending the danger of *positivating* “thinking in images”. Although the notion of “symbol” has another signification for Christianity, one should not forget that this danger has more heads than one.

<sup>8</sup> His study confesses a good understanding of the icon, according to Orthodox views. It is also remarkable that Durand was able to understand why the Western world fails to understand the *meaning* of the icon as an “object of worship”.

<sup>9</sup> For more details, see Durand, *L’imagination symbolique*.

<sup>10</sup> Georgios Kordis, *Hierotypos, Teologia icoanei după Sfinții Părinți* (București: Editura Bizantină, unknown year of publication, p. 15).

who states: “Russian theology, the avant-garde of icon hermeneutics, as depicted in the works of Pavel Florenski and of its main representative, L. Uspenski, supported the idea that the form of the icon was not sufficient to depict the person presented by the icon. The *sine qua non* presumption of the authentic icon constituted in the expression of the existential state of the Person of Christ and of that of the Saints, according to Russian theologians. For if a person is also God (as Christ’s Person has a genuine participation at two natures) or contributes to the world of uncreated energies through grace (Saints), the icon has to find ways of depicting this reality. The core of art is, therefore, found in expressing a reality which is beyond form itself. This striving to describe and to visualize the clerical content of the face inscribes the art of the icon to expressionism, the art which aims to express content through painted form.”<sup>11</sup>

Kordis believes that the essence of the icon consists in transposing the “appearance” of the person<sup>12</sup> „to the painted surface” („appearance” would constitute the ensemble of “inseparable hypostatic traits <*aorista hypostatica idiomata*>”).<sup>13</sup> This “definition” of the icon, the Greek expert argues, would allow a large degree of freedom to the painter, in terms of transposing appearance, while allowing the latter to “create a pictorial composition that is not always related to the manifested reality”.<sup>14</sup> Kordis explains that through this the painter transcends the naturalistic representation, as “appearance” is comprised of “the ensemble of parts” which have their own beingness and existential autonomy”. The fact that “Byzantine mentality deems appearance to be nothing more than the sum of characteristic features” is uncontested proof, for Kordis, in favor of understanding the icon as a mere “appearance resembling the prototype”.<sup>15</sup>

I should also remind the fact that Kordis states that when comparing “the painting of icons” with the expression of “religious truths, which are the fruit of the Holy Spirit’s illumination”, Russian theologians and icon artists would force the “painter of icons” to play the role of the theologian, of illuminate and of body of the Holy Church, one that expresses the truth, not by words, but through shapes and colors”. Even more, “this hermeneutics, which is nowhere to be found in Patristic thought and in Orthodox thought in general, creates a great deal of problems and leads to serious impasses”.<sup>16</sup> Rejecting this hermeneutics is seen in accord with the teachings of the Holy Fathers, with that of Saint Photios I of Constantinople, in particular. The author also quotes Saint Joan of Damscus, Saint Theodore the Studite, Saint Nicephorus I (The Patriarch of Constantinople), but

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<sup>11</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> I will talk about the way in which we understand the “person” later on, in order to better highlight the causes of idolatry in this context of controversy, which he have called “ideological”.

<sup>13</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 83.

<sup>14</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> Kordis, p.p. 84-85.

<sup>16</sup> Kordis, p.p. 16-17.

the main defender of this thesis is said to be represented by Saint Photios I, The Patriarch of Constantinople (a great Byzantine theologian, the author of a corpus of works which is valued almost as highly as that of Saint John Chrysostom. Saint Photios I lived between 820 and 891 (the year of his death is uncertain, while most speculations indicate 893 or 897) and he had an extraordinary doctrinaire and clerical activity, as he is attributed the “merit for the downfall of iconoclasm”.<sup>17</sup>

We should emphasize several aspects before proceeding to make the first comments on the “conclusion” of the Greek iconologist. First of all, assimilating “the writing of the icon”<sup>18</sup> with expressionist art is slightly exaggerated. What we call “art” in the case of the icon’s painting or writing does not have any *direct* connection with art theory whatsoever. Egon Sendler argues that the theological, aesthetical and technical elements of the icon should be regarded as *a whole*, since “the icon is intimately connected to the Scripture and Liturgy, from which it is rooted”.<sup>19</sup> Since “the icon is an image of the Unseen and also the presence of the Unseen”, the image has to have a transcendent dimension, therefore “its essence consists in being the *locus* of presence”<sup>20</sup>. Also, since the image-icon should depict eternal truth, “while expressing its undisclosed character, it should also use an esoteric language, different from that of our world”.<sup>21</sup> Michel Quenot, a French iconologist, emphasizes the undisclosed character of the icon, as “the icon has nothing to do with aesthetics, but with the coming of Christ and of his Kingdome across the world”.<sup>22</sup> Jean-Claude Larchet, a French iconologist as well, states that the “iconographer is not an artist”<sup>23</sup>, despite his acknowledged artistic genius. The essence of the icon is identified with the theophanic and catechetical meanings and this grants the iconographer “a great responsibility towards the Truth that is shared and towards those who will come into communion with It”.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Uspensky, *Teol. icoanei*, p. 195.

<sup>18</sup> Although Old Greek, as confessed by the etymology of the word *eikonographia* (from *eikon*, image and *graphein*, to write), preserves an interesting equivocation between “image” and “writing”, we should also consider the theological meaning, besides the etymological one: the icon is clerical *word* in/as *liturgical image*. We will see that the linguistic distinction is useful for the understanding of the theological *meaning* of the icon. That is why although we will mention the “art of the icon”, in the case of the substantiation of its theological meaning, taking into account the limits of the linguistic distinction, we will refer to the exceptional case of “writing” icons, understood as images with *liturgical sense*, meaning images making present the sense of Embodiment.

<sup>19</sup> Egon Sendler, *Icoana, chipul nevăzutului. Elemente de teologie, estetică, tehnică* (București: Editura Sophia, 2005, p. 6).

<sup>20</sup> Sendler, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> Sendler, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> Michel Quenot, *De la icoană la ospățul nupțial. Chipul, Cuvântul și Trupul lui Dumnezeu* (București: Editura Sophia, 2007, p. 8).

<sup>23</sup> Jean-Claude Larchet, *Iconarul și artistul* (București: Editura Sophia, 2012, p. 14). This statement is brilliantly argued in favor of in the study.

<sup>24</sup> Larchet, p. 14.

Let us mention the main accusation brought by the iconoclasts against the existence of the icon once more: if Christ is a divine-human *person*, thus possessing *two natures*, then the image would obviously only pertain to his human nature (meaning to that which is revealed to human sight). Therefore, the Hieria Council (754) made the following accusation to the icondules: “The defenders of the icon should choose between Monophysitism and Nestorianism. There is no other way”.<sup>25</sup> It is true that the image-icon depicts the “face” of a person. But the term *prosopon* (which is preferred by iconoclasts to *hypostasis*) was not understood in its *correct theological* meaning. While meaning *face* and *person*, at the same time, the term had only been used for the *literal* understanding (“positive”, one could say) of that which it expressed allegorically and symbolically. Therefore one could indeed reject the “circumscription” of Christ’s vision, since his divine nature is in fact *incircumscribable*.<sup>26</sup> The Hieria Council will strengthen the emperor’s position with another argument: “The whole body of Christ was assumed in divine nature (!) and deified entirely”.<sup>27</sup>

The reply of those supporting the icon can be synthesized in the following statement: “He, who denies the existence of the icon, effectively denies the Embodiment of the Word.” The mistake of the iconoclasts, therefore, consists in the conviction that the possibility of the holy image could only be given by the expression of *identity* with that which it represents; hence, the existence of the icon of Christ would not be possible, since it wouldn’t express the relation existing between the two natures of Christ. The only possible icon is, in their opinion, represented by the Eucharist!!! Or this clearly shows a lack of comprehension of the Embodiment dogma, since the iconoclasts could not *distinguish* between nature (*ousia*) and *ipostas* (*hypostasis*) or person (*prosopon*).

Different arguments have been brought to the defense of the icon, depending, of course, upon different contexts. While, Patriarch Nicephorus I “overemphasized the distinction and non-identity between icon and model” and Saint Joan of Damascus “doesn’t distinguish between nature and painted vision”<sup>28</sup>, Saint Theodore the Studite chooses a middle way, by saying: “The prototype is not found in the icon according to being, otherwise the latter would also be called a prototype and, reversely, the prototype would be called icon. This would be absurd, since each nature (that of the model and that of the icon) has its own definition; therefore, the prototype lies in the icon due to the resemblance of the person”.<sup>29</sup> By clearly distinguishing between “being” and

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<sup>25</sup> Chrisoph Schönborn, *Icoana lui Hristos* (București: Anastasia, 1996, p.136).

<sup>26</sup> Schönborn, *I.H.*, p. 135.

<sup>27</sup> Schönborn, *I.H.*, p. 138.

<sup>28</sup> Contextual “emphases” generated, of course, by the need to reject a certain type of argument, as it is well known that the writings of the Holy Fathers were generated by the need to clarify dogmatic misunderstandings. Therefore, they are not “explanations” *in themselves* of the mystery.

<sup>29</sup> Schönborn, p. 175.

“person”, Saint Theodore the Studite annuls the *aporia* of Emperor Constantine the 5<sup>th</sup>. I will present a relevant fragment from his work, “Several objections against iconomachy”: “To those driven by their love for dispute, who say that circumscribing Christ means to divide Him into two sons, like Nestorius, one must reply that this does not mean to divide Him, rather to meditate quite thoroughly to the righteous path. For as the property of hypostases does not sever the unitary nature of Deity in Theology, whereas those found in natural union are distinguishable in a hypostatic manner, likewise, in Economy (*oikonomia*), the property of natures does not sever the sole hypostasis of the Lord’s Word, whereas those in hypostatic union are distinguishable in a natural manner. And if the fact that He is circumscribed, which is characteristic to human nature, would introduce a division, it would therefore mean that the Unborn, Born and the Proceeded, which are the object of the three hypostases, would also divide the unitary (divine) nature; or they do not, although they are different between one another, just like the non- circumscription of Deity and the circumscription of humanity (do not divide) the sole Hypostasis of Christ, although they are different between one another”.<sup>30</sup>

This means that the icon relates to a *person* and not to a *nature* (divine or human). The person, both divine and human, is a *mystery*. How the two natures, human and divine, of Christ are found “in union without being confounded and distinct without being separated” is as mysterious as the existence of the body and of soul together in the human person (although these “two natures” are created). Let us not forget that man is according to the “image and likeness” of God! And the way in which Christ “becomes” Man through Embodiment is the mystery of all mysteries. Therefore, the icon *is not* a mere “copy” of the prototype. It is not a mere “image” of the created but a *confession of the deification* of the created. The Messiah is “the prototype of His icon”, thus *reminding* man that he has been created to the “image and likeness” of God. *Embodiment* only has meaning in the context of *deification* and *deification* only has meaning through *Embodiment*.

Based on the words of Paul the Apostle, Saint Joan of Damascus defined the icon as “a mirror and a *figurative symbol* [emphasis added] suitable to our human nature”, while Saint Theodore the Studite named the icon “*a type of seal and representation* [emphasis added], that comprises the very authentic form of the one according to whom it is named after”.<sup>31</sup> It becomes quite clear that the issue of the relation between “face” and that which is represents is *different* than the mere “reproduction” of the depicted person’s image, thus implying “indirect” and not “direct thought” (*positive*). “All these definitions, even the

<sup>30</sup> Sfântul Teodor Studitul, *Iisus Hristos. Prototip al icoanei Sale* (Alba Iulia: Deisis, 1994, p. 170).

<sup>31</sup> *Apud* Jaroslav Pelikan, *Tradiția creștină: o istorie a dezvoltării doctrinei*, II (Iași: Polirom, 2004, p. 146).

most abstract, were based on the idea that a face had to be understood and defined based on the person to which it was cognate, the face is *pros ti* for that which it represents.”<sup>32</sup> The significations of the distinction and resemblance between “prototype”<sup>33</sup> and “face” are in fact the ones facilitating the worship of the respective image as *icon*.

The defenders of the icon, especially Saint Joan of Damascus and Saint Theodore the Studite, reevaluate the importance of the senses in the process of salvation, by making certain correlations between hearing and sight, between word and image. “Sight, in its capacity of primary sense, is hallowed by the visible appearance [emphasis added] of God through Christ, just like hearing is hallowed by the word [emphasis added] of God. The icon served as means for this hallowing of the sight, merged, as it was, with the hearing of the word”<sup>34</sup>. The hallowing of the senses through this “communion” with Christ transforms the natural power of the senses. “The first analogy between word and image established by Saint Joan, refers to, sort of speak, to the <materiality> of the written word in relation to the painted image. Saint Theodore the Studite reiterates this idea by saying: <That which is represented through ink and paper in one place, is represented in the icon through different colors or materials> [...] The same idea is expressed in the following quote: “Paint Christ, where you can, as you would the One living in your very heart, so that when reading about Him or when seeing Him in an icon you can recognize Him through the two ways of sensitive knowledge – *tais dusin aisthesesi gnorizomenos dittos* – in order for your thought to be enlightened twice and to learn to see with your eyes that which you have learned through the word”. This process therefore implies a certain *recognition* of *Christ*, not of a simple “face” and, in conclusion, of His Person. “In the same way, the Council of Constantinople (869) proclaims its third canon: <We honor the holy images of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Book of the Holy Gospels, by showing them the same veneration, since as we obtain a delivering blessing through syllables (the ones written in the Gospel), the same goes for the images painted with art and color [...].”<sup>35</sup> We may easily observe that the analogy between word and image sends to the teachings of the “two ways of sensitive knowledge”, which aren’t reduced to the mere sensorial perception<sup>36</sup>, but „enlighten thought on the One living in your very

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<sup>32</sup> Pelikan, *Trad. creșt.*, p. 146.

<sup>33</sup> *Prototypos* the first, original *typos*. If we understand that *typos* is assimilated here with *symbolon*, we can also have an adequate *linguistic representation* of the meaning of the icon. In this respect, the icon is, according to Joan of Damascus, a “figurative symbol” or, according to Saint Theodore the Studite, “a type of seal and representation”.

<sup>34</sup> Pelikan, *Trad. creșt.*, p. 148.

<sup>35</sup> Pr. Nikolai Ozolin, *Chipul lui Dumnezeu, chipul omului* (București: Anastasia, 1998, p.p. 50-51).

<sup>36</sup> See Ioannis Romanides, *Teologia patristică* (București: Editura Metafrază, 2011, p. 208).

heart in a double manner”. Therefore, it is this “inhabitant” of the heart that *has* to be seen in the icon and not in any fashion, but based on a *hallowed bodily sight!*

What does Georgios Kordis say about this topic?!<sup>37</sup> While aiming to reject the Russian interpretation, “one absent from patristic thought and from Orthodox thought in general” (!), Kordis quotes Saint Photios, who spoke of “the correlation between the icon and the word of the Gospel” on the topic of the polymorphic representation of Christ’s face. The quote is as follows: “For the lack of resemblance between the persons depicted by the icons does not harm the nature and truth of the icon; for that which is depicted through color in the icon *is represented not only through the shape of the body and through exterior appearance* [emphasis added], but also through a *certain spiritual state* [emphasis added] and through an accompanying work and through a certain emphasis of those suffered and through a certain positioning of the locations and through a *certain interpretation of the inscriptions* [emphasis added] and *through other special symbols* [emphasis added], which *cannot be overlooked* [emphasis added] in the icons painted by the *true believers* [emphasis added] and, at least most of the latter should be included in the icon, if it is not possible to include them all. Through the latter, even if not all of them are included, we can rise to the *understanding and honoring* [emphasis added] of he who is depicted by the icon (*that which the iconoclasts want to prevent*) [emphasis added]”.<sup>38</sup> What does Uspenski have to say about this polymorphism (although not in relation to the issue tackled by Saint Photius)? During the post-iconoclastic period, of which we are talking about, this polymorphism is seen as the expression of the development of the theology of the icon based on the solid ground of Tradition: “New people are Christianized, the Slavs especially. They participate to the elaboration of this classical language, each giving birth to its own type of holiness and to its own type of icon. This is how the classical form of the art of the Church reaches a very large variety and an exceptional richness”.<sup>39</sup> Polymorphism is therefore related to a certain “type of holiness” and the words of Saint Photius did not differ.

Although the meaning of the text is very clear, Kordius states, *against that which is obvious*, that: “the arguments of Saint Photius have, in our opinion, an apologetic character, while failing to represent his works”.<sup>40</sup> Are we to ignore that this type of argument is also present in the works of Saints Joan of Damascus and of Saint Theodore the Studite, as mentioned above?!...What we should also note is the fact that Saint Photius emphasizes certain aspects, besides mentioning the so called “interpretation of certain inscriptions”, namely

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<sup>37</sup> Many are those “said” here, but I am only interested in those referring to the relation between word and image.

<sup>38</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 49.

<sup>39</sup> Uspensky, *Teol. ic.*, p. 193.

<sup>40</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 50.

the idea that the essence of the holy image should be understood “by other *special symbols* [emphasis added]<sup>41</sup> that *cannot be ignored* [emphasis added] in the icons painted by *true believers* [emphasis added]”, this being *the only way* “we can rise to the *understanding and honoring* of he who is depicted (*that which the iconoclasts want to prevent*)”. Therefore, it is not just “exterior looks”<sup>42</sup> which represent the essence of the icon! It would seem pointless to add anything else about the meaning given by Saint Photius to the icon!

Still, “exterior appearance”, understood as “undivided hypostatic traits” (*aorista hypostatica idiomata*), is believed, by Kordis, to be the *sole* ground of the icon’s “essence”, as nothing more is needed to transpose this look, other than “holy grace”<sup>43</sup> for the painter, who doesn’t have to *necessarily* be a believer, as the Council of Constantinople (869-870) didn’t connect the icon’s existence to the “moral-clerical status of the painter”<sup>44</sup>. Even more, he states, “the *copying* [emphasis added] of the appearance of old icons constituted the tradition of the Byzantines”.<sup>45</sup>

Regretting that Uspensky doesn’t make the difference between “face/vision” and “morphology” in the case of the icon<sup>46</sup>, meaning that he doesn’t distinguish between the holiness of the “represented” and the *art* of the painter (which is the “morphology”, “the modus of the transposing of the face”), Kordis concludes that the Russian interpretation is an innovation which would create great problems. Therefore, the “plastic language” used by Uspensky is seen to be an error created by the impermissible confusion between “vision” and “morphology”. We remind that the “plastic language” of the Russian presumes a specific *theological education*, therefore, a call to the words of the Scriptures.

Michel Quenot explicitly mentions a connection between image and word in the “art” of the icon. “Liturgical image, the icon manifests the *present* of the Liturgy which is proclaimed in the texts: < Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing (Luke 4:21)>, < Today is born of a virgin He who holds the whole creation in His hand>.”<sup>47</sup> This relates the icon in close connection to the word of the liturgical prayer: “The liturgy offers a portrait of Christ and, by listening to the Word, one word is sometimes all that it takes to discover Him and to make Him present in one’s heart. Therefore, the words of the prayer test the

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<sup>41</sup> Should not be confused with the representation of the Christ through various *symbols* (lamb, fish, vine, etc.), something already condemned by the Quinisext Council of 692.

<sup>42</sup> Although it is not understood as the *natural* representation of the depicted person, “appearance” is reduced to a series of undivided *physical* hypostatic traits, believed to be *invariable*, which allow the delivery of a certain “stability” of the image and the possibility of representing the *resemblance* of the depicted person with the prototype.

<sup>43</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 159.

<sup>44</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p.p. 57, 59.

<sup>45</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 81.

<sup>46</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, nota 67, 58.

<sup>47</sup> Quenot, *De la icoană...*, p. 102.

authenticity of the icon due to the ontological connection which ties the word to the image. Christ can be merciful, in His glory, suffering or casting out the money changers from the Temple. His icon may represent all these aspects, because His icon is The Icon”.<sup>48</sup> The icon is not a mere image of something or someone, of a phenomenon, but always of a *reality* which is a *clerical* reality for the beholder. In conclusion, the icon can only be *seen* by the true believer. Only the “sight” of the latter can “discover” *true reality*. This “sight”<sup>49</sup> is the direct consequence on the Embodiment of the second Person of the Holy Trinity. The icon as an “object of worship” is based on the doctrinal grounds of *The Transfiguration of Jesus*. He who does not comprehend this fact will never be able to understand the *meaning* of the icon. The epiphany of the Holy Trinity from Mount Tabor reveals the Way, the Truth and the Life that are inherent to the *deification* of man. Without the Path-to-Christ, one cannot know Who is the Truth-in-Christ that gives Itself continuously as Life-in-Christ! This is what the Apostles Paul, Joan and Jacob failed to comprehend at first. The Crucifixion-Path, the Ascension-Truth and the Life-Descent of the Holy Spirit (sent by the Father through the Son)<sup>50</sup> were needed to enlighten the “eye” of those found in the dark. “From the Father, through the Son in the Holy Spirit” is not the mere *expression* of creation, but a revelation, a “transcript” of the “metamorphosis” of Christ’s face, a transcription of the *image* in the *words* of man, who is “image and likeness” of God.<sup>51</sup> This *mystical connection* of man with God cannot be “comprehended” otherwise than as the *process of man’s deification*. In other words, only those deified can *see* The Lord. That is why an *icon* cannot be seen by those with “darkened eyes” – with bodily sight –, but only by those with *hallowed sight*.

We return to the other statements made by the Greek expert, to his conviction that “this interpretation and understanding of the icon (presented by the Russian school, A/N) would necessarily lead to the direct connection of plastic language to the Truth, thus granting plastic language dogmatic dimensions. Since *tehnotropia* is that which expresses, makes visible, the transcendent content of the icon, then it must constitute its essence. Without plastic language, the icon is no longer an icon, since it does not express content and does not make visible the holiness or godliness of the person represented by it. Therefore, one

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<sup>48</sup> Quenot, *De la icoană...*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>49</sup> The degree of “spiritual sight” is direct proportional relation to the beholders degree of sanctity.

<sup>50</sup> Implies the “correlation” of the uncreated divine energies with hypostases of the Holy Trinity in the *economy* of salvation. The Father is He who crucifies – the only Path of deification, the Son is Ascended Truth – meaning, the Invisible made visible to man, while the Holy Spirit is the Descent of Life – the accomplishment of man’s salvation from death and his resurrection to eternal life. It is very important to understand that the divine economy can only be understood as the *work* of God-Logos which performs all belonging to the Father in Holy Spirit. Nobody saw the Son, unless the Father wanted to reveal Him through Holy Spirit. That is why, he who saw the Son, saw the Father and did so only in Holy Spirit.

<sup>51</sup> One should not forget the *dialog* that Christ has with the three apostles.

shouldn't wonder why naturalistic icons – most of which perform miracles – are characterized as being heretical or wrongfully worshiping".<sup>52</sup>

Let us first clarify some of the terms used to express this drastic conclusion. The term *tehnotropia* implies a way of transposing an assumed "essence/nature" of the icon to plastic language, an essence identified with a presumed "existential state of the Christ's Person and of the Saints". Also, the terms "hallow" and "deification" are used totally inadequate here to express the "content" of the icon. "In" the icon, we don't "see" anything similar to the naturalistic representation! Let alone the "holiness" or "deification" of those represented. The icon doesn't depict the *deification* or *holiness* according to *nature* of those depicted, but offers them *relationally*, through the connection between face and archetype/prototype<sup>53</sup>. The icon confesses the truth of the Embodiment, the *reality* of the Embodiment. "The Transfiguration" of God-Man, meaning the *seen making* of the reality of Man-God's *divinity* and, implicitly, the reality of man's *deification*. This is what is shown "through" the icon! *Through* the icon we *see* Who Christ is, meaning God "made" Man. Through the *icon* we, therefore, see the Face of whose *image* we are! "Man is not the icon of God. It is said, of course, that man is the icon of God, but this expression is abused. Literally, man is *to the image* of God and not the image of God", states Ioannis Romanides.<sup>54</sup> The embodiment of the *Logos* meant *humanization*, namely the fact that the human and divine natures were united in the Person of Christ. But man doesn't unite with divine nature, nor does he unite with the divine hypostasis, but with the "deified, resurrected and glorified" *human nature* of Christ. Through it, man is united with the "uncreated work of Christ's human nature, which is the uncreated Divine Grace".<sup>55</sup> As a result, Christ's icon is the Word made body, but not a body which is the *sole* one in which the two natures, divine and human, are united in a hypostatic manner. That is why man is not the icon of Christ, but the *icon of the icon* of Christ. This has extremely important consequences regarding the understanding of man's "face", which has to *necessarily* be seen only in relation to the "resemblance" to Christ (which "resemblance" is nothing more than the *work* "according to the face"...).<sup>56</sup> As a consequence, in the case of the holy image, the "exterior form" of that which is represented by the icon cannot be dismantled from the "resemblance" to Christ, from the *theological education* implied by the *creation* of the icon (not by the "copying" of model, as Kordis would have it), as man is *created* "image and likeness" of God. The icon must, consequently, express a *relation* of resemblance which would refer from the face to the prototype.

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<sup>52</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 16.

<sup>53</sup> Schönborn, p. 176.

<sup>54</sup> Romanides, *Teol. patr.*, p. 157.

<sup>55</sup> Romanides, *Teol. patr.*, p. 159.

<sup>56</sup> Romanides, *Teol. patr.*, p. 158.

As for the “naturalistic icons – most of which perform miracles”, we should say this is yet another unfortunate consequence of the Greek iconologist’s position. *All* icons perform miracles as long as they *are* icons! Miracles aren’t circumscribed to human understanding – otherwise they wouldn’t be miracles anymore – in order for us to identify them to one of their *manifestations* in/through the matter of the icon. As a result, it is not the icon, as the *spoken image itself* (*phenomenon* image), but the icon as a *liturgical* image (meaning that *work together* in the community found in communion with God) which “performs miracles”. Otherwise, it would be *as if* the mere recitation or writing *of a certain* human word (borrowed from a *certain* icon, for example) by someone would make it possible for them to “benefit” from a miracle. Only God can perform miracles – directly or through the Mother of God, or the saints, upon our prayer or not, but *only* through his grace – without us knowing when or why!<sup>57</sup> The icons that “perform miracles” are “identified” by the community in which they appear, usually when there is a need to “resolve” certain *requests* or while aiming to *straighten* certain aspects of the behavior of the members of that community. So, there is nothing *magical* at all about such aspects! “Naturalism” is not a sin *per se* (nothing is a “sin by itself”), but could become a “sin”, as it may be *perceived*, in this case, as a misappropriation of the icon’s *meaning*. The dismissal of “naturalism” means the dismissal of the *possible mistaking* of the liturgical image, hence, of the icon, from the image that doesn’t *refer* to anything more than *plain* nature, namely to its character of being *created*.<sup>58</sup> The icon “is” the sign of God’s *presence* in the world. Worshiping the icon means to acknowledge this presence as such and, implicitly, that of God. The Saints are the *confessors* of this presence of Christ, God-Man. Only *faith* in God can, thus, be the “sign” of the icons that “perform miracles” (even if a non-believer “sees” the natural manifestation of a miracle, he or she doesn’t perceive it as a “miracle”, but as a *yet* unexplained natural phenomenon!).

The theologians of the iconoclastic period focused mainly on the “theological substantiation of the icon’s existence and of its worship”, Kordis states. Theologians were preoccupied with “the capacity of the face to express the person and the cult dimension of the icon”.<sup>59</sup> Yet, the *theology* of the icon has had an indirect influence on the *art* of the icon and the result is the definition of the icon’s *being* in relation to the appearance of the person

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<sup>57</sup> How would we explain, for example, why certain icons that “perform miracles” stop doing so, at a certain point? Miracles do not, therefore, depend on certain “attributes” of the icon as object of worship.

<sup>58</sup> Without understanding the distinction between created and uncreated, it is impossible to understand the character of the relation between man and God. In fact, one cannot understand Christianity without understanding this relation.

<sup>59</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 90.

presented by the icon”.<sup>60</sup> The manifest goal of Kordis’ work is the preoccupation for “the existence or inexistence of the relation between the iconology of Photius and the plastic reality which manifested itself after the iconoclastic period”.<sup>61</sup> Kordis believes that Saint Photius’ *Iconurghia*<sup>62</sup> may be understood as art whose main work is characterized by (1) the appropriate representation of the appearance of those presented by the icon by (2) preserving their cleanliness and decorous appearance which (3) determines the icon’s character of “composed event comprised from the appearance of the depicted person us – a stable and invariable fact – and from morphology (the modus of existence of the appearance), which Photius doesn’t define”.<sup>63</sup> Kordis’ argument is obvious: the icon is a “composed event” in which “morphology”, the specifying element, is the expression of the painter’s “art”. Let us remember that the icon’s painter is given extended liberty, according to this conception, to “work” a holy image (the “liberties” of his art are only limited by the necessity of representing the “appearance”, one reflecting the cleanliness and grace specific to those depicted by the icon), especially since the artist doesn’t necessarily be a believer!

Understanding the “unity of the icon and of the prototype” as *dogma* allowing “the scent and transposition of worship, from icon to prototype”, Kordis claims to set free the art of the iconographer from the constraints of a “plastic language” which would lead to the paradox of iconizing Judas with “holiness”, as “one may conclude according to the Russian theory of the icon”.<sup>64</sup> This statement, however, also represents a very serious accusation. To talk about Uspensky’s “art of the icon” would exceed the purpose and limitations of this article (while the defense of the Russian theologian, iconologist and iconographer would only be indirect).<sup>65</sup>

My aim is to show that one cannot speak of *iconurghie* in the absence of the practical and theoretical education granted to the theologian, meaning without relating to the Christian meaning of the notion of *person* and, implicitly, without evaluating the relation between image and word.<sup>66</sup> The few quotes from the Church Fathers chosen to illustrate this are more than conclusive. The brief comments that will follow hereon will do nothing more

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<sup>60</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 91.

<sup>61</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 91.

<sup>62</sup> This term is transliterated according to the Greek one and it means “work of icons”. The Romanian translator believes that transliteration better preserves the meaning of the Greek term.

<sup>63</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 93.

<sup>64</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 199.

<sup>65</sup> In fact, his “defense” is represented by the *acknowledgment* that he is the greatest expert in the field.

<sup>66</sup> Obviously, this implies the relation between icon and clerical word. The semantic “contamination” of *iconurghie* with “liturgy”, the first would signify “the work of the relation with God through icon.

than to support the existence of an *equipotent relation* between image and word, between icon and clerical word (theological education).

“If someone doesn’t name the description of the bodily sight of the Word an icon of Christ or even Christ [...] he or she is a heretic”<sup>67</sup>. This quote from *Antirrhetic* is interpreted as follows: „Therefore, the exterior bodily appearance of Christ constitutes, *contrary* [emphasis added] to the claims of Russian thinkers, the icon of Christ”. The conclusion follows: “Exterior appearance by itself is that which constitutes the icon”.<sup>68</sup> But does this reflect the argument of Saint Theodore the Studite? He does not mention, not even *literally*, that “exterior appearance” is the icon, but that *the description of the bodily sight of the Word implies the acknowledgement of Its Embodiment*. Therefore, he who does not acknowledge the *Embodiment* is a heretic! Theodore thus rejects the idolatrous understanding of Christ’s person.

To better understand the relation between iconoclasm and idololatriy, we must, first of all, make several assertions on the notion of “person”. We said earlier that *anthropomorphization* is a wide-open door opened to *idololatriy*. In fact, anthropomorphization is the result of *masked* thought that *moves forward* on a path already set to impose a certain “face” to the truth. The efforts undertaken by Greek philosophers, especially Plato and the Neoplatonists (without forgetting Pre-Socratics, like Xenophanes and Parmenides), to “unmask” religious anthropomorphism was pointless in the absence of the understanding of the privileged *relation* that man has with the divine, as they couldn’t reach the meaning that Christians will later on attach to the “person”. Of course, history shows that such a signification couldn’t have been reached in the first place. The person/*prosopon* could no longer be only the “*non-locus locus*” of the emergence of truth, according to a “*logic*” of its constituency founded only on the experience of man. If the “mask”/*prosopon* of the ancient Greek actor reveals a “face” of the truth reflected in “those conflicts between human liberty and the <logical> necessity of the unified and harmonious world”,<sup>69</sup> the Christian is a *person* whose liberty is no longer limited (by necessity), nor illusory (through relativity). As for Greek thought (not just philosophical), “hypostasis” (*hypostasis*) meant “nature” (*physis*) and “substance” (*ousia*), to identify the “person” (*prosopon*) with “hypostasis” was incomprehensible. In fact, it will remain incomprehensible to anyone unable to transcend the *anthropomorphism* implied by an understanding which is tributary to our “logic”.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Sfântul Teodor Studitul, *Antirrh. III*, PG 100, 428 C, *apud* Kordis, Hiero., p. 21.

<sup>68</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 21.

<sup>69</sup> Ioannis Zizioulas, *Ființa eclesială* (București: Editura Bizantină, 2007, 25).

<sup>70</sup> There has been extensive work on this topic. Yannaras and Larchet are just two of the most popular contemporary authors to cover this issue. Sadly, we cannot cover this discussion extensively, although we recognize its importance.

If the icon is an “event comprised of face and morphology”, then the “icon” *can no longer be* mere “exterior appearance”, as the painter *already* “sees” the person depicted in the icon in the light of his or hers theological education. What does “exterior appearance” mean in this context? What does the “description of the bodily sight of the Word” mean? If Kordis’ argument were valid, Saint Theodore the Studite *would no longer be able* to say that this “description” is the *essence* of the “icon”... In fact, the “description” of the depicted person cannot be an “exterior image”, since the *hypostasis* is that which is depicted and not its human *nature*. The “aesthetics” implied by iconography cannot, therefore, be “exterior” to the icon! We cannot “cut” the senses from a certain “internal understanding” in the act of “*iconorghia*”. It would be as if the two natures, the divine and human, would not be “united without being mistaken” and “separated without being combined”. Or, the holy man being God, *according to grace*, (his human nature being united with Christ’s *human nature*), he is in the same iconographical condition as Christ, whose “resemblance” he is, so the “face” is not an “exterior image”, but the expression of the *work* “to the image” of God, meaning under the sign of man’s *deification*.

When Saint Paul the Apostle tells the Colossians that “He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him”,<sup>71</sup> we understand that Christ, being the image (*eikon*) of the Father, the invisible God, makes himself seen through Embodiment, so that he may reconcile all things through his body of “flesh” and, especially, to save man. Men, “who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds”<sup>72</sup>, he reconciles “by the blood of his cross”.<sup>73</sup> The *Mind/Logos* is therefore that which has to be restored for man’s savior to be made possible. It is not by accident that the second Person of the Holy Trinity is called Word/*Logos*. And it is no accident that Saint Paul the Apostle states: “For God, who said, <Let light shine out of darkness,> has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, there is a mysterious connection between Word and Face, between word and the image-icon.

Saint Paul the Apostle helps us to make a fully clarifying connection between the Father, the invisible God and the Son, who is the face/*eikon* of the invisible God, on one hand, and between the *servant’s face*, as “he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness”.<sup>75</sup> The fact that that the battle for salvation takes place in this body of

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<sup>71</sup> Colossians I, 15, 16.

<sup>72</sup> Colossians I, 21.

<sup>73</sup> Colossians I, 20.

<sup>74</sup> Corinthians II, 4, 6.

<sup>75</sup> Philippians 2, 7

“flesh” is extremely important for the understanding of man’s relation with God. “For God, who said, <Let light shine out of darkness,> has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”.<sup>76</sup> It is easily understood in what way Christ’s “face” is “*prosopon*”. Meaning the fact that in the person of Jesus Christ we will “see” the *light* of God’s *glory*, as He is the One, “who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies, so that they will be like his glorious body”.<sup>77</sup> The “appearance” of our lowly body, meaning *deified*, will be “like his glorious body”. God has “made himself nothing”, taking the “face of a servant”, humbling himself, so that we may deify ourselves, emptying ourselves of our worldly self, by humbling ourselves. It is no accident that the unceasing prayer of the heart is called “The Jesus Prayer”. The descent of the “mind” to the “heart” means a “descent”/humbling of God to man’s heart. A beautiful prayer states: “O Christ the true light, enlightening and sanctifying every man who comes into the world. Let the light of Your countenance shine on us, that in it we may behold the ineffable light. Guide our footsteps aright in keeping Your commandments. Through the intercessions of Your all-pure Mother and of all the saints. Amen.” In conclusion, the *icon* of the invisible God, Jesus Christ, is the *icon* in which we see the “ineffable light”, as He is the one whose “countenance shine on us”. But only through prayer...Does this mean that the “painter of icons” doesn’t have to pray?!

To support those stated above we will mention one of the most important works of Saint Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit*, which clearly shows that the “essence” of the icon is something else than a mere representation of an “exterior figure”. Saint Basil the Great clearly states that if divine nature is beyond our sensorial perception capacity, what we see in Christ as “face” of the Father is not the “figure” or “form”, but the “kindness” of the Father, “which relates to His essence” (the same with that of Jesus Christ)<sup>78</sup>. Furthermore, Saint Basil states that, being “inaccessible according to nature” and “perceived only through kindness” (“perception” which cannot, therefore, be *direct*), Christ is communicated “only to the worthy; not shared in one measure, but distributing Its energy according to the proportion of faith”.<sup>79</sup> The “worthy”, meaning those who have achieved a certain degree of holiness and “holiness”, unlike Kordis’ argument, is a *gift*: “to Whom turn all things needing sanctification [...] (He is) the origin of sanctification, *light perceptible to the mind, supplying, as it were, through Itself, illumination to every faculty in the search for truth* [emphasis

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<sup>76</sup> Corinthians II, 4, 6.

<sup>77</sup> Philippians, 3, 21.

<sup>78</sup> Sfântul Vasile cel Mare, *Scrieri*, vol. III (București: Editura Institutului Biblic și de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1988, 37).

<sup>79</sup> Sfântul Vasile cel Mare, *Scr.*, 39.

added].”<sup>80</sup> So, it is through the “light perceptible to the mind” (clerical word), in the absence of which we cannot see the truth, that we may “see” God. The “former face”, the one darkened by sin, will return to “natural beauty” through the sanctification performed “in intimate union of the Holy Spirit with the Soul”. And when the Holy Ghost, shining “like the sun, will by the aid of your purified eye show you in Himself the image of the invisible, *and in the blessed spectacle of the image you shall behold the unspeakable beauty of the archetype* [emphasis added]”.<sup>81</sup> Only “in the Holy Spirit” we may see God as “no one can say “*Jesus is Lord*” except in the *Holy Spirit*”, according to Paul the Apostle.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, the “face” is not something “exterior”, which can be seen with human sight, but something manifested through Christ’s “kindness”.

Of course, this term has to be correlated with the meaning granted to the “person”, since anthropomorphization is, as mentioned before, the door left wide open to *idololatry*. If the *tehnotropia* of the icon is not an essential element, but one “related to the essence”<sup>83</sup> (meaning „relative to”), a “changeable, transformable element, based on the mundane cultural and spiritual context”, the icon, as a “composed element”, Kordis states, would allow the iconographer to paint Christ and Judas “in the same manner”!!!... Kordis does mention that “of course, this doesn’t mean that Judas is sanctified, as the Russian theory of the icon could conclude”.<sup>84</sup> In this case, it is very difficult to understand, as we will see, what “sanctification” means for Kordis.

My intuition is that the genuine purpose of Greek expert’s work is represented by a subtle justification of the “aesthetic reason” (the last chapter of the book being dedicated to this issue) of the “icon’s morphology”, while trying, in fact, to justify the polymorphism of the holy image, in order to explicitly reject the existence of an essential relation of the holy image with theological education (and, therefore, with Russian iconology and iconography). As “holiness is an abstract notion” (this is presented as the definition of “holiness”!!) whose “content may vary from place to place, from one age to another, from one person to another” (*sic!*), “we have to search for the reason of morphology beyond the *expression of holiness* [emphasis added] and to *move to the point of the artist* [emphasis added] that functions in a specific place, with concrete data on the world and with a certain purpose, that of presenting the icon to the eyes of the believers”.<sup>85</sup> (I find it hard to believe that such a degree of liberty granted to the iconographer can ever exist!!) Furthermore, this liberty

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<sup>80</sup> Sfântul Vasile cel Mare, *Scr.*, 38.

<sup>81</sup> Sfântul Vasile cel Mare, *Scr.*, 39.

<sup>82</sup> *I Cor.*, XII, 3.

<sup>83</sup> Probably “relative to essence”, otherwise it wouldn’t make any sense in Romanian (I suspect this to be an error of the Romanian translator).

<sup>84</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, 199.

<sup>85</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 174.

is related directly to the way in which the painter has to “move imaginarily”<sup>86</sup>, creating that pictorial reality that justifies “the storage of appearance (which) is performed through a process, according to which appearance is sent to the senses and memory of the beholder through optical rays. Such rays, originating in the eyes of the beholder, embrace appearance and project it to the latter’s brain”.<sup>87</sup> And further still... “the goal of the painter was to relate the appearance to the beholder”!<sup>88</sup>

We won’t respond to this new challenge (since it would extensively increase our goal), yet we will ask the following: is the “morphology of the icon” (“the modus in which the face is transposed”), that which is completely unrelated to the “face” (the icon’s “to be”), the one that makes possible the worship of the icon? In this case, would this “theology” be *complementary* to “aesthetics”, which is the expression of the painter’s liberty, while the painter could even be a non-believer?!

The “iconic art”, comparable with Orthodox theological education (such is the case of the Russian school’s “art”), is substituted by an “art of the icon” believed to be grounded “on the Byzantine data” of “*tehnotropia*, whose ultimate goal is represented by “relating the icon to the beholder”, an art in which “every new pictorial element that contributes to the connection between the beholder and the icon is acceptable and useful” [...] as it enriches the art of the icon, “one characterized today by *immobility and by the impossibility of a dialog with the mundane pictorial reality* [emphasis added]”.<sup>89</sup>

The ultimate goal of Kordis’ work is thus revealed! The “art of the icon” has never been “immobile”, nor has theological education, while its “dialog” with the “mundane pictorial reality” takes place naturally. The “liturgical function” of the icon (object of worship), *has no direct relation to aesthetical grounds!* The adaptation to the “pictorial mundane reality” is a continuous process, one taking place through the *iconurghia* through the Holy Spirit. That is why the greatest problem of the contemporary iconographer is not that of iconoclasm by “omission” (rigorist), but that of the “insidious” one, “which takes place through excess”, as Gilbert Durand would say. There is great risk for the interpretation of the Greek iconologist to generate a new type of iconoclasm, one similar to the second type, but far more dangerous than it, one that would turn the icon into a mere “work of art”.

Idololatry is, therefore, closely related to the way in which we understand the meaning of the human *person* and, implicitly, to the way in which man relates to creation. In the absence of an *authentic* relation with God, “postmodern” man will believe that the world is “to his image and likeness”.

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<sup>86</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 174.

<sup>87</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 175.

<sup>88</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, p. 176.

<sup>89</sup> Kordis, *Hiero.*, pp. 199-201.

Anthropomorphism will, therefore, subtly, yet significantly, *mask* man's exit from himself, while pointing to his endless wandering in the ruining relativism of "better", which is the insidious enemy of Good.

*"This paper was made within The Knowledge Based Society Project supported by the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU/89/1.5/S/56815."*



# THE CONCEPT OF REFLEXION<sup>1</sup> IN IMMANUEL KANT'S *CRITIQUE OF THE PURE REASON*

GHEORGHE ȘTEFANOV<sup>2</sup>

## *Abstract*

The paper represents an attempt to understand Kant's view on the concept of reflexion (*Überlegung*) in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. After pointing out the difficulties faced by the existing readings, I try to give some support to the claim that if we regard *Überlegung* as a metatheoretical faculty, its concepts are precisely the concepts used by Kant to construct the theoretical system of the Critique.

**Keywords:** Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, reflexion, *Überlegung*, sensibility, understanding, matter, form.

This paper was written with the intention to produce an enlightening analysis of the concept of reflexion (*Überlegung*) that Kant employs in the *Critique of the Pure Reason*. It regards especially the chapter named *Appendix of the Equivocal Nature or Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflexion from the Confusion of the Transcendental with the Empirical use of the Understanding*<sup>3</sup> and also: *Remark on the Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflexion*<sup>4</sup>. I will try to find out what Kant means by *reflexion*, if this is a sort of cognitive faculty or, if not, to what kind of cognitive faculty does it belong. Some classical distinctions should be pointed out in order to achieve, or at least try to achieve, this purpose, some new ones will prove themselves helpful. Once the concept of reflexion is defined, I will briefly examine the *concepts of reflexion* that Kant introduces in this chapter, considering their role in the architecture of the kantian work and their relation with the concepts of understanding and the ideas of reason. Finally

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term *reflexion* instead of the more usual term *reflection* because this last term will be considered in my paper as having another meaning.

<sup>2</sup> University of Bucharest.

<sup>3</sup> *Anhang von der Amphibolie der Reflexionsbegriffe durch die Verwechslung des empirischen Verstandesgebrauchs mit dem transzendentalen*; [B316; A260]. All references from Kant indicate the pages from (Königlichen Preußischen (later Deutschen) Akademie der Wissenschaften, ed., 1900).

<sup>4</sup> *Anmerkung zur Amphibolie der Reflexionsbegriffe*; [B324; A268].

I will offer a rational reconstruction of the kantian concept of reflexion, considering a metatheoretical utilization of it, through its own concepts. My assumption is that one particular understanding of the term *reflexion* may offer important results for the understanding of the entire philosophical system that Kant produces in the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

The importance of the chapter I have mentioned is not entirely determined by those interpreters of Kant's book who have focused their attention on it<sup>5</sup>. Some of the interpreters have considered, because of the critiques raised by Kant in this chapter against traditional metaphysics, especially against Leibniz, that: "This section is, indeed, like the chapter on *Phenomena and Noumena*, wrongly located. [...] (it) ought therefore to found its place in the Dialectic,"<sup>6</sup> Other interpreters think that Kant's chapter about the amphiboly of the concepts of reflexion is "at the ending of his critical ontology,"<sup>7</sup> and some others have adopted an intermediate point of view<sup>8</sup>.

Although it is possible to invoke philosophers like Locke, Leibniz, Baumgarten or Wolff for establishing the understanding of the concept of *reflexion* in Kant's time, his own understanding is a little different from theirs. Traditionally it has been meant by reflexion the attention's focusing on the activity of one's own consciousness, on the subject, or ego (for Leibniz, *reflexive acts* "make us think of what is called I, and observe that this or that is within us [...]")<sup>9</sup> and on the means by which he or she thinks and/or knows something about one object<sup>10</sup>. Kant himself presents a kind of contiguity with these opinions in his thinking when he says, in his logic lectures, that by reflexion we would understand "the reflection on the mode of conceiving various representations in one single consciousness"<sup>11</sup>, though within his critical system the concept of reflexion is precisely redefined.

Thus, for Kant the reflexion "is not occupied about objects themselves, for the purpose of directly obtaining concepts of them, but is that state of the mind (*Zustand des Gemüts*) in which we set ourselves to discover the subjective conditions under which we obtain concepts. It is the consciousness of the

<sup>5</sup> The *Amphiboliekapitel* is often neglected because of its misleading character and its ambiguousness.

<sup>6</sup> (Kemp Smith 1918, 419). See also (Ewing 1936), claiming that "this section should really belong to the Dialectic."

<sup>7</sup> (Heidegger, 1962, 30) writes that given Kant's project, "[Amphiboliekapitel ist] am Schluß seiner kritischen Ontologie".

<sup>8</sup> See (Lange, 1959) for instance.

<sup>9</sup> (Leibniz, 1714, §30).

<sup>10</sup> See (Locke, 1690), Book II, Chapter I, Paragraph 4: "By reflection then, in the following part of this discourse, I would be understood to mean, that notice which the mind takes of its own operations, and the manner of them, by reason whereof there come to be ideas of these operations in the understanding [...]".

<sup>11</sup> See (Kant, 1992).

relation of given representations to the different sources or faculties of cognition (*das Bewußtsein des Verhältnisses gegebener Vorstellungen zu unseren Erkenntnisquellen*), by which alone their relation to each other can be rightly determined."<sup>12</sup> We may distinguish then between an exercise of reflexion for the comparison of our knowledge or our representations one to each other and its exercise for comparing our knowledge with its sources. Since these sources of our knowledge cannot be, for Kant, others than the sensibility or the understanding, the problem concerning them that has to be solved with the aid of reflexion is formulated as follows: "to what faculty of cognition do they belong? To the understanding or to the senses?"<sup>13</sup>

We have to notice here that our representations may be connected (*verknüpft*) by the senses or compared (*vergleichen*) by the understanding. This distinction between connection (*Verknüpfung*) and comparison (*Vergleichung*) seems to be important for the solution of the problem. In his notes Kant formulates it more explicitly, saying: "The thing which I'm thinking at through the concept A but I am also thinking at the same thing through the concept B is a judgment (of connection<sup>14</sup>). The concept which I have got in A and also in B is a judgment of comparison."<sup>15</sup> This distinction between connection (of things) and comparison (of concepts) leads us to the difference between representations which have the sensibility as source (namely *phenomena*) and representations which have the understanding as source (namely *objects*). The two judgments entailed by these different activities can be related with *a priori* or *a posteriori* judgments like this: the judgments of connection are *a posteriori* while the judgments of comparison are *a priori*. So we can understand, for the beginning, why reflexion, through which we are supposed to distinguish between these judgments, is so important for Kant, when he says that it "is a duty which no one can neglect who wishes to establish an *a priori* judgment upon things."<sup>16</sup>

Another distinction occurs, according to Kant, between a *logical reflexion* (*eine logische Reflexion*), which is "mere comparison, for in it no account is taken of the faculty of cognition to which the given conceptions belong, and they are consequently, as far as regards their origin, to be treated as homogeneous;"<sup>17</sup> and a *transcendental reflexion* (*eine transcendente Reflexion*), that is "The act whereby I compare my representations with the faculty of cognition which originates them, and whereby I distinguish whether they are compared with each other as

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<sup>12</sup> [B316; A260].

<sup>13</sup> [B316; A260].

<sup>14</sup> Kant's addition.

<sup>15</sup> See (Kowalewski, 1924), Reflexion 3933: "Das Ding, was ich durch den Begriff A denke, eben dasselbe denke ich auch durch den Begriff B ist ein Urtheil (der Verknüpfung). Der Begriff, den ich in A denke, ich auch in B: ist ein Urtheil der Vergleichung.", quoted after (Bröken, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> The original text: "ist eine Pflicht, von der sich niemand lossagen kann, wenn er a priori etwas über Dinge urteilen will." [B319; A263].

<sup>17</sup> [B318-319; A262-263].

belonging to the pure understanding or to sensuous intuition [...].”<sup>18</sup> According to this distinction the two manners of exercising the reflexion, as a comparison of our representations to each other and as a comparison of them with their sources, come in fact from the existence of two different activities of our thinking. These two kinds of reflexion are entirely different, as long as “the faculties of cognition to which they belong are not even the same.”<sup>19</sup>

We have now the first indication that reflexion has not to be considered a special faculty of knowledge, different from the sensibility, understanding or reason, but it must be regarded as belonging to one, or more, of these faculties. Even more, the two sorts of reflexion that Kant has distinguished appear to belong to different cognitive faculties.

Only now some of the difficulties that had made the interpreters to pass silently over this chapter from Kant’s *Critique* are showing up. For the sensibility does not seem to be this faculty, neither for the transcendental reflexion, nor for the logical one, since it can apply through its pure intuitions only to the empirical intuitions and it certainly cannot determine the way in which the concepts are linked together in a “state of mind,” as the reflexion can do. Nor can the understanding serve as a support of the transcendental reflexion’s activities, since it cannot apply to itself, as Kant says: “[...] the understanding which is occupied merely with empirical exercise, and does not reflect on the sources of its own cognition, may exercise its functions very well and very successfully, but is quite unable to do one thing, and that of very great importance, to determine, namely, the bounds that limit its employment, and to know what lies within or without its own sphere.”<sup>20</sup> This way, the understanding cannot know what a particular representation consists in, and also if it is the understanding itself the one which gives that representation or not<sup>21</sup>. In spite of this, the understanding may be the faculty of the logical reflexion, because “When we reflect in a purely logical manner, we do nothing more than compare concepts in our understanding [...].”<sup>22</sup> It remains that only the reason can be the faculty of the transcendental reflexion.

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<sup>18</sup> [B317; A261].

<sup>19</sup> [B319; A263].

<sup>20</sup> [B297; A238]. In German: “daß der bloß mit seinem empirischen Gebrauche beschäftigte Verstand, der über die Quellen seiner eigenen Erkenntnis nicht nachsinnt, zwar sehr gut fortkommen, eines aber gar nicht leisten könne, nämlich, sich selbst die Grenzen seines Gebrauchs zu bestimmen, und zu wissen, was innerhalb oder außerhalb seiner ganzen Sphäre.”

<sup>21</sup> The case of the transcendental apperception, as a faculty of consciousness to be self-conscious, though belonging (as usually considered) to the understanding, might be viewed as a counterexample to this affirmation. Yet, the source of this transcendental apperception is an empirical apperception, that is a grasp of an internal sensuous intuition of the thinking subject through the concepts of the understanding, which gives us the unity of consciousness in the transcendental apperception and with this the unity of any possible knowledge.

<sup>22</sup> [B335; A279]; in the German text: “Wenn wir bloß logisch reflektieren, so vergleichen wir lediglich unsere Begriffe unter einander im Verstande [...].”

Nevertheless, our difficulties do not end here. For, although the two sorts of reflexion, logical and transcendental, are completely different, one belonging to the understanding and the other to the reason, it seems that for logically reflecting on the relation between our representations we will have to take account of these representations' relation "to the different sources or faculties of cognition." It becomes problematical, then, to determine the very manner in which the reason, through transcendental reflexion, would offer assistance to the understanding for its logical reflexion.

This dependence of the logical reflexion on the transcendental one, some times accepted<sup>23</sup> and several other times rejected<sup>24</sup>, seems to become even more clear when the concepts of reflexion (*Reflexionsbegriffe*) are presented. These concepts of reflection are those of *the identity and the difference* ("der *Einerleiheit und Verschiedenheit*"), *the agreement and the opposition* ("der *Einstimmung und des Widerstreits*"), *the internal and the external* ("des *Inneren und des Äußeren*") and finally of *the determinable and the determination* ("des *Bestimmbaren und der Bestimmung*"), or *matter and form* ("Materie und Form"). Yet, they apply differently to the relations between our representations, depending on whether these prove themselves to be objects of the pure understanding or phenomena of the sensibility. In what concerns, for instance, the identity and difference, Kant says: "When an object is presented to us several times, but always with the same internal determinations (*qualitas et quantitas*), it, if an object of pure understanding, is always the same, not several things, but only one thing (*numerica identitas*); but if a phenomenon (*Erscheinung*), we do not concern ourselves with comparing the concept of the thing with the concept of some other, but, although they may be in this respect perfectly the same, the difference of place at the same time is a sufficient ground for asserting the numerical difference of these objects (of sense)."<sup>25</sup> We could think then, taking this example as a starting point, that the relation between transcendental reflexion and logical reflexion is as follows: the determination, made by transcendental reflexion, of the understanding as the source of our given representations is the condition for the possibility of one mere logical reflexion, considered as a comparison of the intellectual concepts (since having the understanding as a source means for our representations that they are nothing else but intellectual concepts). Thus, we may be justified to admit there is not a univocal relation between the application of one or another from these concepts of reflexion (identity or difference) and the establishing of those representations, as given by understanding or sensibility, to which these concepts do apply, because it might be the case that "the concept is logically

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<sup>23</sup> See the initial definition of reflexion quoted from Kant's *Critique* in this paper.

<sup>24</sup> See, for instance, how Kant defines the logical reflexion in which "no account is taken of the faculty of cognition to which the given conceptions belong."

<sup>25</sup> [B219; A263].

different from another when it contains indeed some, but not all of the other one's predicates."<sup>26</sup> We may ask, indeed: 'By the reflexive exercise of which faculty would we apply the concept of *difference*, for instance, to sensible objects?' This is a very puzzling question. In fact, we may doubt even the possibility of using reflexion in the case of sensible objects, since Kant himself had said that "Reflection (*reflexio*) is not occupied about objects themselves [...]"<sup>27</sup> On the other side, as the logical use of concepts like *identity* and *difference* or *agreement* and *opposition* can be almost easily explained if we notice that "Before constructing any objective judgement, we compare the conceptions that are to be placed in the judgment, and observe whether there exists identity (of many representations in one conception), if a general judgment is to be constructed, or difference, if a particular; whether there is agreement when affirmative; and opposition when negative judgments are to be constructed, and so on,"<sup>28</sup> the way in which the other pairs of concepts (*internal* and *external*, respectively, *determinable* and *determination*) might be used mere logically for reflexion is still undetermined. With respect to the first pair of concepts we have the possibility of representing the relations between the intellectual concepts through: (a) the total comprehension of all the characteristics of one concept *into* another concept (this particular relation is to be expressed by a categorical judgment); (b) the partial comprehension of some characteristics of one concept *in* the other one (this can be expressed by a hypothetical judgment); (c) all the characteristics of one concept existing *out* of the other concept's sphere (using the two concepts we will formulate a disjunctive judgment). Anyway, this possibility seems quite different from the one which Kant offered for the comparison of the intellectual objects<sup>29</sup> with the phenomenal substance<sup>30</sup> from this point of view. Similarly, it is obvious that even in the latter case – that of the second pair of concepts – there is a difference between the comparison of concepts through the logical reflexion and the connection of things through the transcendental reflexion (which we have to suppose that is possible to exist). And this remains so, in spite of the former separation between transcendental and logical reflection made with respect to their different use – for determining the sources of our representations or for considering these representations in mutual relation. We will know this way, for instance, that "In a judgment one may call the given concepts logical matter (for the judgment), the relation of

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<sup>26</sup> (Kowalewski, 1924), 1.c., 534: "der Begriff ist von dem anderen logisch verschieden, wenn er zwar einige, aber nicht alle Prädicate desselben enthält" – quoted after (Bröken, 1970, 81).

<sup>27</sup> Original text: "Die Überlegung (*reflexio*) hat es nicht mit den Gegenständen selbst zu tun [...]"

<sup>28</sup> [B317-318; A262].

<sup>29</sup> "In an object of the pure understanding, only that is internal which has no relation (as regards its existence) to anything different from itself." – [B231; A265].

<sup>30</sup> "On the other hand, the internal determinations of a *substantia phaenomenon* in space are nothing but relations, and it is itself nothing more than a complex of mere relations (*ein Inbegriff von lauter Relationen*)." – [B231; A265].

these to each other (by means of the copula), the form of the judgment.”<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, we will find that “In respect to things in general, unlimited reality was regarded as the matter of all possibility, the limitation thereof (negation) as the form, by which one thing is distinguished from another according to transcendental concepts.”<sup>32</sup>

We are facing this way – by taking into account the possibility for the transcendental reflexion to apply itself even to things, for comparison, and not only for establishing the faculty of knowledge which gives us the things' representations – the necessity of providing a suitable reformulation for the kantian distinction between logical and transcendental reflection initially offered. This is not the proper thing to be urged, anyway. We will distinguish then, following the suggestion present in “Remark on The Amphiboly of the Concepts of Reflexion”, a *transcendental topic* (*transzendente Topik*), which “contains nothing more than the above-mentioned four titles of all comparison and distinction [...], “<sup>33</sup> but which requires “a determination of the place to which the representations of the things which are compared belong [...].”<sup>34</sup> Now we have, for this transcendental topic to work, a transcendental use of reflexion for determining the sources of our representations but also, let us say, an empirical use for the comparisons and distinctions between our sensible representations as well as a logical (yet not purely logical) use of reflexion for another kind of comparisons of our representations given by understanding. The last one must be very carefully distinguished from the pure logical use of reflexion, since this reflection is supposed to find its place in a *logical topic* (as the *Topic* of Aristotle was). However, our difficulties do not disappear, but multiply themselves, with all these distinctions. Even if we accept the existence of some sort of ‘*empirical*’ reflexion, by which we will be able to compare through the above-enumerated concepts the sensitive phenomena, we would have to accept the existence of some special devices, like the schemes which endorse the intellectual categories’ application to the phenomena are. Once compared by the ‘*empirical*’ reflexion – which can exist only as an intellectual capacity – those things would become intelligible objects, capable of a new comparison, this time through the logical reflexion. But, since these intellectual

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<sup>31</sup> [B322; A266]. The original text: “In jedem Urteile kann man die gegeben Begriffe logische Materie (zum Urteile), das Verhältnis derselben (vermitteltst der Kopula) die Form des Urteils nennen.”; This case seems quite different from the other cases because the form and the matter seem not to apply any longer directly to the concepts for their comparison but rather to give the entire structure of this comparison. Yet, Kant will say somewhere else that through matter and form we are still comparing two concepts, searching for “which of the two is given, and which is merely a mode of thinking that given.” – [B335; A279].

<sup>32</sup> [B322; A266-267]. Even here the matter and the form seem to be meta-concepts by which the real comparison of things becomes possible.

<sup>33</sup> [B325; A269].

<sup>34</sup> [B325; A269].

objects are obtained through the concepts of reflection (and, eventually, some reflexive schemes or other devices) the application of the logical reflexion for their comparison will be different from the same application of the logical reflection to those intellectual objects obtained through the categories of the understanding and their schemes. This would lead us to distinguish again between two kinds of logical reflexion, considering the two differently constituted intellectual objects which they apply to, but we might find ourselves very far from Kant's systematic intention in this case.

Given the necessity to distinguish between concepts of reflexion, as titles of the transcendental topic, and categories of the understanding, a new range of difficulties is coming up, forcing us to renounce to solve the previous ones. At the first sight such difficulties should not find their place here, Kant saying clearly enough about the concepts of reflexion that they “differ from categories in this respect, that they do not represent the object according to that which constitutes its conception (quantity, reality), but set forth merely the comparison of representations, which precedes our conceptions of things.”<sup>35</sup> This probably means that, since the comparison of representations precedes the conception of objects, the concepts of reflexion, at their turn, precede the categories of understanding. What happens then in the case of the pure logical reflexion, where, as we have seen, the concepts of reflexion have to apply precisely to the concepts of the understanding for creating judgments? In this case it seems that the concepts of the understanding must pre-exist to those of reflexion, otherwise their application not being possible. On the other hand, if the transcendental reflexion is exercised through the pure reason, the concepts of (the transcendental) reflexion should find their place near the ideas (or the concepts) of the pure reason and so their separation from the concepts of the understanding will become useless.

All these difficulties, as I believe, led the kantian interpreters which did not avoid the analysis of the chapter on the amphiboly of the concepts of reflexion to the conclusion that this chapter has no importance for the system of the *Critique*, but in fact it is an isolated part of the book devoted to the critique of Leibniz's metaphysics. It has been suggested even that the necessities of the critique against Leibniz have created the sistematization existing in the mentioned chapter. But it was often forgotten that Kant's critique was directed against Locke as well. Kant considered that Leibniz had situated all the representations within the understanding because he did not distinguish their sources, but he also considered that Locke misunderstood the very same problem, since he has “sensualized” the concepts of understanding. Thus, the

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*; The original (about *Reflexionsbegriffe*): “die sich dadurch von Kategorien unterscheiden, daß durch jene nicht der Gegenstand, nach demjenigen, was seinen Begriff ausmacht (Größe, Realität), sondern nur die Vergleichung der Vorstellungen, welche vor dem Begriffe von dingen vorhergeht, in aller ihrer Mannigfaltigkeit dargestellt wird.”

critiques addressed directly to Leibniz could be doubled by those addressed to Locke. In the case of identity and difference, for instance, Kant reproached to Leibniz that he was expressing the principle of indiscernables “which is valid solely of concepts of things in general”<sup>36</sup> as applying also to the objects of sense. In the same way he would be able to reproach the same thing to Locke, who was using the space and the time – considered by Kant pure intuitions of the sensibility – for the identification of intelligible objects such as *the substances*<sup>37</sup>, which are for Kant intelligible objects obtained by the application of the categories of inherence and subsistence, due to the permanence scheme (accordingly to the first analogy of the experience), to the sensible intuitions.

Without discussing any longer the possibility of explaining all these obscurities using different terms from those which Kant himself proposed, I am going to propose another understanding of this chapter, considering once again its systematic relevance. This particular understanding extends beyond the interpretation of the text and, even if almost all the places from the Kantian work justifying it will be indicated, some necessary suppositions will be formulated only with the hope that they will justify themselves by their intuitive character. A real evaluation of the reconstruction that I am giving has to refer then to the conceptual clarification which this reconstruction could initiate.

Let us return to the initial definition of reflexion which Kant gives in the *Critique*, before he distinguishes between a logical reflexion and a transcendental one. We are first told that reflexion “is not occupied about objects”. But we saw latter that as reflexion about our representations which can be given by the understanding or by the sensibility it has something to do with the objects, either intelligible or sensible, and this is just for determining the condition of their intelligibility or sensibility and for comparing them as well. Also, in the initial definition of the reflexion as a “state of mind” it appears rather like a distinct faculty than as being dependent on some other faculty. Yet, the pure logical reflexion provides us with propositional knowledge by itself. If we are to consider somehow from exterior the Kantian system we may regard this reflexion, by which “we set ourselves to discover the subjective conditions under which we obtain conceptions,” as a metatheoretical enterprise, first of all. For, as the impossibility of the reflexion’s application to objects has, in the initial paragraph of the chapter, no determined sense, so the obtaining of concepts may be regarded, generally speaking, as critical knowledge. This knowledge is of the same kind with the knowledge obtained by Kant himself when he introduces, for instance, the distinction between the concepts of sensibility and understanding. Considered as such, like a metatheoretical faculty or disponibility, reflexion will have to be distinguished from a mere theoretical

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<sup>36</sup> [B328; A272].

<sup>37</sup> See (Locke, 1690), Book III, Chapter XXVII, Paragraph 2.

device. In what concerns the terms, this thing may be considered to happen in Kant's writing when he is passing from the initial explanation of reflexion (*Überlegung*) – which we consider to be a metatheoretical faculty – to the distinction between the logical reflexion (*logische Reflexion*) and the transcendental reflexion (*transzendente Reflexion*). Even if the distinction between *Überlegung* and *Reflexion* is not constantly made at the level of the current use of the German terms<sup>38</sup> and this fact led to the impression that the two terms would be synonymous, only the former seems to fit the usual understanding of reflexion<sup>39</sup>. In this sense the term is closer to another term used by Kant, when he writes: “Within an enquiry of the pure elements of the human knowledge I have succeeded only after a long reflection (*Nachdenken*)<sup>40</sup> to distinguish and separate the pure elementary concepts of the sensibility (the space and the time) from those of the understanding.”<sup>41</sup> In any case, the separation of reflection as a metatheoretical disponibility necessary for the construction of the *Critique of the Pure Reason* from a mere theoretical reflexion, either a pure logical one, or one which is used within the transcendental topic, seems to be helpful for solving some of the above-mentioned difficulties<sup>42</sup>.

Taking this supposition as a starting point we are to search for the limits of the reflection's application, through its concepts (regarded this time as metatheoretical concepts, with respect to the suggestions from the Kantian text which were initially ignored), within the critical system. The first place where this use of reflection becomes obvious is in the *Transcendental Aesthetic*, where Kant writes: “That which in the phenomenon corresponds to the sensation, I term its matter; but that which effects that the content of the phenomenon can be arranged under certain relations, I call its form.”<sup>43</sup> We may say therefore that, reflecting under the manner in which we achieve at knowledge, Kant comes to distinguish between a matter of the phenomenon, which is given by empirical intuition, and its form, given by the pure intuitions of the sensibility, namely the

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<sup>38</sup> This can be seen, for instance, in the use of the phrase *transzendente Überlegung*, as in: “Diese transzendente Überlegung ist eine Pflicht, von der sich niemand lossagen kann, wenn er a priori etwas über Dinge urteilen will.” [B319; A263] (Yet, this kind of expression also appears to be rather a metatheoretical one, since the entire *Critique of the Pure Reason* pretends to offer an a priori knowledge.)

<sup>39</sup> We might distinguish here, in English, between *reflexion* and *reflection*, the latter term being more appropriate to render the sense of *Überlegung*.

<sup>40</sup> For instance, in (Eisler, 1910, second volume, 657) reflection is defined as “das daran anknüpfende Nachdenken”.

<sup>41</sup> (Kant, 1783, §39, par. 4).

<sup>42</sup> This hypothesis was advanced by other exegetes too. See, for example, (Kopper, 1975, 10).

<sup>43</sup> [B34; A20]. The German text: “In der Erscheinung nenne ich das, was der Empfindung korrespondiert, die Materie derselben, dasjenige aber, welches macht, daß das Mannigfaltige der Erscheinung in gewissen Verhältnissen geordnet werden kann [A: 'angeschaut wird'], nenne ich die Form der Erscheinung.”

space and the time<sup>44</sup>. In the same manner, Kant will use the concepts of matter and form to distinguish sensibility from understanding. The object is thought by the understanding through the application of its concepts (as forms), with the help of the schemes given by imagination, to the sensible phenomena (which constitute the matter). In what concerns the pure forms of space and time, these are distinguished with the aid of the reflection's concepts of the internal and external, as follows: "By means of the external sense<sup>45</sup> (a property of the mind), we represent to ourselves objects as without us, and these all in space. [...] The internal sense (*der innere Sinn*), by means of which the mind contemplates itself [...] is [nevertheless] a determinate form, [...] so that all which relates to the inward determinations of the mind (*zu den inneren Bestimmungen*) is represented in relations of time."<sup>46</sup> We may represent similarly the concepts of understanding as externally determined, since they apply to the sensible phenomena, and the concepts of the pure logical reflexion as internally determined, since they apply to thinking through concepts. Within the metaphysical deduction of the categories of understanding, that is the systematic construction and presentation of their table with the intellectual faculty of judgment as a starting point, Kant will reflect about the agreement or the opposition between judgments and categories. This thing does not become manifest until the author realizes some systematic difficulties, in the second edition of the *Critique*: "With respect to one category, namely, that of community (*Gemeinschaft*), which is found in the third class, it is not so easy as with the others to detect its accordance (*die Übereinstimmung*) with the form of the disjunctive judgment which corresponds to it in the table of the logical functions."<sup>47</sup> In what concerns the transcendental deduction, the reflection on the possibility of deducing the concepts of the understanding as being related *a priori* with the objects is led by the idea of analytical or synthetical identity or unity<sup>48</sup> of apperception<sup>49</sup>. Even more: "This fundamental principle of the necessary unity of apperception is indeed an identical, and therefore analytical, proposition; [...]"<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> See, for instance (Buchenau, 1914, 83), for the idea that the pure intuitions does not succeed to what-is-given because the matter and the form, as concepts of reflexion, are about a single object in itself ("über den an sich einheitlichen Gegenstand").

<sup>45</sup> "Vermittelst des äußeren Sinnes", in original.

<sup>46</sup> [B37; A22-23].

<sup>47</sup> [B111-112].

<sup>48</sup> The kantian concept of '*Einerleiheit*' being in fact intermediate between 'Identität' and 'Einheit', I shall consider that both are its particular notes.

<sup>49</sup> It must be noted that for Kant the synthetic unity of the apperception, on which the analytical identity of the apperception is founded thereafter, is somehow originally set. Yet, "Synthetical unity of the manifold in intuitions, as given a priori, is therefore the foundation of the identity of apperception itself, which antecedes a priori all *my* determinate thought (*meinem bestimmten Denken*)." [B135].

<sup>50</sup> [B136].

The use of the reflection and of its concepts can be easily detected in the *Transcendental Aesthetic* as well as in the *Transcendental Analytic*<sup>51</sup>. We should see now whether the *Transcendental Dialectic* is also elaborated through a similar use of reflection and of its concepts.

Let us notice first that even for the characterization of reason the same concepts of matter and form are still operational, because the reason, like the understanding, has “a formal use”, and processes “the matter of the intuition”<sup>52</sup>. Once with the distinction between a regulative and a transcendental use of the pure reason the reflection about the agreement or the opposition between its ideas, namely on the opposition between the internal idea of subject and a subject considered as a determinable object, on the opposition (or discordance) between the assertions made about the cosmological ideas – in which the unconditioned, either as absolute beginning or as a whole of the conditions’ series – is represented as determinable (*bestimmbar*), or the reflection on the opposition between the ideal of an absolutely necessary being (as completely determinable concept) and the completely determinate object (that is existent) which should correspond to it, become essential for the grasp of the reason’s errors in its transcendental use.

After we briefly identified various places from the Critique where the use of a metatheoretical faculty of reflection (*Überlegung*), through its concepts, for the examination, the conception and the exposition of the system of knowledge, have appeared, we might be able to conclude, in what concerns the limits of the reflection’s use within the *Critique of the Pure Reason*, that there are no such limits, and that reflection is used in its quality of a metatheoretical faculty along the entire Kantian book. This conclusion is entirely compatible with the considerations about reflection developed by Kant in the *Critique of Judgment*, when he says that: “To think (to reflect) means: to compare the given representations, either with other, or with their faculty of knowledge with respect to a concept which we made through this possible. The reflective faculty of judgment is that which is also called faculty of estimation (*facultas dijudicandi*)”<sup>53</sup>. The faculty of judgment, conceived by Kant like a sort of intermediate faculty between understanding and reason is “the faculty of thinking the particular as included in the general.”<sup>54</sup> Thus, it is a determinative faculty of judgment which is exercised only when the general is given and the

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<sup>51</sup> An analysis of the combined use of the reflection’s concepts for the fundamental distinctions from the system of the *Critique* might be interesting, from this point of view. Such distinctions, as those between analytic and synthetic or between *a priori* and *a posteriori*, seem to appear in the Kantian thought from a much profound reflection wherein the reflection’s concepts are developed together. Nevertheless, such an investigation would require a special effort and, first of all, would interrupt the argumentative line of the present paper.

<sup>52</sup> See [B355; A298].

<sup>53</sup> (Kant, 1790), *The First Introduction*.

<sup>54</sup> (Kant, 1790), *The First Introduction*.

particular has to be determined from a reflective faculty of judgment which is in fact the reflection, the main function of which is to determine the general in which one given particular is somehow included. This faculty is the one by which the universals are given in our thinking and our knowledge is systematically produced. It “deals therefore with the given phenomena for grouping them under the empirical concepts of some natural determined objects. It proceeds not systematically but technically; somehow not just mechanically like an instrument standing under the leadership of the understanding and the senses but artistically by the general, yet undetermined, principle of the finalistic organization of the nature into a system.”<sup>55</sup> The leading principle of this faculty is: “the nature specifies its general laws into particular laws according to a logical system which satisfies the interest of the faculty of judgment.”<sup>56</sup> In other words, if we are to understand the external phenomena, but also, and especially our mind as a part of nature, the philosophical reflection focused on them has to develop as a system. The *Critique of the Pure Reason*, conceived by the use of the reflection in the analysis of the natural reality constituted in our knowledge, is such a system.

There is only one thing that stops us from giving a complete answer to the question: “What kind of faculty has Kant used when he was writing the *Critique of the Pure Reason*?”, or, in other words: “Which one of the cognitive faculties is such that allows us to use it for the other faculties’ analysis as well as for its own from those that Kant has mentioned?” We already know that reflection, as a metatheoretical faculty or disposition, is explicitly used for the construction of the Kantian system within the *Critique*. What we still do not know is whether the reflection is the only faculty of this kind. Yet, it is not very probable that another faculty from those distinguished by Kant himself might be seen as capable of such a metatheoretical use. The understanding, as we already saw, can not apply to itself and in no case can it apply to reason for ascertaining its limits. The reason, in its turn, does not supply any knowledge. Therefore to accept that reason might be such a metatheoretical faculty is to accept that the Kantian system brings no knowledge, which would be in contradiction with Kant's own claims. Thus the reflection remains the only metatheoretical faculty used for the entire critique of the pure reason.

Although the use of the reflection and of its concepts for the constitution of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as a system has not been entirely described, but only illustrated in this paper, I do not doubt the possibility of such a description to be made from the perspective of the reconstructive hypothesis which I have been given support here. This has to remain a task for the future inquires of all those interested.

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<sup>55</sup> (Kant, 1790), *The First Introduction*.

<sup>56</sup> (Kant, 1790), *The First Introduction*.

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# ARISTOTELIAN THEOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY: THE PROBLEM OF THE PRIME MOVER AND THE FIRST PRINCIPLES

ANDREEA GAE<sup>1</sup>

## *Abstract*

The problem of the Aristotelian First Unmoved Mover presents hermeneutical challenges to researchers. What mean matter, movement and potentiality in Aristotle's metaphysics? How does actuality and final cause cooperate to secure motion, explaining the Being and the Unity? What is the causal connection between the Prime Mover and the particular objects and how could it explain the multiple Moved Movers? Why the Unmoved Mover is defined as the thought that thinks on itself and in which way the prototype of Substance can transform the relationship between the Aristotelian ontology and theology?

**Keywords:** Unmoved Mover, substance, thought, actuality, potentiality, motion, causality.

## **Matter, Movement and Potentiality**

At the end of Book Θ, Aristotle suggests that the priority of actuality has a very important hermeneutics: "Obviously, therefore, the substance or form is actuality. According to this argument, then, it is obvious that actuality is prior in substantial being to potency; and as we have said, one actuality always precedes another in time right back to the actuality of the eternal prime mover. But actuality is prior in a stricter sense also; for eternal things are prior in substance to perishable things, and no eternal thing exists potentially."<sup>2</sup> This idea introduces the Unmoved Mover as a warrantor for the motion of the First Moved Mover. For Aristotle, every potency is simultaneously potential in regard to its opponent, and the actuality represents the finality of any potency. Therefore, what "can" generate Being exists and does not exist at the same time.<sup>3</sup> Aristotle succinctly formulates the contingency argument: "Nothing, then,

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<sup>1</sup> University of Bucharest.

<sup>2</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* Θ 1051b 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to these, the fragment represents a notion of a contingent being which implies the existence of a necessary being. This argument is used by Thomas Aquinas for proving the existence of God, in the beginning of *Summa Theologiae*, and Ross considers it as a special type

which is in the full sense imperishable is in the full sense potentially existent (though there is nothing to prevent its being so in some respect, e.g. potentially of a certain quality or in a certain place); all imperishable things, then, exist actually. Nor can anything which is of necessity exist potentially; yet these things are primary; for if these did not exist, nothing would exist.”<sup>4</sup> Aristotle put the problem of contingent beings in the context of contingent movements, suggesting that this particular motion is eternally developed because it contains an eternal element. The argument is consistent with the idea that eternal things (in this case, the Unmoved Mover) are never contingent, nor potential.<sup>5</sup>

When the Book  $\Lambda$  discusses the problem of the First Principle, Aristotle presents three different types of substances: 1) physical and perishable; 2) physical and imperishable (the celestial spheres); 3) non-physical (the unmoved movers). The first two types belong to the physics, while the third belongs to a different science, probably the metaphysics.<sup>6</sup>

Under these circumstances, Aristotle affirms that it is impossible to generalize the principles of physical substances (perishable substances). Their only quality is that of being analogue: “They [the principles] are (1) the same or analogous in this sense, that matter, form, privation, and the moving cause are common to all things; and (2) the causes of substances may be treated as causes of all things in this sense, that when substances are removed all things are removed; further, (3) that which is first in respect of complete reality is the cause of all things.”<sup>7</sup> This fragment evokes the *Physics*, where Aristotle demonstrates that an endless movement requires a necessary being or a compulsory warrantor for the First Mover’s motion.<sup>8</sup>

The prime reality, guaranting a ceaseless and circular motion, is a physical, incorruptible and non-generated being (an imperishable substance). This type of substance is necessary because the movement is endless: “For substances are the first of existing things, and if they are all destructible, all things are destructible. But it is impossible that movement should either have come into being or cease to be (for it must always have existed), or that time should. For these could not be a before and an after if time did not exist.

of a “theological argument” (W. D. Ross, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, volume 2, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1924, p. 179). Also, the Unity is manifested in the case of non-material particulars, though it lacks potency (the Matter is the source for every potency). Consequently, the non-material entities are not contingent, because the contingency is a compound of Matter and Form, and the Matter and Form are not corruptible. Once more, the Form is an essential Unity and, in the case of a concrete particular, the Form is the principle of Unity; thus, if the Unity and the Form are convertible terms, one can state that the non-material hypostases of Being are non-contingent.

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1050b 18-20.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem* 1050b 20.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem* 1069b 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem* 1071a 34-37.

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *Physics* 266a 6-9.

Movement also is continuous, then, in the sense in which time is; for time is either the same thing as movement or an attribute of movement. And there is no continuous movement except movement in place, and of this only that which is circular is continuous.<sup>9</sup> The circular movement is seen as a continuous motion because it has no beginning nor end, as well as the straight-lined movement.<sup>10</sup> The comparison between the continuous motion and the endless time suggests that the world knew both an *a priori* time (prior to the initial time) and an *a priori* movement (prior to the first motion) and, because the system seems to be incoherent, the research will follow a straight-line movement.

Aristotle demonstrates that anything that can be moved can also be unmoved: “But if there is something which is capable of moving things or acting on them, but is not actually doing so, there will not necessarily be movement; for that which has a potency need not exercise it.”<sup>11</sup> This fragment is a testimony for the association of Matter and potentiality.<sup>12</sup> For Aristotle, the substances like the ultimate warrantor of motion must be actual: “There must, then, be such a principle, whose very essence is actuality. Further, then, these substances must be without matter; for they must be eternal, if anything is eternal. Therefore they must be actuality.”<sup>13</sup> The material things are perfect candidates for eternity because they are divisible and therefore corruptible, unlike immaterial things, indivisible and incorruptible. The matter is the source of potentiality, and every potential thing will ask for a prior actuality as cause of its own actuality.

The movement is a physical element and such a motion needs space, consequently, Matter. In addition, the material but eternal celestial spheres are mobile, though unsusceptible of destruction, hence the Aristotelian decision to think that their “special” kind of matter could allow a potentiality and therefore a possible immobility.

### Actuality and Final Cause

Aristotle affirms that the Platonicians do not have a right approach to motion and alteration<sup>14</sup>: “This is why some suppose eternal actuality – e.g.

<sup>9</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1071b 5-11.

<sup>10</sup> Aristotle, *Physics* 262a 12.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1071b 13-14.

<sup>12</sup> Constantine Georgiadis, “Aristotle’s Theology and its Influence on the Philosophers of Islam, Judaism and Christianity”, p. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1071b 20-23. Aristotle uses the plural form of nouns to express the idea of multiple unmoved movers, which he treats as an explanation for the celestial motion. The same condition of immortality is applied to the First Unmoved Mover.

<sup>14</sup> According to Ross, an eternal movement needs an eternal substance, able to cause motion by itself. This function could be accomplished by the Platonician Forms, though they are unable

Leucippus and Plato; for they say there is always movement. But why and what this movement is they do not say, nor, if the world moves in this way or that, do they tell us the cause of its doing so. Now nothing is moved at random, but there must always be something present to move it; e.g. as a matter of fact a thing moves in one way by nature, and in another by force or through the influence of reason or something else.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, none of the Platonic principles uses alteration in a positive manner. Aristotle notices that the First Unmoved Mover produces motion and alteration, inducing evolution and change to every individual substance through a principle of continuous movement. In these conditions, every concrete particular needs motion to meet the Being, because a prior actuality should “move” itself in order to (pro)create something. Aristotle thinks that *a priori* actuality explains the actual cause of movement and alteration through its ambivalent potentiality. The Unity, the Being and the actuality cooperate to secure motion (they are warrantors for the existence of cosmos) because the immaterial substances represent essential unities<sup>16</sup> of the Unmoved Mover.

Aristotle introduces the importance of the *a priori* actuality when he approaches the problem of potentiality. The potentiality is still prior to actuality, while the actuality logically depends on potentiality. Nevertheless, some problems arise: “Yet there is a difficulty; for it is thought that everything that acts is able to act, but that not everything that is able to act acts, so that the potency is prior. But if this is so, nothing that is need be; for it is possible for all things to be capable of existing but not yet to exist.”<sup>17</sup> This inference states that there is no being or existence without an *a priori* actuality, because every potentiality is available for a certain thing and for its opposite. To assert the anteriority of potentiality means to disregard the necessity of an actual cause and the principle of sufficient reason.<sup>18</sup> On the contrary, the aristotelian argument of motion requires a circular, continuous movement and a cause of motion: “There is therefore also something which moves it. And since that

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to produce any movement, because the capacity to produce motion must be fully exercised and not only possessed. Its essence should not be a force but the actual activity, otherwise its action could not be completed, nor its change necessarily eternal. In conclusion, this substance must be immaterial, because it is eternal (See W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, volume 2, p. 180).

<sup>15</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1071b 14-16; *Ibidem* 1071b 33; *Ibidem* 1072a 1.

<sup>16</sup> Since the non-material entities are essential unities, the one that certifies the movement (the First Unmoved Mover) seems to be actual and conjunct. As a result, Aristotle introduces the idea of participation and a formal Unity, because all the non-material unities seem to participate to an absolute Unity. In fact, this process tries to show that every formal or essential substance is an expression of an unified principle of its own particulars; the concrete particular unifies itself in the couple Matter-Form or in a certain potentiality aiming toward its final actualisation.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1071b 25.

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle's critique of Plato's motion suggests that the Platonicians cannot reason upon motion and alteration; on the contrary, they represent the Being through a passive and inactive principle (like in the case of Parmenides).

which moves and is moved is intermediate, there is something which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality.”<sup>19</sup> Consequently, in virtue of connections between Matter and potentiality or immaterialness and actuality, and because the immaterial substance represents an essential unity, the Unmoved Mover becomes a primary Unity, Being and Substance. But how does it cause the motion?

The First Unmoved Mover expresses its own actuality, individual substance or the substance through movement; in other words, it shows a substance whose movement is a particular finality, an expression of its own being and a teleology or a copy of the Unmoved Mover, resulted from desire. According to Aristotle, while the First Moved Mover acts like an agent of motion, providing movement for the whole system, the Unmoved Mover acts like a final cause ("something for which").<sup>20</sup> Afterwards, Aristotle discusses the problem of what moves other things without being moved, demonstrating the existence of the object of desire when this desire results from an opinion of a positive element, initialized by the object itself. However, the desire is moved through the Intelligibility, whose primary element is the actual substance. The Unmoved Mover is the warrantor of circular locomotion, always united and immovable. Its movement shows the perfect example of Being that imposes motion to all other elements<sup>21</sup>: “That a final cause may exist among

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<sup>19</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072a 24-26.

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle states that the Being is an equivocal *pros hen*, therefore he is obliged to explain that there is a causal connection between Being (or primary beings) and all other beings, otherwise the unity and the possibility of the science whom he searched cannot be established (See L. P. Gerson, *Plotinus*, pp. 86-87). However, there is a causal and physical relationship which connects all substances, under the appearance of a continuous movement. Under these conditions, the Unmoved Mover becomes final cause and warrantor of the locomotor continuity. Later, Gerson's causality is not necessary anymore, because this time the *pros hen* equivocalness is epistemologically analysed, in opposition with the ontological force.

<sup>21</sup> Randall says that, for Aristotle, the perfect action of the highest world activity is the only legitimacy and reason for the existence of the universe. Also, God is immanent in universe because His cosmos is intelligible, transcending the entire world through its final ideal: therefore, God is both formal and final cause (See J. H. Randall, *Aristotle*, p. 141 and p. 143). The idea that the Unmoved Mover is a final cause looks right, and, in addition, the new status eliminates the necessity for introducing a formal cause. The analogy of the Unmoved Mover seen as a general of the universal army (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1075a 11) justifies again the argument of immanence: Aristotle suggests that the universal Good is an individual entity and, in the same time, a logical taxonomy of all of its parts, in the same way as an army identifies its own good in the general's figure and in his military orders. The general is independent of these orders, while the orders depend on him. This is though an incomplete analogy, because the general could not be a general without an army, and the Unmoved Mover could not be the Prime Mover without the cosmos. Georgiadis notices that the critics should only analyze the metaphor itself, and not its differences, because only the cosmos (the universal order) matters, and there are no proves that this order is created by God; additionally, Aristotle would rather suggest that God and the world exist independently of each other (See Constantine Georgiadis, *op. cit.*, p. 15). Also, Fuller thinks that

unchangeable entities is shown by the distinction of its meanings. For the final cause is (a) some being for whose good an action is done, and (b) something at which the action aims; and of these the latter exists among unchangeable entities though the former does not. The final cause, then, produces motion as being loved, but all other things move by being moved.’’<sup>22</sup> In the case of immobile things, for instance, the Unmoved Mover involves the good or the finality of a certain action (a Prime Mover), while other general cases present a final cause (the good of a certain object) applied to moveable things. Therefore, the Unmoved Mover is the object of love that causes movement, because every moving thing causes motion by itself (in a cosmological order of motion). The other things are moved by this continuous movement and their being or unity results from an impulse that imitates or understands the Unmoved Mover.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, the physical or natural substances that represent concrete, altered particulars (the empirical objects) require motion for their own evolution; they manifest their unity and being in virtue of substantial Form. So, if the Unmoved Mover is immovable and unalterable, it perfectly manifests being and unity. In other words, every substance naturally manifests being and unity and the Unmoved Mover cannot have such a metaphysical connection with the Being and the Unity because Aristotle already criticized the causal inefficacy of Plato’s Theory of Forms. A substance cannot give being and unity to other substance because substances already have being and unity by themselves; the creation of corruptible substances may require movement, but the Unmoved Mover could never offer being and unity to other substances.

The function of the Unmoved Mover is to certify the motion<sup>24</sup>: a perfect entity and a final cause of movement for the Prime Mover.<sup>25</sup> However, the actuality of the potential movement of the First Mover must be a

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this Aristotelian fragment is biased, presenting God as an essential being situated outside the natural order (See B. A. G. Fuller, p. 142).

<sup>22</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b 3-5. Tredennick translates as: “That the final cause may apply to immovable things is shown by the distinction of its meanings. For the final cause is not only ‘the good for something,’ but also ‘the good which is the end of some action.’ In the latter sense it applies to immovable things, although in the former it does not; and it causes motion as being an object of love, whereas all other things cause motion because they are themselves in motion.” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translation by Hugh Tredennick, Loeb Classical Library, London, 1956).

<sup>23</sup> Except for the cases that involve the rational souls and possibly the secondary unmoved movers.

<sup>24</sup> In *Physics* VIII, Aristotle approaches the problem of the Prime Mover, demonstrating its immaterial nature and its function in motion (warrantor of movement). The existence of an eternal, immovable and particular substance does not require a difficult analysis because it causes motion under conditions of infinite time. Consequently, what causes infinite movement or the motion of an eternal time does not have a valid configuration in an empirical universe, temporally limited. Also, the argument is additional to the demonstration of its immateriality.

<sup>25</sup> As an example of love, the First Unmoved Mover shows a physical image of the eternal contemplation, this image being the eternal movement of the sphere (See Sarah Broadie, *What Does Aristotle’s Prime Mover Do?*, p. 2).

distinct entity, or in the case of this being the motion is an activity and the actuality is motion. Hence, the First Moved Mover imitates (materially and physically) the perfection of the First Unmoved Mover.<sup>26</sup>

Plato's conception of *mimesis* represents a major problem for Aristotle because the division between Form and Matter makes the creation of representation and imitation impossible. However, without the imitation of participation, the *mimesis* does not represent anymore a problem (as for Plato), but an attempt to circumscribe the object of desire: the Unmoved Mover is desired by the First Moved Mover. The desire is, consequently, expressed through *mimesis*, imitating the absolute physical actuality or the circular movement (already introduced through the desire of the absolute finality). To know the object means to identify with it, despite empirical limits; accordingly, the First Moved Mover loves the Unmoved Mover and wishes to become like it, actualizing its own version of perfection, the circular motion.

The obvious objection, remarked by Broadie<sup>27</sup>, is that the real existence of such a perfect cause is not necessary for the actualization of the element that makes the *mimesis*, because its existence could be hypothetically stipulated. Aristotle's partial solution for the problem of separation of Forms discusses the reintegration of Form and Matter in such a way that the imitator could obtain the ontological criteria required by actualization and procreation. Under these circumstances, the process presents three major considerations. Firstly, Aristotle introduces an Unmoved Mover situated in a perfect actuality, because every movement contains by definition a potentiality whose actualization is impossible. Secondly, if the First Moved Mover allows the intervention of illusion (for instance, if its actual movement is wrongly certified by the existence of a hypothetical, inexistent Unmoved Mover), the elimination of this illusion could also be valid, inducing, by extension, the extinction of the cosmological motion; on the contrary, if the Unmoved Mover exists and the First Moved Mover is wrong in this matter, the motion is eliminated again and the introduction of an illusory object becomes an unacceptable hypothesis. Thirdly, the difference between Plato's *mimesis* and Aristotle's imitation are antagonistic: in Plato's case, the imitators of the universal substances lack Form or Substance, therefore essence, so their identification with models fails;<sup>28</sup> in

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<sup>26</sup> Ross thinks that God is the efficient cause only because He is the final cause itself, though this does not mean that His being means pure potentiality (something which never reaches its end) but He is an eternal and actual being. Consequently, for Ross, God is an immortal being whose influence is so strong that anything happens in the universe depends on Him (W. D. Ross, *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, volume 2, p. 1981).

<sup>27</sup> Sarah Broadie, *op. cit.*, p. 3; L. P. Gerson, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>28</sup> If Plato's empirical objects were a perfect match for the Forms, then the necessity of imitation would be excluded. The affirmation does not imply though that the First Moved Mover is identical with the First Unmoved Mover when the First Moved Mover is actualized. The

Aristotle's case, on the contrary, both imitator and imitated object contain common and complete elements, so the models can be imitated and transformed into desirable objects. In conclusion, Plato's Forms fail the test of motion because the physical object does not have a substantial element to imitate the paradigm, while Aristotle solves the problem with the help of the reintegration of Matter and Form. Consequently, if the imitator's being and unity are metaphysically derived from the being and the unity of the First Principle, the result will be a metaphysical order that Aristotle associates with Plato's metaphysical hierarchy, obviously rejected. Briefly, Aristotle strongly rejects a gradual univocity of Being.

### Univocity, Causality and the Unmoved Mover

Some critics<sup>29</sup> suggest that a certain fragment of the Aristotelian *Metaphysics* presents a causal connection between the being of the Unmoved Mover and the one of the particular objects (such a gradual univocity requires a single and perfect notion of Being, the particular things having a similar type of substance, proportional to the perfect example of Being): "Now we do not know a truth without its cause; and a thing has a quality in a higher degree than other things if in virtue of it the similar quality belongs to the other things as well (e.g. fire is the hottest of things; for it is the cause of the heat of all other things); so that that causes derivative truths to be true is most true. Hence the principles of eternal things must be always most true (for they are not merely sometimes true, nor is there any cause of their being, but they themselves are the cause of the being of other things), so that as each thing is in respect of being, so is it in respect of truth."<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, the idea that the principles of eternal objects are cause of being for other things is configured by the actuality that warrants the movement, independently of the causal connection involved in the process of gradual univocity.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, what is caused by *αἰτίον τοῦ εἶναι* could simply refer to the cause of generation of substances<sup>32</sup>; consequently,

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thinking of the First Moved Mover belongs to a sensible and completely actualized substance, while the one of the First Unmoved Mover represents the complete actuality of an immaterial substance.

<sup>29</sup> L. P. Gerson, *op. cit.*, p. 133 and p. 139.

<sup>30</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 993b 23-31.

<sup>31</sup> L. P. Gerson, *op. cit.*, p. 333.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1161a 16, 1162a 7, 1165a 23. Gerson rejects this hypothesis: firstly, the principles of the eternal objects, unlike parents (this is the Aristotelian example), do not have a cause of being and, secondly, the cause of being is obviously non-equivalent to a cause of "becoming a being". Even though, Aristotle does not state such a cause for principles. Therefore, if Gerson says that the eternal objects, and not their principles, participate to being, and if these eternal principles govern the Unmoved Mover and the First Moved Mover, they are the ultimate cause for the generation of all other objects, because the

according to *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, the previous fragment shows that the principles of eternal objects cause the being of all other objects (non-eternal) through movement. In other words, the paradigm solves the particular problem of causal participation, a gradual univocity opposed to the dependence of Being and Unity upon substance.

In the same time, the being of accidents seems to be directly proportional to the being of concrete particulars and, if the accidents are dependent upon substance, the relationship does not imply a derivable characteristic but only that the accidental being is a consequence of the substantial being: the elements of each category represent real *onta*, while the accidental being is a way of Being; in this case, the real dependence is not a waste of Being and reality, as it happens in Plato's case.<sup>33</sup> However, both the accidents and the other significances of substance (generated, inanimate or eternal) exist *per se*, the only difference being that the latter can be dependent or independent, eternal or contingent. The Unmoved Mover does not represent anymore (as the example of fire from *Metaphysics II*) the emanational cause of material substances<sup>34</sup> but only the Aristotelian final cause (the contemplation as the highest actuality of the human soul). Therefore, if the movement is involved in the evolution of material world, the motion required by generation will be fully accomplished and, in the same time, the substance will claim its own being and unity.

The Unmoved Mover acts as a warrantor for the first, eternal and circular motion of *Physics*. Hence, the Unmoved Mover is desired by the First Moved Mover, but not desired by the other objects (despite this fact, an exception could occur if the Unmoved Mover becomes an exemplar cause of human contemplation, the man accomplishing his own actuality through the contemplation of the Unmoved Mover). To suggest that the being and the unity of other objects are spread through the Unmoved Mover, or that these objects aim toward a transcendental Being and Unity would represent a regression to the Platonician Forms and imitation. One could state, then, that the substances manifest being and unity in virtue of their own substantial status.

Concerning the restoration of Form and Matter, Aristotle is situated in opposition with Plato's metaphysical hierarchy. The idea that all objects

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genesis requires movement and the motion is the essence of that relationship. In conclusion, Gerson admits the necessity of efficient causality, though he imposes simultaneously the notion of a gradual, univocal causality; in fact, he arguments the function that the final causality has in the process of warranting the efficient cause or the movement, seen as an unitary element of the system (See L. P. Gerson, *op. cit.*).

<sup>33</sup> Martha Husain, "The Multiplicity in Unity of Being Qua Being in Aristotle's *Pros Hen* Equivocity".

<sup>34</sup> In this case, it is not anymore efficient cause. Georgiadis thinks that, for Aristotle, people want a certain thing because it is good, so this thing is not good only because people want it. Therefore, the thinking becomes a principle, and its objective, rational value proves the existence of the Aristotelian Prime Mover. Additionally, the First Unmoved Mover uses both the final and the efficient causality (See Constantine Georgiadis, *op. cit.*, p.14).

possesses being and unity through imitation is invalid if the substances become vectors of Being and Unity. In other words, Aristotle could rebuke Plato for his apparently unreasonable Forms, and, in the same time, he could affirm that his own Unmoved Mover is not necessary for the distribution of being and unity because this process represents a function accomplished by the substances themselves and not by another entity, be it perfect or eternal.

The corruptible substances have being and unity in the same manner as the incorruptible substances have their own, even if the process is differently realised, directly proportional to every distinct, particular substance. Nevertheless, the Unmoved Mover is necessary for movement, and, in addition, the motion guarantees the being of all other objects, because it is compulsory for technical and natural procreation. The existence of motion allows primary movements or facilitates the relationships between the act and potency, without which no generation would be possible: “for an animal is something perceptible, and it is not possible to define it without reference to movement – nor, therefore, without reference to the parts’ being in a certain state”.<sup>35</sup> In fact, Aristotle offers a kinetic system that functions as warrantor to the motion of a certain element, whose actuality is the movement itself; later, he will reveal a mechanism of imitation that allows all participants to have an active participation, the process involving both the imitated object and the imitator.

Under these circumstances, the physical and cosmological problems are solved through the idea of substance and its relationships with the First Mover; in addition, the kinetic actuality of the First Mover is connected to the First Unmoved Mover through an exemplar *mimesis*. Once again, contrary to the Platonic hierarchy for whom the paradigm was totally unknown, this new element is now able to cause and determinate motion through its own nature. The Aristotelian intervention introduces a warrantor of motion situated in continuous movement, while the prior actuality requires an actual and immovable warrantor of motion. The primacy of substance states that every substance has being and unity in virtue of its own substantiality and requires a physical and a metaphysical warrantor, the first offering existence to the concrete particulars, and the latter providing the movement used in the process of generation. These cosmological warrantors of actuality and movement are both causes and different explanations, evolving in the space of unitary entities.

### **The Problem of Substance: Theology and ontology**

As a matter of fact, Aristotle treats Substance like a principle, including it in one of his multiple definitions of metaphysics. In the Book  $\Gamma$ , he pretends

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<sup>35</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1036b 27-30.

that the principal subject of metaphysics is the Being understood as a Being, while in the Book E, the theology: “It is clear then that it is the work of one science also to study the things that are, *qua* being. But everywhere science deals chiefly with that which is primary, and on which the other things depend, and in virtue of which they get their names. If, then, this is substance, it will be of substances that the philosopher must grasp the principles and the causes.”<sup>36</sup>

Later, Aristotle says that “the first science deals with things which both exist separately and are immovable. Now all causes must be eternal, but especially these; for they are the causes that operate on so much of the divine as appears to us. There must, then, be three theoretical philosophies, mathematics, physics, and what we may call theology, since it is obvious that if the divine is present anywhere, it is present in things of this sort. And the highest science must deal with the highest genus.”<sup>37</sup>

It may be noticed that in the beginning of the Book E Aristotle affirms that “We are seeking the principles and the causes of the things that are, and obviously of them *qua* being”<sup>38</sup>; in addition to this, a fragment of the book Γ presents similar statements<sup>39</sup>: “If, then, this is substance, it will be of substances that the philosopher must grasp the principles and the causes.”<sup>40</sup> In other words, the two metaphysical conceptions have a common denominator; in the same time, the principles and the causes of beings can be successfully approached through the research of the most excellent substance, the Unmoved Mover.<sup>41</sup> And, while the principles and the causes of all things refer to the Aristotelian causality, the Prime Mover remains the single cause of all beings.

Hence, if the Books Γ and E are consistently included in the summary of the Book K, it is obvious that the Aristotelian ideas of theology, ontology and metaphysics are strongly related. Also, if the Unmoved Mover becomes the First Principle, an exemplar entity of Being and Unity and, through the First Moved Mover, the ultimate cause for all substances<sup>42</sup>, the comprehension of

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<sup>36</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1003b 15-19.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem* 1026a 17-24.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem* 1025b 1.

<sup>39</sup> Natorp affirms that the attempt to identify the theology and the first philosophy belongs to a belated intervention, because the Book K (chapters 1-8) mainly compresses the Books B, Γ and E. (See G. Patzig, “Theology and Ontology in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*”, p. 35). On the contrary, Jaeger suggests that these theological references belong to a Platonic moment from Aristotle’s youth, contrasted with his mature first philosophy (Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, p. 218).

<sup>40</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1003b 19.

<sup>41</sup> The plural form (“principles” and “causes”) introduces the presence of the Prime Moved Mover and the theory of multiple movers. Also, Aristotle summarizes his reflections on the Unmoved Mover in the sentence “On such principle, then, depend the heavens and the world of nature” (Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b, 13; *Ibidem* 1073a 23).

<sup>42</sup> All sensible substances need motion in virtue of their own generation, guaranteed by the First Moved Mover whose movement, in its turn, is guaranteed by the Unmoved Mover.

substantial causes will require the hermeneutics of most excellent substance.<sup>43</sup> Concerning the Book E, Patzig thinks that Aristotle certainly rejects a contradiction between a first philosophy acting as an universal theology and a first philosophy acting as a theology (treating exclusively the subject of Divinity). Moreover, the first philosophy represents a special type of theology, that can be simultaneously considered an ontology. Aristotle's intention is to create a metaphysical discipline: in one hand, a first and general philosophy and, on the other hand, a Substance superior to all other substances.<sup>44</sup> However, even if the *Metaphysics* does not analyse only the problem of divinity, the Unmoved Mover is fundamental for the research of Being *qua* Being because it is the primary example of Being and the principle of all other beings. Once again, the substances are presented as essential unities belonging to an "ontological abstraction".<sup>45</sup> Patzig affirms that, for Aristotle, the metaphysics is a "double paronymic science" legitimated by the *pros hen* equivocity; furthermore, this specific relationship appears between sensible substances and the Unmoved Mover, as well as between attributes and sensible substances. However, the assumption that the *pros hen* equivocity represents an intra-category is invalid, because there is no reason to apply it to different types of substances (sensible, material-eternal, immaterial); all the substances are vectors of Being and Unity and have, inherently, their own being and unity. Therefore, concerning the Prime Mover, the predication of Being and Unity intersects with the sensible matter, introducing potentiality into the primary actuality of the sensible substance; nevertheless, despite impediments and differentiation, the substance is not equivocally used in the case of concrete particulars.

Later, the process that substantializes the concrete particulars is denied by a difficulty of Plato's metaphysical hierarchy: for Aristotle, the sensible particulars receive substantiality, consequently, the Unmoved Mover exercises its status as a Substance and manifests Being and Unity by excellence, failing Matter and pretending that all formal substances represents essential unities. For Patzig, the metaphysical structure of substance is inconsistent with his "double ontological paronymy", because the substantial analysis has no essential reference to the Prime Mover.<sup>46</sup>

Also, if the substantial functionality focus on a primary, ontological efficacy of distributing Being and Unity to the Unmoved Mover or to the

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<sup>43</sup> If the Aristotelian theology exclusively treated an unity that thought on itself, the metaphysics would become a kind of Parmenidean science or another strange category.

<sup>44</sup> G. Patzig, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>45</sup> The term "ontological abstraction" is distinguished from the other epistemic abstractions belonging to the concrete particulars. The notion appears in the Aristotelian meditation of Book H6, where Aristotle says that the immaterial things are essential unities (See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1045b 23-24).

<sup>46</sup> G. Patzig, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

sensible substances, the previous difficulty seems to vanish. As a vector of Being and Unity, the signification of Substance rests the same: the Prime Mover exhibits Being and Unity in a perfect way, while the sensible substances present identical characteristics, except an inferior degree. In the end, the Unmoved Mover is seen as a warrantor for the motion of the First Moved Mover, whose motion allows the sensible substances to identify being and generation. Finally, Aristotle naturally eludes a discussion on the Unmoved Mover from the central Books of *Metaphysics*; on the contrary, they focus on the sensible substances that compose the metaphysical structure of the Aristotelian movers.<sup>47</sup>

### **The Unmoved Mover or the Thought that Thinks on Itself**

Aristotle's Unmoved Mover is involved in the thinking on its own being, representing a perfect Mind that thinks on itself. Aristotle suggests, as it was shown before, that the immaterial objects are essential unities and the Unmoved Mover is, without any doubt, such an unity. The lack of Matter proves the absence of potentiality, alteration or motion and, in these conditions, the Unmoved Mover is unable to modify its cognitive structure because it is pure and united actuality. Its being is unalterable and manifests a perfect activity, that of thinking on itself. In other words, its being, unity and thought are identical.

Aristotle affirms that the existence of the Unmoved Mover is similar to the good that man temporarily enjoys, an essential function, exercised through its own actuality and confused with its happiness because the contemplation is the thought of the Unmoved Mover: "And it is a life such as the best which we enjoy, and enjoy for but a short time (for it is ever in this state, which we cannot be), since its actuality is also pleasure. (And for this reason are waking, perception, and thinking most pleasant, and hopes and memories are so on account of these). And thinking in itself deals with that which is best in itself, and that which is thinking in the fullest sense with that which is best in the fullest sense."<sup>48</sup>

The thought represents the absolute form of existence, manifested through the actuality<sup>49</sup>. Aristotle remarks that the Unmoved Mover thinks on itself without stop, suggesting that the Thought, the Intellect and the Intelligibility are identical: "And thought thinks on itself because it shares the nature of the object of thought; for it becomes an object of thought in coming into contact with and thinking its objects, so that thought and object of thought

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<sup>47</sup> This inference is valid because sensible substances are corruptible and undergoing generation; their alteration and creation require motion warranted by the cosmological system of movers.

<sup>48</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b 16-20.

<sup>49</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translation by Tredennick, p. 149.

are the same. For that which is capable of receiving the object of thought, i.e. the essence, is thought. But it is active when it possesses this object.”<sup>50</sup>

Aristotle asks himself if the identity between thought and its object is a valid cognitive conception, because the majority divides the thought and its object in two different objects. For instance, Plotinus argues against the Aristotelian paradigm of the Unmoved Mover, replying negatively to Aristotle’s interrogation; therefore, he affirms that the Unmoved Mover is a secondary principle in his hypostatic system. Hence, Aristotle maintains in some cases the identity between knowledge and object: “Since, then, thought and the object of thought are not different in the case of things that have not matter, the divine thought and its object will be the same, i.e. the thinking will be one with the object of its thought.”<sup>51</sup>

Next, the interrogation analyses the particular structure of the Thought that thinks on itself. Norman argues that the “narcissistic” idea of the Thought that thinks on itself (some critics talk about the narcissism of the First Principle, because it loves itself and it thinks only on itself, nothing else being worthy of its thought) is incorrect and comes from an inadequate comprehension of the Thought.<sup>52</sup> According to this statement, the idea of a Mind that thinks on itself is better expressed in *On the Soul* III.4, where Aristotle develops a double cognitive typology, the criterion of difference representing a potential thought situated in an external or internal context (the two cognitive typologies concentrate over a potential intellect in relation to the external Forms or to itself, in the case if it truly possesses the knowledge of all Forms)<sup>53</sup>: “Once the mind has become each set of its possible objects, as a man of science has, when this phrase is used of one who is actually a man of science (this happens when he is now able to exercise the power on his own initiative), its condition is still one of potentiality, but in a different sense from the potentiality which preceded the acquisition of knowledge by learning or discovery: the mind too is then able to think itself.”<sup>54</sup> The first type of thought shows that intellect is potential because it does not possess its object, while the second type presents an active intellect in virtue of that specific possession.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, Norman thinks that the potential intellect becomes identical with the objects of thought, unlike the

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<sup>50</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1072b 20-24.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibidem* 1075a 3-5.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Norman, “Aristotle’s Philosopher-God”, *Articles on Aristotle* IV, ed. Barnes, Schofield, Sorabji, Duckworth, London, 1979, p. 93.

<sup>53</sup> Aristotle, *On the Soul* 429b 5. In both of these cases, a potential intellect is situated in relation to a certain element, be it an external Form or itself, suggesting a duality of Thought: the thinker and the object of its thought (so, two distinct entities). Therefore, this duality is the essence of the criticism that Plotinus makes against Aristotle.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem* 429b 5-9.

<sup>55</sup> Richard Norman, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

actual intellect that was already identical to them, even before<sup>56</sup> it had thought on itself.<sup>57</sup> However, if an intellect is potential in regard to an external object, then that particular possession<sup>58</sup> requires a specific motion and, under these circumstances, the Unmoved Mover could not be anymore proportional to the Thought because, unlike material substances, The Prime Mover does not have potentiality but it is always actual.

Consequently, Norman continues the Aristotelian argument from *On the Soul* and comments the *Metaphysics* Λ9. Briefly, he says that the Aristotelian question (“What does the Unmoved Mover think?”) involves only one of the two forms of thought. So, the interrogation applies to the intellect (the capacity to think) or to the thought (potential or actual) and inquires about the nature of this object of thought (external thing or mental structure). In the end, if the essence of the First Unmoved Mover is not the Thought but the potentiality, its state will be determined by an external and non-contemplative object (so not by itself) and it will cease to be the highest reality.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, the general interpretation of how the First Unmoved Mover thinks on itself focus on the highest Good, because nothing else is worthy enough: “Further, whether its substance is the faculty of thought or the act of thinking, what does it think of? Either of itself or of something else; and if of something else, either of the same thing always or of something different. Does it matter, then, or not, whether it thinks of the good or of any chance thing? Are there not some things about which it is incredible that it should think? Evidently, then, it thinks of that is most divine and precious, and it does not change; for change would be change for the worse, and this would be already a movement.”<sup>60</sup> In spite of that, the thought on itself should not be represented as a totally exclusive thinking, because every actual, theoretical thought is involved in a process of thinking on itself. In fact, the continuous and abstract thinking could never be eliminated because it is distinguished from the human thought through its own eternity. If the Unmoved Mover does not think at external objects, then it thinks on itself. Under these conditions, one could state that it is impossible for it to think at particular, contingent objects if these ones are created and later destroyed, because such knowledge would introduce an alterity in the space of Being. Nevertheless, the Unmoved Mover is a completely actual and thoughtful entity whose structure cannot be modified, since to think at “x” while “y” is already being thought means that the intellect is in a relation of potentiality with “y”. The Unmoved Mover thinks on itself

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<sup>56</sup> In this case, the adverb “before” relates to the logical priority and not to a temporal one (if the Unmoved Mover eternally thinks on itself, the temporal distinctions are totally excluded).

<sup>57</sup> Richard Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

<sup>58</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1074b 28.

<sup>59</sup> Richard Norman, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-98.

<sup>60</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1074b 15-28.

because the process represents the highest way of being or the perfect unity: the primary Substance. In other words, Aristotle says that to think the Thought itself means to think both the Being and the Unity.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> This prototype of substance is simultaneously a continuity between the Aristotelian theology and ontology. However, the idea does not suggest that the ontology is reducible to theology, or that the latter represents the climax of the former; on the contrary, it shows that the ontology collaborates with the highest principle, the divine Unmoved Mover or the prototype of the Substance itself.

# DWORKIN'S ASSOCIATIVE POLITICAL OBLIGATIONS AND THE ANARCHIST CHALLENGE

VALENTIN STOIAN

## *Abstract*

The article argues that Ronald Dworkin's account of political obligation as a form of associative obligation fails to ground a duty to obey the law. The article shows how Dworkin does not succeed in establishing what A.J. Simmons calls the particularity condition. First, Dworkin's 1986 account of associative obligations is contrasted to its anarchist criticism. Then, Dworkin's 2011 clarifications made in *Justice for Hedgehogs* are analyzed. The article shows that Dworkin's 2011 version of associative political obligations fails the same way as the 1986 version. Dworkin grounds the obligation to obey the law of the state in the claim that one has duties to some associations he participates in, even if he did not consent to this participation. Further, with special reference to political obligation, Dworkin claims that the state is a coercive association in which all participate and which undermines each participants' dignity.

To argue for the claim, the article utilizes arguments about coercion employed in the global justice debate. It shows how Dworkin's account of associative political obligations is based on a classical concept of coercion. This reading of coercion has been severely criticized by Laura Valentini and Arash Abizadeh. The article transfers some arguments from the discussion on coercion and global justice into the field of political obligation and legitimacy. Finally, Dworkin's account of participation in coercion is challenged, showing how it is not possible to refuse this involvement.

**Keywords:** political obligation, associative duties, anarchism, coercion.

## **1. Introduction**

The topic of political obligation is an important one in analytical normative philosophy. Authors in the field have attempted to offer justifications of a moral imperative to obey the laws of the state. Philosophical anarchists denied that such imperative can exist. They expressed even stronger doubts when it came to justifying an obligation owed to a particular state. In the history of political thought, voluntarist accounts predominated. These relied on the idea of an explicit or a tacit consent to be governed. When this was criticized, political theory moved towards grounding political obligation without reference to voluntary acts. Ronald Dworkin's account of associative obligations and John Rawls' theory of the natural duty of justice are the main representatives of this group.

This paper will address and criticize a particular form of non-voluntarist account: the theory of associative obligations as outlined by Ronald Dworkin.

The paper will analyze Dworkin's claim and the main criticism of the anarchist camp offered by A. J. Simmons. However, a stipulation has to be made: Ronald Dworkin presented initially his theory in his book *Law's Empire* in 1986. A.J. Simmons reacted in 2001 and criticized Dworkin. However, in 2011, Dworkin improved his account in his last book *Justice for Hedgehogs*. The paper aims to discuss whether the revised account is robust enough to give an adequate reply to the anarchist challenge. It will argue that Dworkin's account still fails to rebut the anarchist criticism because it cannot establish the particularity condition. Dworkin's reliance on coercion and participation in coercion to ground particularity is open to two types of challenges. The first criticism argues that Dworkin relies on a very narrow understanding of coercion. The second states, that without a meaningful exit-option, participation in coercing others cannot be escaped. The paper aims to transplant the discussion on coercion and global justice into the field of political obligation and legitimacy. In the global justice literature, coercion was seen as an argument for statism over cosmopolitanism. However, in Dworkin's work, the existence of coercion is employed to ground political obligation and to impose a requirement of legitimacy (not justice). The paper will employ some arguments from one normative debate to explore consequences for another.

The paper will proceed by first outlining the literature in the field and by presenting the arguments of the opposing camps. Then, it will move to an analysis of Dworkin's concept of coercion. The paper will conclude by claiming that the particularity condition is not met in Dworkin's theory.

## 2. Literature Review

Ronald Dworkin presents his theory of associative obligations in his 1986 book, *Law's Empire*. He initiates his explanation by an analogy with two instances of social interaction: friendship and the family. Dworkin shows that obligations such as those owed by children to their parents or those owed by friends to one another are not assumed by voluntary consent. A child does not choose who his parents are, nor is a friendship established through a mutually agreed contract. While the first is a random act of nature, the second case evolves through social practice. Two people do not explicitly agree to become friends, nor do they sign a contract to that respect, after mutual negotiations. Yet, this does not make the obligations of children towards parents or of friends towards one another less real and less strong (Dworkin 1986, 197).

Dworkin also asserts that associative moral obligations are genuine only if certain conditions are met. Among these conditions are that obligations are special, holding only within the group, that they are personal (owed to individual

members not to the group as a whole), that they are based on concern for the other members and that this concern is offered equally (Dworkin 1986, 202).

Dworkin then moves to make his position more clear and to reject a moral relativist claim. This claim, dubbed by Simmons the normative independence case, would state that associative obligations are created merely by the fact of having a social role in any association, without reference to its overall goals (Simmons 2001, 84). Dworkin implicitly denies this thesis by claiming that associative duties and responsibilities are true moral obligations only if the association in which they are undertaken does not conflict with general justice. Dworkin describes groups which undertake to discriminate against non-members as an example of unjust associations. He also argues that interpretation is needed to see whether a certain practice supported by an association is truly in conflict with wider justice and if yes, if it is genuinely supported by the association's founding principles (Dworkin 1986, 204).

Finally, Dworkin claims that states bear the hallmarks of genuine associations and that if their internal structure is just, then citizens have an associative *prima facie* obligation to obey their laws. However, Dworkin does not offer a principled argument for this claim. Firstly, he appeals to the moral intuitions of people who feel that elected officials have a specific duty to them and that a country is "our country". Even though borders are arbitrary, Dworkin claims that they are a matter of interpretation. Dworkin also describes three models of community, out of which only the third meets the criterion of genuinely being able to command political obligation. He denominates this model as the "model of principle" and presents it as:

it insists that people are members of a genuine political community only when they accept that their fates are linked in the following strong way: they accept that they are governed by common principles, not just by rules hammered out in political compromise. Politics has a different character for such people. It is a theater of debate about which principles the community should adopt as a system, which view it should take of justice, fairness and due process, not the different story, appropriate to the other models, in which each person tries to plan the flag of his convictions over as large a domain of power or rules as possible [...] Nor does this suppose that these further rights and duties are conditional on his wholehearted approval of that scheme. (Dworkin 1986, 211)

A. J. Simmons criticizes Dworkin's account of political obligation mainly because it fails to establish that political obligations are particular. Simmons requires any account of political obligation to show that a citizen owes political obligation to his particular state. Otherwise, Simmons claims, our political obligations are owed to just institutions in general (Internet encyclopedia of philosophy, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/poli-obl/>). Simmons quotes Dworkin as admitting that obligations will not be sustained if the members of a certain group do not feel love or friendship for one another (Simmons 2001, 78).

Even if Dworkin does not directly compare the family and the state, he at least begins his description of associative political obligations by the example of the family. Simmons criticizes this association, by saying that the obligations of the family are based on mutual ties of love and friendship. However, such ties do not obtain in a modern state, which impersonally administers general laws. Moreover, citizens in a modern society are not neighbors, many times they live thousands of kilometers apart. Their subjective allegiance might even fall on other states or on their particular national, ethnic or local group (Simmons 2001, 50).

However, Dworkin does not directly associate the family and the state. He merely asserts that we have general political obligations to just institutions. The social rules of the institutions we are members of specify our duties but do not create them. Simmons also has a reply to this objection. He asserts that Dworkin relies too much on independent principles of justice to ground political obligations. In a footnote he argues that very little moral work is done in Dworkin's work by particular associative obligations as opposed to universal principles of justice. This would lead Dworkin, according to Simmons, back to a failure to establish particular political obligations (Simmons 2001, 79n35).

Thirdly, Simmons denies the empirical premise that "our own community" (Simmons' and Dworkin's), by which he means the United States of America, satisfies the "model of principle" account. Simmons believes that the contemporary US comes closer Dworkin's second model, the rulebook model or the Rawlsian "modus vivendi". This is, according to Simmons, a fatal flaw for Dworkin's attempt to establish political obligation towards the contemporary US (Simmons 2001, 79n35).

Dworkin returns to the same problem in his 2011 book, *Justice for Hedgehogs*. Firstly, he differentiates between two types of associative obligations: those that have as a background a universal moral principle and those who do not. Among the first, he quotes obligations to children. He asserts that a community which does not specify the universal moral duty to care for children by assigning social roles for discharging that duty is morally defective. The other type of associative obligation is that owed to lovers for example. A community which does not create special obligations for lovers might be impoverished but does not fail from a moral point of view (Dworkin 2011, 313).

Then, Dworkin analyzes the relationship between obligations and conventions. He asserts that "convention strengthens as well as shapes role obligations" (Dworkin 2011, 315). Thus, he explicitly claims that a universal moral duty is always in the background, but this is discharged through a specific association. Associative obligations are not triggered directly by being member of an association and unjust associations, like mafias, do not have a moral right to being obeyed. His arguments closely resemble those put forward in the earlier book, but the later text makes his view considerably more explicit.

Dworkin finally moves to establishing the reasons for which he believes political obligations are particular associative obligations towards the end of the chapter. He admits that there is something arbitrary in the borders we know today, but he maintains that this does not count towards the problem of political obligation. He justifies his claims by showing that political organizations which exist today undermine the dignity of their members through coercion. When one citizen supports a coercive political organization, he participates in undermining the dignity of others. On the other hand, he claims that a dignified life could not exist without an organization which coordinates social processes through coercion. This makes the state more closely resemble the first type of association. Like a community that does not attribute care for children, a community without a coercive state to coordinate social interaction would be morally defective, Dworkin could claim. Dworkin poses this as a paradox (Dworkin 2011, 320).

Dworkin believes that this paradox is solved by political obligation. By participating in coercion, one undermines others' dignity but life with dignity is impossible without coercion. However, the only way to avoid undermining another's dignity, Dworkin claims, is by subjecting oneself to the same laws one participates in subjecting others: "We find ourselves in associations we need and cannot avoid but whose vulnerabilities are consistent with our self-respect only if they are reciprocal-only if they include the responsibility of each, at least in principle, to accept collective decisions as obligations" (Dworkin 2011, 321). This, according to Dworkin, grounds political obligation towards fellow citizens and makes it a special type of associative obligation.

### 3. Coercion and Participation in Coercion

Firstly, one could summarize Dworkin's argument in the following way:

- P1. Dignity is one of the essential aspects of a human being
- P2. Individuals have a duty to not undermine other individuals' dignity
- P3. Individuals can create, support and participate in social practices
- P4. In some specific cases, individuals can fulfill their duty under P2 only through social practices
  
- C1 (from P1-P4) In cases in which individuals can fulfill their duty to not undermine others' dignity only through social practices they have a duty to create the social practices necessary for them to fulfill this duty.
  
- P6. A coercive political organization is a social practice necessary for individuals to fulfill their duty to not undermine others' dignity.

Life without a coercive political organization is a life in which dignity is impossible

C2 (From P1-P6 and C1) Individuals have a duty to create a coercive political organization

P7. Decisions of coercive political organizations undermine the dignity of their members unless: 1. individuals who support these decisions accept that they should be enforced also on themselves and 2. The respective coercive organization meets a standard of legitimacy

P7(1) can be justified as follows:

P8. Individuals undermine the dignity of those who are members of the same coercive political organization by non-reciprocity.

P9. Non-reciprocity is manifested by disobeying the laws one participates in coercively enforcing against others

C3. Individuals have a duty to obey coercive laws they participate in enforcing against others.

P7(2) is explained as: A coercive organization meets the standard of legitimacy if it strives for its citizens' full dignity

P11. Two or more individuals can be members of the same coercive political organization.

P12. Membership in a coercive political organization is not premised on any act of explicit or implicit consent of accepting membership.

P13. It is a product of history that some groups of individuals are members of one coercive political organization and other groups are members of other coercive political organizations.

C5. If one is a member of a legitimate coercive political organization one has the duty to obey its laws if the community meets the standard of legitimacy, even if one did not voluntarily enter into this membership.

The first main criticism to be leveled against Dworkin is targeted at his understanding of coercion. The debate of what coercion is has been waged in the literature on global justice and some of the arguments will be brought from there. Dworkin does not particularly spell out what he means by coercion and coercive political organizations. The only reference he makes to what he

understands by coercion is that political organizations apply threats of force and carry out those threats in case of disobedience (Dworkin 2011, 320). This offers support for claiming that Dworkin understands only direct application of physical force as coercion. Moreover, Dworkin implicitly assumes that governments coerce primarily their own citizens.

The first assumption can be shown false by offering a different version of what coercion is. Such an account is offered by Laura Valentini in her paper on coercion and global justice. According to Valentini, the classical account of coercion, the one which Dworkin seems to share can be read like this: "An agent A coerces another agent B if A intentionally forces B to do, or to refrain from doing, X through a command backed by the threat of sanctions" (Valentini 2011, 209). However, she avers that an understanding of coercion as "command backed by the threat of sanctions" does not capture the true nature of what coercion is and that a wider interpretation is necessary. Her account defines two types of coercion: interactional and systemic. Interactional coercion occurs when an agent (individual or collective) "foreseeably and avoidably places non-trivial constraints in the path of another agent's freedom as opposed to a baseline without these constraints" (Valentini 2011, 210). Systemic coercion emerges when a system of rules, without the backing of an agent, but supported by many individual actions accomplishes the same result of frustrating an agents' freedom. As an example, Valentini offers the international trade system especially before the emergence of the WTO, which represented a system of rules without any collective agent to interpret them or to enforce them (Valentini 2011, 210–212).

To defend his claims, Dworkin would have to affirm that coercion is only a command backed by the threat of physical sanctions or to accept some ambiguous results. On Valentini's description of interactional coercion Dworkin would have to admit that one owes political obligations to all collective agents which he participates in and which coerce other members. At the international level, no organization has established the degree of interactional coercion (either as threat backed by sanctions or as non-trivial constraints) which states currently enjoy, but the European Union comes relatively close (at least when it comes to non-trivial constraints). On Dworkin's view, one would have to admit that a European citizen (we can assume one who was born after her country joined the EU) owes political obligation to the institutions of Brussels. While this is not necessarily a strong argument against Dworkin, it does create a somewhat counterintuitive feeling for many.

If one was to accept the systemic view of coercion and Dworkin account, an apparent paradox ensues. In the case of systemic coercion one obeys a system of rules, not enforced by an agent, which coerce other individuals. Dworkin's demand that we obey the same rules which we force others to seems moot because the very coercion is triggered by us following those rules.

However, in this case, one could say that if a coercive system of rules is created by numerous decisions of individual agents, but no group agent exists to coordinate them, individuals might incur a duty to create such a collective agent. Coercive rules also need interpretation and adjudication, once they have been created. This could trigger the demand for creating a legitimate global state.

Dworkin also assumes that governments coerce primarily or exclusively their own citizens. However, even on the narrow understanding of coercion which Dworkin takes, this is not true. Firstly, states coerce others at the borders by not allowing them to enter their territory at will and threatening sanctions if they try (Abizadeh 2007). Secondly, states coerce others in wars, even if that coercion is justified by other moral imperatives. It would be hard to interpret wars, which are sometimes followed by occupation as anything else than coercion.

On this interpretation of coercion, a citizen would owe an obligation to not undermine the dignity of those coerced in wars and at the borders. Once again, one might find himself morally obliged to support the creation of some global organization which would regulate (or abolish) borders between states and would preempt wars. This organization would have to possess far greater powers than the United Nations does today.

The second line of attack against Dworkin's conception is his understanding of participation in coercion. He places special emphasis on an individual's participation in coercing others through the state. He takes it as an assumption that if an individual disobeys the laws, he has to grant the same moral freedom to others. This would lead to a tyrannical association, forcing individuals to do what they have no duty to do (Dworkin 2011, 320). Moreover, Dworkin asserts that even if we have not voluntarily accepted being in a state, we are still, by simply residing there, participating in coercing other people. This seems somewhat contradictory and circular. How can one be meaningfully said to participate in coercion, when that participation is something which he has no option to avoid? How can one's disobedience to the law be said to constitute imposing duties, when one has no choice but to impose those duties? Of course, if one disobeys only some laws but not others, and receives the benefit of other people obeying all the laws, then one is indeed imposing duties one is not willing to take. But, Dworkin cannot give a meaningful reply to a person who genuinely wishes to avoid participating in coercion altogether. There is no place to go in which one does not participate in coercing at least some people.

Unlike other associative obligations, Dworkin's political obligation is unlimited and inescapable. One can exit a friendship if one feels that his duties have become burdensome. The same person can forswear friendship forever. One might not have such leeway when it comes to a parent, but these duties are limited in time. At a certain point a child's duty to help the parent lapses with the death of the parent. Normally, the death of the parent occurs earlier than that of the child, leaving the child enough time without an obligation. But, a political

obligation lasts from and individuals' birth to his death and there is no meaningful way of exiting it. Dworkin's account would be considerably more satisfactory if it would create a duty incumbent on the community of states to create a space for the immigration of those who do not wish to participate in coercion or be coerced.

#### 4. Conclusion

The paper has argued that Dworkin's account of political obligation as a type of political associative obligation relies on two main weaknesses. In order to fill the requirement of particularity which Simmons requires, Dworkin relies on a narrow account of coercion. This account has been criticized in the literature. If Laura Valentini's wider interpretation of coercion is taken into consideration then Dworkin's provisos can lead to a duty to create a world state. Secondly, Dworkin views political obligation as a special type of non-voluntary associative obligation. However, unlike other associations, an individual cannot leave all states behind, as he can do with friendships. Nor does the political association have naturally fixed time limits. In the absence of any meaningful exit option, it is hard to claim that a person is morally bound to a particular country.

Further research could attempt to investigate whether the two types of coercion which Valentini posits are somehow different from a moral point of view when it comes to political obligation. Secondly, an attempt to justify obligations without exit options could be attempted.

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## WHY THE EXTENDED MIND?

BOGDAN BOGHIȚOI<sup>1</sup>

### *Abstract*

The goal of the paper is to determine what could provide grounds for the idea that mind could be partly realized by environmental items. In this respect, it analyses the now classical arguments put forward by Clark and Chalmers, and shows that both the thought experiments and the parity approach they devise fail to substantiate the claim that cognitive processes extend beyond skin and skull. Yet, the paper concludes that we should not discard the idea of a mind that extends into the environment, as it can extract its credentials from life sciences.

**Keywords:** extended mind, Clark, Sterelny, Dawkins, extended phenotype.

### **Introduction**

What is the realization base of the mind? One of the most radical proposals here, notoriously defended by Clark and Chalmers<sup>2</sup>, is that mind is not confined between the traditional boundaries of skin and skull. Instead, mental processes and states should be considered as partly realized by external elements. At the core of their approach lies the more commonsensical idea that the external resources with which the individual interacts play an essential role in driving cognition. For instance, it is quite obvious that we cannot perform complex calculations without pen and paper or without the aid of a computer, for instance. The human organism comes to be linked through an array of reciprocal causal interactions such external entities that serve cognition, creating a “coupled system”, which can be seen as implementing cognition, as a whole. Thus, they contend, the external entities themselves come to participate in realizing mental states and processes.

During the last decade the debate evolved and ramified considerably. Nevertheless there is a consistent thread that runs across the discussion, provided by the original arguments that Clark and Chalmers put forward for their ontological claim. Both for the friends and for the foes of the extended

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<sup>1</sup> University of Bucharest.

<sup>2</sup> Andy Clark and David J. Chalmers, “The extended mind,” *Analysis* 58 (1998): 7-19.

mind, these arguments act as a reference point, around which much of the discussion still revolves, even after more than a decade since they were presented to the philosophical community. What this paper will be arguing is that, in spite of the attention they managed to attract and the structuring role they played for the field they inaugurated, these arguments fail to be conclusive. More generally, what I will try to demonstrate is that any argument based on the idea of parity is bound to fail. Nevertheless, as I shall attempt to show, that isn't a death spell for the extended mind, as it can find better grounds elsewhere.

### **The Thought Experiments**

The backbone of the original argumentation in favor of the extended mind idea was given by two thought experiments and a certain principle, that invites rational assent. Let us concentrate first on the thought experiments.

In one of them, Clark and Chalmers invite us to think at three cases of Tetris players:

- (1) one of the players rotates the falling blocks “in the head”, using only his biological resources;
- (2) another physically rotates them on the computer display, by pressing some keys;
- (3) a “cyberpunk”, which has a neural implant, designed to compute such rotations. This enables him, to use at will not only the normal human mental resources, but also the output of the implant.<sup>3</sup>

According to Clark and Chalmers all three situations should be counted as instantiating cognitive processes, in spite of the location of some of the resources involved. Case (1) is a clear example of cognition, and case (3) seems to be on the par with it. Case (2), where the non-biological cognitive resource is situated outside the body shares the same computational structure with (3), so we must consider it too as exemplifying cognition. Therefore the mechanisms performing rotations can be located anywhere, and are not confined to the usual inner equipment of humans. We should conclude that cognitive processes can sometimes span outside the body.

One problem arises from the fact that the cyberpunk argument assumes something that is far from being unproblematic, namely that the mereological sum of the implantee and his chip (i.e. the cyberpunk) exemplifies a system that can be said to perform cognitive tasks, in the same way a person can be said to perform mental rotations or play Tetris. It is not at all clear that (1) and (3) are

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<sup>3</sup> Clark and Chalmers, “The Extended Mind,” 12-14.

on par. Attributing the completion of task to the ensemble formed by a man and the artifacts he uses is far from being straightforward.

Thus, there are clear cases when carrying out the task is attributable to the person involved, who is merely said to use those objects. It would be strange, at least, to say that eating is something me and my fork do or that me and my plate ate a large pie last night. It is me who has a dinner, that is, the activity said to be performed by me. The fork is just a mean I use to further my goal. It is not a component of me, so that the attribution could be said to be about the hybrid formed by a person and his fork, although the latter has a definite causal contribution to the whole process, even externalizing a process that otherwise would have been performed using our biological apparatus, like picking up and holding food. Likewise, to apply our reasoning to the classic Rumelhartian example, saying that me and my pen perform calculations, does not conform to the usual attributive practices. The standard way to put it is to say that I perform calculations using a pen, a computer or an abacus, which, from this standpoint are merely instrumental to who is truly performing the task, namely the human. It is me that calculates, not the aggregate composed of me and my pen. Whatever their role, we usually regard artifacts as not being constitutive to whatever carries out a cognitive task, or, in other words, to what implements the cognitive processes proper, as otherwise we would have no problem attributing collectively the carrying out of the task.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, we might need to revise our naive idea about what is performing cognitive tasks, and grant this sort of “cognitive agency” to hybrid systems, formed by man and its implements, which, as a whole, should be considered to carry out the task. I shall actually plead for taking that route. But we should not assume that from the outset, as it is not at all uncontroversial. Moreover, even if we grant that possibility, we must prove that such is the case with the cyberpunk, and that we are not dealing with an ensemble that cannot be considered to perform any rotations, the same way as me and my plate, taken collectively, cannot be said to eat.

Also, please note that the case of the cyberpunk cannot be straightforwardly assimilated to that of a Martian whose natural cognitive equipment includes such a microchip. Clark tries to beef up his thought experiment this way, holding that the Martian, which allegedly nothing relevant distinguishes from the cyberpunk, would be considered performing mental rotations<sup>5</sup>. Such a Martian is a system performing cognitive tasks. But, *ex hypothesi*, he does not employ artifacts designed to help him, relying only on the structures he was

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<sup>4</sup> For an excellent treatment of the instrumental-constitutive difference and the various types of assemblages one can have, see Susan Hurley, “The Varieties of Externalism”, in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, A Bradford Book, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Andy Clark, “Memento’s revenge”, in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, A Bradford Book, 2010), 44.

born with. What would have been needed, is rather a case where not all parts are there by nature, as it is precisely the tool use that poses problems.

The second thought experiment involves two characters, Inga and Otto. While Inga stores the information that the Museum of Modern Art is on the 53<sup>rd</sup> street in her internal memory, Otto, who has Alzheimer's, wrote that piece of information in a notebook, which he checks when he wants to visit the museum. We could explain why they head to the 53<sup>rd</sup> street by pointing out that both want to go to the museum and that they think that it was located on the 53<sup>rd</sup> street, therefore ascribing both the same opinion. Thus, we can attribute non-occurrent beliefs to Otto, even if the information is stored outside his central nervous system.

As regards Otto, attributing him extended mental states would lead straight to inconsistency. One of the familiar explanations of his behavior, which involves consulting his notebook, would be to assert that he has no idea where the address of the Museum of Modern Art. Unfortunately, ascribing him beliefs about the location of the museum would yield contradictory psychological attributions. Were the thought experiment of Clark and Chalmers conclusive, we would have to predicate of Otto both that he thinks that the museum is located on the 53<sup>rd</sup> street and that he lacks such an opinion. As Preston<sup>6</sup> remarked, being incapable to say without the help of a notebook where the museum is precisely what we qualify as failure to remember.

### The Parity Principle

The intuitions at play in these experiments exemplify situations that fall under the “parity principle”, which states that

if, as we confront some task, a part of the world functions as a process which, were it done in the head, we would have no hesitation in recognizing as part of the cognitive process, then that part of the world is part of the cognitive process<sup>7</sup>

Before proceeding, a few clarifications are required. There is a persistent ambiguity with regard to the parity principle, which hasn't escaped its critics<sup>8</sup> namely, with regard to the degree of functional isomorphism required between the regular internal cognitive processes and the external components.

Thus, some – both friends and adversaries of the hypothesis of extended cognition – have read the parity principle as presupposing some form of

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<sup>6</sup> J. Preston, *Belief and Epistemic Credit*, in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, A Bradford Book, 2010), 262.

<sup>7</sup> Clark and Chalmers, “The extended mind”, 8.

<sup>8</sup> See Frank Adams and Kenneth Aizawa, *The Bounds of Cognition* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2008), 133-136.

functional isomorphism between what happens within the wider coupled system and the regular intracranial processes. To take Wheeler's words, the interpretation was that "the parity principle states that if there is functional equality with respect to governing behavior, between the causal contribution of certain internal elements and the causal contribution of certain external elements, and if the internal elements concerned qualify as the proper parts of a cognitive trait, then there is no good reason to deny equivalent status – that is, cognitive status – to the relevant external elements."<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, more recently Clark felt the need to return on what the parity principle was meant to require, making a few clarifications about how it should be interpreted. Thus, he emphasized what some have subsequently described as a form of "complementarity" between the inner and the outer.<sup>10</sup> According to Clark, the parity principle should not be taken to require some sort of functional identity or similarity between the regular psychological processes implemented by the brain and those unfolding outside the body.<sup>11</sup> The part of the coupled system that lies outside the head can even assume roles which are highly dissimilar to those usually assumed by the nervous system, and contribute differently to behavior.<sup>12</sup> The parity principle should be taken as a mere invitation to avoid chauvinism, and offer equal opportunities to internal and external elements when ascertaining whether they realize a mental process or not.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, Clark does not wish to step outside functionalism.<sup>14</sup> So how can this position accommodate different architectures? Well, the option left is to disregard how the structures at play are internally organized, and appeal to the functional relations with the overall input and output. Thus, Clark emphasizes that what truly matters is "systemic role" each mechanism plays in guiding current responses<sup>15</sup>, their contribution to the functional poise of the system, and not how much they mimic what actually happens in the brain.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> John Wheeler, "In Defense of Extended Functionalism", in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, A Bradford Book, 2010), 248.

<sup>10</sup> See John Sutton, "Exograms, interdisciplinarity and the cognitive life of things," in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, A Bradford Book, 2010), 194; Andy Clark, *Supersizing the mind, Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 115. At some point, Clark described the attempt to find such a homology as "an all too common misreading of the parity principle" (Julian Kiverstein and Andy Clark, "Mind Embodied, Embedded, Enacted: One Church or Many?", *Topoi* 28 (2009), 3; see also A. Clark, "Curing cognitive hiccups: a defense of the extended mind", *The Journal of Philosophy*, vol. CIV, no. 4 (2007), 166).

<sup>11</sup> Andy Clark, "Memento's revenge", in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, A Bradford Book, 2010), 52.

<sup>12</sup> Kiverstein and Clark, "Mind Embodied, Embedded, Enacted" 3.

<sup>13</sup> Clark, *Supersizing the mind*, 104.

<sup>14</sup> Clark, *Supersizing the mind*, 96.

<sup>15</sup> Clark, "Memento's revenge" 52.

<sup>16</sup> Kiverstein and Clark, "Mind Embodied, Embedded, Enacted," 3.

Nevertheless, although the parity principle does not require functional identity, functional identity leads to parity, especially if we want to stay functionalists. Being liberal to what can constitute cognition and allowing into the cognitive realm components that have wildly different architectures, and consequently might have varying behavioral effects, does not mean that the functionally identical architectures do not stay cognitive, even in this permissive interpretation of parity. Actually, as perfect replicas, they are bound to have an identical output with what goes on in the head, which might control in the same way the behavior, and as such would have the same contribution to the poise of the system. Such an identical shaping of behavior coming from functionally identical structures is an example of parity, according to Clark's requirements. Moreover, were we to find somewhere processes isomorphic to those in my head they should be counted as cognitive, according to functionalism. The isomorphic mechanisms instantiate actually the simplest and neatest cases of parity, and as such they can guide our intuition easier in certain rival thought experiments, aimed at showing that Clark's principle doesn't work, because we can have external items complying with it that don't plausibly realize any of my cognitive processes.<sup>17</sup>

But before seeing what happens when we externalize to such parity compliant devices, we would like to set the grounds by stressing a few points. First of all, constructing functional descriptions means tracking causal chains. Secondly, saying that A causes B doesn't amount to holding that the process leading from state A to B isn't further decomposable into an array of intermediate states and processes. For instance, pushing the throttle pedal causes the car to run faster, but only through the mediation of a host of intervening states and processes in the carburetor, engine, transmission system and so on.

Now, suppose the city I live in is struck by a heat wave. Consequently, I get the sudden urge to have a soft drink, which in turn makes me action a vending machine, by inserting coins into it. The machine passes through a series of states that make it eject into a tray a can of soda and the change it owes me. As a result, I pick up the change, then the can, which I drink. We have here a causal sequence of events that begins with the temperature rise, and ends with me performing of a set of behaviors, like picking up some objects and drinking soda.

In addition, imagine that a certain simple subroutine involved in my decision to have a soft drink finds its isomorphic counterpart in an array of functional states the machine passes through, while controlling the delivery of the soft drink. Think, for instance, of the mental process that computes the amount of money I will get from the machine as change, and that consists in the application of the arithmetical algorithms we were taught in elementary school. We could easily have the same rules written into the program that controls the

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<sup>17</sup> One can actually modify the thought experiment below to allow more dissimilarity, albeit this will more likely result in a less efficient "intuition pump".

machine. Imagine that we actually do such operations in the head, as I need to do such calculus in order to know whether I should search for one or two coins in the dedicated tray, or whether the money I insert are enough to buy me a soft drink. Thus, the machine could be provided with a suitable set of internal states, corresponding to each human mental state involved in mental calculus, and onto which the common arithmetic algorithms would be applied, whenever the machine calculates how much money it owes me or whether what I entered is enough for a can. This will allow for a seamless mapping between the mental and the matching machine states and transformations, and so we could have isomorphic processes. This way, the inner workings of the vending machine come to perform operations like additions, subtractions and multiplications that, had they been done in the head, they would be recognized as cognitive, making them comply with the parity principle.

Moreover, in the above scenario, the inner workings of the machine modulate the same way our behavior. The vending machine states lead to the same effects as my internal states. Concretely, the inner workings of the machine, make me do certain things, like empty the contents of the trays. The loud sounds of objects falling into those trays prompt me do that. We have here a process that is triggered by the heat wave and that ends with me manipulating in specific ways certain objects and drinking soda. Within it, both my internal computations and those inside the machine are links in a causal chain that ends with those behaviors. So they must have the same end effects. They even have the same causes, as at the chain of events they are part of is triggered by the same event, namely a rise in temperature, which constitutes stimulus triggering my behavior.

Of course, there is a difference. My internal states, involved in planning and acting, need the intercession of states within the machine, so that I could proceed with picking up the can and money, and finally enjoy the soft drink. Also, what happens inside the machine is not directly generated by the heat wave, requiring the mediation of an array of states in my head, that make me action the device, and so is the causation of my behavior by the machine mechanisms, which needs, for instance, the intercession of some processing by the brain of the sound of the coins falling, in order to trigger my reaction to reach for them. Yet as we have seen, this can't preclude the states thus separated being related as cause and effect, because, generally speaking, there might be many intermediate states between what we identify as cause and effect.

We have therefore an example of a mechanism that shapes behavior in the same way the brain structures do.<sup>18</sup> Were we to find in the head structures

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<sup>18</sup> Albeit controlling a narrower range of behaviors. It might be objected that the inner workings of the machine do not contribute to controlling the same set of behaviors as my internal arithmetic routines. Their influence is limited only to eliciting a narrow kind of soda-drinking behavior, while the latter mechanisms make me do a lot more, like determine how I fill in the income tax forms or solve Sudoku puzzles. They do not have the same contribution to what the

that do arithmetics and, as a consequence, make us stretch our hand and pick coins and the beverage, we would have no problem considering it cognitive. As a matter of fact, there actually are such structures performing this sort of computations. When I inserted the coins in the slot, I calculated whether I entered enough money and how much change I should be given. This reasoning made me proceed with entering my hand into the beverage tray and grope for the can, and do the same thing in the coin tray until I retrieve, say, two coins. Nevertheless computations in the microchip of the vending machine cannot be said to extend our cognitive processes. We have therefore an example that complies with the parity principle, and that doesn't yield any extended cognitive system.

### Some Diagnoses

Let us summarize briefly. Although not inconsistent as the Otto example, the cyberpunk thought experiment was inconclusive because an independent reason was needed so that that the ensemble formed made out of the human and his computerized tools could be attributed the cognitive processing. Sure, the parity principle might have provided that independent reason (though that would have not made the thought experiments any more useful), but it doesn't as it is simply false.

There is a general reason for which parity principle fails. It lies on the reliance on function for delineating cognitive systems, which creates problems. On the most general level, one should note that any good biological reason for manifesting certain behaviors turns whatever hardware supports such a worthy goal into a part of a cognitive system. This should go for devices designed to help us quench our thirst, but the commonest form of instantiation of this problem is elsewhere. Biological functions can be carried out both by cognitive and noncognitive mechanisms. One can easily figure a situation where the same control is carried out by cognitive mechanisms, that contribute identically to the poise of the organism. As a matter of fact, there are many control systems for behavior that are not cognitive. For instance, the push back of the kangaroo's legs when it hits the ground is not exclusively due to some neural control mechanisms that trigger a motor reaction. Amongst the many factors that control the kangaroo's hopping are elastic tendons that, like a spring, accumulate kinetic energy at landing and pull back the lower leg for a new jump.<sup>19</sup> Were we to find in the

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organism does as the intracranial states. Nevertheless, as we have seen, this is not required by the liberal interpretation of the parity principle Clark promotes, and sometimes emphasizes expressly (Kiverstein and Clark, "Mind Embodied, Embedded, Enacted," 3). After all no one expects a pen and paper to have the same impact on our capacity do do sums than our brain; for instance by the means of the outer tools we can work with larger numbers.

<sup>19</sup> R. McN. Alexander and Alexandra Vernon, "The mechanics of hopping by kangaroos (Macropodidae)," *Journal of Zoology* 177 (1975): 265-303.

head a mechanism that controls a similar movement of the lower limbs, by the usual means of some banal neural processes in the brain, which would make the animal energetically distend its legs when it lands, we would consider them cognitive right away. Nevertheless the action of the tendons is merely mechanical, due to the elastic properties of the proteins in the tendon. Yet, this makes for a set of complex interaction between the action of the tendon, the nervous terminations involved in proprioception that pick the effects of the tendon distension, the brain that orders the muscles to compensate, so that the animal would head in the right direction, at the right pace, and would maintain its balance, which in turn redounds upon the way the tendon is tensioned and releases back energy, generating more processing in the brain and so on. This amounts a coupled system with components in permanent interaction and which has parts that, although comply in the way they function with the parity principle, do not get to exemplify a cognitive process.

The same problem could be illustrated by the hormonal modulation of behavior. The way parts of the endocrine system interact with the neural system satisfies the formal conditions for being coupled system realizing cognition. They are permanently interlocked with the nervous system, regulating what the animal does. Neuroendocrinological mechanisms influence the nervous system. But most of all, were we to find a cortical mechanism that is tailored to fulfill that regulating function with respect to behavior by the means, we would not hesitate to consider it cognitive. For instance melatonin levels, increases after dark, making us sleep (of course *ceteris paribus*)<sup>20</sup>. Nevertheless, the same is true of our conscious reflections to go to bed when the night falls, which also makes us go to bed under normal circumstances. And the array of examples could go on and on.

True, the kangaroo's tendons or the endocrine system lie entirely within the borders of the organism. Nevertheless, the parity principle can't be taken to discriminate in that respect. As we have seen, the parity principle was presented precisely as an urge not to discriminate between the inner and the outer, or, to put it in Clark's words as a veil of "metabolical ignorance".<sup>21</sup> So the border of the skin and skull should not count here. On the other hand, this makes the parity cut both ways, blurring the borders between biological kinds that everything keeps apart, from mechanisms and investigating methods to evolutionary history.

## Evolution

Now if the functional isn't enough, we must turn elsewhere for a working method that could help us decide what is to be deemed cognitive and what

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<sup>20</sup> And vice-versa, the decisions of the brain influence melatonin secretion. For instance the decision not to go to sleep, but to turn on the lights and read a book instead, lowers the level of melatonin, as a result of light exposure.

<sup>21</sup> Clark, *Supersizing the mind*, 114.

shouldn't. Luckily, there is one more way to argue for the idea of an extended mind, that can put us on the right track, albeit it needs some tinkering to make it helpful. It pops out occasionally as part of the arguments aimed at tracing the borders of the mind. We are talking about evolutionary argumentation.

Thus, Sterelny points at two evolutionary models that have striking affinities with the hypothesis of the extended mind, and can be considered as sources for an evolutionary account of it<sup>22</sup>. One of them is Dawkins' idea of an extended phenotype<sup>23</sup>, namely that the phenotypical effects of a gene should not be confined within the limits of the body; on the contrary, we should consider as part of the phenotype the outer structures effected by the genes, like the beaver's dams and bird's nests. From such a standpoint, the beaver's dam is as part of the phenotype as its beaver's fur.

Unfortunately Sterelny rejects the extended phenotype view as an evolutionary account of what goes on with cognitive outsourcing. The problem Sterelny sees is that it requires a "gene for" building nests, dams and so on, which increases the chance for the production of such items in their typical environment. They are developmentally stable, heritable and predictable in their ecological effects. On the other hand, there is no similar "gene for" using pen and paper. My use of pen and paper in order to enhance my cognition is due rather to the fact that former generation humans perfected such artifacts, with which they populated the environment of the present generation.<sup>24</sup>

Sterelny prefers a second evolutionist approach, stemming from the idea of "niche construction". In a nutshell, the latter holds that species are not passively adapting to a fixed set of selective pressures, but are also actively modifying their environment.<sup>25</sup> Thus, according to Sterelny, when it comes to cognition, humans populate their environment with thinking tools and elaborate techniques to use them, which are passed to the new generation, adding to the set of resources humankind can tap into when solving cognitive problems. It is this rich complex of objects and techniques – or "collective resources", as he calls them – that scaffolds the intelligence of humans.

As a matter of fact I can agree entirely with the above depiction of the way cognition is scaffolded within its niche. But there are three problems with Sterelny's account. On one hand although there is no "gene for" specific epistemic artifacts, it doesn't mean that the use of those epistemic tools isn't genetically informed. Secondly, Sterelny's theory about the way human niche is

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<sup>22</sup> Kim Sterelny, "Minds – Extended or Scaffolded", *Phenomenology and The Cognitive Sciences*, 9, vol. 4 (2010): 465-481.

<sup>23</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Extended Phenotype* (Oxford: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> Sterelny, "Minds – Extended or Scaffolded", 468-469.

<sup>25</sup> For an overview of the consequences of the niche construction idea, see John Odling-Smee, Kevin F. Laland, and Marcus W. Feldman, *Niche Construction: The Neglected Process in Evolution* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

populated with collective resources is no rival to the extended phenotype, as both can be smoothly integrated. And thirdly, niche construction per se cannot ground the extended mind hypothesis anyway, although it complements it nicely.

First and foremost, we have to remember that is of the essence of the phenotype to be brought about by the interaction of the genotype with the environment. Thus, jungle crows (*Corvus macrorhynchos*) and carrion crows (*Corvus corone*), living in urban environments build their nests out of wire coat-hangers that they steal from balconies, where they are used for drying laundry, instead than using only sticks.<sup>26</sup> The use of these artifacts isn't the result of crow's specific gene, that was selected for picking up coat hangers as such, any more than our genes were selected for use pen and paper. In ancestral environments natural selection could not have favored the use count hangers, nor of pen and papers, as such items are recent inventions. The genotype of the crow was shaped for picking sticks, that it uses in its original environment, but for which, at some point the crow found substitutes. Nevertheless there is a genetic mechanism at play here. Not all species of birds have a similar material selection. A species with a different set of genes wouldn't pick coat hangers, nor would species other than man be capable to use pen and paper to do arithmetic. Finding (cultural) forces that furnish the environment with useful artifacts doesn't automatically exclude genetic factors, which must shape the cognitive makeup so that one could employ them. The genes shaping our organisms gave us the propensity to use pen and paper, unlike the genes of dogs or cats, that don't do that, although, no doubt, there is no gene "gene for" using pen and paper. Therefore, we cannot discount the gene factor in an account of extended cognition. The capacity to employ such and such environmental item is due to the specific genes, that shaped our brain such that it could take advantage when encountering certain items. The likelihood of using epistemic tools is increased by the possession of certain genes, which thus get the chance to form an extended phenotype. An ape, which is incapable of doing arithmetic, will have a null chance at employing writing for that, while our makeup, as a species, leads to the use of writing aids for the purpose of calculating in a multitude of cultures. This predisposition is inheritable as any other due to genes, and quite predictable. We have very good reasons to expect that the next generation to use pen and paper, in an environment that provides them with the right education and utensils. In these respects, emphasized by Sterelny, recruiting for cognitive purposes novel items present in the environment is as genetically determined as the non-augmented functioning of cognition and the functioning of many other structures we deem as products of the genotype.

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<sup>26</sup> J. Matsuo, "The relation between nests in which jungle and carrion crows used wire hangers and the vegetation coverage in Osaka City and Sakai City", *Strix* 23 (2005): 75-81.

What niche construction, at least in the Sterelny's variant, brings over and above is a description of a second mechanism of inheritance, cultural in its nature, that shapes environment. Nevertheless the two mechanisms – genetic and cultural – dovetail nicely in a very robust theory of extended cognition. As we have emphasized the phenotype is the joint result of genes and environment, which can be of several types. For instance, the gene might get to shape the phenotype in a “pristine” environment, where there are no novel or artificial artifacts that it can recruit, be they epistemic or mere non-cognitive tools. A crow in its original environment would use only twigs. *Mutatis mutandis*, an environment with no suitable cognitive artifacts would leave the individual only with its intraorganismic cognitive resources. Nevertheless environments change, and consequently, so do factors with which the genotype interacts in order to produce the phenotype change. At one point, the environment of crows became highly urbanized. The cognitive mechanisms of some of the species that enabled them to build nests, as they were genetically shaped, were also triggered by several artificial items, such as the wire hangers, which happen to be reasonable good building materials.<sup>27</sup>

Humans<sup>28</sup>, as the idea of niche construction holds, can shape shape their niche, which creates a specific environment that interacts with genes influencing their cognition. They can do it as individuals, by spontaneously inventing epistemic artifacts (or modify those already in use so that they could better suit their purposes), and these can be even passed into the common material culture. Whatever mechanism underpins invention, we might realize that our cognitive mechanisms for carrying out a certain cognitive task are better served by employing outer items, from pen and paper to supercomputers. For instance, at some point in time, someone must have realized that one can do arithmetics better by employing physical tokens, which kick-started the development of abaci or other similar implements. Thus, our capacity to apply algorithms gets to work with external items rather than internal representations. Instead of, for instance, imagining tokens<sup>29</sup>, and mentally performing transformations on such representations in order to, say, find the solution to an addition problem, we can algorithmically manipulate physical items available in

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<sup>27</sup> For an attempt to integrate the behavior of these crows into the niche construction theory, see John M. Marzluff and Tony Angell, “Cultural Coevolution: How the Human Bond with Crows and Ravens Extends Theory and Raises New Questions,” *Journal of Ecological Anthropology* 9 (2005): 69-75, who see this case as an example of human-crow cross-niche construction.

<sup>28</sup> But not only humans. There are also other species that shape their environment, rearranging it for cognitive purposes. For instance certain spiders create special threads, whose vibrations inform them that prey has landed in their web (cf. D. Klarner and F. Barth, “Vibratory signals and prey capture in orb-weaving spiders (*Zygiella x-notata*, *Nephila clavipes*; *Araneidae*)”, *Journal of comparative physiology*, Vol. 148, Issue 4 (1982): 445-455.

<sup>29</sup> Or similarly using any other type of representation.

the environment. This means, inter alia, as Clark emphasizes<sup>30</sup>, substituting offline representations with another set, which is perceptual and online, and thus easier to work with, which accounts for their adoption. This way, we press into use such items, that modify the way things have been done up to that point. This amounts to a situation in which a gene gets to produce phenotype by the means of a mechanism that includes external items, rather than using only factors within the limits of skin and skull. And of course, the genes structuring our calculation capacities can be offered a ready made tool for thinking, in the manner Sterelny's model says the society takes care to. But that won't make any difference with regard to the genetically determined mechanism into which such items get to be integrated. From this standpoint, it is irrelevant whether the tools are created by ourselves as ad hoc implements or by others – either way, they enable the gene project the effects of the genotype into the environment in order to create the extended phenotype. Nevertheless, the case of cultural transmission represents one way our genes get to interact with a certain type of environment, and must be documented in order to have a complete picture, that goes beyond the fundamental mechanisms.

What's more, it is paramount to be able to tackle the extended mind question by the means of the idea of an extended phenotype, as the niche construction theory isn't capable to account properly for the extended cognition. Proper instances of mind extension can't be explained away as limiting cases within the wider framework of niche construction.<sup>31</sup> The latter isn't capable to account for the constitutive nature of epistemic artifacts. Thus it is entirely possible that in spite of their essential role with respect to cognition, epistemic artifacts might stay invariably ancillary and never get to be constitutive, as for instance claims Rupert's "hypothesis of embedded cognition".<sup>32</sup> The fact that culture makes us use pen and paper for cognitive purposes doesn't tell us whether pen and paper is constitutive or merely instrumental. For instance the air conditioning machine, which provides me the comfort necessary to solve efficiently complex mathematical problems is merely an aid for my cognition. It is so in spite being in my environment precisely for the same reasons (as cultural niche modification that favors cognitive activity) why pen and paper are there, which are, in some accounts at least, plausible candidates (according to the extended mind hypothesis) for the realization of mind. One needs to assume more than the fact that culture produces tools and technologies which can be employed for cognitive purposes.

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<sup>30</sup> Andy Clark, "Reasons, Robots and the Extended Mind", *Mind and Language* 16 (2001): 132-133.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Sterelny, "Mind, Extended or Scaffolded", 480.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Rupert, "Challenges to the Hypothesis of Extended Cognition", *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. 101, No. 8 (2004):389-428; Robert Rupert, *Cognitive systems and the extended mind*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

And this is precisely where the idea of an extended phenotype comes handy, as it dissolves traditional phenotypic boundaries. It can provide the sort of neutrality with regard to the outer items that can realize cognitive processes advocated by the parity principle, without having to deal with its unwanted fallouts. A phenotypical trait, like exhibiting symbolic thinking or having semantic memory, can be equally instantiated by elements inside or outside the body, indiscriminately.<sup>33</sup>

The external realizers may include a mix of natural items and artifacts. Also the set of realizers can change over time, as the environment with which the genotype interacts changes. Both the natural and the artificial, the internal and the external can help a set of genes aggregate mechanisms, function of what it gets to interact with. Let us think again here at the crows whose nest is made out of clothes hangers, which illustrate very well these two points. The latter artifacts replace the usual items the natural history of crows made them use as materials. Similarly whatever genes endowed us with the sort of symbolic thinking that enabled us develop mathematics, at some point in time the mechanism was offered the possibility to manipulate symbols on paper rather than work only with internal representation. From an ontological standpoint, this means that the bodily building blocks normally put together as a result of certain genes, in order to set up the various types of cognitive mechanisms, can be occasionally replaced or supplemented with items in the environment and still express that kind of mechanism. The important thing to note is that even thus modified, such mechanisms can still express the same biological kind. A nest is still a nest, even if it is made out of wires and clothes hangers. Similarly, we could stay within the limits of the same type of cognitive process even the mechanics of the information crunching get to include external artifacts like computers or pen and paper. The genes at the origin at various biological mechanisms allow typing them, and do that irrespective of the location of what enters into their composition and even of the natural or artificial origin of those elements. It is this that might make cyberpunks, as a whole, plausible cognitive systems, rather than parity.

Sure not always such a replacing and supplementing exercise yields cognition. A less fortunate species, whose genes make it pick materials that are totally unsuited for building a nest might lead to a structure that can hardly qualify as such, for whatever reason would prevent us thus doing so. Similarly, not all use of external items would lead to an extended cognitive process. There might be various strong reasons not to consider these odd cases as realizing the

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<sup>33</sup> Our internal and external variants of a certain kind of cognitive process would represent an example of polyphenism. But who says polyphenism, says variants of the same type of trait. External and internal items would be realizers of two different morphs of the same cognitive process. This means that mind extends into the environment, as one type of cognitive process can be instantiated by both internal and partly external realizers.

old type of process. For instance, as it is the case with Otto and his notebook, it might introduce inconsistencies amongst the psychological attributions we make. If that inconsistency cannot be conveniently eliminated, for instance by operating changes elsewhere in folk psychology, we will have to step back. Other such extensions might lead to theories that are more complicated and so on. The general constraints of scientific theory construction can provide us with examples of such interdictions to apply cognitive concepts to certain biotechnological hybrids or to other “coupled systems”. Nevertheless sometimes there aren’t such reasons, as there aren’t reasons to consider the coat hanger construction of the crow as a nest. Then, at least for the sake sort of simplicity thus obtained in theorizing Clark and Chalmers talk about,<sup>34</sup> we should keep such extended mechanisms within the same conceptual pigeonhole.

### Concluding Remarks

This attention to the mechanisms genes build offer us a new type of criterion deciding what is a cognitive system. The extended mind theory, in its parity based, classical form, is a type of functionalism, which is explicitly assumed as such by Clark<sup>35</sup>: by using parity, it employs the gross functional role to establish what to be considered cognitive.<sup>36</sup> Our approach goes one step lower, and puts to work a criterion that relies on the mechanisms implementing the algorithms. Unlike the functionalism of Clark, which is neutral with regard to what implements mental processes, our story points at the mechanism at whose origin is a certain gene, which can have extended and non-extended variants.<sup>37</sup> It is this implementing mechanism that singles out what is to be

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<sup>34</sup> Clark and Chalmers, “The extended mind”, 14.

<sup>35</sup> See Andy Clark, “Intrinsic Content, Active Memory, and the Extended Mind”, *Analysis* 65 (2005), 2; Andy Clark, “Pressing the flesh: A tension in the study of the embodied, embedded mind?”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 76 (2008), 37; Andy Clark, *Supersizing the mind*, 96 etc.

<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Mark Spervak (“Extended cognition and functionalism”, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 106 (2009), 503-527) demonstrates, quite cogently that Clark’s hypothesis of extended cognition is a consequence of functionalism. Last but not least, as Wheeler emphasizes, because functionalism entails multiple realizability, it allows cognitive processes to come in two different formats, extended and non-extended (John Wheeler, “In Defense of Extended Functionalism,” in *The Extended Mind*, ed. Richard Menary (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, A Bradford Book, 2010), 248).

<sup>37</sup> As a matter of fact in a new environment it can generate a mechanism with quite a different architecture, because it interacts with novel environmental items. This provides for a natural explanation for why the functional description of the mechanisms implementing the wider coupled systems can be so utterly different of those inside our head. This has created a great deal of controversy, some of the adversaries of the extended mind hypothesis objecting that we won’t be able by allowing extended and nonextended variants of the same cognitive processes to come up with unitary laws governing such processes, but rather with a motley crew of anarchically

considered as exemplifying a certain type of cognitive process, rather than its higher level functional description in a mereological hierarchy.

### **Acknowledgements**

This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/89/1.5/S/62259, Project “Applied social, human and political sciences. Postdoctoral training and postdoctoral fellowships in social, human and political sciences,” cofinanced by the European Social Fund within the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

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behaving mechanisms ( see Rupert, “Challenges to the Hypothesis of Extended Cognition”, 410; Adams and Aizawa , *The Bounds of Cognition*, 52; Andy Clark, “Curing cognitive hiccups: a defense of the extended mind”, *The Journal of Philosophy* 104, no. 4 (2007), 174). As long as we have origin criterion, we will have a common mechanism - that by which the gene constructs the phenotype – which is at least as good as anything we can find in genetics, where to the degree such issues arise, they don't seem to create real problems.

# A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE FOUCAULDIAN HETEROTOPIAS<sup>1</sup>

VIOREL VIZUREANU<sup>2</sup>

## *Abstract*

The following study<sup>3</sup> is intended to be the first part of what could be called a “trptych” dedicated to the Foucauldian heterotopias and it is designed to organically capture the following levels of the French thinker’s interpretation of the original concept: 1) an “internal” hermeneutics (a critical commentary) of the text where the concept is sketched; 2) an analysis of the existing comments on the subject; 3) a constructive “continuation” of Foucault’s ideas, by highlighting the possibility of applying the concept in question to the cases that are not discussed by the author or by other philosophers “faithful” to it. Of course, the manner in which we seek to approach this issue does not exclude all references – necessary, otherwise – to the minimal critical sources, but their role will be, for the moment, only to clarify, specify and complete our interpretative claims. In this first step, we will be particularly attentive to the manner Foucault’s structuralism “affects” his vision about space, to the consistency of what he called “the principles of the heterotopology” and also to some aspects of the extensional manner of defining the heterotopias.

**Keywords:** Foucault, Heterotopia, Heterotopology.

Foucault’s short text, entirely dedicated to the theme of heterotopias (*Des espaces autres*), had – from the point of view of publishing process – a special destiny: the author presented it in 1967 at a conference at *Cercle d’études architecturales*, and he accepted its publication only in the spring of 1984, shortly before his death (in fact, the conference was published in October 1984, in the *Architecture, Mouvement, Continuité* journal, after the author’s death, which occurred on June 25 of that year)<sup>4</sup>.

In addition, concerning its thematic content, it is a special text – very few of Foucault’s writings are “about *space*” (strictly speaking), which however did

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was made within *The Knowledge Based Society Project* supported by the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (SOP HRD), financed from the European Social Fund and by the Romanian Government under the contract number POSDRU/89/1.5/S/56815.

<sup>2</sup> Romanian Academy, Iași Branch.

<sup>3</sup> The author would like to thank Andreea Todd for helping him consistently to improve the quality of the translation.

<sup>4</sup> According to Derek Gregory, we could speak about a “published unpublished” essay (Gregory 2012).

not prevent some commentators to consider Foucault to be a pioneer of the revival of the interest in space in the contemporary social thought. Edward W. Soja considers him to be, along with Henri Lefebvre, one of the prominent sources of a decisive process in the recent social thinking, for what he called the *spatial turn*. During an interview about this phenomenon, Soja pointed out: “I trace this recent ‘transdisciplinary’ interest in space back to the work in the late 1960s and early 1970s of Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre, both writing at about the same time in the same place about a particular way of looking at space that was quite different from mainstream spatial thinking.” (Blake 2001: 140). Moreover, he further noticed – and, unfortunately, things have not changed too much since then – that “this remarkable ‘moment of origins’, if you will, has not yet been well studied”.

Stepping back to focus on Foucault’s text, we easily see that the way of approaching the subject, too “direct”, too “educational”, with many simple and short examples, not very detailed, is atypical to Foucault (the public context most likely caused such a discursive tactic). Foucault’s texts usually have a “subject” but are not “prisoners” of this topic, they are not subjected to the subject (to joke around a little bit, even when the subject is the... prison system). The same Edward W. Soja, but in another work, spoke in this context of “Foucault’s uncharacteristically explicit and didactic discussion on the principles of heterotopology”, noting that he will ignore even his own theoretic approach (Soja 1996: 15), more dialectic and postmodern, we add.

We have already said that it is one of the few Foucauldian texts “dedicated to the space”. Of course, precisely relative to the previous remarks, we do not account here for texts in classic forms of presentations, reviews and analyzes: Foucault does not make such speeches (in which the space would have been presented as a category of reality – physical, social and so on – or through its significance in the knowledge – scientific, philosophical and so on). It is simply an assertion related to the presence of space in an oblique way through its “figures”, constructs, embodiments, or instantiations, but ones that receive a more consistent and a sort of self-description (we should note that *description* is just the term mainly used by Foucault in order to characterize his approach in *Des espaces autres*, trying to avoid – through his permanent terminological exploration or indecision – any classical form of presentation).

Finally, Foucault has never returned to this notion for “using” or “exploiting” it. *Heterotopia* previously appeared only in *Les mots et les choses*, published shortly before (1966) the conference analyzed by us, and only at the beginning of the work (we will return to this occurrence though), without being “recovered” in the text (methodologically, through examples and so on). Foucault’s text “about” heterotopias seems to resemble to – using a plastic expression at the end of this historical introduction – a firework announcing a big celebration of space which eventually has not been held.

The general framework outlined by Foucault in his discussion on heterotopias is, however, provided by what we might call an ideational urgency of the moment in which the article was written (paradoxically, it receives the subsequent “nonexistent” destiny of the term mentioned above). Foucault will add to this a historical outline designed to offer a clear meaning for the specificity of his approach, and also to fix some basic terminological elements later used during the conference.

First of all, the ideational urgency (which means, of course, also the “sufficient” reason to start the theoretical approach as such) could be condensed in the claim, situated at the beginning of the text, that “l’époque actuelle serait peut-être plutôt l’époque de l’espace” (1571)<sup>5</sup> – is easy to see how a potential demanding character of the assertion is carefully mitigated by Foucault (instead of the verb “sera”, semantically expected in the tumultuous social horizon of that epoch, Foucault used attenuated and wise verb “serait peut-être”).

The historical “judgment” will be further clarified by identifying the elements that support it, both to the “theoretical” and “practical” level, i.e. at the level of the theoretical models and the everyday experience: “Nous sommes à l’époque du simultané, nous sommes à l’époque de la juxtaposition, à l’époque du proche et du lointain, du côte à côte, du dispersé” (1571). The history is claimed here by relating that “epoch” to the previous century (note: the nineteenth century, Foucault’s text being written in 1967), a “century of time” due to his obsession with history itself (and with all that it means: crisis, cycles, development, decay, revolution and so on).

We should notice in passing that Henri Lefebvre takes a similar contraposition in *La production de l’espace*. The heroes of this “primacy of time” are Hegel, Marx and his followers, at least for the nineteenth century. Referring to Georg Lukács, Lefebvre basically summarizes this trend in the history of thought when he asserts that “le temps retrouvé, dominé par la conscience de classe qui s’élève jusqu’au point sublime où elle saisit d’un coup d’œil les méandres de l’histoire, brise la primauté du spatial”. And he adds that “seul Nietzsche a maintenu le primat de l’espace et la problématique de la spatialité” (Lefebvre 2001: 30; in this regard, the entire section I, 10 of the book is instructive). This is a “common position” shared by Foucault and Lefebvre which can be used as a starting point for researching what Soja, as we saw, assessed as “[a] remarkable ‘moment of origins’” for what he called *the spatial turn*.

Otherwise, Lefebvre himself is very critical regarding Foucault’s conception of space, for example when he comments a passage taken from *Archéologie du savoir*: “«Un savoir, c’est aussi l’espace dans lequel le sujet peut prendre position pour parler des objets auxquels il a affaire dans son

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<sup>5</sup> We will offer the pagination of *Dits et écrits* (2001 edition) in parentheses, without any indication, whenever we quote from “Des espaces autres”.

discours», déclare tranquillement M. Foucault (...) sans se demander de quel espace il parle, et comment il saute du théorique (épistémologique) au pratique, du mental au social, de l'espace des philosophes à celui des gens qui ont affaire à des objets" (Lefebvre 2001: 10).

Back to Foucault's text, it is noteworthy to see that *the structuralism* itself generally responds to the ideational urgency mentioned above (indeed, a "nom un petit peu général" for Foucault), defined as "l'effort pour établir, entre des éléments qui peuvent avoir été répartis à travers le temps, un ensemble de relations qui les fait apparaître comme juxtaposés, opposés, impliqués l'un par l'autre, bref, qui les fait apparaître comme une sorte de configuration; et à vrai dire, il ne s'agit pas par là de nier le temps; c'est une certaine manière de traiter ce qu'on appelle le temps et ce qu'on appelle l'histoire." (1571)<sup>6</sup>.

We can say that the Foucauldian approach which follows this introduction is related and also not related to structuralism, like all the French thinker's writings from this period. It *is* related because, for Foucault, the ideational determinant of the epoch was the network itself: "Nous sommes à un moment où le monde s'éprouve, je crois, moins comme une grande vie qui se développerait à travers le temps que comme *un réseau* qui relie des points et qui entrecroise son écheveau. (our underlining)". It is precisely this network, in its various modes, that will be involved in the way in which Foucault will configure the basic properties, the functioning of heterotopias.

It *is not* related, paradoxically, to that temporality (and not spatiality) – redesigned and recovered through efforts such as the "archaeological" or "genealogical" one – which remains a central category for the theoretical approach, to that history which, for Foucault, has to be "rewritten" – being suggested by the subtle distance from a "pure" structuralism marked in its presentation: the structuralism, we quote again, "c'est une certaine manière de traiter ce qu'on appelle *le temps* et ce qu'on appelle *l'histoire* (our underlining)" (1572)<sup>7</sup>. Of course, classifying Foucault's (neo)structuralism in a "complicated" task, it can not be accomplished in a few words<sup>8</sup>, but we should investigate it through an analysis of his generally relationship to space.

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<sup>6</sup> However, the same Henri Lefebvre presents structuralism as a theoretical extension of the pre-eminence of subjectivity or as a "falsification" of spatiality – the social space in the structuralism's perspective actually reproduce a "mental space", which does not capture the concreteness of the social reality, but reproducing in fact the main points previously criticized: "Dans cette école devenue de plus en plus dogmatique (...) se commet couramment ce sophisme fondamental: l'espace d'origine philosophico-épistémologique se fétichise et le mental enveloppe le social avec le physique" (Lefebvre 2001: 12).

<sup>7</sup> See the "pivotal" text of Foucault in this respect, „Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire", from 1971.

<sup>8</sup> But we can refer here to Manfred Frank's fundamental work in this regard, *Was ist Neostukturalismus?*, 1983.

However, on the one hand, we can think that – this happens if we accept this (too) brief “classification” of Foucault as a neo-structuralist, at least until the texts of the last period of his life – all his texts are somehow automatic texts “about space”, and the interpreter’s effort should cover all of them. On the other hand, we can see that one of the “central themes” of Foucault’s thought, *the power*, developed especially after 1970, it does not involve the deciphering of some more or less abstract meanings (involving “the use of the words”, “the logic of power” and so on), but the analysis – meaning here a “concrete study” – of power relations that always occur in practice, i.e., “in space”. In this regard, the classic example is, of course, *Surveiller et punir* (1975). We should simply state: power is always “spatializing” itself. It “needs” space, both as “spatiophage” and “space builder”: it occupies spaces, it creates spaces, it “offers” (versatily or imperatively) spaces. Perhaps a non-canonical Foucauldian definition would assume that power is “a dynamic in space, imposing constraints” – attention, not only in the passive sense, but also in the manner in which the subject is “constituted” (him or herself) as such.

But let us go back to the text we announced that will guide our approach. From a (vey “simply” or “common”) historical point of view, which enables us to talk about a “history of space” (obviously, only outlined – “très grossièrement” is the expression used by Foucault), space is presented, since the Middle Ages, as having three distinct configurations (nothing about previous “figure” or “figures” of space).

A brief observation, a necessary one we believe. Foucault uses three terms to describe the evolution of the manner in which the things-bodies are thought – so *theoretically* speaking, it should be noted – to “behave” in a general spatial frame (or milieu): *la localisation*, *l’étendue* and *l’emplacement*, corresponding respectively to the Middle Ages, the Early Modern Era (the seventeenth century) and the Late Modernity (our epoch, nowadays)<sup>9</sup>. The first term will be translated by localization, and the last by emplacement<sup>10</sup>. Of course,

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<sup>9</sup> By using this periodization, what we have in mind is not to “trespass” a strictly Foucauldian terminology, but to efficiently provide to the reader some ordinary historical references.

<sup>10</sup> Concerning the translation problems of the French “l’emplacement” we should only provide the reader with De Cauter and Dehaene’s full note in their translation of “Of other spaces”: “The term ‘emplacement’ in French refers to site and location (as in parking space) or the setting of a city, but also to a support (for instance, *emplacement publicitaire*: a billboard). In English, the meaning of the term is more specific. It is used in geology and more commonly as a military term to indicate the support/position of a semi-stationary weapon. In Foucault’s text, emplacement of the network as opposed to extension. The space of emplacement only exists as ‘discrete space’, an instance of one of the possible positions that exist within a set of positions. We believe that the term perhaps also foreshadows one of Foucault’s later key concepts, ‘dispositif’. On occasion, he uses the term in a non-technical sense to refer more generally to sites and places, but it is clear that he deliberately avoids the common words ‘place’, ‘lieu’, or ‘endroit’ and thereby produces an effect of both emphasis and estrangement. We have, hence, left the term ‘emplacement’ throughout the text to indicate its technical character and this sense of

we could avoid an “unnecessary” complication and we may naturally use “extension”<sup>11</sup> for the French “étendue”, but it seems “non-homogeneous” with the other two, rendering *a reality* (in itself) rather than *a reference* to a “framework” (or to a “surrounding reality”). We choose therefore to use the term “positioning” for better rendering Foucault’s intention concerning the Early Modernity. Positioning involves thinking of something through its position, thinking of it as a point *in* a homogeneous space (extension), strictly geometrically understood. This option is not strictly speaking one of translation, but of interpretation of the Foucauldian text – or of its “comprehensive overview”.

A first remark, somehow trivial: heterotopias is related to the outer space (*l’espace du dehors*), a space defined by Foucault as being in opposition or at least complementary to the inner one (*l’espace du dedans*), in a classical scheme and through duality (questionable too). This is very briefly described, in a double dimension, phenomenologically and historically I dare say, as a *heterogeneous* space, a space that has not been leveled down, homogenized by the process of desacralization imposed by the thought of the seventeenth century (notably by Galileo and Descartes). Foucault gives a hint that this outer space has received no hermeneutic (broadly speaking) labors similar to those developed for the inner space by Bachelard and phenomenology, highlighting that this heterogeneity is his very general theme, the target of his own contribution. Of course, this fact transforms this text in an answer, modest if someone considers its size, to the ideational urgency previously mentioned and it also open a possible comparative “dialogue” with the way in which Lefebvre read the Foucault’s conception of space, mentioned above too.

What follows is a classification of heterotopias by creating a class or type of places of which they are parts, places that have therefore something in common. These other spaces (or “spaces of other kind”, if preferred) possess “la curieuse propriété d’être en rapport avec tous les autres emplacements, mais sur un mode tel qu’ils suspendent, neutralisent ou inversent l’ensemble des rapports qui se trouvent, par eux, désignés, reflétés ou réfléchis. Ces espaces, en quelque sorte, (...) sont en liaison avec tous les autres, (...) contredisent pourtant tous les autres emplacements” (1574).

We previously highlighted our relationship with the different social spaces, which gave them the characteristic of non-superposability: “Nous vivons à l’intérieur d’un ensemble de relations qui définissent des emplacements irréductibles les uns aux autres et absolument non superposables” (1574). Two things draw here our attention: our definition, as human beings, through the relationships we have with the “outside” (which actually involves our “non-substantialization” or

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estrangement.” (Foucault 2008: 23-24). The reasons displayed by De Cauter and Dehaene had probably determined Miskowiec (1986) to earlier translate “l’emplacement” with “the site”.

<sup>11</sup> The same for Miskowiec (1986), Hurley (1998), and De Cauter and Dehaene’s translations (2008).

“non-subjectivization”), a new affirmation of a structuralist way of organizing human experience; and the determination of relationships “between people and places” as a constituent factor for the lack of interchangeability of places themselves and a decisive factor for pushing away the Galilean-Cartesian model of a homogeneous space from the horizon of the “human sciences”.

Moreover, we can discriminate this genre through the way its species relates to the real, in the ascending sense of its presence, which leads to the sequence *utopia - mirror - heterotopia*. *Utopias* are „emplacements with no real places”, “essentially are fundamentally unreal spaces” (“sont fondamentalement essentiellement irréels”) (Foucault 2008: 17), still they are not deprived of the existence of relations with the concrete social reality, being “les emplacements qui entretiennent avec l’espace réel de la société un rapport général d’analogie directe ou inversée. C’est la société elle-même perfectionnée ou c’est l’envers de la société” (1574).

The positioning of heterotopias in this new context, as opposed to utopias, is an occasion for resuming and deepening its previous definition:

“Il y a également, et ceci probablement dans toute culture, dans toute civilisation, des lieux réels, des lieux effectifs, des lieux qui ont dessinés dans l’institution même de la société, et qui sont des sortes de contre-emplacements, sortes d’utopies effectivement réalisées dans lesquelles les emplacements réels, tous les autres emplacements réels que l’on peut trouver à l’intérieur de la culture sont à la fois représentés, contestés et inversés, des sortes de lieux qui sont hors de tous les lieux, bien que pourtant ils soient effectivement localisables.” (1574)

It is worthy to mention one particular aspect: heterotopias are different from utopia, they are opposite to them, *only* by their real, localized, concrete character – they are “sortes d’utopies effectivement réalisées”. Otherwise, they have in common with utopias the modulation or even the inversion of the relations with all other spatial realities, because in their case too “les emplacements réels, tous les autres emplacements réels que l’on peut trouver à l’intérieur de la culture sont à la fois représentés, contestés et inversés” (1574). Although “real”, they “loose” reality precisely because of the existence of this “privileged” relations with other emplacements. In fact, we might have said they have a “superabundance of reality”, that reality is overflowing inside them. They are, in this latter perspective, “des sortes de contre-emplacements” – visibles, tangibles, reals, they are just by their particular location somehow delocated, being thus des sortes de lieux qui sont hors de tous les lieux, bien que pourtant ils soient effectivement localisables” (1574-1575).

In a sense, heterotopias are “in the middle” between utopia and simple places-emplacements, possessing the “power” of the first (manifested through relationships with all other places) and the reality or the effectiveness of the second. However, between utopias and heterotopias we can find the experience of

the *mirror*, “une sorte d’expérience mixte, mitoyenne”. Mirror simultaneously means an utopia, “un lieu sans lieu” (it creates in itself a “space” that is not of its own, a space that “steals” from the surrounding reality where it is located, and if I look in(to) it, I will see myself “out there” where I am not). In addition, “le miroir fonctionne comme une hétérotopie en ce sens qu’il rend cette place que j’occupe au moment où je me regarde dans la glace, à la fois absolument réelle, en liaison avec tout l’espace qui l’entoure, et absolument irréelle, puisqu’elle est obligée, pour être perçue, de passer par ce point virtuel qui est là-bas” (1575).

Furthermore, we add, the relationships of the mirror with the one who looks in the mirror are privileged for the mirror (understood as the water’s surface – as in the myth of Narcissus; the first mirrors were apparently even bowls of water) because it gives me the direct, natural experience of seeing my face, my image. It is the only that “creates” this “reality” – I can say that I have a face “resembling” to the other people’s faces which I can look at (otherwise, to “deduce”), but I do not “know” it visually in the absence of the mirror; I can touch my face, I can feel it, I can have a (rather vague) “idea” about how I look based on this experience, but we all feel that we lack a (maybe) decisive factor to speak about *a* face – even if I feel that I “have” a head “with” a face, I can touch only some parts of it, which do not give me the *visual* (not *felt*) significance of an assembled unity, as I made in the experience of looking at my own face “straight” in the mirror; or I can look in it at my whole body perceived in closed contours – naturally, I get it from a certain perspective: front, profile or semi-profile (a created semi-profile, we could say, because for looking at yourself in a mirror from one “side” you must rotate the head, so what I “straightly” see will be my head, my twisted neck, and the rest of the body “from one side” or “from profile”), with some possible coverage of my back (when I look in the mirror “over my shoulder”). Without mentioning that until the emergence of the contemporary devices of shooting and playback – which allow me to see corporeal projections of myself in the same time when I am filmed – mirror, in its various forms (made from polished stone, copper, bronze, alloys, glass etc.), was the *only* means by which we had access to these “realities”.

There is, we can observe, a latent tension (arising, perhaps, even from Foucault’s peculiar and structuralist positioning in this respect) about what is raised in relation to the presence of heterotopias in the contemporary reality. One aspect appear to belong to the history, it seems to require an explanation in the horizon of temporality – it is about understanding heterotopias as a kind of “residues” or “remainings” (our terms) related to a reality or epoch not yet disenchanted, which has not yet experienced the secularization:

“Or, malgré toutes les techniques qui l’investissent, malgré tout le réseau de savoir qui permet de le déterminer ou de le formaliser, l’espace contemporain n’est peut-être, *pas encore* entièrement désacralisé – à la différence sans doute du temps qui, lui, a été désacralisé au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Certes, il y a bien eu une certaine désacralisation théorique

de l'espace (celle à laquelle l'œuvre de Galilée a donné le signal), mais nous n'avons peut-être *pas encore* accédé à une désacralisation pratique de l'espace. Et peut-être notre vie est-elle *encore* commandée par un certain nombre d'oppositions auxquelles on ne peut pas toucher, auxquelles l'institution et la pratique n'ont *pas encore* osé porter atteinte : des oppositions que nous admettons comme toutes données : par exemple, entre l'espace privé et l'espace public, entre l'espace de la famille et l'espace social, entre l'espace culturel et l'espace utile, entre l'espace de loisirs et l'espace de travail; toutes sont animées *encore* par une sourde sacralisation. (our underlining)" (1573)

We could easily note the admirable frequency of the expression "(pas) encore" for such a short paragraph, a sign if not necessarily for an "attitude", at least for an explanation which is required for this strange "lack of tuning" of our current practice not only with all sort of "theoretisations", but also with what might be called the "current" expectations of many of us.

In this eventuality, our next step would be a sort of "historical" explanation, which could provide the answer for the natural question: "What allowed these other spaces to 'resist' without being affected by secularization?" Moreover, the tone adopted here by Foucault suggests a kind of "care" or even "concern" about their destiny<sup>12</sup>, a certain joy offered by their present existence, which could open the possibility of "saving" them. Of course, what is thus opened is – we might say – only a "hope" and not what could be called a horizon of action: you cannot "write for (in favour of) heterotopias" nor "(concretely) fight for them".

There is also, as we said, a "phenomenological" presentation, a presentation of heterotopias that does not involve at all the historical factor, based only, on one hand, on the description of the individuals' relations (people's relations) with the realities of the surrounding area, found in some relationships and pleading for their irreducible heterogeneity (from an explanatory point of view, this already situated us "out of time") – from this perspective, the heterotopia would be an invariant of the spatial reality, one of its persistent qualities, and it would not depend on a particular historical instantiation, on the enchanted character of some epoch:

*"L'espace dans lequel nous vivons, par lequel nous sommes attirés hors de nous mêmes, dans lequel se déroule précisément l'érosion de notre vie, de notre temps et de notre histoire, cet espace qui nous ronge et nous ravine est en lui-même aussi un espace hétérogène. Autrement dit, nous ne vivons pas dans une sorte de vide, à l'intérieur duquel on pourrait situer des individus et des choses. Nous ne vivons pas à l'intérieur d'un vide qui se colorerait de différents chatoulements, nous vivons à l'intérieur d'un ensemble de relations qui définissent des emplacements irréductibles les uns aux autres et absolument non superposables. (our underlining)" (1573-1574)*

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<sup>12</sup> See the manner in which Manfred Frank identifies such "attitudes" in Foucault, in his work cited above.

Temporality itself seems to be an ideational subordinate to this heterogeneous space, our lives (our projects, our actions, etc.) being subjected to it. Temporality seems to lose its reality, being replaced by “whirls” (the term is ours) or other-spaces that “swallow” us. Like we said, as can be easily seen, what is at stake here is the relationship of the *individual* with the spatial realities, and not the relations between the latter ones (the relations between different emplacements).

On the other hand, the presentation of heterotopias contribute to the highlight of their transhistorical character – we only need to go back to the beginning of the text, when Foucault wanted to make us aware that “Il y a également, et ceci probablement dans toute culture, dans toute civilisation...”

This would mean that those passages using the term *emplacement(s)* refer, structurally speaking, not only to “nowadays”, with the remark that there are, of course, spatial realities defined only for our present time. Reviewing these emplacements with distinct relationships to the other sites, Foucault identifies *en passant* several categories of them: the emplacements of passage (the streets, trains), the emplacements of temporary halts (cafés, cinemas, beaches), the close or semi-closed emplacements of rest (the house, the room, the bed). It is clear now that apart trains and cinemas, the other “emplacements” have a considerable age, including those cafés existing since the beginning of modernity, from the XVI<sup>th</sup> century in the Ottoman Empire and from the XVII<sup>th</sup> in the Western Europe. Obviously, we can discuss about a change, sometimes pronounced, of their function (let’s call it social), for some of them, like the case of beaches, whose true “social role” began to manifest only in the end of the nineteenth century, with – among others – the revolutionizing of how people start to look at their own nudity in public or to understand the concept of leisure or entertainment. But their special relationship with the rest of the spatial realities is not starting “nowadays”, and it is lasting so since a long time, at least for the ancient island communities.

According to Foucault, a *heterotopology*, i.e. the theoretical approach – „l’étude, l’analyse, la description, la «lecture»” (1575) – applied to heterotopias, is based on a total of six “principles”. Despite the “warning” that Soja mentioned above, we will discuss each one attentively (even “didactically”, it might be appreciated, but – we hope – not in the pejorative sense), trying to highlight both the contributions and the difficulties of Foucault’s conception.

*The first principle*: “il n’y a probablement pas une seule culture au monde qui ne constitue des hétérotopies. C’est là une constante de tout groupe humain. Mais les hétérotopies prennent évidemment des formes qui sont très variées, et peut-être ne trouverait-on pas une seule forme d’hétérotopie qui soit absolument universelle.” (1575) However, Foucault adds that they allow a classification in two categories: heterotopias of crisis and of deviation (*de déviation*).

The first is characteristic for the “primitive” societies – they are privileged places (sacred, forbidden) reserved for those individuals who are in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly, etc. They are disappearing in our (Western) society of today, some remnants of them being still identifiable until recently: the nineteenth-century boarding school, military service (they allow the resolving of the crisis in the adolescent sexuality in “another space” than home) or the “honeymoon trip” (episodes performed in hotels, trains or boats, where the young girls’ deflowering is consumed); of course, we add, they can survive with some success in the traditionalist or pejoratively called “un(der)developed” societies of today.

The heterotopias of deviation concern an aspect often analyzed by Foucault, being those places dedicated to the behavior that deviates from the norm, to the abnormal: rest homes (*les maisons de repos*), psychiatric hospitals, prisons; retirement homes (*les maisons de retraite*) are somehow in the vicinity or at the intersection of both, because in our society, Foucault notes, the old age is regarded as expressing both a “crisis” and – because the retired persons’ “inactivity” – a “deviation” from the social normality (note: besides the English verb, we can observe, with this occasion, the same idea of being “out”, “retired”, “captured” in several languages, as in French by “être à la retraite” or in Romanian by “a ieși la pensie” and so on – in other words, to leave a certain space, to pass a threshold, as they would have left in a sense *our* space, of course, a changeable “our”, from which we will be all evacuated some day.

*The second principle* states that “au cours de son histoire, une société peut faire fonctionner d’une façon très différente une hétérotopie qui existe et qui n’a pas cessé d’exister; (...) la même hétérotopie peut, selon la synchronie de la culture dans laquelle elle se trouve, avoir un fonctionnement ou un autre.” (1576)

We should answer a question before proceeding to comment on this principle: are heterotopias defined by reference to other *spaces* (by the functions they maintain in a social space with other “different-spaces”) or by the relationships that the *individuals* have with them? We have already noticed some aspects of this issue. Some passages in Foucault’s text seem to favor the first option, while others obviously support the second.

We saw – in the presentation of the first principle of heterotopology – that what matters is the way in which the *individuals* are constrained by the “society” to consume some crucial episodes of their lives (crises) in some places, specially “designed” for these purposes.

When he details the example offered to illustrate his the second principle of analysis (the cemetery), Foucault writes: “Le cimetière est certainement un lieu autre par rapport aux espaces culturels ordinaires, c’est un espace qui est pourtant en liaison avec l’ensemble de tous les emplacements de la cité ou de la société ou du village, puisque chaque individu, chaque famille se trouve avoir des parents au cimetière.” (1576)

We find here a clear trace of the reason that led us to raise the question above, because both possible answers are “merged” within the presentation of the social and symbolic functions of the cemetery (with all other emplacements of the society, city and village – with all individuals); moreover, the second option seems to explicatively support the first through the presence of the particle “puisque”. Obviously, any function that spaces and places have is relative to a practice (or to its absence: prohibitions, constraints, etc.) of some human beings. Even if those spaces are not built by man (for a certain, precise social, political, cultural, etc. practice), but they are, consequently, “natural”<sup>13</sup>, they are invested with such functions – from the most sacred places of various religions (*exempli gratia*, mountains: Mount Fuji, Olympus or Sinai; rivers: the Ganges; valleys: Urubamba Valley in the Andes of Peru etc.) to the most mundane elements of the tourism topology<sup>14</sup>. We can say that, since appearing on the tourist map, a place – even a white spot on a map, without a name; probably, *especially* for this reason – receives nowadays “the baptism of tourism”, becoming a potential and valuable target for the tourists’ curiosity. Not to mention that we can add here, as an increase of this phenomenon in the collective mentality, the “sacred” places for any tourism: Himalaya, the Everest, the Niagara Falls, etc., unavoidable points in any respectful tourist map).

Two things deserve to be noticed here: on one hand, there is no direct, immediate, *self-evident* explanation between the two levels (to call them, assuming the necessary imperfections: of the individual or of the society). Individuals may come from different places and can pass through different spaces (they may take different routes) to get to that “other space.” This observation is completed by a second one, which reminds us that, for Foucault, when the analyze concerns the individual, the problem seeks *all* individuals who have relationships with that particular space – all people have someone buried in a cemetery or, at least, they *seem* to have such a dead loved person, whom memory is important and still present. By this, the cemetery becomes a kind of space of co-participation of the living and the dead, with its own mixed reality. Even if someone goes to the cemetery only to take care of his *own* future grave, we could concede that he *accepted* a peculiar “space” for himself (and for the others) after his own death and a future relationship between “him” (his grave) and his possible visitors, that he accepted to participate thus in a spatial

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<sup>13</sup> We often forget that “natural” is a concept and not a pure and simple expression for what is “given” (independently of us) – in the social and cultural human experience there is no *datum* at all. Otherwise, we confuse the physical existence with the cultural meaning of the “things”.

<sup>14</sup> Not to mention also, as an emphasis of this phenomenon in the collective mentality, the “sacred” natural places of tourism itself: Himalaya and the Everest, the Niagara Falls etc., unavoidable points for every respectable tourist’s map.

*social* convention, with its specific reality (i.e. the grave is not only a space, defined by its concrete dimensions, it is also a social space)<sup>15</sup>.

But what is here at stake is not only an “analytical” (logical or hypothetical) philosophical game and, for the accuracy of the “research”, we should introduce here also some concrete historical alternatives: the crematorium for example, with the possibility to deposit the urn in a columbarium, to take it home or to scatter the cremated ashes in the sea; the full body burial in the ocean, etc.<sup>16</sup> The columbarium can be seen in the light of Foucault’s own analysis, something like a “continuation”, a palpable “transformation” of the cemetery in the strict sense. But the scattering of ashes – which is increasingly used today – that can be officially or privately done in many (other) *places* – does not practically relativize or “dilute” this heterotopia, apparently one of the easiest paradigmatic types.

We could also insert the constraint of a “total” individuals’ participation in the presentation of the examples used by Foucault in the case of the first principle. We should admit, from the beginning, that a major part of the population (we think, for example, of the children) who do not participate in any kind of relationships presented by these (almost all?) other spaces.<sup>17</sup> It could be said that our remark belongs to a crude empiricism, like those made by Locke concerning Descartes’ doctrine of innate ideas. We accept this objection. But, we note further, the fact that the people situated in those “turning points” of their lives choose (we are not discuss how) other existential path which does not

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<sup>15</sup> We do not see the grave only as a condition facilitating (or permitting) the dead’s trespassing, but also as a continuation of his or her presence in our world. By this, it becomes a kind of extrapolation of the social function of the funerary monument, as Fahlander and Oestigaard stated concerning the Egyptian society: “The monuments are as much for the living as they are for the dead and the gods because they work and function in society. Through the monuments and ritual practices some humans attain divine legitimacy and become the gods themselves on earth.” (Fahlander and Oestigaard: 8).

<sup>16</sup> An analytic philosopher, faithful to his method, may simply note here that we can imagine a man who has all his relatives, friends and acquaintances cremated and that their ashes were scattered in various places on the Earth, while that man could not be present – let’s say, for objective reasons - to none of the incineration. Also, imagine a man who is afraid of death and a man who, for this reason, never participated to a burial procession. What kind of relationship does he have with the cemetery or with the columbarium? Nothing at all, obviously, unless we do not choose to speak about a “mental relationship” that would move the discussion towards the imaginary and archetypal areas and so on this is not at all insignificant, but very important, because the constitutive factor of the discussion itself is what might be called an effective social practice.

In fact, for underlining this aspect in a social manner (spatially and indirectly), we could note, as Frederik Fahlander and Terje Oestigaard, that “the conceptions of death and the transformations of death into life and new social structures in society, together with beliefs of a life hereafter or realms where the ancestors are living or other transcendental states of being, are not merely spiritual or ideological, but they are materialised by the descendants and the living” (Fahlander and Oestigaard: 1).

<sup>17</sup> And some people, probably, due to their premature death, will not even have the possibility to develop something like that, unfortunately.

imply the spaces mentioned above, is a significant problem of our present society, at least in the Christian area. Of course, the most ordinary interpretation and the solution to these difficulties would simply find a radical change in the relation between people and cemetery, more “liberal” today than aforesaid and more absent, involving though some “danger” if the cemetery seen as heterotopia or as a “privileged place would be abandon.

At the end of the presentation of the cemetery as a heterotopia (the largest part of the entire conference) and after he detected the transformation of meaning and social practice recorded in the nineteenth century, Foucault summarizes: “Les cimetières constituent alors non plus le vent sacré et immortel de la cité, mais l’«autre ville», où *chaque* famille possède sa noire demeure. (our underlining)” (1577) We can see now that the cemetery is mainly presented by comparison with another social fully constituted space (the city), as a “new city”, a kind of replica of the “real” one, a city with its own “houses” (populated by different families), with its own “streets”, with its “squares”, moreover, reproducing the differences of the social and political classes from the “real society”, the quality and the location of the “eternal residences”, a space where visits are made, most often the “family visits”, etc. At this point, it would seem that what defines the cemetery as heterotopia is precisely its capacity to be “something else” in relation to a whole concrete reality: the cemetery is a heterotopia not only because it is (only) “a different kind of space”, but – mainly? – because it is “another *city*” (or, maybe, “*the other city*”), because it mimetically assumes the structure and the internal functions of another spatial reality<sup>18</sup>.

Apparently, we are stuck in a dilemma: a) either we completely ignore the “all” of them, but then, we could say, Pandora’s box is still open, in the sense that we will have to virtually accept as heterotopias *any* social space (a “plausible” variant of this would be stated for the common sense only, having though many methodological difficulties, like to explicitly accept that here we imply the majority of people – or, for being even more imprecisely, *many* people – from a particular culture society)<sup>19</sup>; b) or we keep “all” of them (at least the “all” belongs of a certain society and not to the society in general) and then we do not see how we could respond to the previous complaints, unless by another definition of the heterotopias (which could avoid the extensional aspect).

Obviously, considering Foucault’s general philosophical position, we must accept a non-essentialist version – there are not heterotopias “by themselves”,

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<sup>18</sup> We do not assume in the observation above that the city chronologically precedes the cemetery (that the cemetery is a replica of the city itself, being, consciously or unconsciously a kind of model), but that they are socially and spatially co-constituted, that they are co-originated.

<sup>19</sup> In this sense, we explain the relative abundance of the texts on the heterotopias – at least in the terms of the spaces designated like that – which we see today: there are counted among heterotopias, often without making a minimal analysis of the notion itself, i.e. without asking about the legitimacy of its use in that particular case, probably all spaces of a society.

they appear and disappear, even the most “common” ones. It is important that, at any time and in any space, *there are* heterotopias. The problem is, and we insist upon it, that the “all” (synchronically and / or diachronically) reinterpreted by “many”, without a new appropriate definition, irreparably weakens the capacity of the heterotopia to be a real explanatory element, an effective cognitive instrument. In this respect, a “doctrine” of heterotopias would rather be a way to “give color” to different spaces of society, a more pretentious, philosophical manner to talk about spaces or places socially invested with certain qualities by the people, which could be otherwise the subject for sociological studies. Somehow, in the wake of the contemporary discourse that exalts “difference”, any space should “have the right” to be defined as heterotopia and to be studied like that. We may even suspect that these spaces, being generally and constantly accessible to people (at least in the democratic societies, where the most effective spatial conditionalities – and, by that, exclusions – seem to be “only” financial<sup>20</sup>), will be, maybe, in the future, *politically correct* to categorize all social, cultural and political spaces as heterotopias.

Therefore, we must abandon this “all” in order to see its occurrence (and the corresponding term for “every” – *chaque*) in Foucault’s text as an emphasis of the overwhelming social power of – at least – a certain heterotopias only, if not of a hyperbole. This means, in other words, to rethink “all” in the sense of “potential all”. And to do this not as a possible “materialization” for all (some day) the relationships with the heterotopia, but as the expression – with all its theoretical risks – that we are all “caught” in the *social* reality (i.e. concrete, effective, not just mental, archetypal, representational or ideational) of these spaces-places. Returning to the previous example, you may not have ever been to the cemetery and maybe you will not go in the future, but you’re socially “connected” to it in various ways. In other words, the cemetery is a social reality (a heterotopia) which can not be “bypassed” (nor denied, challenged, etc.) – at least in our days. Its social reality comes from the inescapable reality of the death itself, from our desire to make *together* something “against” it, to still give to the deads a form of “social life” on this Earth, just as the city (village, etc.) represents our common life trying somehow to avoid, maybe, the solitude and to remove the fear of dying alone.

Otherwise – and from this could come the “true” methodological dissolution of the heterotopias (and, therefore, the plausible explanation of their “disappearance” from Foucault’s later writings) – we might be forced to introduce an additional factor in the geography of the heterotopias, continuously spatialized by Foucault (and maybe for this reason “subversive” to any other social spatiality), namely *the power*. In other words, what indicates (discriminates) heterotopias is not only the social relations, their complexity and their “focal points”, but the spatial institutions

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<sup>20</sup> Which raise no problem for a neoliberal mentality.

(in a large sense) put into practice by different mechanisms of power. That would mean (however) to abandon many examples from Foucault's own discussion of heterotopias and to limit ourselves to his "classical", "socially blunt" examples, which constituted the favorite subjects of many of his further books and courses at Collège de France, to consider thus that the supplementary specification of heterotopias (without being an explicit thematisation), also equivalent to their own "disappearance", occurs only by analyzing the concrete expression of power (as in *Surveiller et punir*). This would mean to abandon heterotopia as a central notion within a theory of social space, and to transform it in a spatial formulation of the prominent actions of power. Heterotopias would be, consequently, nothing than a name used only for the places where the power is manifesting itself.

What more could be done, however, in this case? No doubt we will have to indicate and analyze other examples, besides those "dear" to Foucault, and it would probably be interesting to move ourselves in the area of the seemingly insignificant everyday life, trying to decipher the meaning of the political (either communist or neoliberal) standardizations and spatial impositions – like the place where we live (the communist blocks of flats or the French HLMs), we learn (schools with standardized architecture) or we relax (resorts), and so on, without any present, "tough", interference of a certain power, but where the latter sovereignly decided once.

Another trail, that might deserve careful consideration in this context, will determine whether the understanding of the heterotopias has anything to do with accepting the free individuals' behavior. This does not happen in a social-cultural sense, of course – we are all "forced", in one way or another, by the society, and, consequently, we attend certain social spaces, without being noticed – but from a social-political perspective: do the participations in the meetings of the communist parties or in the May 1 parades in the former communist countries define some "special" heterotopias? Is there, therefore, any "normal" and "natural" heterotopias (generally imposed by a society) or any "abnormal" ones (politically imposed)? Do "gray" heterotopias and "black" heterotopias really exist?

*The third principle* tells us that "l'hétérotopie a le pouvoir de juxtaposer en un seul lieu réel plusieurs espaces, plusieurs emplacements qui sont en eux-mêmes incompatibles." (1577). Concerning this, Foucault's examples involve the theater, the cinema and the garden. We should note some remarks about the first two, right from their presentation made by the author himself: „le théâtre fait succéder sur le rectangle de la scène toute une série de lieux qui sont étrangers les uns aux autres; c'est ainsi que le cinéma est une très curieuse salle rectangulaire, au fond de laquelle, sur un écran à deux dimensions, on voit se projeter un espace à trois dimensions." (1577)

First, it is curious that Foucault rapidly changes the criterion proposed for "proving" the heterotopical quality of the spaces in question: for the theater is

about the co-presence of various (incompatible, if desired) spaces on the scene, according to the text of the play or to the director's intention, while the cinema requires the ability to give the sensation of the three-dimensionality starting from a two-dimensional surface. Obviously, the observation about the theater would be appropriate in the case of the cinema too, because they can be recreated and connected with the most diverse and "incompatible" spaces.

But perhaps, in both cases, Foucault actually wanted to show something else – that we are dealing with the juxtaposition of two or more spaces in the same *room* (not on the same *stage* or on the same *screen*, and from this perspective the presentation he makes to the cinema is closer to our suggestion): the space designed for the spectators (described by my own physicality and the one of those around me, viewers like me) *and* the stage or screen. Of course, it might be objected that you cannot be, at the same time, "participant" (mentally speaking) at two different locations. We could answer to that objection, even though this is not our target, our question being what could coexist in the same – unitary defined – space; two spaces, let's say, two spatial realities "embracing" two different kinds of relationships, belonging to the actors and to the audience – although, as a summary remark, some theater performances include the spectator's involvement in the actual substance of the theatrical act, his co-participation; or, in reality, our sensations are complex sensations, virtually containing more spaces that simultaneously coexist (this would mean that I simultaneously attend both the space of the audience *and* the space of the stage or screen).

We have to concede that the mere juxtaposition of the incompatible spaces or the creation of the illusion of a three-dimensionality (*trompe l'œil*) can easily be imagined in the case of painting too (you can even create the sensation of a moving object – see, for example, the famous paintings of David Hockney dedicated to the Grand Canyon; unfortunately, you really have to go and see the pictures for "checking" this). But, again, if our suggestion represents the theater and the cinema (better explanatory examples), it opens the door to all those means of expression that give to us, sometimes as well as those mentioned by Foucault, the illusion of being "in another place", although we know perfectly well where we actually are: a book we are reading; the concert hall, when hearing a piece of music (on this occasion, it is worthy to notice that the "other spaces" are not just purely *visual* products, they do not depend only on the visual factors); a museum (of any type); a painting or an exhibited item, etc.. Why not, a natural landscape can take us in "another space" and/or in "another time" than the "present". Thus, from this perspective, any space can be a kind of other space: people (in a private sense) have different and practically infinite places that can make them slipping into spatial reveries, which – again – would lead to a "heterotopic inflation."

Additionally, the example of the garden opens some important discussions. Firstly, on the one hand, nothing that was initially situated in the

Persian garden was meant to be a microcosm, including the four parts reproducing the other four parts of the world, having the fountain as an “umbilical” center, and, on the other hand, the carpet was also a reproduction of a garden, Foucault completing thus his remarks: “Le jardin, c’est un tapis où le monde tout entier vient accomplir sa perfection symbolique, et le tapis, c’est une sorte de jardin mobile à travers l’espace. Le jardin, c’est la plus petite parcelle du monde et puis c’est la totalité du monde. Le jardin, c’est, depuis le fond de l’Antiquité, une sorte d’hétérotopie heureuse et universalisante (de là nos jardins zoologiques).” (1578)

So the carpet (at least in its “initial” intention, by its “original” meaning(s), if there is such a thing...) brings together several spatialities: it is an object of a certain size for household purposes (which occupies, with a specific function, a given area in a room<sup>21</sup>), it is a “garden” (*in* the house) and it is thereby a “world too.” All these spaces are put forward, called, presented in one and the same “thing”, the carpet itself. And it could be stated that, in an “enchanted” world, the “domestic” meaning of the carpet – today, that is for us its most natural function (and, probably, for many, the single one) – could have been once the least “actual” one – the carpet brought together, gathered the people of the house on its living surface, it determined them to have another smaller world in their *sui generis* world, which is the house itself: a more intimate, a more “vivid” world, remembering them the richness of the world itself, through its richness of colors and figurative elements; it could induce themselves the presence of a space (of the house) which seems today, for many people, a space of “closure” (physically speaking) extracting them, as direct participants, from the vitality of this world. Even if it is “mobile” – according to Foucault “c’est une sorte de jardin mobile à travers l’espace” – it also has the ability to “immobilize” or to “anchor” the whole world within itself, in the place where it is laid down.

Also, the heterotopias from the same “family” are meant to communicate with each other, being able to replace each other. If we accept that a carpet is a garden, that the latter was the “reason” for which the former was created (at least in a certain area and in a certain historical period), we will also accept – notes Foucault – that the garden is a carpet. Carpet and garden are not just “symbols” that can stand for each other, analogically, but they involve some concrete or “spatial” experiences – when we walk on a carpet, but also in a garden, we step somehow carefully (of course, some busy people would say that we only “use” them), we “tune” our steps according to their spatial reality, going to the place that “meets” us: we do not step be that as it may but we feel their special tissue, their special texture<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> For a more complex discussion, we could develop here the pattern of the vertical carpets or of the tapestries.

<sup>22</sup> Today, some people still take their shoes off when they observe carpets in a house or in a room they enter; of course, there is much to talk on this subject, and it is also, in many cultures, a

Without being linked to a strict topology as the Persian garden, the zoos and the contemporary botanical gardens (mentioned by Foucault himself in this context) have the same “universalizing” requirement, trying to show us (as much as possible) the world of animals or plants. In another sense, which brings some difficulties to the concept of heterotopia (we will see further why), the natural reservations and parks – configured precisely because their natural wealth – appear to be more than a “a part of nature”, constituting in fact what might be called a “world” itself. Naturally, each of these “worlds” is only one side of the World, it is a world because it has its finality and function in this greater world, with which it organically communicates. It is what scientists call today ecosystem or ecological system. Of course, and this is the difficulty which we have just talked about, these “worlds” are only symbolically characterized as being like that, they do not obviously reproduce or (re)present the whole world, but they only partially “instantiate” or “particularize” it, more or less, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

We can think, evidently, to other countless heterotopias of the same family: the herbarium, the insectarium, the greenhouse, the aquarium. Some imaginative metaphysicians found – *avant la lettre* – everywhere such relationships of “the reproduction of the world” (as we could call them), even as an endless possibility, their existence “resulting” beyond all possible perceptions, in conformity with the *a priori* foundations of that philosophy. In a famous fragment of his *Monadology* (section 67), Leibniz states that “chaque portion de la matière peut être conçue comme un jardin plein de plantes, et comme un étang plein de poissons. Mais chaque rameau de la plante, chaque membre de l’animal, chaque goutte de ses humeurs est encore un tel jardin, ou un tel étang.” (Leibniz 1909: 70-71). Let’s note here the internal, qualitative infinity of the matter and the impossibility of its undefined and abstract division.

We can ask then, for relating ourselves to the introductory general classification, which kind of heterotopia is this heterotopia called by Foucault “blissful” – it is one of crisis or one of deviation? It seems that the blissful heterotopias escape from this kind of “dark” alternative... It is obvious that some heterotopias are developed in the absence of the mechanisms of subjectivation, they do not appear as *dispositifs* of power (contrary to our hypothesis, previously announced). The “sociality” involved by some heterotopias seems to be “soft” when they are compared to the disciplinary intensity (often based on physical and verbal violence) of emplacements such as the prisons or the psychiatric hospitals.

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form of expressing the respect for the masters of the house; additionally, many people take their shoes off nowadays to prevent the mess in the house – “I have dirt on shoes” or “I came with dirt from outside” we are told, especially if there are small children in that house.

Finally, let's note before passing to the next principle that, despite the important "functional" issues related to the human practices (which include them) we might observe that what leads to the juxtaposition of the several spaces, in some of these cases, is something visual, belonging to the order of the representation or likeness, and not something developed or required by the individual practices: a carpet *resembles* to a garden (it is *like* a garden) and a garden *resembles* to a world (it is *like* a world). It is a structural, self-evident correspondence (strictly visual, perceptual), a correspondence that goes from big to small (or vice versa). This correspondence or visual likeness – and not a socio-cultural practice – "induces" the heterotopia (it creates its impression), while enforcing a static and aesthetic appearance to the overlapping spaces.

*The fourth principle* occasions the "link of the spatiality to the temporality" (our expression) and the introduction of the related concept of the *heterochrony*. Thus, "Les hétérotopies sont liées, le plus souvent, à des découpages du temps, c'est-à-dire qu'elles ouvrent sur ce qu'on pourrait appeler, par pure symétrie, des hétérochronies; l'hétérotopie se met à fonctionner à plein lorsque les hommes se trouvent dans une sorte de rupture absolue avec leur temps traditionnel." (1578)

We find here that the heterotopias are really put into function (operating at full speed, we could reformulate) when the time itself, i.e. here the traditional time, is "suspended". Naturally, it would be worthy to explore which or what time is this "traditional" time: the regular one, of our daily life? The cyclic one of the "traditional" (archaic) societies? The linear one of the modern man or the fragmented one (somehow "indifferent" to the order) of the postmodern man<sup>23</sup>? In some of them, this break of time is "natural". This is the case of the cemetery, the first example given here by Foucault: any presence in this place is (even in a visit for some aesthetic reasons, such as a "walk" made by many tourists in the famous cemeteries Père-Lachaise, Montmartre or Montparnasse in Paris) a way to "plunge" into another time, to "link" thus two (or more) time levels.

There are, in light of this principle, two types of heterotopias: those which are meant to express "the accumulation of time" and those which "celebrate" life *hic et nunc*, life in its "immediacy" (which suspend the time, we could add, through an exacerbation of the lived moment: *carpe diem*). The first are called eddy "eternitary", the others "chronic" (*chroniques* – from Chronos, of course). Let's detail this, along with some comments.

Trying to present the first case, the one of the heterotopias related to the accumulation of time ("infinite", it is added), Foucault produced a particularly vivid fragment:

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<sup>23</sup> Insofar, it seems that this latter "really exists" and that it is not just a philosophical-literary construct, just an *idea* or a *desire* – not even a more or less "theoretical" *obsession* – of being different, so a desire that we think we could "objectify" and put into it practice.

“l'idée de tout accumuler, l'idée de constituer une sorte d'archive générale, la volonté d'enfermer dans un lieu tous les temps, toutes les époques, toutes les formes, tous les goûts, l'idée de constituer un lieu de tous les temps qui soit lui-même hors du temps, et inaccessible à sa morsure, le projet d'organiser ainsi une sorte d'accumulation perpétuelle et indéfinie du temps dans un lieu qui ne bougerait pas, eh bien, tout cela appartient à notre modernité. Le musée et la bibliothèque sont des hétérotopies qui sont propres à la culture occidentale du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle.” (1578)

Shortly, the museums and libraries as we know today (in their functions, not simply as “buildings”) are expressions of the modernity, they are proper heterotopias according to this epoch.

Foucault's observation that precedes the above presentation is simple and it is based on the fact that until the end of the eighteenth century those realities existed in another form, without any relation to the time (to its accumulation), but rather in relation to the space, being the result of the personal choice of those who initiated such a project, being thus “personalized” – they rather expressed a “personal world” than a piece of a real geographical world. They were mainly a way to collect “precious” worldwide curiosities or specimens. There were, of course, also the libraries of the universities or monasteries, well organized, trying to give a kind of universal coverage (both spatial and temporal) of the knowledge, but their resources were intended to contribute to the spiritual education of those who had access to them. None of them had, strictly speaking, a public character: they were reserved for a relatively small circle of individuals: friends and acquaintances, or members of the congregation and the specific community.

There were also the great libraries of the Antiquity (but Foucault does not reach this issue either), whose “model” remains, of course, the Ancient Library of Alexandria. The intention of the latter was to keep all the wisdom of the world, to “accumulate time”, but it was also an expression of the Egyptian power and its usage<sup>24</sup>. However, to integrate this observation in the Foucauldian discussion, we should note, on the one hand, that nothing prevents, in principle, a certain significance attached to a heterotopia to appear, to be “lost” and to reappear throughout history.

On the other hand, it should be noted that what distinguishes the contemporary museums and libraries from those of Antiquity is their *institutional* character (in the

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<sup>24</sup> The Library of Alexandria is sometimes designated as a heterotopia. See in this sense Ryan MacLeod's sketchy remark: “That project focused upon a community of people, objects and texts within the palace at the Brucheion, the Greek section of the city. For the next two thousand years – for linguists, archaeologists, historians, and scholars of religion, culture, and the book – that community became a place within a place, a constellation of identities, a heterotopia, in the language of Foucault, where text elides into subtext, and myth endures long after masonry disappears.” (MacLeod 2004: 2). See also Lawrence Liang, “Shadow Libraries”.

modern sense), of a *systematic*, generalized – social and cultural – *practice*<sup>25</sup>, originally designed to preserve the national memory (thus giving it a certain “form”), to capture the national identity, and to keep it safe from the vicissitudes of the irreversible flow of time.

Not to mention that today’s museums and libraries are very efficient tools for the individuals’ cognitive discipline. The evolution of the museums (and, partially, of the libraries, keeping pace with the new conquests of the electronic technique, designed – isn’t it? – to facilitate research and to make more enjoyable and more comfortable our relationship with the written text, too inexpressive and too dusty as a printed work) in the direction of facile, spectacular or commercial show (under this “imminent”, to threat the public’s sensitivity might redirect itself to other spaces, more malleable, belonging to a “cultural relaxation”, and also, it could especially go after the ghost of the market economy) means, to a great extent, nothing than a neoliberal-style “change”, encouraging the decoupling of the paying public from the true culture because they offer instead a “cultural show”, profitable in two ways: it makes money and it “anesthetizes” the critical sense developed by an complex interrogative education<sup>26</sup>. Anyway, we must keep the museums and the libraries in the horizon of the systematic institutional practices, with other, well “organized”, purposes (not declared, of course) this time.

A short postscript about the fact that we have “museums about anything.” The museum seems to be, from this perspective, the public and commercial *analogon* of today’s science, sociologically and sufficiently commercialized on its turn, for everyone’s benefit. In its annual course at the Collège de France, the one about *The Psychiatric Power*, in the meeting of January 23, 1974, Foucault noted that one of the characteristics of the modern science, which defines it, is to consider that no corner of the reality is trivial, so his duty is to “investigate everything.” Similarly, we can say that the mission of the today’s museums is to “present everything.” In fact, in a closer analysis, it appears that the common denominator of the two “research” directions is the *curiosity* (and, to be very direct, not the *wonder*), the peripheral, epidermal, “educated” excitation of human senses, the individual’s restless desire (researcher, visitor, tourist, etc.) to “learn” anything about everything, a personal curiosity, socially accompanied by the official recognition of himself – just – as a bold expression of a claimed and desired cognitive emancipation of the “man.”

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<sup>25</sup> We might add, even with an uncritical character: today, we take for granted that we *must* have museums, moreover, museums of any kind and for anything (of course, the museum policies have commercial-touristic reasons too).

<sup>26</sup> A synthetic manner to render idea is to consider the current (neoliberal) state smart enough for not funding those activities that could lead to its own undermining; in the same way as they consume all sorts of products and services, the neoliberalized citizens could (and should) consume culture too, and the internet is probably the biggest possible cultural hypermarket.

The other heterotopias presented at this point, the “chronic” one, designates the escapes from the everyday temporality, from the routine, from the ordinary. Foucault’s examples are the fairs organized on the outskirts of the past cities (held once or twice a year) and the today’s holiday of the villages. They are both specially created spaces, precisely intended for this separation from everyday life. For the people of the past – we mean the vast majority of them – had no “holidays”, we can approximate the social effect of these fairs, i.e. offering them the spectacular, bringing another world close to those who could not go for that (having neither the financial means, nor the social curiosity for this); they were substantially the same as the today’s vacations or holidays, representing not only an encounter driven by curiosity with what is “different”, but also a “deserved reward”, psychologically felt as such, after the work of a whole year. Naturally, the forms of such escapes are today more varied and they should be presented beyond the (bourgeois) “cliché” of the holiday village, which appears in Foucault’s text, characterizing the French tourist space of the ’50s-’70s of the last century, promoted by the agencies such as the well-known *Club Med*.

*The fifth principle* shows us that the heterotopias “supposent toujours un système d’ouverture et de fermeture qui, à la fois, les isole et les rend pénétrables” (1579). In its vague generality, this principle initially does not cause difficulties – any place (any space apart) implies a certain boundary that means both a closure (even for its identification) and an opening, so that the “toujours” in the text does not bring problems.

The continuation seems problematic though, since, on the one hand, Foucault returns to his familiar area, significantly restricting the meanings of these closings and openings, and, on the other hand, he mixes the heterotopias and the heterotopic *emplacements*, causing thus confusion<sup>27</sup>. We present the whole fragment, followed by our comment:

“En général, on n’accède pas à un emplacement hétérotopique comme dans un moulin. Ou bien on y est contraint, c’est le cas de la caserne, le cas de la prison, ou bien il faut se soumettre à des rites et à des purifications. On ne peut y entrer qu’avec une certaine permission et une fois qu’on a accompli un certain nombre de gestes. Il y a même d’ailleurs des hétérotopies qui sont entièrement consacrées à ces activités de purification, purification mi-religieuse, mi-hygiénique comme dans les hammams des musulmans, ou bien purification en apparence purement hygiénique comme dans les saunas scandinaves.” (1579)

First of all, we should note a brief remark, apparently minor, but which reveals at a closer look some significant difficulties. We start from a simple question: is the mill (*moulin*) or is it not a heterotopia? The mill – in the traditional sense (i.e. historically speaking, a “pre-emplacement” space) – represents a space

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<sup>27</sup> At this point, our suggestion is this: even if they are “species” of the heterotopias, the emplacements *mainly* develop issues related to the disciplinary mechanisms of power in general, expressing the propagation, the configuration and the realization thereof.

apart, not only with a key role in the rural economy, but also with a wider significance, because all crops owners turn their corn into meal there – and that indicates a dependence of all people in the village on this space, transforming it in a sign of social intertwining. Naturally, a mill was not (specially) secured, it was only guided by special rules of accession, there was no password – the economical interest of those who arrived there to get the thing for which they came for was enough to enter in that place. We might add that you voluntarily came and entered to the mill.

But this also happens for several heterotopias – some amusement parks, some “modern” holidays fairs (the Christmas fair, for example) or some flea markets (which still exists); many of them have no entrance fee, therefore you do not have to ask for permission to enter inside nor to do certain “gestures” for accessing them.

The park, the simple park, could also be considered as a heterotopia: for most inhabitants of a city or of a region, it is another space, situated in the middle or in the outskirts of a city, creating the possibility to escape from the time and space of the everyday life (even of the park itself has its own urban “routine”, but this is something else). The restrictions for “admission” are minimal and they are applied for almost any public place: not to be aggressive, not to offer excessive bodily nudity<sup>28</sup>, etc.

We do not discuss here the disciplinary character (as much as it is, at least in a broad cultural sense) of such “restrictions” (the problem can be put, hermeneutically, in the wake of Foucault’s thought) – we just want to point out that if they *define* a way of accessing a place, so if they *indicate* a space apart, then *all the public spaces* get this status or character of heterotopia, thus the heterotopias sensibly loose again the capacity of being a methodological, efficient<sup>29</sup> research tool<sup>30</sup>.

Concerning the saunas indicated by Foucault, we face other difficulties. The mentioning of the public baths only (such as Turkish hammam) could have ruled out such kind of difficulties and they would have related the discussion to

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<sup>28</sup> There are, paradoxically, “inverse” spaces, “special” spaces, where the nudity is “required” – the nudist beach, for example, where you will look different, becoming somehow “suspect”, even if you are not forbidden to stay dressed up. The general framework would impose some special spaces where the rituals and the constraints are indirect, “oblique”, tacit, imposed by the community (mostly) attends those spaces, by its behavior – by the community who practically creates the identity of those places. We precisely refer to the stadiums of many football teams, to the clubs frequented by sexual minorities, to the dens, etc.

<sup>29</sup> This means, among other things, to have the capacity of qualitatively discriminate between the investigated entities.

<sup>30</sup> Not to mention the private spaces, which would complicate the discussion, since they are in fact “typical” expressions of the existence of a procedure for accession, the simplest being, probably, the owner’s permission; apart from our further short discussion, we should extensively analyze somehow the importance of the public and private dichotomy of the heterotopia in general: and also, we should see if other concrete examples could contribute to the subject.

a social or religious practice (even venerable) which employed the existence of a space apart, specifically devoted to it (with different rituals of access, according to different cultures).

There is, indeed, a certain sacred character of sauna – there is an old saying in Finland, widespread even today, telling us that “saunassa ollaan kuin kirkossa” (you should be(have) in the sauna as you do in the church); however, we should remark, the sauna was also accompanied by what we could call a “spiritual dimension” (sometimes not in the expected sense of purification, but in the sense of being a space of divine pleasures).

But this (*only* this) does not transform the sauna into a heterotopia. Consequently, we think that is necessary to discuss what is related to the *private* character that the heterotopias might or might not have. If a certain practice is developed by one person or by few people only (those who have access to the family’s intimacy, for example), in a particular place (religious, cultural location etc.), might it be called a heterotopia?

There is no problem in the first instance and we could accept this: the small sanctuaries of worshipping from people’s houses (populated by icons, candles, votive lights, etc.) or the small spaces designed for private prayers may be an example – they are a variation in micro, a privatized and individualized place of worship and they receive (somehow by “contamination”) a heterotopic character<sup>31</sup>.

Everyone has (or rather had) such “spaces”, there is a widespread in the sense of cultural-religious practice, but could this belong to the “social space”? If so, then *all* cultural, religious, and especially secular developments of the majority of the population would lead to the creation of heterotopias: the (private) bathroom would be a heterotopia (*people* wash in the bathroom), the kitchen (*people* cook in the kitchen), the bedroom, the living room and so on, with all their variations and variants.

We return to this point, for the major problem is – differently formulated – that thereby it occurs again an “inflation” of heterotopias, that the very criteria used for their “attestation” may be changed depending on the case, that – again – *any* space is one of a particular coloring. It seems that we have no space to escape colorations: emotional, social, religious, political, cultural, etc. – there are no neutral spaces, there are no “non-places” spaces, all spaces are *already* places, the “space” occurs secondly, overlaps the place itself and it cannot “cancel”, “annihilate” it<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Moreover, in a presentation of a juxtaposition of spaces, we find both the secular and the sacred space in the same domestic space which is a house. Simplifying the discussion, the family is, as for the Christians, a *sui generis* form of the Church – the family is “the little church” (or “the home church”, according to St. John Chrysostom), the church is a large family: for a Christian, church and family cannot exist without each other – and the house is the privileged place that expresses this relation.

<sup>32</sup> A reference that works in this direction, not entirely identical to our previous suggestions, is the one belonging to Edward S. Casey in *The Fate of Place. A Philosophical History*.

We would also add that, in the era of “order” or “social disciplining” of the space where we already live since a while<sup>33</sup>, any spatial “piece” receives *a fortiori* a strong social coloratura and it introduces us to a world of social (but also political, cultural, etc.) relations.

Space, wherever it may be – in the deep jungle or at the North Pole, on the surface or in the depths of the Earth’s oceans – is (already) socially “organized”, there are ubiquitous and universal (legal) restrictions for space, any space is regulated. Moreover, these regulations exist far before our presence “there”, they already exist not only in treatises, but (which is more important) also in our behavior, when we “inform” about those places (even on the geographical and touristic level).

Nature or what is today called “nature” is *organized*<sup>34</sup> by itself, it is already full of restrictions (which are not the “natural” constraints of the physical obstacles – a river, a slope, etc.) – there is, for example, a typical tourist’s behavior (we are told, only “to defend nature”), a “normal” tourist’s behaviour, including what *can* and what *cannot* do a tourist, wherever he would be in this world.

Returning to the Foucault’s examples at this point, there is also another kind of heterotopias, some “qui ont l’air de pures et simples ouvertures, mais qui, en général, cachent de curieuses exclusions; tout le monde peut entrer dans ces emplacements hétérotopiques, mais, à vrai dire, ce n’est qu’une illusion: on croit pénétrer et on est, par le fait même qu’on entre, exclu” (1579). Here, the main example is the one of the farms in South America (Brazil in particular), which provided a special room for the unknown guests, isolated from the residence where the owners’ family ran their daily life. We might call them “openings that close”, and Foucault adds that, nowadays, their mentioned form is gone.

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<sup>33</sup> One of the aspects of this process is the translation of all our human relations in connections with some property, limited to the links *between properties*, so not between people, communities, etc. who *own* properties, but between “owners”; *tout court*, our way by excellence (if not, for many, unique) is to identify ourselves today, socially and anthropologically (not to speak juridically or politically), as individuals and social assemblies.

<sup>34</sup> There is no more a “virgin” nature. The few left virgin areas must be defended and “organized” to remain so. You are in the presence of something *special* and you have to behave yourself *specially*, with care. You does not have to be “natural” in the “nature”. The natural is considered today – paradoxically – the expression of an exception: this conception belongs to the nature itself (now “corrupted” and damaged by the social for whom we fight for) and to you too, the “intruder” himself (in other words, the man recognizes that he is not – anymore – a part of nature). Not to mention the obsession to “maintain the ecological balance” in a desperate attempt to keep from the “(real) nature” whatever “exists”... or at least as much as possible. Like a posthumous recognition of an unpunished “social guilt of man”, of a “social sin” of himself (as a second Fall, this time not from Heaven, but from the Earth itself). In addition, the desire to recover a “pure”, a “virgin” or an “authentic” nature has to face a sharp criticism à la Baudrillard. And, to paraphrase him, the symbolic anticipation – and not only some “empirical reality” – compels us to say (is there any reason at all?) that “la nature n’existe plus”.

There is something similar (“peut-être”, Foucault mentions) in the case of the motels (“américains”, is specified<sup>35</sup>). Considering the presence of these two examples, we might state that what brings them together is the fact that you are somewhat *tolerated* inside them, you are temporarily allowed there (because you are not part of the family, or because – in the second case – of your moral behavior). You are accepted there for some time, then you will have to go. You find there a shelter, but you are somehow hidden: the rest of the space remains impenetrable to you, either because you do not have the permission to go there, or because it is mainly in your own interest not to be seen around that place, in the second case), so you are not present. You remain “unknown” to that place, that place remains “unknown” to you, you are clandestinely, incognito out there.

*Finally*, Foucault states quite vaguely that the heterotopias “ont, par rapport à l’espace restant, une fonction” (1580). This *fonction* covers the segment between two extremes, defined by the heterotopia of illusion (“d’illusion”) and the heterotopia of compensation (“de compensation”). The first “ont pour rôle de créer un espace d’illusion qui dénonce comme plus illusoire encore tout l’espace réel, tous les emplacements à l’intérieur desquels la vie humaine est cloisonnée” (1580), as example being offered “les maisons closes”, while heterotopias of compensation offer “un autre espace, un autre espace réel, aussi parfait, aussi méticuleux, aussi bien arrangé que le nôtre est désordonné, mal agencé et brouillon” (1580) – the colonies, for example (of the English Puritans in the North America or of the Jesuits in the South America). *The denunciation of the rest of the space* – this is what we might call to “gather” together these heterotopias – as not satisfying our innermost desires, leads us to temporary “escape” from its limits or, respectively, to a total and “rigorous” reorganization of it, in another place, “forever” (at least, in intention).

And what brings us together, what juxtaposes at a second level, and not only these heterotopias, but also other countless spaces, going from harbor to harbor, is precisely the ship – the Foucauldian “hétérotopie par excellence”, from the sixteenth century to nowadays.

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<sup>35</sup> We think that some examples offered by Foucault are the result of some general clichés: the “American” motel, where a boss flees with his mistress, both registering under fictitious names in exchange for a small tip, etc. – although this kind of space is present in all civilizations.

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**Volume LXI, Number I, January-June 2012**