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ASPECTS OF GANDHI'S INTERPRETATION OF BHAGAVAD GITA *

Kathrin BOUVOT¹, Gianluigi SEGALERBA²

Abstract: *The intent of our investigation is to expose and interpret aspects of Gandhi's meditation on the Bhagavad Gita. One of the aims of Gandhi's meditation on the Gita consists in searching for the foundations of the right moral thought and for the foundations of the right individual education. The revelation of the Gita is for the individual, among other things, a journey towards the discovery of himself and of his position in the reality; it is a journey towards the discovery of the possible developments of his own soul.*

The foundation of the right individual education has immediate social aspects: the right education proves to represent the very foundation of the right political action. In Gandhi's view, the political doctrine and the political action ought to have as their own foundation the teachings of the Gita. The revelation of the Gita gives the individual the right moral education and the right moral foundation: it gives the knowledge of truth, of God, of reality, and of the individual nature. Through and thanks to the teachings of the Gita, the individual's education finds the due foundation. The correct moral education is the basis of a right political and social order; it represents the basis for the dialogue between individuals and for the peaceful coexistence between individuals. The morally right order of the society is the consequence of the morally right order of the individual.

Thus, the meditation on the Gita constitutes the foundation of the possibility of a right political strategy. Thanks to the education obtained through the meditation on the Gita, the individual is able to understand the right moral behaviour: this has an immediate effect on the structure and organisation of the whole society. In order that the society can be morally changed, the individual ought to develop his moral constitution in a right way. There may not be any right political programme without a previous individual right moral education.

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The analysis of the position of individuals within the reality and the investigation on the individual soul constitution enables the individual to reach an appropriate strategy for a right moral education. Since individuals consist of the three gunas — sattva, rajas, and tamas —, individuals are, as such, complex entities. Individuals are, moreover, dynamic entities: the development of the three gunas inside the individual soul, the relationships between the gunas in the soul, and the prevalence of a guna over the other gunas within the souls are not given once and for all; they depend on the education and on the life choices of the individuals. The prevalence of a guna over the other ones is due to the free decision of the individual; depending on how the individual decides to orientate his own life and depending on which parts of the soul the individual decides to cultivate, the soul of the individual will take a corresponding direction and will have a corresponding development. The responsibility for the development of one's own life belongs to the individual.

The corporeal dimension puts precise limits on the individual capacity of self-improvement within the corporeal life. Individuals ought to accept the limits due to their bodily dimension. At the same time, individuals ought to steadily try to improve themselves by promoting the virtues connected to sattva; the being-limited of individuals does not imply an absence of responsibility of the individuals as regards the moral value of their own actions. Individuals have the responsibility for being aware of their own constitution and for fighting against the limitations of their own condition. The fact that individuals are constitutively imperfect entails that individuals ought to educate themselves continuously; the individual ought to reach a moral foundation and ought to steadily pay attention to the stability of his own character.

The main works analysed throughout our inquiry are Gandhi's Discourses on the "Gita", contained in The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), pp. 94–376, and the work of Mahadev Desai, The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi.

Keywords: *Gandhi, Bhagavad Gita, Atman, Moksha, Gita, Sattva, Tamas, Rajas, Desai, Mahabharata, Satyagraha.*

1) Preamble

In our study, we shall investigate some aspects of Gandhi's meditation on the *Bhagavad Gita*³. We shall search for aspects regarding Gandhi's strategy

³ In our inquiry, we are interested in Gandhi's interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita* and in the aims which Gandhi had in his interpretation. Therefore, we are not

of meditation on the *Gita*: Gandhi's observations on the *Gita* regard many aspects, such as Divinity, the problem of good and evil, the structure of the reality, the individual's nature, the conflict present in the individual's nature between virtue and vice, the individual's position in the reality, the individual's possible developments, and the duties of the individual as regards his own moral development. Gandhi's meditation on the *Gita* proves to be an inquiry into the foundations of reality, of morality, and of society. Thus, the aim of our analysis consists in reconstructing Gandhi's steps towards the discovery of these foundations.

We would like to begin our inquiry with a quotation taken from Gandhi's *Discourses on the "Gita"*, since we think that Gandhi's statements, as they are expressed in this specific passage, represent a good synthesis of all the considerations, aims, and goals expressed throughout his work of interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita*:

going to analyse the defensibility of Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gita* and to expose the possible criticisms of Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gita*. Our attention is directed to the investigation of the elements which Gandhi found in the *Gita* in order to build and develop his own thought. The meditation on *Gita* is a process of formation for Gandhi. For our analysis of Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gita*, we resorted to and shall refer, within this contribution, to Gandhi's *Discourses on the "Gita"*, contained in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927)*, pp. 94–376. We also resorted to and, within our contribution, shall also refer to the work of Mahadev Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi* since Gandhi's exposition of *Anāsaktiyoga* gives very important elements for the understanding of Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gita*. The notes we have written on Gandhi's meditations on the *Gita* refer only to a little part of the contents which can actually be found in the whole extension of Gandhi's meditations on the *Gita*. As regards this research, we are interested in those observations of Gandhi which deal with *Gita's* considerations on the individual's nature. As regards commentaries and studies on the *Gita* (besides the analysis contained in Desai's work), we consulted the following works: S.M. Srinivasa Chari, *The Philosophy of Bhagavadgītā; The Bhagavad Gita. With Text, Translation, and Commentary in the Words of Sri Aurobindo; The Bhagavad Gītā (Sanskrit Text, Transliteration, English Translation & Philological Notes). Introduction by W. Douglas P. Hill. Translated by John Davies; Ithamar Theodor, Exploring the Bhagavad Gītā. Philosophy, Structure and Meaning*. All the pieces of information regarding the studies used for this contribution can be found in the bibliography contained at the end of this analysis. The responsibility for the interpretation which we expose in our paper is, of course, ours alone.

'And so Krishna says:

"Though I was never born in time, though I am the Lord of all creatures, I incarnate Myself and am born as a human being."

This is the essential nature of the *atman*. If we realize this truth, we would always act in conformity with that nature; we then act, though born as human beings, as if we were never born. If the *atman* in each of us is identical with the *atman* in everyone else, one *atman* born in a body means all of them born, and all others born means that one born too.

[...] We can follow reason only up to a point. What, then, does avatar mean? It is not as if God comes down from above. It would be right to say, if we can say it without egotism, that each one of us is an avatar. The *atman* in every body is as potent as the *atman* in any other, though outwardly we see differences. In our awakened state all are one, though in our ignorant state we may seem separate existences. In real truth, there are not several, there is only one.⁴

This passage represents, in our opinion, a synthesis of Gandhi's foundations as regards the moral and the political order which Gandhi is aiming to establish. The following principles of Gandhi's interest in and interpretation of the *Bhagavad Gita* can, in our opinion, be extracted from the passage quoted above:

- God is present in the individuals's dimension. Gandhi's God is not an absent God. God's descent shows that God is not extraneous to the individuals. He is not the absolutely other in relation to the individuals. He does not exist in a dimension which is completely different from the individuals's dimension. God is not absolutely transcendent. Individuals, correspondingly, are not only immanent, since they all are manifestations of *atman*.

- The individual's learning that the nature of the individuals is *atman* implies, for the individual, a corresponding programme of action. The individual's mind is not given once and for all; it can have and will have a development.

- Everybody is an avatar of God, and everybody is a manifestation, a concretisation of *atman*. Everybody is a manifestation of the Divinity. Individuals are unified in *atman*.

- *Atman* is identical in all individuals: *atman* is equally potent in all individuals.

⁴ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 189.

- The fact that atman is equally present in all individuals means that everybody has equal dignity. Since all individuals are avatars of God, and since atman is equally potent in all individuals, then all individuals are equal. Hence, no consideration of the individuals as unequal entities is legitimate.

- All individuals are one and only one entity; they all are atman. There are, actually, no separately existing individuals.

- Individuals can change through the knowledge of the revelation; their nature is not determined, at least not in all aspects. They have a space of development.

- From the acquaintance with his being atman, the individual learns that he ought to give up his attachment to the ego, since this attachment directly leads to the mutual separation of the individuals. The road to the recognition of the common nature of atman proves to be, therefore, the road to liberation from the attachment to the ego. The road of knowledge is the road to liberation.

- Since all individuals are one entity in atman, they ought to act in conformity with the common nature of atman; reciprocal harmony, and not mutual strife, ought to be the principle of their behaviour and of their mind disposition.

- To learn that he is a manifestation of atman leads the individual to act as though he were never born; he assumes the dimension and the awareness of being eternal. Therewith, the individual becomes able to free himself from the particular historical conditions in which he is living. The individual acquires a point of view on the whole reality which is completely different from the point of view which he originally had; he becomes able to mentally transcend the particularities of his initial life condition. He becomes able to understand that he is spiritually something other than the particular conditions in which he is living. The individual's mind is being transformed through and thanks to the revelation of the *Gita*.

- The recognition of the identical presence of atman in everybody represents the passage from the ignorant state – in which individuals think that they are mutually separate existences – to the awakened state – in which individuals become aware that they all are one entity.

- Since the individual condition of being an avatar can be known only after meditating on the *Gita*, learning the contents of the revelation proves

to be indispensable for the moral formation of the individual⁵. There can be no authentic education without meditation on the revelation.

- The individual's awareness of one's own condition and position in the reality is developed through the individual's learning of the *Gita*. The awakened state will not come about by itself; the individual's engagement is needed. The *Gita* proves to be the source of the individual's enlightenment and of the individual's transformation.

2) Introduction

Coming now to a description of our inquiry, we would like to analyse in our contribution some of Gandhi's considerations on the *Gita*. The aim which we have in our investigation is to show that the meditation on the *Gita* represents, for Gandhi, the search for and the discovery of the foundations of the individual's education. The right education of the individual has precise social consequences: it represents the foundation of a good order within a society and between societies. In Gandhi's meditation on *Gita's* teachings, we can see that the reflections on the individual condition described within the *Gita* are connected to a collective and to a social dimension. The teachings of the *Gita* represent, for Gandhi, a programme for the foundation of the right moral and political action.

Throughout his meditation on the *Gita*, Gandhi aims to show that the knowledge of the revelation of the *Gita* can give the person the right moral education and the right moral foundations. The *Gita* teaches, on the one hand, that the nature of the individual is given as regards his own components – i.e., the three gunas: sattva, rajas, and tamas –. The *Gita* also teaches, on the other hand, that the nature of the individual is not given as regards the degree of strength and of influence of each of these components. The components of the individual are given, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, the concrete development of the individuals is not given; this development depends on the individual's decisions as regards his intellectual development.

Gandhi states that the individual is responsible for the evolution and development which his own components will have within his own person;

⁵ In this context, we intentionally limit the analysis of this particular passage to a few notes since the passage will find a more extended comment thereafter. We exclusively aim to find through this passage some of Gandhi's principles in order to gain elements which can be relevant for the whole inquiry.

this development is open. The individual is free to choose, can choose, and ought actually to choose the direction of his moral development. As a consequence, the right moral development will not come about by itself, nor will the right political order come about by itself; the individual ought to act for the right moral and political organisation to be realised.

The engagement of the individual is required both for due learning and for due acting. First of all, the individual needs and ought to learn his own condition in the reality, the elements of his own nature, and the possible ways of his own development. In a certain measure, the nature of the individual is yet to come about, since exclusively the components of the individual's nature and not the concrete development of the components of the individual's nature are given. The form which the different components take depends on the education of the individuals. Correspondingly, there is not a unique nature for all the individuals; there is only a unique series of components. The authentic nature is to come about and will come about on the basis of the development which the individual, on the basis of his own choice and his own responsibility, will reach. The strengthening of a component or of another component depends on the individual choice.

In Gandhi's view, the process of learning obtained through meditating on the whole *Gita* can give each individual the knowledge of truth, of God, of reality, and of his own essence. Through this process of learning, the individual acquires the capacity to organise and modify his own mind towards the right moral condition. For instance, thanks to the teachings of the *Gita*, the individual comes to know the existence of the three gunas – the qualities of reality *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. In particular, the individual learns that his own nature consists of these three qualities and that the influence of these qualities can be modified depending on the level of education reached by the individual. In Gandhi's view, learning *Gita's* teachings and meditating on *Gita's* contents turns out to be indispensable for improving, in every individual, the strength of the good component of his own soul (i.e., *sattva*) and for diminishing the influence exercised by the other components of his soul (i.e., *rajas* and *tamas*)⁶.

⁶ *Sattva*, *tamas*, and *rajas* are defined, in the translation of the *Gita* contained in Desai's work, in the following way: 'XIV 6. Of these *sattva*, being stainless, is light-giving and healing; it binds with the bond of happiness and the bond of knowledge, O sinless one.' 'XIV 7. *Rajas*, know thou, is of the nature of passion, the source of thirst and attachment; it keeps man bound with the bond of action.' 'XIV

Furthermore, through *Gita's* principles, the individual becomes able to know that he ought to improve the force of *sattva* and to diminish the force of *rajas* and *tamas*. The place of the individual development is, therefore, the meditation on the revelation.

Correspondingly, without the process of learning and without the process of maturation produced within the individual's mind by this process of meditation, the individual will have no possibility to learn the duty to improve the strength of *sattva* in himself and to learn the duty to diminish the force of *rajas* and of *tamas*⁷.

Gita's revelation teaches that all individuals have a common nature; since all individuals are avatars of God, they constitute a common entity. Atman is the common foundation of all individuals. In spite of the fact that they appear to be divided and mutually separated, all individuals are, actually, one entity with each other. They are atman; they are manifestations of the same principle. Based on this point, Gandhi is able to

8. *Tamas*, know thou, born of ignorance, is mortal man's delusion; it keeps him bound with heedlessness, sloth and slumber, O Bharata.' 'XIV 9. *Sattva* attaches man to happiness, *rajas* to action, and *tamas*, shrouding knowledge, attaches him to heedlessness.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 327; the passages are also quoted in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927)*, p. 315). To be noted, among other things, is the connection of *sattva* with spiritual knowledge and the connection of *tamas* with the concealment of spiritual knowledge. *Tamas* is the component directly opposed to spiritual knowledge and, therefore, to the education of the individual. The individual needs to limit the influence of *tamas* if he wants to arrive at spiritual knowledge. Correspondingly, to reach knowledge means as such limiting the power of *tamas*.

⁷ The relations holding among the three forces are modified by the process of strengthening of one of them over the others: 'XIV 10. *Sattva* prevails, O Bharata, having overcome *rajas* and *tamas*; *rajas*, when it has overpowered *sattva* and *tamas*; likewise *tamas* reigns when *sattva* and *rajas* are crushed.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 327). This passage shows that the relation among the three qualities can change. The components of the reality and of the soul are given, but their strength and influence within the individual are not given; they can be modified. The point is that *sattva* can prevail only after a process of meditation and of education. *Sattva* does not arise by alone; the individual needs and ought to act so that *sattva* can become stronger and stronger. The improvement of *sattva* turns out to be, therefore, a difficult process for the individual. The individual engagement is needed for the development of *sattva*.

state that the division between individuals has no ground to exist. Therefore, the knowledge of the *Gita* can immediately provide norms of behaviour for the individuals between each other.

To summarise, learning about the revelation of the *Gita* is the right way for the individual to reach greater and greater degrees of right moral disposition; the truth manifested by the *Gita* will represent the foundation for the morally right individual and for peace between individuals. The right political action has its foundation in the right moral formation. As a result, the improvement of the individuals brings about the improvement of the political and social order in which individuals live. Through and thanks to the *Gita's* teachings, education finds its due foundation. This is the basis of the right political and social order; it represents, for Gandhi, the indispensable foundation of the dialogue between individuals and of the peaceful coexistence between individuals. There is no separation between the morally right political strategy, on the one hand, and the right moral education, on the other hand. The right political strategy needs the right moral education; the right education of the individual is the basis for the right political order⁸.

3) Summary of Gandhi's positions

In the following summary, we can find the main ideas of Gandhi which we have already introduced in part and which we are going to develop further in our contribution:

i) Gandhi firmly believes in the power of transformation exercised, on the individuals, by the knowledge of the truth, i.e., by the learning of the revelation. The knowledge of the truth expressed in the revelation of the *Gita* successfully modifies men as regards their moral dimension⁹. The

⁸ Throughout Gandhi's meditation on the *Gita*, we can observe the presence of reflections which are directed to the education and formation of the individual as such. Furthermore, we can observe the presence of reflections which expose the norms deriving, for society, from this education and this formation. Gandhi's attention is directed to both aspects.

⁹ The connection between spiritual knowledge and *sattva* can be found in the following statements of the *Gita*: 'XIV 11. When the light – knowledge – shines forth from all the gates of this body, then it may be known that the *sattva* thrives.' 'XIV 12. Greed, activity, assumption of undertakings, restlessness, craving – these are in evidence when *rajas* flourishes, O Bharatarshabha.' 'XIV 13. Ignorance,

spiritual knowledge obtained through the meditation on the *Gita* transforms the individual mind¹⁰. Individuals ought to develop themselves from their initial condition; revelation is the teaching programme for development.

ii) To follow the truth does not admit any exception, since God is the truth.

iii) The knowledge of the truth and the learning process needed for the individual to grasp this kind of knowledge, are indispensable for the individual in order that he can find the foundations both of the right moral disposition and of the right political order¹¹. The right moral individual education is the indispensable basis for the right political order.

iv) Individuals are composed entities. They consist of different components which do not live in harmony with each other.

v) Individuals are morally limited entities; they cannot completely eliminate bad factors as long as they are in the corporeal dimension.

dullness, heedlessness, and delusion — these are in evidence when *tamas* reigns, O Kurunandana.' 'XIV 14. If the embodied one meets his end whilst *sattva* prevails, then he attains to the spotless worlds of the knowers of the Highest.' 'XIV 15. If he dies during the reign within him of *rajas*, he is born among men attached to action; and if he dies in *tamas*, he is born in species not endowed with reason.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, pp. 328–329). Knowledge is the cause of *sattva*. If *sattva* is present, spiritual knowledge is present. The flourishing of *sattva* in the individual is manifested by the presence of spiritual knowledge and is made visible by the presence of spiritual knowledge in the individual. The positivity of *sattva* clearly emerges from these statements. The negativity of *rajas* and *tamas* is likewise clear. Furthermore, the development of *sattva* is directly connected to the presence of spiritual knowledge.

¹⁰ In the teachings of the *Gita*, spiritual knowledge turns out to be indispensable for the individual to arrive at a condition of purity. Spiritual knowledge represents the best factor for the purification of the soul: 'IV 38. There is nothing in this world so purifying as Knowledge. He who is perfected by *yoga* finds it in himself in the fullness of time.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 207) If the individual wishes to reach purification, he needs the kind of knowledge transmitted by the revelation of the *Gita*.

¹¹ The *Gita* teaches that the responsibility for the presence of virtue and vice belongs to the individual: 'V 15. The Lord does not take upon Himself anyone's vice or virtue; it is ignorance that veils knowledge and deludes all creatures.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 216) The individual ought to take the due steps so that he can become free from ignorance.

vi) Individuals are battlefields; they have a psychic division between good factors and bad factors.

vii) The responsibility of every individual consists in strengthening the good factors and in taming the negative factors which are present in his own soul.

viii) Individuals ought to become aware of their own limits. Despite their limits, individuals do not need to despair because of their own limits; they ought to be confident in what they can actually do¹². Moreover, to have limits does not mean that the individual has no duty as regards his own limits; the individual ought to act against his own limits.

ix) Individuals ought to reach knowledge and develop themselves on the basis of the knowledge which the individual is able to reach. They may not remain in a condition of ignorance, and they may not accept their inner condition as it is. The individual may not remain in a condition of passivity towards his own nature if he wishes to reach a moral foundation and moral development; he ought to act by developing sattva in himself.

4) The human condition: human beings are battlefields

As we have anticipated in the introduction, we think that one of the causes of the interest of Gandhi for the *Gita* lies in Gandhi's search for the contents of the individual's education; education consists in establishing, in the individuals, a general disposition which will make the individuals able to take the morally right decisions.

In Gandhi's view, the revelation of the *Gita* explains, among other things, that the individual condition corresponds to that of a battlefield; the

¹² In Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 145, we can find the following interesting considerations regarding the possibilities connected to the individual's action: '[...] Lord Krishna distinguishes between body (not-Self) and Atman (Self) and shows that whilst bodies are impermanent and several, Atman is permanent and one. Effort is within man's control, not the fruit thereof. All he has to do, therefore, is to decide his course of conduct or duty on each occasion and persevere in it, unconcerned about the result. Fulfillment of one's duty in the spirit of detachment or selflessness leads to Freedom.' The individual ought to engage himself in the action; the engagement is in the individual's power, whereas the results of the engagement are uncertain. The individual ought to learn that only the engagement is in his power and, as a consequence, ought to concentrate himself on the engagement. Since the results do not depend on him, he should not concentrate his effort on the results.

human condition is to be compared with a battlefield in which reciprocally hostile moral potencies fight against each other. The first step for the education of the individual is to analyse his position and his condition in the reality in order to see how to change and what to do. Knowledge and self-knowledge are indispensable for the development of the individual. The individual moral starting point is not easy; the first step which the individual ought to make in order to begin a process of moral self-improvement consists in becoming aware of his complex life condition, of his composite essence, and of his divided constitution. Only through this awareness does the individual become able to understand the necessity of finding the right formation for his moral constitution.

As regards the individual moral condition, Gandhi expresses the following positions, basing his reflections on his interpretation of the general sense of the Mahabharata:

'The Mahabharata is not history; it is a *dharma-grantha*. [...] The battle described here is, therefore, a struggle between dharma and adharma. [...] the epic describes the battle ever raging between the countless Kauravas and Pandavas dwelling within us. It is a battle between the innumerable forces of good and evil which become personified in us as virtues and vices. We shall leave aside the question of violence and non-violence and say that this *dharma-grantha* was written to explain man's duty in this inner strife.'¹³

There is a condition of inner strife and there is a duty of the individual related to the inner strife. The condition of inner strife means that the individual can explode; this has consequences both for the individual and for society. Thanks to the epic narration, the individual can moreover understand his own duty; there is a moral message in the narration. As we can see, Gandhi interprets the Mahabharata in a metaphorical way; the battle of Mahabharata is, actually, the battle between the good and evil which are present in each individual. This means that the individuals are composed out of forces of evil and forces of good. The individual psychic condition is not void; forces of evil and of good are present in the individual. In particular, the individual has vices in himself. There are bad components with which the individual ought to reckon and which the individual ought to face in the appropriate way. The individual ought to become aware that there are negative components within himself.

¹³ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 95.

The presence of evil forces within the individual means that the individual can be or become bad. As a consequence, the individual cannot remain indifferent if he wishes to reach the right moral formation and unless he wants to remain exposed to a conflict situation. From the awareness of the presence of bad components in the individual, the question arises if and how the individual can be liberated from these bad components. There is a condition of inner strife within the individual. The individual has duties in relation to this strife. The individual may not simply take notice of it; the individual ought to act in an appropriate way in relation to this strife. The individual may not resign to the presence of this strife, and he may not simply live his own condition as it is immediately given. He ought to counteract the presence of evil. The individual has and will always have precise limits for his development: he cannot eliminate these limits, but he can improve his initial condition. The components of the individual are given; the development of the individual is not given. The individual is not responsible for the components which he has; however, he is responsible for the development of his own components.

Gandhi does not stop at the consideration of the inner condition of the individual, but he adds that the Mahabharata was written in order to expose the duty of the individual in relation to his own soul. The presence of evil and of inner strife in the individual does not mean that the individual may remain passive in relation to the given situation. The individual ought to become aware of his own condition and to educate himself correspondingly. The fact that the individual has this composition does not mean that he is not responsible for his life and for his behaviour; the right moral development can be reached only through the engagement of the individual. The individual, therefore, ought to take a decision on his future moral constitution¹⁴. Since vices are present in him, the individual

¹⁴ Since the individual ought to follow the truth – as we shall see in a further passage of Gandhi’s meditation –, the individual may not avoid taking a decision as regards his condition in the world. The individual ought to follow the truth, therefore his decision ought to be in favour of the learning process, which leads the individual to the truth and to the knowledge of reality (and, consequently, to his moral transformation). Not taking any decision as regards one’s own life means taking a decision to the advantage of the evil forces, since the individual needs the due development in order to arrive at the right moral condition. The individual

ought to learn the road to the right moral formation in order to be able to limit the power of his vices. Gandhi then adds on this specific subject:

'[...] the battle-field described here is primarily the one inside the human body. [...] here the physical battle is only an occasion for describing the battle-field of the human body. In this view the names mentioned are not of persons but of qualities which they represent. What is described is the conflict within the human body between opposing moral tendencies imagined as distinct figures. [...] It is the human body that is described as Kurukshetra, as *dharma-kshetra*.'¹⁵

As we can see, the individual is constitutively internally divided in different forces which are able to produce in him virtues or vices. Mutually opposing tendencies are present in the individual. There is a conflict within the individual; the individual has in himself mutually conflicting forces. As a consequence, the individual may not remain in a state of inaction provided he really aims to reach a moral education. The individual ought to act. The responsibility begins as soon as the individual knows that he is a composed entity; the individual responsibility is to decide whether the individual wants to let virtue or vice grow in himself.

The condition of internal conflict could be externalised into the social texture. Historical phenomena, consequently, have their root, their origin, and their cause in the internal structure of the individual. The Mahabarata provides, in Gandhi's view, the explanation of the origin of the evil in the individual and in society; the evil is within the individual with all the consequences derived from this presence. This does not mean that the individual is only evil, but it means that the evil exists in the individual and, as a consequence, in the social dimension. The problem of the presence of evil in society is not to be solved unless the condition of conflict of the individual is at least limited. The correct education and development of the individual are the basis, the foundation and the presupposition for the correct order of society. No correct moral society is possible without the correct development of the individual.

ought to develop spiritual knowledge. This knowledge will not come about by itself. The engagement of the individual is needed; a path of practice of virtues is needed.

¹⁵ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 96.

5) Truth, spiritual knowledge, and sattva

We would now like to consider some of Gandhi's observations on the truth and on the necessity of following the truth. The truth gives the individual the due contents and the due foundations in order that the individual can successfully develop the forces of good which are present in the individual. Gandhi expresses the following general considerations on truth:

[...] there can be no exception in the matter of following truth, for truth is God and, if exceptions were admitted in regard to it, God also would be sometimes truth and sometimes non-truth.¹⁶

This statement lies at the basis of Gandhi's research: truth, which is God, ought to be followed. Truth is to be followed by everybody; there can be no exception to the general rule. The learning process is indispensable in order that the individual is actually able to follow the truth. Learning is an indispensable aspect of the process of education of individuals. Gandhi clearly states that everyone can reach spiritual knowledge; nobody is excluded. To understand reality in all its aspects depends on spiritual knowledge:

'It is stated in the *Gita* itself that everyone, whether a woman, a Vaisya or a Sudra, can acquire spiritual knowledge if they have devotion to God. All the same, learning should not be slighted. To understand any matter, one must have the knowledge which comes from learning.'¹⁷

We can see the following contents in the following passage:

- Spiritual knowledge comes from the devotion to God.
- Spiritual knowledge is available to everybody.
- Learning is indispensable.
- The knowledge which derives from learning the contents of the revelation lies at the basis of our understanding of everything.

The devotion to God is the basis for reaching spiritual knowledge. Learning proves to be the basis for the development of the individual. Spiritual knowledge can be reached, but the learning process is necessary; spiritual knowledge constitutes the foundation for the understanding of all aspects of reality. Gandhi's general attitude towards revelation, truth, and

¹⁶ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 106.

¹⁷ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 96.

the individual's moral growth consists in the conviction that the knowledge of revelation modifies the mind of the individual; the meditation on the revelation will modify the individual.

The revelation acquaints the individual with another dimension of reality, i.e., with the dimension of the Divinity. Spiritual knowledge modifies the consideration of the reality which the individual has. The condition for improving *sattva* in the individual consists in developing his level of spiritual knowledge¹⁸. The possibility, for the individual, of developing the good component in himself is clearly expressed in the following statement of Gandhi:

'If a person overcomes *rajas* and *tamas*, he can create *sattva*. (All the three exist in us. We should make a special effort to cultivate that which we want to strengthen.)'¹⁹

Gandhi's intent and programme are already clear in this statement; constitutively, the three factors are within the individual; morally, the individual ought to decide which factor he wants to strengthen. The responsibility belongs to the individual. If the individual wishes to strengthen *sattva*, the individual ought to follow the learning process: the learning process enables the individual to understand his condition in the world and his duties in the world. Throughout his meditation on the *Gita*, Gandhi states that the individual can – at least up to a certain level – improve himself. There is, for the individual, no predetermination to become or to be evil. Each individual, as we shall see, is affected by limits

¹⁸ Only the individual who has improved the quality of *sattva* in himself can live with peace in mind: '*Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, the three forces or modes of *prakriti*, drive everyone to action, whether he will or no. A *tamasik* man is one who works in a mechanical fashion, a *rajasik* man is one who rides too many horses, who is restless and is always doing something or other, and the *sattvik* man is one who works with peace in his mind. One is always driven to work by one or another of these three modes of *prakriti* or by a combination of them.' (see *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 149). The individual's general orientation in life is different depending on the prevalence of the three factors within the individual. The individual behaviour depends on the factor prevailing within the individual. Knowledge is a way of living too. The presence and the absence of knowledge is decisive.

¹⁹ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 316.

as regards his moral development. These limits are due to his corporeal dimension; nonetheless, each individual can develop himself at least up to a certain level²⁰.

One of the duties which the individual has during his corporeal life is to let *sattva* grow and to let *rajas* and *tamas* diminish; the composition which everyone finds in himself between *sattva*, *tamas*, and *rajas* should be shifted through one's own education and consequent deeds to the advantage of *sattva* and to the disadvantage of *rajas* and *tamas*. Changing the individual towards a better moral condition means creating the foundations of a better society.

6) Foundations

The knowledge needed for the moral development of the individual is the knowledge of the principles of reality. Gandhi is searching for the foundation of the right moral behaviour. In order to learn the contents and norms of the right behaviour, the individual needs to know his nature and his condition in the reality. The individual needs to know the structure of his own nature to see whether, how, and in which measure he can influence and modify it. This modification cannot have the necessary elements if the individual does not meditate on the revelation of the *Gita* and if the individual does not lead his learning process by following the contents of the revelation.

Gandhi is searching for a foundation of reality to find directions for political action. The possibility of coexistence in society finds its foundation in *atman* being the common essence for everybody:

'The Hindu belief in avatars may present a difficulty to some of us. Avatar means descent. Our descent means God's descent too, for He is present in

²⁰ If the person allows *tamas* to flourish, the effect will be ignorance: 'XIV 16. The fruit of *sattvika* action is said to be stainless merit; that of *rajas* is pain and that of *tamas* ignorance.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 329). Only *sattva* brings about a morally positive result. *Rajas* produces pain, whereas *tamas* produces ignorance. The only remedy against ignorance is the learning process to be found in the *Gita*. The danger of ignorance is always present; if *tamas* is in the individuals, and the consequence of *tamas* is ignorance, this means that the individual can become prey to ignorance unless *sattva* is strengthened, on the one hand, and unless *rajas* and *tamas* are limited, on the other hand.

every creature and in every object²¹. All this is His *maya*. All concrete things—our body, the material objects, all these—exist at definite points in space and time, but the *atman* was not born in time, it pervades all space and exists through all time²². We do not know it by direct experience. If we wish to understand the principle known as God, either with the help of reason or through faith, we should first know the *atman*. What is it? So long as we live in ignorance, it is more distant than even the sky, but in our awakened state we cannot say that it is removed from us by even so much as an inch²³. It is that through which we came into being and through which we exist; if you believe that you are that, then “I” and “you” are identical—but only a person devoid of egotism can assert that²⁴. “I” and “you” are identical in the sense in which the ring and chain are in the final analysis but gold. Name and form are only for a moment; while things have them, they are no more real than a mirage. That into which things merge when they cease to have name and form is ever the same²⁵.

And so Krishna says:

²¹ God is not extraneous to the entities of the world; God is present in the entities of the world.

²² As we can see from Gandhi’s text, a first difference emerges between concrete things and *atman*; concrete things are enclosed in their spatial and temporal limits, whereas *atman* is not limited by any spatial or temporal limit.

²³ The interpretation of reality which the individual gives in an ignorant spiritual condition is completely different from the interpretation of reality which the individual gives when the individual has reached an enlightened spiritual condition.

²⁴ If a person is not devoid of egotism, she is attached to the ego; consequently, she is not able to acknowledge that there are no differences between individuals. She is and will remain attached to an interpretation of the individuals as mutually separated entities, and she will not be able to see the individuals as particular concretisations of the same entity, i.e., of *atman*.

²⁵ *Atman* is the permanent structure of the concrete entities; therefore, *atman* is the foundation and the very nature of the things themselves. The dimension of the plurality of independent things turns out to be, on a closer inspection, only a transitory appearance. Concrete things interpreted as a plurality of mutually separated things prove to be only a mirage. Thus, to interpret the plurality of things as the authentic dimension of the reality amounts to confusing the appearance with the authentic reality.

“Though I was never born in time, though I am the Lord of all creatures, I incarnate Myself and am born as a human being²⁶.”

This is the essential nature of the *atman*²⁷. If we realize this truth, we would always act in conformity with that nature²⁸; we then act, though

²⁶ The intervention of Krishna in the world is due to the prevalence of Evil in the world. Krishna intervenes when Evil tends to prevail in the reality: ‘IV 7. For whenever Right declines and Wrong prevails, then O Bharata, I come to birth.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 193) God intervening in the reality is proof of the moral insufficiency of individuals. Since, at least in certain periods of history, Right declines, God, as a consequence of the moral worsening of the individual’s moral condition, intervenes. There are, therefore, periods of history in which individuals degenerate as regards their moral level. Individuals are not able to solve the decline of Right by themselves; God’s intervention is therefore needed. The aim of Krishna consists in the reaffirmation of Right: ‘IV 8. To save the righteous, to destroy the wicked, and to re-establish Right I am born from age to age.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 193) Gandhi comments on this passage in the following way: ‘Here is comfort for the faithful and affirmation of the truth that Right ever prevails. An eternal conflict between Right and Wrong goes on. Sometimes the latter seems to get the upper hand, but it is Right which ultimately prevails. The good are never destroyed, for Right—which is Truth—cannot perish; the wicked are destroyed because Wrong has no independent existence. Knowing this let man cease to arrogate to himself authorship and eschew untruth, violence and evil. Inscrutable Providence—the unique power of the Lord—is ever at work. This in fact is *avatara*, incarnation. Strictly speaking there can be no birth for God.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 193) God is not an extra-worldly entity; God is not an entity which is completely extraneous to reality, in general, and to the dimension of the individuals, in particular. God incarnates Himself and intervenes in the reality of human beings when Right becomes weaker, and Wrong becomes stronger. Therefore, God, at least on some occasions of particular gravity, leads the dimension of the individuals. As regards the relationships between men and divine, it is interesting what Gandhi says as a comment on the *Bhagavad Gita* IV 12: ‘Gods, as indicated before, must not be taken to mean the heavenly beings of tradition, but whatever reflects the divine. In that sense man is also a god. Steam, electricity and the other great forces of Nature are all gods. Propitiation of these forces quickly bears fruit, as we well know, but it is short-lived. It fails to bring comfort to the soul and it certainly does not take one even a short step towards salvation.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 196)

born as human beings, as if we were never born. If the *atman* in each of us is identical with the *atman* in everyone else, one *atman* born in a body means all of them born, and all others born means that one born too. This is a difficult idea to grasp. “This is *maya*,” says Shri Krishna, “and through it I incarnate Myself in this world time and again.”

We can follow reason only up to a point. What, then, does avatar mean? It is not as if God comes down from above. It would be right to say, if we can say it without egotism²⁹, that each one of us is an avatar³⁰. The *atman* in every body is as potent as the *atman* in any other, though outwardly we see differences. In our awakened state all are one, though in our ignorant state we may seem separate existences³¹. In real truth, there are not several, there is only one³².

²⁷ Gandhi seems to interpret atman and God as the same entity. Moreover, following a non-dualistic interpretation of reality, Gandhi identifies the individuals with atman. Furthermore, he extends the status of avatar to all the individuals.

²⁸ From the recognition of the contents of the truth, the individual would act in conformity with the contents of the truth; to understand the truth means acting immediately in conformity with the truth. *Gita's* teaching transmits norms for the right individual behaviour. The presupposition for arriving at the knowledge of these norms is the individual's will to meditate on the *Gita* and to learn the truth. The individual ought to be ready to engage himself in the activity of learning the contents of the revelation.

²⁹ This insertion sounds like a kind of admonishment. The fact that all individuals are avatars of God may not lead the individuals to any feeling of egotism; the individual may not have self-admiration, vanity, or self-centredness because he is an avatar of God.

³⁰ Gandhi does not limit the notion and condition of avatar only to Krishna; he assigns the condition of avatar to all individuals. All individuals without exception are avatars of God. This is the root of all individuals; they appear to be separated from each other, but, actually, they are a unity.

³¹ To be noted is the difference between appearance and reality; it seems that individuals have a mutually separate existence; actually, all individuals are one entity.

³² The knowledge of atman is the condition of liberation from the condition of ignorance. The specific knowledge which frees from ignorance is the knowledge of atman. The knowledge of the structure of reality and of the condition of the individual in the reality gives the needed orientation, but it is always the individual who ought to decide on his own life direction. Choice and responsibility belong to the individual. ‘V 16. But to them whose ignorance is destroyed by the

If we constantly reflect over this essence named the *atman*, we shall regard no one as an enemy to be killed and shall have nothing to get angry about³³. We shall then see that anyone who hits us hits himself too.’³⁴

As previously alluded to, the passage represents the foundation for the consideration of all individuals as being one and the same entity. The common nature of *atman* is the foundation of the connection between living beings. Since individuals are mutually connected through the common nature of *atman*, since their authentic essence is *atman*, for an individual to commit injustice against other persons means, actually, committing injustice against himself. Thus, the common nature of *atman* represents the foundation of the individual’s solidarity with the other beings³⁵. The foundation of good behaviour lies in the truth of reality and in the structure of reality; the knowledge of the structure of reality gives the foundation and the programme of the individual’s good behaviour. The fact that all individuals are, actually, only one entity implies, for the individuals, that they ought to consider themselves as being *atman*, i.e., as

knowledge of *Atman*, this their knowledge, like the sun, reveals the Supreme.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 218) This kind of knowledge gives the moral formation: ‘V 17. Those whose intellect is suffused with That, whose self has become one with That, who abide in That, and whose end and aim is That, wipe out their sins with knowledge, and go whence there is no return.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 218) The knowledge frees the individual from the sins and from the transmigration of the soul.

³³ The authentic nature of every individual is *atman*. Since *atman* is common to all individuals, there is no authentic separation between individuals, and there is no real enemy.

³⁴ We quoted some sentences of this passage at the beginning of this investigation (see *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927)*, pp. 188–189).

³⁵ The knowledge of *atman* gives the due formation for becoming free from lust and from wrath: ‘V 26. Rid of lust and wrath, masters of themselves, the ascetics who have realized *Atman* find oneness with *Brahman* everywhere around them.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 222) The reached due moral composition of the soul makes the individual able to become master of his own self. ‘VI 7. Of him who has conquered himself and who rests in perfect calm the self is completely composed, in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, in honour and dishonour.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 228)

being manifestations of atman. If they remained in the consideration of themselves as separate entities, they would refuse to reckon with God's revelation. Since the essence of everybody is atman, all individuals have the same essence; there is, actually, no separation between individuals. There is no enemy.

The process of learning the foundations of reality is necessary for the individual so that he can arrive at the knowledge of his own condition. The individual cannot remain in the condition in which he is born if he wishes to reach due moral development. The individual ought then to orientate his behaviour through the knowledge which he has reached. Moreover, the fact that each individual is an avatar of God entails that every individual is – at least partially – a spiritual entity; since every individual is atman, every individual cannot be reduced to corporeal elements. Every individual is as such, actually, something other than corporeal components. Since every individual is, in his own nature, an avatar of God, he ought to develop spiritual factor in himself and limit his other elements. Since all individuals share the common nature of atman, reciprocal agreement, on the one hand, and not mutual discord and disagreement, on the other hand, ought to be the guiding principles prevailing within the members of society³⁶. Hence, the authentic foundation of human nature proves to be the principle of the correct behaviour for the individual and for society.

The comprehension that there is no separate existence is a turning point in the life of the individual. The individual ought to understand that the reality which he immediately has before himself is only appearance. A way of education is needed for the individual to see the reality as it is and not as it appears. Through the revelation of Krishna, the individual transcends history and experience; therefore, he acquires a different orientation towards history and experience in comparison with the orientation which he had before. The general life orientation of the individual in the reality before the revelation of the *Gita* is completely

³⁶ This attitude could be extended to the relationships between countries too. The detachment from the ego means and implies detachment from any attitude of separation between the individuals. The detachment from the attitude of separation and the corresponding attitude of unification of all individuals in atman can function as an alternative against all the attitudes supporting a condition of separation between entities.

different from the general life orientation of the individual in the reality after this revelation.

Revelation is, for the individual, the road of transcendence of the particularity of his own position. By reaching the awareness that he is atman and that likewise every individual is atman, the individual becomes able to transcend the particularity of his own condition. The individual transcends the specific situation in which he is living, since he arrives at the understanding that plurality is only appearance. Thus, the individual is transformed through the acquisition of the knowledge of reality into an entity which is different from the entity which he originally was, since his outlook on reality has completely changed. The individual changes through the *Gita*. The individual transcends reality as regards the way in which reality is given. His consideration of reality is completely different from the initial way of interpreting reality. There is an individual before the revelation and an individual after the revelation. For the enlightened individual, reality ceases to be the dimension of the here and now and the dimension of the particularities; the enlightened individual can recognise the presence of atman in everybody and the universal reality in everything. All reality thus becomes for him a unity; the individual is now able to see that reality is a unity.

The principle of non-violence, too, has its own foundation in the revelation, as we can see in the following passage:

‘One should see oneself in the whole world and the world in oneself, and act towards others accordingly. The ideal of non-violence also had its origin in this realization that, when human life as such is full of suffering, we should cause suffering to none’³⁷.

Only spiritual knowledge and the process of learning can give the individual the right way of education. Without the sphere of truth, without assimilation to the contents obtained through this process, the individual cannot be in the condition to organise his behaviour on the basis of the illumination given by truth. Only truth can give the individual the instructions for correct behaviour, but the process of attaining truth presupposes an apprenticeship in knowledge and education.

³⁷ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 270.

7) Limits of individuals and responsibility of individuals

As anticipated, Gandhi insists on the limits of the individual. The individual is not a perfect entity; every individual has, constitutively, defects, which can be certainly limited and diminished, but which, nonetheless, cannot be completely eliminated, since they belong to the nature as such of every individual. The fact that the individual is constituted by the senses, whose influence is one of the main hindrances to his own elevating to the truth, can be limited, but cannot be eliminated:

[...] the cravings of the senses die away only when we cease to exist in the body³⁸. This is a terrible statement to make, but the *Gita* does not shrink from stating terrible truths. Truth does not remain hidden because it is not stated. *Moksha* is the supreme end, and even yogis can experience it only in contemplation. We must, therefore, say that the Dweller in the body cannot be free while He dwells in it. The prisoner is in jail and the king promises him that he will be released; but till he is actually released he cannot be said to have come out of cage.

He can only imagine his condition after release. In the same way, if there is anyone waiting to receive and greet the *atman* on its release, he cannot do that as long as it remains imprisoned in this cage of the body. And this cannot but be so. How can it be otherwise than that the state after release will be different from the state before it?

³⁸ The sphere of the sense perception is the sphere which transmits instability to the individual: 'II 14. O Kaunteya! contacts of the senses with their objects bring cold and heat, pleasure and pain; they come and go and are transient. Endure them, O Bharata.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 148) The feelings originating in the sense perception represent only something instable. *Gita's* teaching on this subject is that the individual ought to withstand them. The joys connected to the senses have only negative aspects: 'V 22. For the joys derived from sense-contacts are nothing but mines of misery; they have beginning and end, O Kaunteya; the wise man does not revel therein.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 220) The right formation ought to teach the individual to become indifferent to lust and wrath. The individual who has reached the right education is able to stand firm against lust and wrath: 'V 23. The man who is able even here on earth, ere he is released from the body, to hold out against the flood-tide of lust and wrath, – he is a *yogi*, he is happy.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 221) In general, it is the sphere of the senses and of the feelings which represents the instability factor of the individuals.

Truth is so profound and great a thing that, as we think more and more about it, we realize that to have a direct experience of it, we should completely shed our attachment to the body and yearn every moment for *moksha*. As we think of *moksha* in this light, its value in our eyes should daily increase. If it is the most important thing in life, it should be clear to us that it cannot be attained while we live in this body. Till the gate of the body prison³⁹ has opened, the fragrance of *moksha* is beyond our experience. Whether terrible or not, this is the truth.⁴⁰

Moksha is the supreme end of the individual. The earthen life is compared to a jail, to a cage. The individual is a prisoner. In spite of the fact that the truth which expresses the individual condition is hard, the individual ought to learn it and ought to accept it. Gandhi pleads for the knowledge of the truth despite its hardness. To know the truth is necessary in order to be aware of one's own limits. The release from the senses can take place only after the end of the corporeal existence. The condition of *moksha* cannot be reached as long as the individual lives in the body.

The cravings of the senses disturb the individual. The senses are always present in the individual; the individual constitution is condemned to be disturbed by the senses as long as the individual is in the corporeal dimension. Even for yogis, the condition of *moksha* is a condition which can be reached only through contemplation. *Moksha* is reachable during the corporeal life only by yogis, provided that yogis are in the condition of contemplation. The individual cannot remain in the condition of contemplation during the corporeal life. Therefore, *moksha* is not a condition which the individual can reach in a stable way during the corporeal life. There is no way of liberation from the influence of the senses during the corporeal life. The individual ought to take notice and be aware of his own limits.

To have limits, though, does not mean that the individual has no duty as regards the development of his own personality. The positive condition for the individual is to be free from bodily influences. Therefore,

³⁹ The language used by Gandhi in this passage is important. He asserts that the dweller of the body cannot be free as long as he dwells in the body; he speaks of the corporeal dimension as a cage, and he describes the body as a prison. The individual is described as a prisoner in jail.

⁴⁰ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 137.

the individual ought to try to become as next as possible to the condition of absence of corporeal dimensions. The limits present in the individual corporeal condition can teach the subject to be as next as possible to the condition in which the subject will be without the body. If to be without the body is to be free from the influence of the body, if the positive condition is to be without the body, then the individual ought to try to imitate this condition by trying to detach himself from the body as much as possible. The individual's attachment to the body ought to become weaker and weaker.

The truth cannot be reached as long as the individuals are bound to the body. This is a precise limit which the individual has; in the same way, the fact that the individuals are in the corporeal dimension entails that the individuals have some form of violence in themselves:

'The only way of rising to this state beyond the three *gunas* is to cultivate the *sattvik* quality, for in order to rise to that state one is required to cultivate the virtues of fearlessness, humility, sincerity, and so on. So long as we live in the body, there is some evil, some violence. The most, therefore, that we can do is to be *sattvik* in the highest degree possible.

The state beyond the three *gunas* can only be imagined. It does not seem possible to maintain it in action. In concrete action, our state must be *sattvik* in the highest degree⁴¹. We cannot say even of a seemingly perfect man that he has risen beyond the three *gunas*. We can only say that he seems to be like one who has so risen.'⁴²

⁴¹ The state which is beyond the three *gunas* cannot be maintained in action. During the state of action, the best condition which can be reached is to be *sattvik* in the highest degree. The condition of action is not appropriate for the individual going beyond the *gunas*.

⁴² See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 320. The condition of going beyond the three *gunas* is described in the following passage too: 'It is stated, it is true, that a good man will not be born again, but only if he rises above the plane of *gunas*. There is, beyond the *gunas* of good and evil, a state which is characterized by no *guna*. It is not an undesirable state, but a desirable one. It is the state of *moksha*, a state which endures for ever.' (see *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 192) The condition of *sattva*, too, ought to be surpassed. *Gunas* regard the corporeal dimension of the individual; the individual ought to try to go beyond his corporeal dimension.

The more the individuals are limited, the more the individuals ought to educate themselves. The individual is condemned to have some form of violence in himself because of his corporeal dimension as such. The individual cannot be free constitutively from all forms of violence as long as he is in the corporeal dimension. He ought to cultivate the virtues connected to *sattva* in order that the balance existing in him among *sattva*, *tamas*, and *rajas* can be shifted to the advantage of *sattva*; *sattva* will therewith increase, whereas *tamas* and *rajas* will correspondingly diminish⁴³. Nonetheless, even in the possibly best condition of development for *sattva* in the individual's soul, both *tamas* and *rajas*, which are constitutively present in the individual, will not completely disappear:

'We can make as many categories as we like. The intention was to show that the reign of the three *gunas* prevails throughout the universe. A cooking or other utensil is an inert object, but it contains air inside; likewise, everything is pervaded by the spirit. Existing apart from the three *gunas* is God. We have to merge in Him. Even if we cultivate the *sattvik* qualities to their highest perfection in us, something of *rajasik* and *tamasik* will remain. But, without worrying ourselves about this, we should continue to strive and cultivate finer and finer *sattvik* qualities in us, for the impulses which agitate us the least and consume the least amount of our energy are *sattvik* impulses.'⁴⁴

Gandhi insists that elements of *rajas* and of *tamas* will remain in the individual. *Tamas* and *rajas* are not completely eliminable as long as the individual is in the corporeal dimension. Only God is beyond the three *gunas*. The individual is composed of the three *gunas*. Therefore, the individual cannot completely eliminate the *gunas* in himself; he cannot go completely beyond them during his corporeal life. His aim ought to be to

⁴³ Only by following *sattva* can the individual develop himself: 'XIV 17. Of *sattva* knowledge is born, of *rajas*, greed; of *tamas*, heedlessness, delusion and ignorance.' 'XIV 18. Those abiding in *sattva* rise upwards, those in *rajas* stay midway, those in *tamas* sink downwards.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi* pp. 329–330). The state of knowledge comes about only through *sattva*. Only through *sattva* can the individual improve his position within the reality.

⁴⁴ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 336.

merge with God, even though there are limits connected to his own condition.

In spite of the fact that negative components will always be present in the individual, the individual ought to continue his work of self-improvement. The fact that the individuals are constitutively imperfect beings entails that individuals ought to educate themselves continuously. The individual ought to reach the moral foundation, but nothing is reached once and for all within the corporeal dimension⁴⁵. Individuals being limited does not mean absence of duties or freedom from responsibilities; on the contrary, individuals have the duty of learning and have the responsibility of fighting against their own limits. To become aware of one's own limits is to become aware that one's own limits ought to be fought against. Hence, being limited does not exempt the individual from duties and responsibilities. Individuals ought to steadily pay attention to the stability and endurance of their moral character; individuals ought to try to reach, maintain, and strengthen it. Gandhi clearly expresses that the individual cannot manage, in the corporeal dimension, to fully follow ahimsa:

'It is impossible in this body to follow ahimsa fully⁴⁶. That is why *moksha* is laid down as the supreme end of life. Violence is inescapable. [...] Evil is inherent in action, the *Gita* says further on.'⁴⁷

⁴⁵ The following passage of the *Gita* can give us elements for the understanding of the qualities which the individual ought to develop: 'XVI 1. Fearlessness, purity of hearth, steadfastness in *jnana* and *yoga* – knowledge and action, beneficence, self-restraint, sacrifice, spiritual study, austerity, and uprightness; [...] XVI 2. Non-violence, truth, slowness to wrath, the spirit of dedication, serenity, aversion to slander, tenderness to all that lives, freedom from greed, gentleness, modesty, freedom from levity; [...] XVI 3. Spiritedness, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, freedom from ill will and arrogance – these are to be found in one born with the divine heritage, O Bharata.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 343). The complex of the virtues which an individual ought to cultivate and follow is, as we can see, very great.

⁴⁶ Gandhi is confident that human beings have the capability of reaching progressive degrees in the knowledge of the good. He is confident in the consequent maturation of the capability of becoming *sattvik*. He is nonetheless aware that, in spite of all efforts which human beings could ever fulfil, human beings have limitations connected to their being corporeal as such. Confidence in one's own capabilities and awareness of one's own limitations are two main

There are clear limits put on the human capabilities. Despite all efforts, elements of violence and evil will remain both in the individual's soul and in the individual's action. As regards the possibility to follow and to realise ahimsa in a complete and perfect way, Gandhi clearly states that this realisation is not possible for human beings. Everyone ought to become aware of one's own limitations; in the corporeal dimension, it is not possible to concretise a perfect doctrine of ahimsa in one's own self. This point, of course, may not lead to refraining from trying to realise ahimsa as best as possible; on the contrary, the awareness of one's own defects ought to lead everyone to multiply the efforts towards the realisation of ahimsa. The individual ought both to be aware of his own limitations and to act against these limitations; far from being an excuse for him, the awareness of his limitations leads to an exhortation of developing his nature so that his limitations exercise as little influence as possible. The presence of limitations in the individual cannot lead the individual to a condition of indifference; the individual is called to realise the good factors of his soul. The fact that he cannot reach perfection may not exempt him from being attentive to the improvement of his own nature.

In spite of the individual limitations, it should not be forgotten that Gandhi insists on the individual duties and on the responsibility deriving from the presence and existence of the individual duties. Each individual has the responsibility and the duty as well to improve himself morally; nobody is allowed to say that she/he cannot reach spiritual knowledge and the corresponding level of moral growth (and of moral education). If the individual wants to improve himself, he can too. The fact that the individual is not perfect does not mean that the individual cannot become better than he is originally.

One of the remedies against the presence of evil forces in the individual is represented by the detachment from the ego. The attachment to the ego can only bring about a false orientation in life, since the ego imprisons the individual in a limited dimension. The root of the possibility of the right moral behaviour lies in the abandonment of the ego; the

concepts, i.e., are two main fountains of inspiration, which often come to the surface throughout Gandhi's discussion of the *Gita*.

⁴⁷ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 106.

morally right decisions can be taken only after the individual's detachment from the ego. Gandhi is clear about the necessity of abandoning the ego:

'Krishna is the *atman* in us, who is our charioteer. We can win only if we hand over the reins of the chariot to him. God makes us dance, like the master in a puppet show. We are smaller than even puppets. We should, therefore, trust everything to God, as children to parents. Let us not eat uncooked stuff. Let Krishna the cook prepare and give us what food of grace He wills for our *atman*.

The *Gita* does not decide for us. But if, whenever faced with a moral problem, you give up attachment to the ego and then decide what you should do, you will come to no harm. This is the substance of the argument which Shri Krishna has expanded into 18 chapters.'⁴⁸

The *Gita* does not decide for us; individuals are autonomous. They have free will and free choice. Therefore, the Divinity reveals the essence of the reality, but the Divinity does not choose for the individual.

To renounce the attachment to the ego implies to be able to adopt a universal point of view, since the new dimension of the individual is no longer restricted in the limitation of the individuality. Until the individual remains enchained in his own self, the individual will not be able to reach a point of view which is compatible with the other ones. The ego separates the individuals from each other; the road to the morally right behaviour consists in the detachment from the ego and in the recognition of the common nature of *atman*. The common nature of *atman* proves to be the foundation of the right behaviour; the awareness and recognition of the common nature of *atman* unite the different individuals with each other. The abandonment of one's own self is liberation towards the truth:

'[...] one will not shed the sense of "I" and "mine" till one has attained knowledge. One can attain self-realization only if one sheds this attachment to the ego. [...] We can follow truth only in the measure that we shed our attachment to the ego.'⁴⁹

⁴⁸ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 109.

⁴⁹ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), pp. 106–107. There is a clear separation and opposition between the sphere of the senses and the sphere of reason. The level of truth can be grasped only by reason. The senses are not appropriate instruments for the understanding of the superior level of reality. If the individual can arrive at that level of reality, the individual

Truth can be followed only if the attachment to the ego becomes weaker. Following truth proves to be incompatible with the attachment to the ego.

8) The dangers represented by the attachment to the ego and by influence of the senses

In the individual, there can be a conflict between mind and senses. In general, the attachment to the senses is a danger for the person:

‘A pleasure-loving man wastes his time in aimless wandering; he must have new suits of clothes every day, he eats and drinks what pleases his palate and goes about dressed in finery. If one of his pleasure-loving senses is so undisciplined that it seeks gratification anywhere and anyhow and if his mind is totally enslaved by this one sense, it will drag his intellect behind it as the wind drives a ship before it in the sea and wrecks it on a rock or runs it aground. Thus the man whose senses are completely out of his control and whose mind is totally enslaved by one of them will be ruined through gradual stages explained earlier as the consequences of attachment. If the mind is enslaved by even a single sense, one is lost.’⁵⁰

will not lose the contact with the truth. That level can be arrived at only through reason. ‘VI 21. Where he experiences that endless bliss beyond the senses which can be grasped by reason alone; wherein established he swerves not from the Truth.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 231) The effect on the individual of reaching the new dimension is to reach an inner calm. ‘VI 25. With reason held securely by the will, he should gradually attain calm and with the mind established in *Atman* think of nothing.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 233) A process of purification from the wanderings of the mind is needed for the individual to reach *atman*. ‘VI 26. Wherever the fickle and unsteady mind wanders, thence should it be reined in and brought under the sole sway of *Atman*.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 233) The knowledge consists in the apprehension of the nature of the *atman*: ‘XIII 11. Settled conviction of the nature of the *Atman*, perception of the goal of the knowledge of Truth,– All this is declared to be Knowledge and the reverse of it is ignorance.’ (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 315)

⁵⁰ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 142. The text quotes then the following passage from the *Bhagavad Gita*, II 68 and II 69: ‘Therefore, O Mahabahu, he whose senses are reined in on all sides from their objects, is the man of secure understanding.’; ‘When it is night for all other beings, the disciplined soul is awake; when all other beings are awake, it is night for the seeing ascetic.’ (see also Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to*

The senses are the enemies of the mind. The example given by Gandhi is illuminating; if the mind is enslaved by senses such as the pleasure-loving ones, the mind will never be free. Gandhi clearly states that senses are a danger:

'He who lives his senses no longer subject to attachments and aversions and perfectly under his control becomes fit for God's grace. [...]

What is the natural work of the ear? We describe a man as established in *samadhi* when his *atman* abides in serene content in itself. His senses must be under his perfect control. The ears of a man whose mind has become one-pointed must have become the servants of his *atman*. Actually, however, we are the slaves of our senses. From this slavery we must win *swaraj* for the *atman*. The ears should in fact listen only to the divine music of the *atman*. They would not, then, hear even the loud beating of drums. While the *atman* dwells in this body, it should live as the latter's master and god, and use the senses to do only their natural work.'⁵¹

Gandhi points out that the individual ought to change his condition. From the slavery of the senses, the individual ought to arrive at the government of *atman*. Individuals are initially slaves of their own senses; they must free themselves from this slavery reaching a condition of government of *atman*. *Atman* ought to substitute the senses as regards the direction of the mind. Gandhi seems to individuate a dualism between mind and senses; there is at least the possibility that the senses influence the mind. Senses are not immediately under the control of the mind; they can invade the mind. The influence of the senses and the corporeal dimension brings the individual away from *atman* and from truth, since the senses individualise the person. The senses and the corporeal dimension represent a hindrance for the individual; they enslave and enclose the individual into a limited, particular dimension. Individuals are slaves of their senses. The duty of the

Gandhi, p. 166) The second quotation of the *Gita* is commented in Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 166, in the following way: 'This verse indicates the divergent paths of the disciplined ascetic and sensual man. Whereas the ascetic is dead to the things of the world and lives in God, the sensual man is alive only to the things of the world and dead to the things of the spirit.' There is a complete difference between the ascetic man and the sensual man. The ascetic man lives in God; the sensual man ignores God and directs his attention exclusively to the things of the world.

⁵¹ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 139.

individual and the road of development of the individual consists in the coming back to atman. Atman, not the sense dimension, ought to direct the individual. The government of atman ought and needs to be reached. If atman governs the individual, the individual is governed by himself, since the very nature of the individual is atman. The government of atman over the individual proves to be, on closer inspection, self-government of the individual⁵². The self-governance of the individual begins from his becoming aware of his being essentially atman; it goes ahead with the individual fulfilment of the process of letting his life be conducted by Atman and ends up in the individual's bringing his new condition into the social dimension. Self-governance begins with the relation of the individual to atman⁵³.

To have control of the sense-dimension is the first, indispensable step to direct one's own mind to atman⁵⁴. If the influence of the senses is at least

⁵² Correspondingly, the government of the senses within the individual is the government of an external factor since the nature of the individual is, actually, atman. To come back to atman represents, for the individual, to return to his own nature.

⁵³ Gandhi is bringing the root of swaraj into a transcendent dimension. The first form of swaraj concerns the individual and the individual's relations both with his senses, – i.e., with his whole corporeal dimension – and with his essence, i.e., with atman. We can read the following contents in the *Bhagavad Gita*: 'III 43. Thus realizing Him to be subtler than the reason, and controlling the self by the Self (*Atman*), destroy, O Mahabahu, this enemy – Lust, so hard to overcome.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 189). Gandhi's comment on this passage is as follows: 'When man realizes Him, his mind will be under His control, not swayed by the senses. And when the mind is conquered, what power has Lust? It is indeed a subtle enemy, but when once the senses, the mind and the reason are under the control of the subtlest Self, Lust is extinguished.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, p. 189).

⁵⁴ It is true that the individual ought to improve sattva in himself. Nonetheless, the improvement of sattva is not the final point, since the individual ought to try to go beyond sattva itself. Sattva is also a quality binding the individual to the body: 'XIV 5. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the *gunas* sprung from *prakriti*; it is this they, O Mahabahu, that keep the imperishable Dweller bound to the body.' (see Desai, *The Gospel of selfless action or The Gita according to Gandhi*, pp. 326–327; the passage is also quoted in *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 315). Hence, the improvement of sattva represents only a stage of

partially limited, and the bounds of the ego are also partially limited, the individual will be transferred into a condition which transcends the limits imposed by the senses. The road to atman is the road out of the particularity connected to the individuality. The self-government of the individual has precise political consequences, since it means the abandonment of the separation between individuals.

Reaching atman ought to be the target of the individual. The individual ought to be aware that his position is, at the beginning of his life, a disadvantaged one; the senses and, generally, the corporeal dimension represent a dangerous hindrance for the individual and for his moral development. Senses can enslave and enclose the individual into a limited dimension. To have control of the sense dimension is, therefore, for the individual, the first indispensable step in order that he can reach atman.

9) Conclusions

We shall now conclude our remarks with a quotation of Gandhi's text which connects firmness of mind and satyagraha:

'The *Bhagavad Gita* says that women, Vaisyas and Sudras, all classes of people, can win freedom. In the same way, all of us can do this. Whether or not we are stout and well-fed, we can do this work if we are strong in mind. Let us, therefore, cultivate firmness of mind; if we do not let the senses distract the mind, we can become fit for satyagraha.'⁵⁵

The condition for reaching satyagraha lies in the education of the mind. In order to be able to be fit for satyagraha, the individuals ought to reach the condition of firmness of mind; this condition can be reached only through the meditation on the revelation and through the consequent assimilation to the truth. The foundation of the whole behaviour of the individual and, in particular, of the morally right behaviour of the individual depends on the meditation on revelation and on the change in himself produced by the knowledge of revelation. For the individual to reach a new dimension, the individual needs truth. The foundations which are transmitted through the *Gita* are in Gandhi's interpretation, for instance, the following:

- Atman is the common essence of the individuals.

preparation for a further passage of the road of development of the individual: in this passage, the individual merges in atman.

⁵⁵ See *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XXXII (November 1926 – January 1927), p. 141.

- There are no separate existences of the individuals.
- The separateness of existence is only appearance.
- The individuals ought to recognise that atman is their common essence. They ought to acknowledge that they all are one entity.
- The individuals ought to detach themselves from their own ego by acknowledging atman as their common essence.
- The individual ought to put himself under the government of atman by separating himself as much as possible from the influence of his corporeal dimension, of his senses, and of his own ego.
- The authentic place of the individual is the revelation. The revelation is the key to the individual's moral development.

These foundations are both the foundation for the individual's moral behaviour and for political action. The foundations of the right political action need the contents of the revelation, since only the contents of the revelation make available, through and thanks to God's own manifestation throughout the *Gita*, the foundational elements of the knowledge of the order of reality, of the place of the individuals in the reality, of the human condition, of the right way of relationships between individuals and reality, and of the right moral behaviour of individuals. The common nature of atman is a general law of reality which can then be applied to the particular political circumstances, problems, and controversies. The individual's recognition of the common nature of atman implies the abandonment of the ego; it implies the beginning of a change of attitude towards reality and of change of the behaviour of the individual.

Of course, the *Gita* cannot give the answer to the specific problems of politics, but it can give the due disposition on how to handle the particular problems and questions of politics; the common nature of atman of all individuals, for instance, could not justify any strategy of marginalisation or of exclusion of persons and groups, since marginalisation would amount to going against this common belonging.

Gandhi is clear both as regards the authentic aims of the individual life, i.e., to strengthen sattva in himself, and as regards the individual responsibility to strengthen sattva in himself. Rajas and tamas ought to be kept under control; creating sattva ought to be the moral aim of the individual life. The individual is not immediately a complete entity as regards his own nature. The individual's components are given, but the evolution of the components depends on the individual choice; the individual is a dynamic, not a static entity. The development of the

individual is a matter of individual responsibility and of individual choice. Therefore, the development of education lies at the basis of the moral improvement of the individuals and, consequently, at the basis of the moral improvement of the whole society.

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MILL'S PHENOMENALISM AND WHY HE PREFERRED IT

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Abstract: *My aim in this paper is to argue that the depreciative historical image on Mill's empiricism is unjustified and biased, and that at least some of his theories and insights were still fresh and available as solutions to some philosophical problems in spite of the opposite public image claimed by his critics. I think that the strong rejection of a priori knowledge and his preference for a radical empiricism were turned into a straw man which is ready for an easy criticism. Mill's aim was to develop a radical empiricist theory regarding the sources of new knowledge following the so-called "new psychological way" based on the associationists principles. In the same time he balanced this working hypothesis with the relativity of knowledge principle. As a result, he tried to solve this philosophical puzzle and to find a sort of empiricist theory able to avoid some historical weaknesses, such as idealism and skepticism. He developed a phenomenalist theory based on the odea of permanent possibilities of sensation which seem to be the most wanted form of empiricism.*

Keywords: *John Stuart Mill, radical empiricism, a priori knowledge, relativity of knowledge, permanent possibilities of sensation, phenomenalism.*

A happy introduction

Some of Mill's contemporaries attacked him conclusively, claiming that his philosophical theories could not be supported. The relations between him and Early Analytic Philosophy were bad from the beginning and Gottlob Frege, through the critique developed in *The Foundations of arithmetics*², seemed to put him definitively in a shadow cone. Other philosophers who criticized him, especially F. H. Bradley and James Ward, claimed that his entire philosophy, including his views on some epistemological and ontological issues, was dependent on his associationist psychology, a

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² See Frege, 1974. The titles of two paragraphs are suggestive for the content of Frege's strong delimitation from Mill: paragraph 7 states that "Mill's view that the definitions of the individual numbers assert observed facts, from which the calculations follow, is without foundation" and the paragraph 9 mentions the error that "In calling arithmetical truths laws of nature, Mill is confusing them with their applications".

theory which was already exceeded and outdated. Moreover, his theory of scientific inductive method is based on Bacon's framework of canons, an idea that leads to a systematization of science into a collection of inductions. Other philosophers thought that Mill's traditional education, given to him by his father, turned him into the previous century and modelled his mind to look backward. (Passmore, 1966, p. 13)

Moreover, in a letter of 1834 Mill recognized himself that he was extremely superficial, even an ignorant, in the domain of mathematical and experimental science, but, paradoxically, he admitted that his knowledge was sufficient to enabled him "to lay hold of the methods" and appropriate to himself "fully as much as any metaphysician has ever done, the logic of physical science." (Mill, 1963, p. 211) By comparison, his arch-rival Whewell had a more comprehensive knowledge of the sciences of his time and of the methods used by scientists in their research³.

Russell's harsh judgement was that Mill's misfortune was to be born at the wrong time because he wasn't able to see the philosophical significance of symbolic logic: "Everything that Mill has to say in his *Logic* about matters other than inductive inference is perfunctory and conventional" (Russell, 1951, p. 2). It is without any doubt that Mill identified formal logic with the logic of syllogism. In his *History of Western Philosophy* Russell discusses about Mill in the chapter on utilitarianism, and only mentions him as a follower unable to comprehend the inherent difficulties of baconian view on the inductive method⁴. Russell was angry that Mill didn't used the techniques of formal logic, but, as I will argue in

³ The controversy between Mill and Whewell on the method of science was rediscovered by E. W. Strong since the year 1955 and become a classical topic of the debates about induction as method and science as a source of new knowledge. See Strong, 1955.

⁴ Russell's commentary is an explanatory one: "John Stuart Mill framed four canons of inductive method, which can be usefully employed so long as the law of causality is assumed; but this law itself, he had to confess, is to be accepted solely on the basis of induction by simple enumeration. The thing that is achieved by the theoretical organization of science is the collection of all subordinate inductions into a few that are very comprehensive – perhaps only one. Such comprehensive inductions are confirmed by so many instances that it is thought legitimate to accept, as regards them, an induction by simple enumeration. This situation is profoundly unsatisfactory, but neither Bacon nor any of his sucesors have found a way out of it." (Russell, 1996, p. 500).

this paper, Mill didn't have this aim. Mill considers that Whately "rehabilitated the name of Logic, and the study of the forms, rules and fallacies of Ratiocination" (Mill, 1981, p. 231) and that Whately's book *Elements of Logic* was enough as a good description of that domain. Mill explicitly mentions at the beginning of his *Logic* that logic as a science of formal laws of truth is limited (Mill, 1974, p. 15) and he relates it with the pursuit of truth, with belief and disbelief.

My aim in this paper is to argue that this depreciative historical image is unjustified, based on preconceptions and that at least some of his thesis, theories and insights were real contributions to philosophical debates, and that they remained still fresh and available as solutions to some philosophical problems in spite of the opposite public image claimed by his critics. I think that it is possible to change the perspective and I agree with an appreciative historical approach following the one proposed by Scarre: "Mill possessed the ability to transcend the limitations of false or inadequate theories he had inherited from his predecessors, and to penetrate through them to major new insights." (Scarre, 1989, p. 3)

First of all, it is true that Mill's empiricism is an old fashioned one, inspired from Locke's and Berkeley's theories, but he developed the empiricist theory to its limits, taking it farther than any other philosopher. Second, it is also true that Mill used an associationist psychology but he put this old theory into a new theoretical framework and he related it with some new theoretical principles as it would be the relativity of knowledge principle and the very idea of phenomenalism as permanent possibilities of experience.

Mill's research programme started from the problem of new knowledge production and he developed in his *Logic* an answer to it based on a detailed analysis of induction. Thus we can understand how Mill develops a critique of a priori knowledge and propose a robust empiricist theory regarding the sources of knowledge. But an empiricist theory has its own vulnerabilities and Mill tried to avoid them. He also has taken into account the relativity of knowledge and he found in the phenomenistic approach a way to escape from the metaphysical idealistic temptations. A *laudatio* for Mill's philosophy becomes necessary: "The truth is that J. S. Mill is the greatest philosopher to have attempted to develop an empiricist view of knowledge and reality to the point at which all rival conceptions are completely excluded from the field" (Scarre, 1989, p. 3)

Radical empiricism and the strong critique of *a priori* knowledge

Mill clearly express his philosophical option for a radical empiricist research programme in a letter to Theodor Gomperz written in the year 1854, where he mentions his goal to develop a theory which is able to place metaphysics and moral science “on a basis of analysed experience, in opposition to the theory of innate experience” (Mill, 1972, p. 239). In his *Autobiography* (Mill, 1981, p. 233) Mill mentions his fight with the defenders of *a priori* knowledge and asserts that he offered an explanation based on experience and association. Being a consistent and radical empiricist, going all the way, Mill breaks away from Locke in terms of evaluating the sources of mathematical knowledge. After Locke, mathematical knowledge is certain because it has as its source the infallible contemplation of mental archetypes, a theory which leads back to Plato and Descartes⁵. Mill dissolves Locke’s ambiguity and develop a radical empiricism extended to all the forms of knowledge⁶.

Mill’s goal is a strong critique of the so called School of intuition, where the term “intuition” is synonymous with “*a priori* knowledge”. He doesn’t offer a conclusive rejection of *a priorism* as a whole, but, in his view, empiricism is an alternative more credible regarding at least the problem of sources of knowledge. Therefore, we could say that, on the one hand, empiricism is more credible than *a priorism*, and, on the other hand, that *a priorism* remains strange and mysterious. Moreover, *a priorism* cannot reject empiricism with the same force with empiricism is able to find an alternative. Mill’s pure empiricism doesn’t leave any room for intuition or something else: “We see no ground for believing that anything can be the object of our knowledge except our experience, and what can be inferred from experience by the analogies of experience itself; nor that there is any

⁵ See Locke, Book IV, Chap. II, § 9: “It has been generally taken for granted, that Mathematicks alone are capable of demonstrative certainty; But to have such an agreement, as may intuitively be perceived, being, as I imagine, not the privilege of the Ideas of Number, Extension, and Figure alone, it may possibly be the want of due method, and application in us; and not of sufficient evidence in things, that Demonstration has been thought to have so little to do in other parts of Knowledge, and been scarce so much as aim’d at by any but Mathematicians”. (Locke, 1975, p. 534).

⁶ Some contemporary philosophers, such as Philip Kitcher (Kitcher, 1998) and Crispin Wright (Wright, 2004), developed millian thesis that logical laws and basic arithmetic aren’t *a priori* but part of our empirical knowledge.

idea, feeling, or power in the human mind, which, in order to account for it, requires that its origin should be referred to any other source." (Mill, 1969, pp. 128-129)

In his essay about Coleridge Mill described himself as a follower of empiricist tradition in theory of knowledge, from Aristotle to Locke, claiming that "all knowledge consists of generalizations from experience. Of nature, or anything whatever external to ourselves, we know, according to this theory, nothing, except the facts which present themselves to our senses, and such other facts as may, by analogy, be inferred from these. There is no knowledge a priori, no truths cognizable by the mind's inward light, and grounded on intuitive evidence. Sensation, and the mind's consciousness of its own acts, are not only the exclusive sources, but the sole materials of our knowledge." (Mill, 1969, p. 125). In the same essay on Coleridge is described the domain of *a priori* knowledge as it was postulated by some philosophers: "the fundamental doctrines of religion and morals, the principles of mathematics, and the ultimate laws even of physical nature." (Mill, 1969, p. 125).

Mill's divergence from *a priorism* is contained in his thesis about the two modes in which knowledge is attained. In *A System of Logic* Mill expressed his idea that "Truths are known to us in two ways: some are known directly, and on themselves; some through the medium of other truths. The former are the subject of Intuition, or Consciousness; the latter, of Inference" (Mill, 1974, p. 6). "Intuition" means here, in Mill's vocabulary, nothing that sensation and not an a priori faculty or apprehension. The *a priori* knowledge isn't possible as an activity of pure consciousness because without sensations the goal of knowledge isn't attained.

Mill claimed that *a priorism* is untenable in Metaphysics, which is focused on to identifies "what part of the furniture of the mind belongs to it originally, and what part is constructed out of materials furnished to it from without" (Mill, 1974, p. 8) and also in Logic, which deals with the conditions of valid inference Logic has nothing to do with the so called "evidence of consciousness" (Mill, 1974, p. 8). The knowledge of our sensations is the only our immediate knowledge. All the other forms of propositional knowledge are derived by inference from sensorial basic knowledge. Mill develop a strong version of empiricism, a radical foundationalist theory of justification, and he thinks that empiricism is able to explain the production of new knowledge.

But is there any place for Mill's *Logic* in this debate which guided him towards a radical empiricism? As surprising as it may seem we could say that Mill's theoretical aim which was explicitly assumed in his *Logic* was to develop a theory about how new knowledge is possible by experience, and not just an epistemological explanation about how empirical data are acquired, selected, processed and used by mind. Mill continues his critique of *a priorism* in Book II of his *Logic* about the experiential basis of mathematical propositions and later in his book about Hamilton who, in Mill's view, accepted that we may know the properties of a thing by *a priori* demonstration⁷.

In his *Logic*, Chapter V of Book II, entitled "Of Demonstration, and Necessary Truths", contains an analysis of the idea that some of the principles of geometry that are axioms are not hypothetical, but experimental truth: "What is the ground of our belief in axioms – what is the evidence on which they rest? I answer, they are experimental truths; generalizations from observation. The proposition, Two straight lines cannot inclose a space – or in other words, Two straight lines which have one met, do not meet again, but continue to diverge – is an induction from the evidence of our senses." (Mill, 1974, p. 231). This topic is also a good opportunity to continue his anxious controversy with Whewell, the representative of the opposite perspective, who claims that experience isn't able to prove the axiom, "but that its truth is perceived *a priori*, by the constitution of mind itself, from the first moment when the meaning of the proposition is apprehended." (Mill, 1974, p. 231).

But this doesn't mean that conditions of validity and soundness differ from an empiricist to an *a priorist* theory of valid deductive and inductive arguments. He wrote in Introduction to *Logic*: "Logic is common ground on which the partisans of Hartley and of Reid, of Locke and of Kant, may meet and join hands." (Mill, 1974, p. 14) Later, in his *Autobiography*, Mill mentions that his aim was to offer a book opposed to *a priori* views and that he preferred the empiricist view that all knowledge derives from experience. Mill's justifies why he has taken a combative position: "The notion that truths external to the mind may be known by

⁷ "Not only, in Sir W. Hamilton's opinion, do we know, by direct consciousness or perception, certain properties of Things as they exist in the Thing themselves, but we may also know those properties as in the Things, by demonstration *a priori*." (Mill, 1979, p. 14).

intuition or consciousness, independently of observation and experience, is, I am persuaded, in these times, the great intellectual support for false doctrines and institutions.” (Mill, 1981, p. 233). And in a letter to Comte he will claim that his *Logic* had also a polemical goal and that his philosophical option is a positivistic one, following Hobbes and Locke. (Mill, 1963, p. 531)

Therefore, I agree with Scarre that Mill’s goal in *Logic* was an epistemological one, namely, “to investigate how in principle deductive and inductive modes of inference could produce new knowledge.” (Scarre, 1989, p. 7) If we take seriously into account this goal then it will be easy to understand why Mill wasn’t interested in a survey of deductive logic but he is very devoted to the problem of producing new knowledge by deduction so that to avoid the *petition principia* fallacy. The same theoretical goal of new knowledge production explains why Mill is more interested in a research of inductive methods and their inferential validity.

The relativity of knowledge

The radical empiricism proposed by Mill has to be understood in relation with the principle of knowledge relativity. It is obvious that in Mill’s view an acceptable empiricism, *id est*, the best theory regarding the production of new knowledge, must be balanced by taking into account this principle.

The idea of knowledge relativity is used by Reid in some assertions about body and matter in his *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*. In chapter XVII, “Of the Objects of Perception”, Reid refers to Locke and his theory of qualities, then, to Berkeley and Hume. His conclusion, exposed in chapter XIX, “Of Matter and of Space”, is very clear: “It seems, therefore, to be a judgement of nature, that the things immediately perceived are qualities, which must belong to a subject; and all the information that our senses give us about this subject, is, that it is that to which such qualities belong. From this it is evident, that our notion of body or matter, as distinguished from its qualities, is a relative notion; and I am afraid it must always be obscure until men have other faculties. The philosopher, in this, seem to have no advantage to the vulgar.” (Reid, 1865, pp. 322-323)

Hamilton was the editor of Reid’s book and in a footnote he makes a commentary: “That is, our notion of *absolute* body is *relative*. This is incorrectly expressed. We can know, we can conceive, only what is relative. Our knowledge of *qualities* or *phenomena* is necessarily relative; for these exists only as they exist *in relation to our faculties*. The knowledge, or even the conception, of a substance in itself, and apart from any qualities in

relation to, and therefore cognisable or conceivable by our minds involve a contradiction.” (Reid, 1865, pp. 322-323)

It seems that Mill used for the first time this principle in his essay on Coleridge, in the form cited above, that we can know only sensations. (Mill, 1969, p. 125) A similar formula is repeated in his *Logic* when he mentions that of the external world “we know and can know absolutely nothing, except the sensations which we experience from it.” (Mill, 1974, p. 62)

The principle of knowledge relativity is connected with the principle of empiricism. According to these two principles taken together, Mill rejects three kinds of knowledge: of external things, of mind (inner world), and of a priori truths. First, our knowledge of external world is knowledge of sensations, we can't know the things in themselves. Therefore, our knowledge is reducible to the phenomenal presentations of senses. Moreover, this principle is also applicable to inner experience, an analysis developed in Chapter XII of his book about Hamilton. The mind or the self are reducible to our own conscious states. Third, as I have already explained, this principle also excludes the *a priori* knowledge about mathematics, science, religion and morality, as it is asserted by the “school of intuition”. Consequently, the only knowledge is that of sensorial experience.

But if we aren't able to know the external world, if we can't have a knowledge of physical objects as such, then we are in danger to accept an idealist position. Mill admired Berkeley's philosophy, but he tried to find a solution and to avoid the idealist standpoint. In the same time, it is important to mention that Mill believed in the possibility of knowledge and he avoided the sceptical thesis proposed by Hume. Accordingly, we are justified to claim that Mill tried to improve the empiricist theory so that to avoid the traditional empiricist vulnerabilities, the idealist temptation⁸ and the falling into scepticism.

In “Berkeley's Life and Writings” Mill agrees Berkeley's critique of the common notion of matter⁹, but he thinks that Berkeley and Hamilton didn't explain correctly how this illusion is produced and he tried to

⁸ Andy Hamilton suggests that Mill's goal was to improve Berkeley's idealism. See Andy Hamilton, 1998.

⁹ “It was competent to Berkeley to maintain that this part of the common notion is an illusion, and he did maintain this, in our opinion successfully.” (Mill, 1978, p. 460).

restore this deficiency by applying the associationist psychological method. Of course, it is easy to remember that Mill's method was outlined by Berkeley himself in his *Theory of Vision*.

Moreover, a careful scrutiny reveals that the relativity principle is related with Mill's associationist psychology. All we can do with our mind is to combine our ideas according to the laws of association. Mill mentions in his book about Hamilton the postulates which support the so called psychological way of research, opposed to the traditional school of intuition. These are the law of expectation and the fourth laws of association: similarity, contiguity, repetition and inseparability. The basic epistemological claim is that even those beliefs which seem to be intuitive are in fact a product of experience. The first postulate is that "the human mind is capable of Expectation". (Mill, 1979, p. 177) If we have some actual sensations then we are able to form after this real experience the concept of possible sensations, namely, the concept of "sensations which are not feeling at the present moment, but which we might feel, and should feel if certain conditions were present". (Mill, 1979, p. 177) We suppose that the nature of these conditions was already learned from the previous experience.

Secondly, the psychological way is based on the laws of the association of ideas. The law of similarity postulates that "similar phenomena tend to be thought of together". (Mill, 1979, p. 177) The law of contiguity claims that "phenomena which have either been experienced or conceived in close contiguity to one another, tend to be thought of together", (Mill, 1979, p. 177) simultaneously or in immediate succession. The law of repetition assures the certainty of associations: "When two phaenomena have been very often experienced in conjunction, and have not, in any single instance, occurred separately either in experience or in thought, there is produced between them what has been called Inseparable, or less correctly, Indissoluble Association" (Mill, 1979, pp. 177-178). The effect of these associationist mechanisms is that "it is impossible for us to think the one thing disjoined from the other." (Mill, 1979, p. 178). Finally, the fourth law: "When an association has acquired this character of inseparability – when the bond between the two ideas has been thus firmly riveted, not only does the idea called up by association become, in our consciousness, inseparable from the idea which suggested it, but the facts or phaenomena answering to those ideas come at last to seem inseparable in existence: things which we are unable to conceive apart, appear

incapable of existing apart; and the belief we have in their coexistence, though really a product of experience, seems intuitive" (Mill, 1979, p. 178).

Regarding this last law, Mill offer an example about our acquired perceptions of sight, taken from Bailey's review about Berkeley's *Theory of Vision*. (Bailey, 1842, pp. 105-117) For example, the perception of the distance to a mountain or the perception of size of the moon by the eye seem to be intuitive and not acquired. But what we see is in fact what we think to see, is the result of an inference. Mill claims that our intuitions are apparent perceptions which are deceptive. We have to make an inference in order to match our deceptive perceptions with real objects which are perceived. There is an inference in any perception, there isn't an intuitive or direct or unmediated level of knowledge. In this commentary Mill combines empiricism with the relativity of knowledge and his associationist psychology.

Another example that this combination works is a commentary from his essay about Bain where he states that the relativity principle helps us to dispense from direct proof because we can use associationism as a general evidence (Mill, "Bain's Psychology", 1978, p. 343).

In terms of a metaphysical approach this means that there isn't a substance which have to be known and that all we can know is only the phenomenal world. Historically, there were two forms of this principle, the idealist one, proposed by Berkeley, and the phenomenalist one, proposed by Kant. The difference between the two is given by the acceptance or not of a *substratum* as a hidden cause of sensations. The principle of the relativity of knowledge means nothing but all we know is relative to us, according to the powers which affect us.

It's time for a short summary. After the strong rejection of the possibility of an *a priori* knowledge Mill develops a radical empiricist theory regarding the sources of new knowledge following the so called new psychological way based on the associationists principles. But our capacity to produce new knowledge is limited so that we have to accept the relativity of knowledge. If this is the case, how should look a good empiricist theory? Mill thinks that phenomenism is the best solution to all these problems.

Towards phenomenism

Mill's extreme empiricism leads him to a reductionist metaphysics related with subjective idealism and phenomenism. Scarre's view is that "Mill is

saying not just that all knowledge comes through sensation and reflection on sensation, but also that all knowledge is knowledge of sensation and reflection on sensation." (Scarre, 1989, p. 4) But Mill, tempted sometimes by a moderate form of scientific realism, compatible with empiricism, tries to find a way between Berkeley's eliminative phenomenalism and Kant's reductive phenomenalism.

The core of Mill's phenomenistic theory is exposed in his book about Hamilton, especially in chapter XI, "The Psychological Theory of the Belief in an External World", where he takes into account the perceptual knowledge of the external world, and then in the chapter XII, "The Psychological Theory of the Belief in Matter, How Far Applicable to Mind", where he applies his theory to our mind and its introspective capacity. In the previous chapters Mill investigated the question of the reality of matter with the help of the "introspective method" used by Hamilton and he concluded that there were no results gained. His alternative is to follow the psychological way and to agree that "the belief in an external world is not intuitive, but an acquired product." (Mill, 1979, p. 177. This passage became in the meantime the starting point for the standard historical interpretation of Mill's theory exposed in his book about Hamilton. Another Hamilton, Andy, wrote about Mill's project: "The kernel of the dispute is that, according to Mill, beliefs that appear intuitive - i.e. that are 'irresistible - are mistakenly regarded as intuitive, because the possibility that they are an 'acquired product' is not considered. Mill's own 'psychological' theory, in contrast, shows how a belief, though possessing 'the character of necessity', could have been acquired through experience." (Andy Hamilton, 1998, p. 146).

Mill's theory is based on the idea that the order of our sensations and of our reminiscences of them naturally and necessarily generates associations without any intuitive support. The traditional philosophers made the mistake to think that the belief which is formed in our consciousness is an intuitive one. Our belief in the existence of the external world is explained by Mill in Kantian terms. When we think that we perceive objects which are external to us this means that "there 'is concerned' in our perceptions something which exists when we are not thinking of it, which existed before we had ever thought of it, and would exist if we were annihilated; and further that there exist things which we never saw, touched, or otherwise perceived, and things which never have been perceived by man. This idea of something which is distinguished

from our fleeting impression by what, in Kantian language, is called Perdurability.” (Mill, 1979, pp. 178-179).

In Mill’s view the idea of an external world is a result of a combination based on the laws of association and on the experience of contingent sensations, namely, sensations which can’t be in our consciousness without an external object as their cause. The millian turning point is based on the new concept of “possibilities of experience”. A common example may help us to understand better Mill’s idea about phenomenalism. If I am seeing now a piece of white paper in this room and I shall go immediately outside will this mean that the piece of paper ceased to exist? Of course, the answer is “no”. If I will return into the room, I will see the piece of paper again. This means that the piece of paper will continue to exist event if I am not seeing it. Moreover, owing to the properties of my mind, my conception of the world doesn’t consist only in the fugitive sensations given in the present. Mill explains: “The conception I form of the world existing at any moment, comprises, along with the sensations I am feeling, a countless variety of possibilities of sensation; namely, the whole of those which past observation tells me that I could, under any supposable circumstances, experience at this moment, together with an indefinite and illimitable multitude of others which though I do not know that I could, yet it is possible that I might, experience in circumstances not known to me. These various possibilities are the important thing to me in the world.” (Mill, 1979, pp. 179-180).

Mill has used the phrase “possibilities of sensation” in his *System of Logic*, in which he talks about bodies, sensations and the substratum of them. The question is if this substratum really exists independent from our sensations and how could we avoid the extreme idealist metaphysics. He develops a commentary about Kant’s metaphysics of things in themselves and the contrast between the things in themselves and the representations of our mind: “Kant himself, on this point, is as explicit as Berkeley or Locke. However firmly, convinced that there exists an universe of ‘things in themselves’, totally distinct from the universe of phenomena, or of things as they appear to our senses; and even when bringing into use a technical expression (*Noumenon*), to denote what the thing is in itself, as contrasted with the representation of it in our minds; he allows that this representation (the matter of which, he says, consists of our sensations, through the form is given by the laws of the mind itself) is all we know of the object: and that the real nature of the Thing is, and by the constitution of our faculties ever

must remain, at least in the present state of existence, an impenetrable mystery to us." (Mill, 1974, p. 59)

The concept of permanent possibilities of experience transforms the substratum in a permanent possibility and assure the cognitive access to it, but the idea of a permanent substratum as a possibility of sensation is distinguished from sensations as such, it isn't reducible to sensations. We have no other way to conceptualise this substratum than our flow of sensations, but the possibilities of sensations are permanent because they didn't depend on sensations which are experienced by an epistemic subject. This means that they are independent on consciousness. The permanent possibilities of sensations are common to all the human beings while the actual sensations differ from one to another. Although the permanent possibilities are subjective, they are in the same time the same for all the epistemic subjects and in this sense they are objective, because they are available for all the epistemic subjects.

The idea of a difference between the permanent possibilities of sensations and sensations themselves is summarized by Mill in a famous passage: "I believe that Calcutta exists, though I do not perceive it, and that it would still exist if every percipient inhabitant were suddenly to leave the place, or be struck dead. But when I analyse the belief, all I find in it is, that were these events to take place, he Permanent Possibility of sensation which I call Calcutta would still remain; that if I were suddenly transported to the banks of the Hoogly, I should still have the sensations which, if now present, would lead me to affirm that Calcutta exists here and now. We may infer, therefore, that both philosophers and the world at large, when they think of matter, conceive it really as a Permanent Possibility of Sensation. But the majority of philosophers fancy that it is something more; and the world at large, though they have really, as I conceive, nothing in their minds but a Permanent Possibility of sensation, would, if asked the question, undoubtedly agree with the philosophers: and though this is sufficiently explained by the tendency of the human mind to infer difference of things from difference of names, I acknowledge the obligation of showing how it can be possible to believe in an existence transcending all possibilities of sensation, unless on the hypothesis that such an existence actually is, and that we actually perceive it." (Mill, 1979, pp. 184-185).

Mill explanation is given in terms of the capacity of our mind to make generalizations based on the observed laws of our sensations. From our sensations, related with something different from them, we obtain by

association the general notions of difference and inseparability, and then the notion of permanent possibilities of sensation which correspond to the idea of a substratum which transcends our sensations. The natural probability associated with this process is converted into certainty if we take into account the laws of our experience and the law of causation. Therefore, based on the law of causation and on the group of permanent possibilities, we extend universally the laws of our experience from some cases to our entire experience. As a result, the idea of permanent existence become a part of our conception about the external world.

These permanent possibilities have the form of conditional certainties and are the epistemic warrant for our judgments about the world. Skorupski has developed a interpretation of Mill's phenomenalism which can help us to understand it better. Skorupski's thesis is that in Mill's book about Hamilton there is a tension which results from the conflict between his naturalism, his inductivism, and his subjectivism, and the result is the his philosophical moving to phenomenalism: "that is, his insistence on the primacy of consciousness – both epistemologically, as constituting the ultimate baseline from which we reason, and for psychology, as providing the data of that science. If one combines the last two of these tenets (inductivism and the primacy of consciousness), some form of phenomenalism – matter as the permanent possibility of sensation – is inevitable." (Skorupski, 1989, p. 10.)

How shall we interpret this form of phenomenalism centered on the permanent (certified or guaranteed) possibilities of sensation? These possibilities are understood as 'conditional certainties', namely, they have the form of a conditional belief, "If such and such sensations were to occur, then such and such other sensations would occur (with a given degree of probability)", and all of them are mixed in a stable network. The epistemic subject discover in this cluster of possibilities an order of succesion.

Andy Hamilton tries to give a historical explanation for this balance between a psychological and a linguistic approach regarding the idea of permanenet possibilities of experience. He asserts that "there are two competing tendencies in Mill's account, those of eighteenth-century psychological analysis, and what would become twentieth-century semantic analysis. The latter tendency – what is sometimes called 'linguistic' phenomenalism – treats Mill's subjunctive conditionals as 'meaning-equivalences', and may therefore be viewed as an attempted 'vindication', or perhaps a reduction, of ordinary discourse." (Andy

Hamilton, 1998, p. 151). I think that is too much to attribute to Mill a semantic turn in the analysis of experience similar with that clearly proposed by Ayer (Ayer, 1940), but the ontological implications of his psychological theory, which are explicitly mentioned by him, connected with the logical form as subjunctive conditionals of the sentences about permanent possibilities (A statement as “There is a tree in the garden” is equivalent in meaning with “If X were in such-and-such circumstances then we would have so-and-so perceptual experiences”) are sufficient arguments to state that Mill’s approach was based on a phenomenalist framework as such.

Conclusive remarks

If we accept the idea that Mill’s philosophy is a research programme that has to be seriously taken into account as an opened project, then we can find some valuable ideas that deserve to be capitalized on. Mill’s critique of *a priori* knowledge, his new psychological way based on associationist principle and his own version of the relativity of knowledge principle are some of the ideas which have their own place in contemporary philosophy. I think that Mill’s phenomenism is his big challenge since it leads to a whole new approach, bold, subtle, and unmistakable.

There were previous forms of phenomenism, Berkeley’s and Kant’s theories were Mill’s historical landmarks, but Mill’s project has its own place. Which is then the difference? It is obvious that it is made by the new concept of the permanent possibilities of sensation. For Berkeley objects are groups of actual ideas which are held by a human or a divine mind, for Mill external world itself is a permanent possibility of experience. This means that, according to Mill, Berkeley is close to phenomenism when he talks about the potentiality of external things, but he remains an idealist from an ontological point of view. Mill’s phenomenism became an epistemological one in a Kantian framework. Mill tried to avoid the consequences derived from the two previous theories and his idea of permanent possibilities of sensation wasn’t only a creative one, but also a solution of some philosophical puzzles, unfortunately, still insufficiently explored. In this paper and others two (See Stoenescu, 2018; Stoenescu, 2021; Stoenescu 2022) I have tried to bring these subjects back to the forefront of the philosophical debate.

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CONVIVIR EN LA DIVERSIDAD: UNA RELECTURA DE KARL MANNHEIM

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Abstract: *After explaining the distinction between multiculturalism as a socio-political project and multiculturalism as a sociological reality, this article reviews some of the main models that have been formulated to articulate coexistence between people from different cultures. It then outlines a proposal for social organization in the light of the sociology developed by Karl Mannheim in his English period. The text concludes by presenting Mannheim's vision of the refugee as an interpreter between two cultures, closely related to Robert E. Park's concept of "marginal man".*

Keywords: *multicultural society, assimilation, melting pot, cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, interculturalism, marginal man, Robert E. Park, refugee, Karl Mannheim.*

1) La sociedad multicultural

La reflexión en torno al fenómeno multicultural aparece condicionada en nuestros días por varias circunstancias que dificultan el debate desapasionado sobre una cuestión ya de por sí sensible. De entrada, se trata de un asunto en el que se entremezclan factores políticos, económicos, sociales, culturales, identitarios... Tampoco ayuda la vaguedad de una retórica que en ocasiones ha servido para defender una cosa y su contraria².

Pero quizá lo que más está impidiendo el debate sereno sobre la cuestión migratoria y la diversidad cultural en las sociedades occidentales es el choque de discursos en la opinión pública basados en prejuicios de distinto signo. De un lado, nos encontramos con el tono alarmista –cuando no abiertamente xenófobo– con el que algunos partidos políticos y medios de comunicación previenen “frente al ‘peligro’, la ‘amenaza’, la ‘invasión’ y la ‘avalancha’ que constituirían los hombres y mujeres migrantes. Todos

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² Así, John Rex considera que la retórica del multiculturalismo ha servido a Gran Bretaña para tapan el proceso real de reclusión en gueto de la población marginada y su tratamiento desigual. Véase John Rex, «La metrópoli multicultural: la experiencia británica», en Emilio Lamo de Espinosa (ed.), *Culturas, estados, ciudadanos. Una aproximación al multiculturalismo en Europa*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1995, p. 203.

esos nombres se utilizan de hecho como sustitutos de una categoría no confesada: la de enemigo”³. De otro, tropezamos con las descalificaciones de quienes tachan sistemáticamente de racistas a todos aquellos que plantean preocupaciones legítimas sobre la integración –social, laboral, cultural...– de los recién llegados a las sociedades de acogida.

A esclarecer los términos del debate contribuye la distinción que hacen varios autores entre el “multiculturalismo” como proyecto sociopolítico que reivindica el derecho a la diferencia de las distintas identidades culturales, y la “multiculturalidad” como fenómeno que alude a la coexistencia de etnias y culturas diferentes en una misma sociedad⁴.

De acuerdo con Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, “el término multiculturalismo se origina en Canadá para aludir a una política inmigratoria que trata de ser respetuosa con las identidades culturales de los emigrantes, y no –como era usual– sustituirlas por la identidad de la nación receptora”⁵. El multiculturalismo, pues, surge como respuesta de organización o proyecto político que reivindica el valor de las distintas identidades culturales frente a la cultura dominante. Así lo entiende, por ejemplo, el filósofo canadiense Charles Taylor, uno de los defensores más autorizados de las políticas del reconocimiento de la diversidad cultural.

Pero, en ocasiones, el multiculturalismo va más lejos y sobrepasa esa intención política. Lo que al principio se concebía como “una actitud de resistencia” –al decir de María Elósegui– ante los procesos de imposición de

³ Sami Naïr, *Y vendrán... Las migraciones en tiempos hostiles*, traducción de María Cordon y Malika Embarek, Bronce, Barcelona, 2006, pp. 13-15.

⁴ Véase, por ejemplo, Carlos Giménez, “Pluralismo, multiculturalismo e interculturalidad. Propuesta de clarificación y apuntes educativos”, *Educación y futuro*, núm. 8, 2003, pp. 9-26. Por su parte, Emilio Lamo de Espinosa recoge ambos aspectos cuando afirma que el término “multiculturalismo” tiene dos sentidos: uno descriptivo o sociológico (como situación de hecho), y otro normativo o político (como propuesta de organización social). Cfr. Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, “Fronteras culturales”, en Emilio Lamo de Espinosa (ed.), *Culturas, estados, ciudadanos. Una aproximación al multiculturalismo en Europa*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1995, p. 18. Vid. también Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, “Sociedad multicultural”, en Salvador Giner, Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, Cristóbal Torres (eds.), *Diccionario de Sociología*, Alianza Editorial, Madrid, 1998, p. 702.

⁵ Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, Voz «Sociedad multicultural», p. 702.

una cultura sobre otras, a menudo ha pasado a designar una visión de la sociedad de corte relativista⁶.

Así entendido, el multiculturalismo renuncia a cualquier criterio de universalidad y difumina lo común en todas las identidades: “El multiculturalismo lleva en sí, más o menos explícitamente, un doble postulado teórico: a) diluye las individualidades en las identidades colectivas, étnico-culturales, imaginando las culturas como algo compacto, perfectamente definido e impenetrable; b) afirma la absoluta alteridad e incomparabilidad de las culturas, por lo que cada una de ellas es única y diferente de todas las demás, intrínsecamente autorreferencial, irreduciblemente idiomática; los valores, las normas morales y las costumbres que lo caracterizan tienen una autárquica formalidad, pero no son valorables mediante categorías extraídas de universos culturales externos”⁷.

Una de las consecuencias más graves de esta postura es que niega la posibilidad de una verdadera comunicación entre las culturas: “Todo intento de interrogar, comprender, definir la otra cultura a partir de criterios inmanentes a nuestra racionalidad representa una forma disimulada de colonialismo. Pedir cuentas al otro, al extraño, de la validez de sus prácticas, de sus valores, de sus costumbres, en lugar de limitarse a tomar nota, constituye el primer signo de una chauvinista conciencia de superioridad y de una totalitaria voluntad de homologación. Las culturas son universos de sentido comprensibles solo a quien pertenece a ellas y no son susceptibles de ser juzgadas con categorías externas a ellas”⁸.

En un sentido más descriptivo, Emilio Lamo de Espinosa entiende por sociedad multicultural “aquellos espacios de acción social en los cuales coexisten personas y/o grupos sociales con variadas adscripciones e identidades culturales”⁹. Vista así, la sociedad multicultural “es un

⁶ Véase María Elósegui Itxaso, “La democracia liberal ante las identidades culturales”, *Aceprensa*, 6 marzo 1996. Ver también Pierpaolo Donati, *Oltre il multiculturalismo. La ragione relazionale per un mondo comune*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2008.

⁷ Carmine di Martino, «El encuentro y la emergencia de lo humano», en Javier Prades y Manuel Oriol (eds.), *Los retos del multiculturalismo*, Encuentro, Madrid, 2009, p. 116. Vid. también Carmine di Martino, «La convivencia tra culture», en Marta Cartabia (ed.), *I diritti in azione*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 2007, pp. 491-506.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁹ Emilio Lamo De Espinosa, «Sociedad multicultural», p. 702.

fenómeno de alcance mundial que deriva de la creciente movilidad geográfica de personas a causa de la globalización económica, el transporte, el turismo, las emigraciones y un largo etcétera”¹⁰.

Ahora bien, es preciso aclarar que la sociedad multicultural no es la consecuencia necesaria de los movimientos migratorios, sino tan solo una entre varias posibles. En otras palabras, la inmigración por sí sola no da lugar a la emergencia de espacios multiculturales. Para Hans-Joachim Hoffmann-Nowotny, “esto solo ocurre cuando los inmigrados se presentan como un colectivo portador de una cultura extranjera –o cuando la ‘mayoritaria’ los delimita y los separa como a tales– y se definen y se entienden a sí mismos como ‘minorías’”¹¹.

2. Distintos modelos de organizar la diversidad cultural

A lo largo de la historia han sido muy variadas las propuestas que se han formulado para organizar una sociedad diversificada étnicamente. Siguiendo la tipología clásica elaborada por Milton Gordon para Estados Unidos¹² (y desarrollada después por Graciela Malgesini y Carlos Giménez), cabe distinguir tres modelos de integración de las minorías étnicas: la asimilación, el *melting pot* y el pluralismo cultural. Este último modelo tiene, a su vez, dos modalidades: el multiculturalismo y el interculturalismo.

Una manera de gestionar la diversidad cultural en una sociedad es la **asimilación** (*anglo-conformity*, en la terminología de Gordon), mediante la cual un grupo minoritario acaba siendo absorbido por un grupo mayoritario. Nacido en Norteamérica a principios del siglo XX, el modelo asimilacionista constituye “una propuesta de uniformización cultural: se propone y se supone que los grupos y minorías van a ir adoptando la lengua, los valores, las normas, las señas de identidad de la cultura dominante y, en paralelo, van a ir abandonando su cultura propia”¹³.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Hans-Joachim Hoffmann-Nowotny, “Oportunidades y riesgos de las sociedades multiculturales de inmigración”, *Revista del Instituto de Estudios Económicos*, núm. 4, Madrid, 1994, p. 129.

¹² Véase Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origin*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1964.

¹³ Graciela Malgesini y Carlos Giménez, *Guía de conceptos sobre migraciones, racismo e interculturalidad*, La Catarata, Madrid, 2000, p. 51.

La propuesta asimilacionista “lleva a la imposición de la cultura propia sobre las otras, bien porque se considere que es superior, bien porque se piense que no es posible la convivencia de lo heterogéneo”¹⁴. Otros supuestos ideológicos de la asimilación son la creencia en la bondad de la homogeneidad sociocultural y la convicción de que son los recién llegados quienes tienen que esforzarse por congraciarse con los nacionales para que la integración sea posible¹⁵.

Amitai Etzioni ha explicado cómo la URSS trató de lograr esto con su trato a los miembros de diversas minorías –sobre todo a los judíos–, y cómo China continental intentó tratar así a los tibetanos. Ambos países combinaron fuertes esfuerzos de aculturación con la eliminación forzada de las diferencias culturales. En Estados Unidos, los que favorecen la asimilación han recurrido en no pocas ocasiones a aplicar presiones que rozan lo coercitivo. Así, se ha prohibido a los niños hablar su lengua nativa, incluso en los recreos, y en varios estados norteamericanos se han aprobado leyes que exigen que todas las papeletas electorales, letreros de la vía pública y transacciones oficiales estén únicamente en inglés¹⁶.

A diferencia de la asimilación, el *melting pot* (que se ha traducido como “fusión cultural” o “crisol de culturas”) no busca la absorción de los recién llegados en la cultura dominante o autóctona. El núcleo argumental de esta propuesta “se encuentra en la idea de que la cultura nacional o la identidad cultural de un determinado país o entidad debe configurarse a partir de las contribuciones de todos los sectores o segmentos en él representados o a él incorporados”¹⁷. Es esencial al *melting pot* la idea de la “nueva síntesis” de razas y culturas como resultado de las aportaciones de todos los participantes.

Es importante destacar la visión positiva del inmigrante que subyace al modelo de fusión cultural. El recién llegado empieza a ser visto como portador de artes y de técnicas civilizadoras, como compañero en la tarea común de construir una nueva cultura que aúne lo autóctono con lo de fuera. No obstante, como recuerda el historiador italiano Antonello Gerbi,

¹⁴ María Elósegui Itxaso, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Véase Graciela Malgesini y Carlos Giménez, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

¹⁶ Véase Amitai Etzioni, *La nueva regla de oro. Comunidad y moralidad en una sociedad democrática*, traducción de Marcos Aurelio Galmarini, Paidós, Madrid-Buenos Aires, 1999, p. 231.

¹⁷ Graciela Malgesini y Carlos Giménez, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

el paradigma del *melting pot* ha sido más un mito norteamericano que una realidad vivida y concreta: “El mesianismo del *melting pot*, el crisol de Dios en que se funden y se refinan todas las razas de Europa y del cual debería salir una humanidad nueva y perfecta, ha sido uno de los mitos nacionales, o lo fue por lo menos hasta las leyes restrictivas de la inmigración (1921-1924)”¹⁸.

Una tercera propuesta que rivaliza con la asimilación y el modelo de fusión es el **pluralismo cultural**, el cual “afirma la posibilidad de convivir armoniosamente en sociedades, grupos o comunidades étnica, cultural, religiosa o lingüísticamente diferentes. A diferencia de otros modelos, el pluralismo cultural valora positivamente la diversidad sociocultural y toma como punto de partida que ningún grupo tiene por qué perder su cultura o identidad propia”¹⁹.

Mientras que en los dos paradigmas anteriores se da por supuesto que los recién llegados siempre pierden algo, “en el modelo pluralista de sociedad la diversidad existente no desaparece sino que se mantiene, se recrea. No desaparece ni por adquisición de la cultura dominante y abandono de la original (modelo asimilacionista) ni por surgimiento de una nueva cultura integradora de los aportes de las preexistentes (modelo de fusión)”²⁰. Desde esta perspectiva, se trata de “una propuesta de suma y no de resta: todas las expresiones culturales, étnicas, religiosas, lingüísticas, están llamadas a estar presentes en la comunidad sociopolítica, a desarrollarse sin represión, libremente”²¹.

Según Giménez, el pluralismo cultural se basa en dos principios básicos: 1) el *principio de igualdad*, que subraya la igual dignidad de todas las personas y prohíbe la discriminación por razones de raza, cultura, etnia, religión, lengua, nacionalidad, etc.; y 2) el *principio de diferencia* o respeto y aceptación del otro, en virtud del cual cada individuo debe ser reconocido por su identidad única. “Dicho de otra manera, lo que el pluralismo cultural postula es una sociedad, comunidad, escuela y en general sociedad

¹⁸ Antonello Gerbi, *La disputa del Nuevo Mundo. Historia de una polémica. 1750-1900*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982, p. 703.

¹⁹ Véase Graciela Malgesini y Carlos Giménez, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

²⁰ Carlos Giménez, “La integración de los inmigrantes y la interculturalidad”, p. 135.

²¹ Carlos Giménez, “Pluralismo, multiculturalismo e interculturalidad. Propuesta de clarificación y apuntes educativos”, *Educación y futuro*, núm.8, 2003, p. 15.

internacional en la cual las personas son iguales en derechos, obligaciones y oportunidades, al tiempo que son respetadas en su distintividad cultural, lingüística y religiosa”²².

De acuerdo con la tipología de Malgesini y Giménez, el pluralismo cultural tiene dos modalidades: 1) el multiculturalismo, que pone el acento en lo distintivo de la propia identidad; y 2) el interculturalismo, que enfatiza la cooperación entre las diversas culturas y potencia los puntos en común entre ellas. Giménez ha resumido muy bien la diferencia básica que existe entre ambas modalidades: “Si el multiculturalismo aborda la diversidad, el interculturalismo trata de ver cómo construir la unidad en la diversidad”²³.

El **multiculturalismo** –entendido como propuesta política y no como situación de hecho– pone el énfasis en el valor distintivo de cada cultura y, por eso, exige el reconocimiento de esa diferencia. “Hasta ahora –explica María Elósegui glosando la postura de Charles Taylor– ha sido un avance el reconocimiento de la universalidad de los derechos humanos y de la igualdad entre los hombres. Pero junto a eso es necesario atender ahora a las diferencias, si queremos evitar que algunas culturas desaparezcan absorbidas por los grupos mayoritarios. Esto justifica incluso que ciertas legislaciones se propongan el mantenimiento de determinadas lenguas y modos de vida”²⁴.

El punto de partida de la reflexión de Taylor es la relación que existe entre el reconocimiento y la identidad. Su tesis es que “nuestra identidad se moldea en parte por el reconocimiento o por la falta de este; a menudo, también, por el *falso* reconocimiento de otros, y así, un individuo o un grupo de personas pueden sufrir un verdadero daño, una auténtica deformación si la gente o la sociedad que lo rodean le muestran, como reflejo, un cuadro limitativo, o degradante o despreciable de sí mismo”²⁵. Por este motivo, el reconocimiento no es una mera cuestión de cortesía; se trata de algo más radical: es “una necesidad humana vital”, pues su

²² *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁴ María Elósegui Itxaso, *op. cit.*

²⁵ Véase Charles Taylor, *El multiculturalismo y “la política del reconocimiento”*, 1ª reimpresión, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, 2001, pp. 43-44.

ausencia “puede infligir una herida dolorosa que causa a sus víctimas un mutilador odio a sí mismas”²⁶.

La preocupación por la identidad y el reconocimiento, tal y como la concebimos en la actualidad, es una conquista de la modernidad. Dos fueron, según Taylor, los cambios que hicieron posible este nuevo discurso. De un lado, la sustitución del antiguo concepto de honor –que estaba íntimamente ligado a las jerarquías sociales y, en último término, a la desigualdad– por el moderno concepto de *dignidad*, que tiene un sentido universalista e igualitario. De otro, la nueva interpretación de la identidad individual que surgió a finales del siglo XVIII (de la mano de Jean-Jacques Rousseau y Johann Gottlob Herder), y que Taylor conecta con el ideal de la *autenticidad*; es decir, con la aspiración a “ser fiel a mi propia originalidad, que es algo que sólo yo puedo articular y descubrir. Y al articularla, también estoy definiéndome a mí mismo. Estoy realizando una potencialidad que es mi propiedad”²⁷.

Los dos cambios mencionados han situado la relación entre el reconocimiento y la identidad entre las preocupaciones básicas de la época actual. Ahora bien –matiza Taylor–, el nexo que une a ambas realidades no es algo cultural, creado por los pensadores de finales del siglo XVIII. Por el contrario, se trata de una relación que es íntima al ser humano y que deriva de un rasgo decisivo de la condición humana: su carácter dialógico. Por eso, “el que yo descubra mi propia identidad no significa que yo la haya elaborado en el aislamiento, sino que la he negociado por medio del diálogo, en parte abierto, en parte interno, con los demás”²⁸. En consecuencia, el desarrollo de un ideal de identidad pasa necesariamente por la atribución de una nueva importancia al reconocimiento: “Mi propia identidad depende, en forma crucial, de mis relaciones dialógicas con los demás”²⁹.

La exigencia de reconocimiento ha alumbrado, en las sociedades democráticas, dos políticas que en principio son complementarias una respecto de la otra y que deberían conducir a un equilibrio aceptable. Mientras que la política de la *dignidad igualitaria* pone el acento en lo universal (lo que se traduce en la asignación de una “cesta” idéntica para

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

todos de derechos y deberes), la política de la *diferencia* pide respeto a las especificidades propias que nos hacen distintos a los demás. El problema, dice Taylor, es que estas políticas no se han desarrollado históricamente de la misma manera pues ha sido la condición de ser distinto la que se ha pasado por alto; la que ha sido “asimilada por una identidad dominante o mayoritaria. Y esta asimilación es el pecado cardinal contra el ideal de autenticidad”³⁰.

A este planteamiento se opone una corriente importante del liberalismo político contemporáneo. Autores como John Rawls y Ronald Dworkin consideran que el precio que los ciudadanos deben pagar por vivir en una sociedad que nos trata a todos como iguales es la neutralidad del Estado respecto a las particularidades culturales o religiosas o, en realidad, respecto a cualquier clase de metas colectivas que vayan más allá de la libertad personal y la seguridad de sus ciudadanos. Este tipo de liberalismo, ciego a la diferencia, considera inaceptable “la idea de que cualquiera de los conjuntos habituales de derechos puede aplicarse en un contexto cultural de manera diferente que en otro”³¹.

Pero esta opinión restrictiva de los derechos igualitarios no es la única interpretación posible dentro de la tradición liberal. Según Taylor, existe un segundo tipo de liberalismo que permite que el Estado se comprometa con metas colectivas, como la protección especial de un grupo cultural o religioso minoritario, “siempre que sea capaz de respetar la diversidad, especialmente al tratar a aquellos que no compartan sus metas comunes, y siempre que pueda ofrecer salvaguardas adecuadas para los derechos fundamentales”³².

Es lo que hizo la provincia canadiense de Quebec al privilegiar el francés como lengua oficial y al proteger de forma especial las tradiciones y las lenguas indígenas de las comunidades aborígenes conocidas como Primeras Naciones. Tal decisión fue muy criticada por los partidarios del primer tipo de liberalismo. Y todavía hoy la política del reconocimiento tiene entre sus principales detractores a los liberales clásicos, para quienes

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

la igualdad ante la ley es un principio irrenunciable de las democracias liberales³³.

Por otra parte, el multiculturalismo puede desencadenar una espiral de exclusión de otras minorías, que es precisamente el gran defecto contra el que clama este modelo de organización social. En efecto, como observa Elósegui con agudeza, el multiculturalismo “puede ser igual de irrespetuoso con otras culturas minoritarias insertas en una cultura a su vez minoritaria. Por ejemplo, si Quebec no respetara la peculiaridad cultural de los inmigrantes orientales que allí viven o los flamencos no respetaran la de los judíos o la de los inmigrantes magrebíes o turcos. En vez de carteles solo en francés en Quebec, mejor sería que fueran plurilingües. De hecho, en Nueva York muchos carteles están en inglés y en español, debido al gran número de inmigrantes hispanos. También es frecuente que en Bruselas la información esté en árabe”. Y añade: “El peligro del planteamiento del multiculturalismo es crear guetos dentro de otra cultura mayoritaria”³⁴.

A la misma conclusión llega con otro argumento: “Si por ensalzar la propia cultura se pone el énfasis en las diferencias, se puede llegar a negar los puntos en común y la interacción entre las diversas culturas. Para este multiculturalismo no habría valores humanos generales y universales, por eso podría definirse como relativista. De ahí que mire con recelo el diálogo intercultural: parece poner como condición para la preservación de las culturas que estas se encierren en guetos”³⁵.

Como respuesta a este problema surgió precisamente el **interculturalismo**, que defiende el derecho a la diferencia a la vez que plantea una convivencia en la diversidad basada en la afirmación de lo común y el diálogo entre culturas. “Si en el movimiento multiculturalista el

³³ En las antípodas de Taylor se encuentra el politólogo italiano Giovanni Sartori, quien se opuso con contundencia al hecho de que el Estado pudiera reconocer derechos particulares por razón de la pertenencia a un grupo cultural: “La llamada política del reconocimiento no se limita a ‘reconocer’; en realidad, fabrica y multiplica las diferencias metiéndonoslas en la cabeza. A lo que hay que añadir que la política del reconocimiento no solo transforma en reales unas identidades potenciales, sino que se dedica también a aislarlas como en un gueto y a encerrarlas en sí mismas”. Giovanni Sartori, *La sociedad multiétnica. Pluralismo, multiculturalismo y extranjeros*, traducción de Miguel Ángel Ruiz de Azúa, 2ª ed. española, Taurus, Madrid, 2001, pp. 88-89.

³⁴ María Elósegui Itxaso, *op. cit.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

acento está puesto en cada cultura, en el planteamiento intercultural lo que preocupa es abordar la relación entre ellas. Si el multiculturalismo acentúa, con acierto, la identidad de cada cual como un paso absolutamente necesario para reclamar el reconocimiento, y ello conlleva el énfasis en las diferencias, la perspectiva intercultural buscará las convergencias sobre las cuales establecer vínculos y puntos en común”³⁶.

El interculturalismo no se ensimisma en la diferencia, sino que la trasciende para descubrir lo que une. Si se lanza al diálogo con otras culturas es porque “cree que, detrás de la diversidad cultural, hay unos valores comunes”³⁷. En la práctica, esa preocupación por conciliar lo diferente y lo común se traduce en una legislación “que consagre la universalidad de los derechos y el pluralismo cultural”. (...) El resultado de la interacción no es ni el asimilacionismo ni el relativismo cultural, sino el enriquecimiento mutuo”³⁸.

Los “valores comunes –prosigue Elósegui– se reflejan en las declaraciones universales de derechos o en los derechos fundamentales recogidos en cada Constitución, que marcan unos criterios de justicia para juzgar las tradiciones de cada cultura. Así se logra también un referente crítico de la propia cultura, lo cual es imposible en un multiculturalismo cerrado”³⁹.

En la misma línea se pronuncia Etzioni, firme partidario del interculturalismo: “Los diálogos morales transculturales se constituyen sobre la base de valores globales sustantivos, valores que formulan una exigencia a todos y no guardan relación específica con una comunidad o sociedad cualquiera en particular. De esta suerte, tal como veo yo las cosas, los derechos individuales no reflejan un valor occidental (aun cuando históricamente hayan surgido en Occidente), sino un valor que formula exigencias a todo el mundo”⁴⁰.

En 2002, Etzioni lanzó el manifiesto *Diversidad en la unidad* como una propuesta para organizar una sociedad diversificada étnicamente desde el planteamiento intercultural. Frente a la asimilación y el multiculturalismo, su enfoque “se resume en que todos los miembros de una determinada

³⁶ Carlos Giménez, «Pluralismo, multiculturalismo e interculturalidad», p. 20.

³⁷ María Elósegui Itxaso, *op. cit.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Amitai Etzioni, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

sociedad respetarán y se adherirán completamente a los valores básicos e instituciones que se consideran parte del marco compartido de la sociedad. A la vez, cada grupo social es libre para conservar su distinta subcultura (políticas, hábitos e instituciones que no entren en conflicto con la parte esencial de aquello que comparten con otros) y un fuerte sentido de lealtad a su país de origen, en tanto que esto no interfiera en la lealtad hacia el país en el que se vive y no entrañe un conflicto de lealtades”⁴¹.

En la práctica, el principio de la diversidad en la unidad permite distinguir entre “aquellas leyes que todos debemos respetar y aquellas que han de aparecer provistas de excepciones y variantes a la vista de los grupos minoritarios” en diversos ámbitos, como la educación, la lengua, las prácticas religiosas, las fiestas, etc.

Como veremos enseguida, la propuesta de Etzioni sintoniza muy bien con el planteamiento del sociólogo húngaro Karl Mannheim.

3) La herencia de Mannheim

Aunque Mannheim no se ocupó directamente del fenómeno multicultural –salvo en el artículo “The Function of the Refugee”, al que luego haremos referencia–, se podría decir que la preocupación de fondo que recorre su obra –cómo articular la convivencia pacífica en una sociedad en la que compiten distintas concepciones del mundo– es el mismo problema que hoy afrontan las sociedades multiculturales. En palabras de Lamo de Espinosa:

El problema esencial de nuestra época (y de nuestro pensamiento) deriva de una gigantesca globalización mundial del mismo problema que atenazaba a Mannheim: el choque de concepciones del mundo, el pluralismo cultural, el etnocentrismo (o eurocentrismo) y su contraste, el relativismo, la deconstrucción de la razón en ‘discursos’ y ‘narrativas’, la pérdida de referencia en la objetividad⁴².

⁴¹ Amitai Etzioni, “Diversity within Unity: A Communitarian Approach to Immigration Policy”. *Migration World Magazine*, v. 30, n. 1-2, pp. 14-19, 2002. Citado en “Un manifiesto a favor de la diversidad en la unidad”, *Acepresna*, 17 julio 2002.

⁴² Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, “Introducción. En el centenario de Karl Mannheim (1893-1947)”, en Emilio Lamo de Espinosa (ed.), *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, núm. 62, abril-junio 1993, pp. 7-13. En el mismo número de esa revista, dedicado por entero a Mannheim, Javier Noya Miranda aborda en un artículo un tema central del segundo Mannheim –la planificación democrática– desde algunas categorías del primer Mannheim (los estratos espirituales, el conocimiento

Con esta clave interpretativa en mente, es posible identificar en la obra de Mannheim escrita durante su etapa inglesa varios elementos para una propuesta de convivencia entre personas de distintas culturas. Se trata de una variante del interculturalismo; es decir, aboga por el respeto a un marco de valores compartidos y, a la vez, se mantiene atento a proteger las identidades de los diferentes grupos. ¿Cuáles son esos elementos?

Convivir en la diversidad

Democracia militante

Las comunidades como sujetos de derechos

Cosmopolitismo

Justicia social

Educación cívica

Laicidad positiva

Democracia militante

Cuando Mannheim escribe *Diagnóstico de nuestro tiempo*, en plena Segunda Guerra Mundial, una de sus preocupaciones fundamentales es que las democracias liberales tomen conciencia de que necesitan “una nueva actitud frente a los valores”⁴³ que se desmarque tanto del despotismo totalitario como del *laissez faire* relativista:

En contraste con la regimentación brutal y completa de las dictaduras, que solo toleran una forma de pensamiento, mas en contraste también con la abstención pasiva del liberalismo en su incapacidad de tomar partido, esta democracia militante habrá de tener el valor de salir al campo en la defensa de ciertos valores básicos comunes a todos; y, sin embargo, sabrá dejar por

conjuntivo y el conocimiento comunicativo, y la competencia). Véase Javier Noya Miranda, “Clase, conocimiento y ciudadanía. La (des)legitimación del Estado del Bienestar en la perspectiva de la Sociología del Conocimiento de Mannheim”, en Emilio Lamo de Espinosa (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 99-119. Tanto este texto como el de Lamo de Espinosa me inspiraron la idea de poner en diálogo la obra de Mannheim con el fenómeno multicultural.

⁴³ Karl Mannheim, *Diagnóstico de nuestro tiempo*, versión española de José Medina Echavarría, México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1994, p. 17.

otra parte a la elección y decisión individuales los valores más complejos susceptibles de diversidad⁴⁴.

Frente al relativismo cultural por el que abogan algunos partidarios del multiculturalismo, Mannheim insistiría en que la democracia no puede ser relativista y neutral⁴⁵. Por el contrario, “tiene que abandonar su actitud defensiva y adoptar una posición constructiva y militante” a favor de un núcleo de valores mínimos. Al mismo tiempo, debe “dejar abiertos los valores más complicados a las diferencias de credo, de elección individual y de experimentación libre”⁴⁶.

La doctrina de Mannheim sobre la “democracia militante” se aparta de la polémica postura del filósofo alemán Karl Loewenstein, para quien un Estado democrático estaría legitimado en tiempos de guerra a suspender de forma temporal la legalidad y restringir derechos y libertades fundamentales para frenar a un movimiento totalitario⁴⁷. En cambio, está más próxima al manifiesto *Diversidad en la unidad*, de Etzioni. Lo que interesa a Mannheim no es restringir derechos, sino fijar los límites de lo tolerable en una sociedad democrática. Su enfoque es sensible al reconocimiento de las peculiaridades culturales o religiosas y, a la vez, permite al Estado adoptar una actitud de firme oposición frente a todas aquellas prácticas que atentan contra la dignidad humana, como los matrimonios forzados, la poligamia o la mutilación genital femenina. Son “problemas –como dice Andrés Ollero– que no admiten soluciones neutras”, por extendidos que estén en determinadas culturas; frente a ellos “hay que tomar postura y hay que acabar imponiendo jurídicamente valores éticos, se quiera o no”⁴⁸.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁴⁵ Me ocupo ampliamente de esta tesis en: Juan Meseguer, *Democracia y valores en Karl Mannheim. Una teoría social contra el liberalismo desarmado*, CEU Ediciones, Madrid, 2024.

⁴⁶ Karl Mannheim, *Diagnóstico de nuestro tiempo*, pp. 17 y 150.

⁴⁷ Véase Karl Loewenstein, “Militant Democracy and Fundamental Rights I”, en *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 31, núm. 3, junio, pp. 417-432, 1937.

⁴⁸ Andrés Ollero, “Las convicciones morales de los ciudadanos dan vida a la democracia”, *Aceprensa*, 25 diciembre 2002. Ver también: Andrés Ollero, *Democracia y convicciones en una sociedad plural*, Navarra Gráfica Ediciones. Berriozar (Navarra), 2001.

Las comunidades como sujetos de derechos

Mannheim fue pionero en la propuesta de un modelo de organización social que proteja tanto los derechos de los individuos como los de las comunidades o grupos intermedios entre el individuo y el Estado. Y, por eso, fue pionero también en la crítica a un tipo de liberalismo que no considera a esos grupos como sujetos de derechos:

El liberalismo, al yuxtaponer el individuo a la sociedad o al Estado, no toma en cuenta la significación de los grupos intermedios y funcionales. La afirmación sagrada, ‘los Derechos del Hombre’, ha de ser traducida a la Era de la Planificación. Una democracia planificada tiene que proteger el derecho del individuo a un desarrollo personal (...); pero en una era de organización de masas no basta con garantizar sus derechos a los individuos, es igualmente importante el proteger las libertades de los grupos y las asociaciones⁴⁹.

Frente al planteamiento liberal clásico, para el que solo tiene sentido reconocer derechos a los individuos, Mannheim insiste en que en las nuevas condiciones sociales que ha traído una época de masas “el individuo puede ser protegido con frecuencia únicamente por el grupo al que pertenece”⁵⁰.

En la misma línea, el filósofo canadiense Will Kymlicka afirmaría años más tarde lo siguiente: “Los derechos humanos básicos –como la libertad de expresión, asociación y conciencia–, si bien se atribuyen a los individuos, se caracterizan por ejercerse en comunidad con otros individuos; de ahí que pueda afirmarse que protegen la vida del grupo”⁵¹.

Si bien Mannheim no alude expresamente a las minorías nacionales, étnicas, religiosas o lingüísticas, de su planteamiento se desprende que también habría que reconocer a esos grupos unos derechos colectivos, siempre que no vayan en contra ni de los derechos individuales ni del marco de valores compartidos. Es lo que propone Kymlicka de forma expresa, quien llega más lejos y pide una protección especial para esas

⁴⁹ Karl Mannheim, *Libertad, poder y planificación democrática*, versión española de Manuel Durán Gili, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México, 1953, pp. 334-335.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

⁵¹ Will Kymlicka, *Ciudadanía multicultural. Una teoría liberal de los derechos de las minorías*, traducción de Carme Castells Auleda, Paidós, Barcelona, 1996, p. 15. Un buen análisis de este libro en: María Elósegui Itxaso, “Una teoría liberal de los derechos de las minorías”, *Acepremsa*, 15 enero 1997.

minorías: “En un Estado multicultural, una teoría de la justicia omniabarcadora incluirá tanto derechos universales, asignados a los individuos independientemente de su pertenencia de grupo, como determinados derechos diferenciados de grupo, es decir, un ‘estatus especial’ para las culturas minoritarias”⁵².

Cosmopolitismo

Ahora bien, Mannheim también advierte del peligro del nacionalismo exacerbado: “Tenemos que distinguir entre rasgos indudablemente perjudiciales, tales como la agresividad chauvinista, y las tradiciones de la comunidad que son funcionalmente significativas e importantes (...) Los dirigentes de la política y la educación deberán tratar de extirpar las características nocivas del nacionalismo que se oponen a una cooperación mundial pacífica”⁵³.

Para evitar la estrechez nacionalista, invita a inculcar en los individuos y en los grupos “la visión de la humanidad como un conjunto”⁵⁴. Esta visión debería servir para fomentar la solidaridad entre las naciones, así como un nuevo tipo de responsabilidad colectiva. Aquí Mannheim vuelve a adelantarse a su tiempo y vislumbra la importancia creciente que en un futuro no muy lejano llegaría a tener la globalización: “No es ya una frase sin sentido el afirmar que todos estamos embarcados en el mismo navío. La interdependencia de la sociedad moderna hace que el hambre o la ruina económica de una nación sea una amenaza para las demás”⁵⁵.

Justicia social

El tiempo ha dado la razón a Mannheim y hoy es impensable afrontar el debate migratorio sin tener en cuenta esa “interdependencia” económica entre naciones. Pocas dudas caben respecto al hecho de que los procesos migratorios de nuestra época son, en buena medida, el resultado de la pobreza y de las desigualdades extremas⁵⁶.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁵³ Karl Mannheim, *Libertad, poder y planificación democrática*, p. 90.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Véase José Félix Tezanos, “Causas y tendencias de los procesos migratorios de nuestra época. La migración como fenómeno social global”, en Alfonso Guerra y

Las diferencias de clases no solo están alentando la migración procedente de países pobres, sino que también puede tener fuertes efectos desestabilizadores en las sociedades de acogida; difícilmente cabe esperar tolerancia allí donde reinan el resentimiento y la tensión social. Por eso, para Mannheim –que, aclaro de nuevo, no escribe con el fenómeno multicultural en mente–, la justicia social “no es solo una cuestión de ética, sino una condición necesaria del funcionamiento del sistema democrático en sí”⁵⁷.

Si extrapolamos la conclusión del sociólogo húngaro al debate migratorio, acabaremos concluyendo que el empeño por mitigar la desigualdad es también una forma de contribuir a la paz social entre personas y grupos de distintas culturas. En palabras del filósofo Michael Walzer: “Ningún régimen de tolerancia funcionará durante mucho tiempo en una sociedad de inmigrantes, pluralista, moderna o posmoderna sin cierta combinación de las dos cosas siguientes: una defensa de las diferencias de grupo y un ataque a las diferencias de clase”⁵⁸.

Educación cívica

Ante el avance de los totalitarismos en Europa, Mannheim se pregunta por qué algunas democracias apostaron por la dictadura como antídoto a los problemas sociales de su época. Su respuesta apunta a las deficiencias de la tradición liberal, que resume en una especie de “ceguera para lo social”⁵⁹.

Frente al individualismo dominante en la época del *laissez faire*, que exaltó la autonomía del individuo por encima de cualquier otro valor, Mannheim propone una estrategia educativa que reequilibre los derechos y las obligaciones. En consecuencia, aboga por una educación “que tienda a crear el ciudadano responsable y en la cual la conciencia del todo sea, por lo menos, tan importante como la conciencia de los propios intereses”⁶⁰.

Para Mannheim, uno de los cometidos más nobles de la educación es ensanchar los horizontes mentales de los alumnos y despertar en ellos el

José Félix Tezanos (eds.), *La inmigración y sus causas. IV Encuentro Salamanca*, Editorial Sistema, Colección Ciencias Sociales, Madrid, 2008, p. 189. Ver también Sami Naïr, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁵⁷ Karl Mannheim, *Diagnóstico de nuestro tiempo*, p. 15.

⁵⁸ Michael Walzer, *Tratado sobre la tolerancia*, traducción de Francisco Álvarez, Paidós, Barcelona, 1998, p. 122.

⁵⁹ Karl Mannheim, *Diagnóstico de nuestro tiempo*, p. 106.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

sentido de pertenencia a una comunidad en sus justos términos. Si echa en cara al fascismo el énfasis excesivo que pone en la sociedad, critica al liberalismo por haber educado a los jóvenes “como lo hacen los padres ricos con sus niños”⁶¹; es decir, preocupándose solo de sus derechos y no de sus deberes hacia la sociedad:

Si la vieja educación autoritaria era ciega a las necesidades vitales y psicológicas del niño, el liberalismo del *laissez-faire* perturbó el equilibrio sano entre el individuo y la sociedad al concentrar su atención en el individuo casi con exclusividad, olvidando el medio concreto de la sociedad dentro del cual se espera a la contribución que cada individuo debe aportar⁶².

Otra gran misión que atribuye Mannheim a la educación es la de inculcar el aprecio por los valores democráticos. Y esto, en una época de reconstrucción social como la que siguió a la Segunda Guerra Mundial, exigía llevar ese empeño más allá del aula. Para espolear el pensamiento democrático, el propio Mannheim participó en varias tertulias de la BBC, el servicio público de radio y televisión británico. En ellas, planteó preguntas de todo tipo para hacer pensar a sus oyentes. Entre otras, Juan Ramón Tirado Rozúa menciona las siguientes: “¿Puede la sociedad sobrevivir sin valores comunes?; ¿tiene algún significado la educación social?; ¿puede la sociedad influir en la conducta del hombre?; ¿cuál es el origen de nuestra virtudes?; ¿cuál es el origen de la crisis de nuestro tiempo?; ¿hay un verdadero camino democrático?...”⁶³.

La visión de Mannheim sobre la educación cívica resulta particularmente necesaria en sociedades multiculturales. No solo para inculcar la importancia del respeto mutuo para la convivencia –lo que incluye el reconocimiento de lo distintivo de las diferentes tradiciones culturales y religiosas–, sino también para enseñar el marco de valores compartidos, exigibles a todos, y el aprecio por lo que nos une.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Juan Ramón Tirado Rozúa, “¿Libertad y/o planificación? Releyendo a Karl Mannheim en su cincuentenario”, *Contrastes: revista interdisciplinar de filosofía*, núm. 2, 1997, p. 331.

Laicidad positiva

Afirmar que una sociedad debe garantizar la identidad cultural de los distintos grupos que coexisten en ella supone defender que el Estado no puede dar la espalda a las creencias religiosas de los ciudadanos. Estado laico es aquel que no se identifica con una confesión religiosa concreta, pero eso no significa que deba pasar por alto el hecho religioso. Así lo entendió Mannheim, un judío agnóstico que mostró gran estima por el cristianismo.

Es cierto que Mannheim no comprendió la dimensión trascendente de la fe. Pero, al igual que otros sociólogos, veía en la religión una fuente de integración. Fue en Inglaterra, gracias al influjo de un grupo de pensadores cristianos, cuando Mannheim se persuadió –explica Julián Morales Navarro glosando la postura del sociólogo húngaro– “de que la sociología y la filosofía social no pueden permitirse el lujo de permanecer ‘ciegas a la religión’, así como una preocupación verdaderamente religiosa respecto del mundo no puede permanecer ‘ciega a la sociedad’”⁶⁴.

Este planteamiento lleva a Mannheim a defender la trascendencia pública del hecho religioso: “La religión no puede ni debe ser un compartimento separado de la sociedad planificada, sino que debe (...) revivir tanto en los motivos de las acciones individuales como en su incorporación institucional”⁶⁵. Por el mismo motivo, para Mannheim, la laicidad no puede significar “que las iglesias no puedan hacer recomendaciones” sobre lo que creen verdadero o justo.

En la misma línea se pronuncia Benjamin Barber: “Existe cierta estrechez de miras por parte de la doctrina secular al afirmar que si queremos respetar la separación de la Iglesia y del Estado, la religión debe ser completamente privada y personal (...) La religión se explica por su propia naturaleza comunal y su práctica solo es posible dentro de un espacio común y en los lugares públicos. La separación entre la Iglesia y el Estado se creó con el propósito de proteger la religión, no de destruirla. Al prohibir el culto en los espacios públicos nos arriesgamos a prohibir el propio culto, y cuando esgrimimos que el culto solo es constitucional

⁶⁴ Julián Morales Navarro, “Dimensión axiológica de la sociognoseología de K. Mannheim”, *Anuario Filosófico*, vol. 9, núm. 1, 1976, p. 277-278.

⁶⁵ Karl Mannheim, *Diagnóstico de nuestro tiempo*, p. 149.

cuando se realiza de manera privada, apartándolo del pueblo, estamos cayendo en la hipocresía”⁶⁶.

Lejos de ser un problema para la convivencia entre personas de distintas culturas, la apertura del Estado a la sensibilidad religiosa de los ciudadanos puede ser de hecho un facilitador del diálogo intercultural. Lo que sí excluye la posibilidad de entendimiento es negar a un grupo o comunidad el derecho a la manifestación pública de lo que constituye parte esencial de su identidad cultural.

4) El refugiado como intérprete entre dos culturas

El 19 de abril de 1945 la revista británica *The New English Weekly* publicó un breve artículo de Mannheim, titulado “The Function of the Refugee”. Se trata seguramente del único texto en el que el sociólogo húngaro aborda de manera directa el problema de la convivencia entre personas de distintas culturas. La primera parte del artículo constituye una réplica a la reseña que Montgomery Belgion escribió contra *Ideología y utopía*, en un número anterior de esa revista (15 de febrero de 1945). La segunda parte, que es la que aquí nos interesa, trata de dar respuesta a la pregunta que –según Mannheim– está implícita en la crítica de Belgion: “¿Cómo pueden los refugiados o, en términos más precisos, cómo pueden los individuos que han asimilado dos o más culturas servir mejor a su país de adopción?”⁶⁷.

Mannheim sabe de lo que habla cuando escribe sobre la contribución que puede hacer un refugiado a la sociedad a la que llega. Tras huir de Hungría en 1919 por motivos políticos, se instala en Alemania; y en 1933, con la llegada de Hitler al poder, vuelve a exiliarse hasta su muerte prematura en 1947; esta vez a Inglaterra, gracias a un programa de acogida ofrecido por la London School of Economics para intelectuales perseguidos por el nazismo. De origen húngaro judío, aunque educado en lengua alemana, representa un buen ejemplo del “hombre marginal” descrito por Robert E. Park⁶⁸.

⁶⁶ Benjamin Barber, *Un lugar para todos*, traducción de Carlos Ossés, Paidós, Barcelona, 2000, p. 64.

⁶⁷ Karl Mannheim, “The Function of the Refugee”, *The New English Weekly*, núm. 27, 19 abril 1945, pp. 5-6. Traducción propia.

⁶⁸ Fue Enrique Martín López quien me sugirió esta idea. La noción de “hombre marginal” aparece por primera vez en 1928, en un artículo de Robert E. Park en el que explica el mecanismo del conflicto cultural: “Human Migrations and the Marginal Man”, *American Journal of Sociology*, núm. 33, mayo 1928, pp. 881-893.

El “hombre marginal” de Park es el judío emigrante socializado en dos culturas, que elabora soluciones nuevas. Representa “un nuevo tipo de personalidad, a saber, un híbrido cultural, un hombre que vivía y compartía al mismo tiempo la vida cultural y las tradiciones de dos pueblos distintos; nunca dispuesto a romper del todo con su pasado y sus tradiciones –incluso si esto le hubiera sido posible–, y a causa del prejuicio racial, nunca aceptado por completo en la nueva sociedad donde trataba de hacerse un lugar. Era un hombre en los márgenes de dos culturas y dos sociedades, nunca del todo fundidas ni penetradas entre sí. El judío emancipado era y es, histórica y típicamente, el hombre marginal, el primer cosmopolita, el primer ciudadano del mundo”⁶⁹.

El hombre marginal experimenta un conflicto de lealtades entre el viejo y el nuevo yo; “entre la tibia seguridad del gueto, que había abandonado, y la fría libertad del mundo exterior, en el que no encontraba todavía su hogar”⁷⁰. Se trata de un conflicto moral, que a menudo se traduce en una profunda frustración y ansiedad espiritual.

Probablemente, prosigue Park, esa sensación de angustia es característica de todo inmigrante durante el período de transición. “Pero en el caso del hombre marginal ese período de crisis es relativamente permanente. El resultado es que tiende a convertirse en una personalidad-tipo. De ordinario, el hombre marginal es sangre mixta, como el mulato en los Estados Unidos o el euroasiático en Asia, pero eso es al parecer porque el hombre de sangre mixta es uno que vive en dos mundos y en ambos es más o menos un extranjero. El cristiano converso en Asia o en África muestra algunos de los rasgos del hombre marginal, si no la mayoría: el mismo espíritu inestable, autoconciencia intensa, esa inquietud y aquel malestar”⁷¹.

Al igual que el hombre marginal, Mannheim representa la figura tipo del conflicto y del avance cultural. Su posición particular –está dentro pero

Posteriormente, Park perfila este concepto en la introducción que hizo al estudio de Everett V. Stonequist, *The Marginal Man*, Nueva York, 1937.

⁶⁹ Robert E. Park, “Las migraciones humanas y el hombre marginal”, *Scripta Nova. Revista Electrónica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, traducción de Emilio Martínez, Universidad de Barcelona, núm. 75, 1 noviembre 2000, p. 12. En el mismo número de la revista puede verse un estudio introductorio de Emilio Martínez: “Robert E. Park y las migraciones”.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

viene de fuera– le confiere una claridad de juicio, de la que carecen los miembros de la sociedad de acogida. Esto le convierte de algún modo en un catalizador social: continuamente propone diagnósticos originales y formula terapias novedosas. Pero, al mismo tiempo, no puede escapar de ese estado de agitación interior del que habla Park: busca, en ocasiones de manera obsesiva, el reconocimiento de los demás como una vía de escape a la inseguridad en que se mueve⁷².

Respecto a la pregunta formulada en “The Function of the Refugee” – ¿cómo pueden los refugiados servir a su país de adopción?–, Mannheim cree que existen tres respuestas posibles: a) la primera se corresponde con la actitud de desprecio del nazismo, que ve en el refugiado un foco de infección; b) la segunda actitud, que es la que con frecuencia adoptan los refugiados, consiste en asimilar las normas y valores de la sociedad de acogida del modo más rápido posible; esta actitud no está exenta de riesgos, ya que encierra una capitulación de la propia identidad; c) la tercera actitud se caracteriza por una visión optimista del refugiado; en vez de mirarse a sí mismo con desprecio, trata de descubrir el valor añadido que puede aportar a la sociedad de acogida. El inmigrante ya no se limita a someterse ni a esconder las diferencias identitarias que lleva consigo; por el contrario, ahora las pone al servicio del país de adopción como algo enriquecedor⁷³.

⁷² De ello deja constancia Edward Shils, amigo y admirador de Mannheim. En el primer encuentro que mantuvo con Mannheim, en el otoño de 1942, la conversación giró en torno a la reputación que tenía el sociólogo húngaro en Estados Unidos. Según Shils, las primeras palabras de Mannheim fueron: “¿Qué piensan de mí en Estados Unidos?”. Véase Edward Shils, “Karl Mannheim”, *American Scholar*, núm. 64, 1995, p. 231. En ese mismo artículo, Shils relata la necesidad que tenía Mannheim de reconocimiento: “Pese a la profunda admiración que sentía [T. S.] Eliot hacia sus cualidades intelectuales y morales (...), nada disminuía la ansiedad sobre su estatus y su futuro. Es una pena. Era un hombre de gran categoría intelectual y moral. Era una buena persona, capaz de recibir y de mostrar afecto, pero necesitaba algo más que eso”. Véase Edward Shils, *ibid.*, p. 235. Traducción propia. Sobre la relación de amistad de Shils con Mannheim y su progresivo distanciamiento, véase Jefferson Pooley, “Edward Shils’ Turn Against Karl Mannheim: The Central Europe Connection”, *Am Soc*, núm. 38, 2007, pp. 364-382.

⁷³ Véase Karl Mannheim, “The Function of the Refugee”, p. 6.

Esta tercera actitud es la que adopta Mannheim. A su juicio, el refugiado socializado en dos o más culturas “tiene la habilidad de ver cada experiencia a la luz de situaciones comparadas y de pensar más fácilmente en soluciones alternativas”⁷⁴. Su participación en la vida cultural de gentes diversas –que le ha hecho compartir nuevos y distintos patrones de interacción social, de comportamiento y de organización comunitaria– constituye una oportunidad privilegiada para “servir como intérprete viviente entre culturas diferentes y de crear comunicaciones vivas entre mundos diversos que hasta ahora se han mantenido aparte”⁷⁵.

Para que el refugiado despliegue todas sus posibilidades, es imprescindible –dice Mannheim– que los miembros de la sociedad de acogida tengan una actitud abierta. “En el pasado, cuando los países podían permitirse vivir en el aislamiento mental, la necesidad de fomentar esa interpenetración de ideas era poco más que un lujo. Pero creo que no exagero cuando digo que, en la coyuntura actual, solo aquellos países que opten por ensanchar sus puntos de vista y por asimilar los modos de pensar y los problemas de otros países, serán capaces de liderar la gran transformación que se avecina”⁷⁶.

Como puso de manifiesto en *Diagnóstico de nuestro tiempo*, Mannheim tiene la convicción de que esa función de liderazgo corresponde a Inglaterra⁷⁷. Para que esta función no quede frustrada, el sociólogo húngaro advierte del peligro de considerar el propio punto de vista como el único representativo de la tradición inglesa. Mannheim se resiste a pensar que las personas que razonan así sean “más genuinamente inglesas que aquellas otras que no tienen miedo a las nuevas experiencias”⁷⁸. Y añade: “Los genuinamente ingleses son aquellos que comprenden que, en el tiempo presente, Inglaterra tiene la misión de preparar el terreno para la gran confrontación de ideas que llega desde distintas regiones y para afrontar su discusión en un espíritu de libertad”⁷⁹.

Retomando su réplica a Montgomery Belgium, Mannheim concluye su artículo con las siguientes palabras: “Dado que el capitán Belgium se

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Véase Karl Mannheim, *Diagnóstico de nuestro tiempo*, p. 7.

⁷⁸ Karl Mannheim, “The Function of the Refugee”, p. 6.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

refirió críticamente en su reseña a la serie de libros que estoy editando bajo el título 'The International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction', ¿puedo decir unas palabras de corrección? Esta colección pretende ser una plataforma para el intercambio de ideas y de experiencias entre investigadores ingleses, norteamericanos y continentales. Sus autores son ingleses, norteamericanos, suecos, alemanes, checos, húngaros y chinos y, como la serie también se está publicando en Estados Unidos y pronto aparecerá en el continente, sirve tanto para importar las ideas de otros países a este país como para difundir las ideas inglesas a otras partes del mundo»⁸⁰.

La visión positiva de Mannheim sobre el refugiado y su propia experiencia vital completan el valioso legado de este sociólogo al debate sobre cómo articular la convivencia entre personas de distintas culturas.

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⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

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LA PHÉNOMÉNOLOGIE DE L'IMAGE DANS LA PHILOSOPHIE DE SARTRE. UNE LECTURE DU POINT DE VUE DU CONCEPT SARTRIEN DE « CONVERSION »

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Abstract: *This article addresses Sartre's conception of the image, developed by him from a phenomenological perspective. The author points out that Sartre rejects the conception of his time about the image as a content of consciousness, placed in it as a material thing in space, and advances the hypothesis of the identity between them. For him, the image is a form of consciousness, an active and creative phenomenon. Sartre's phenomenological approach, carried out within the framework of eidetic psychology and situated on the plane of reflective experience, considered infallible, determines him to establish the features of the image, its main types and to realize their description. These are the express subject of the article. Numerous other aspects of the image are placed by Sartre in the sphere of experimental psychology, and that's why they are not the subject of this article. At the end of the article the author emphasizes the importance of Sartre's conception of image in substantiating his conception of man and freedom.*

Keywords: *Sartre, image, consciousness, phenomenology, conversion.*

1. Introduction

Le rôle de l'image² dans la vie humaine et la société a toujours été et reste encore essentiel.³ De plus, le phénomène de l'image est très complexe, le

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² Il y a de nombreux types d'images, parmi lesquelles visuelles, auditives, tactiles, olfactives, mais aussi polysensorielles ou synthétiques. Dans ce qui suit, nous nous référons principalement aux images visuelles.

³ Sur le rôle de l'image dans l'histoire de l'humanité, voir : Régis Debray.1992. *Vie et mort de l'image. Une histoire du regard en Occident*. Paris: Gallimard. Dans cet ouvrage, Debray parle d'un « archaïsme post-moderne » de l'époque actuelle, dans lequel les « médiations omniprésentes » provoquent un « fétichisme de l'image »

concept d' « image » exprimant une diversité d'aspects de l'expérience humaine, depuis les représentations mentales et les figures de style courantes dans la littérature, jusqu'aux images extérieures, configurées sur divers supports matériels et ayant de nombreux contenus et fonctions : cognitifs, analogiques, symboliques, religieux-spirituels, esthétiques, artistiques, idéologiques, etc.⁴ En ce qui concerne le problème de la nature de l'image mentale, il a attiré l'attention des philosophes depuis l'Antiquité, car l'image est étroitement liée au fonctionnement de notre esprit et, par conséquent, aux spécificités de la conscience de l'homme, ce qui le distingue principalement des animaux. En ce sens, Démocrite, déjà aux IV-III siècles av. J.-C., mettait en évidence la relation directe entre les images sensibles des choses (leurs simulacres - gr. εἰδωλα) – qui, selon lui, flottent partout dans l'air, comme des effluves, entre le sujet percevant et l'objet perçu – et leurs images mentales, qui représentent une récupération d'images sensorielles par notre âme et, en même temps, une adaptation de celles-ci aux capacités perceptives du sujet.⁵

La philosophie moderne, qui s'est concentrée sur la révélation des mécanismes complexes de la connaissance, s'est toujours préoccupée du rôle de l'image dans les processus cognitifs, et les conceptions des penseurs à ce sujet ont influencé les théories ultérieures en psychologie. Bien que cette dernière, en tant que science, paraisse beaucoup plus appropriée que la philosophie pour traiter des questions concernant le psychisme humain, les philosophes contemporains n'ont pas abandonné l'étude des processus mentaux, de sorte que leur intérêt à résoudre « l'énigme » de la fonction de l'imagination et son résultat, l'image, est resté relativement constant.

Dans ce contexte, la phénoménologie, dont l'intention principale était de décrire l'essence des phénomènes de conscience, n'est pas restée insensible au « phénomène image ». Husserl lui-même y prêta une attention particulière, même si ses ouvrages les plus représentatifs à cet

qui a beaucoup « de points communs avec la lointaine ère des idoles », et dans laquelle, ainsi, « nous découvrons la phénoménologie des imageries primitives » (Debray 1992: 321).

⁴ Voir, en ce sens, des ouvrages tels que : Martine Joly. 2015. *Introduction à l'analyse de l'image*. Paris: Armand Colin, ou Jacques Morizot. 2005. *Qu'est-ce qu'une image?*. Paris: Vrin.

⁵ Morel 2000.

égard ne furent publiés qu'après sa mort, survenue en 1938⁶. Mais ceux qui ont repris sa méthode de penser et l'ont adaptée à leurs propres positions philosophiques ont compris l'importance de l'image pour la manière d'être de la conscience, et se sont efforcés de l'éclairer sous le plus d'angles possibles. L'un d'eux était Jean-Paul Sartre, qui, au début de sa période de création philosophique, a consacré à l'image et à l'imagination deux travaux distincts mais complémentaires : *L'Imagination* (1936) et *L'Imaginaire* (1940).

Le présent article se propose d'aborder la conception sartrienne de l'image telle qu'elle s'est cristallisée dans ces deux ouvrages – les seuls ouvrages antumes d'envergure consacrées par Sartre entièrement à la conscience imaginative – sous l'influence de la vision philosophique de type phénoménologique initiée par Husserl, dont les cours Sartre écouta entre 1933 et 1934, à Berlin. En fait, en ce qui concerne *L'Imaginaire*, il ne se concentrera que sur ses deux premières parties (« Le certain. Structure intentionnelle de l'image » et « Le probable. Nature de l'analogon dans l'image mentale »), car dans les deux dernières Sartre passe délibérément du plan de la description phénoménologique de l'image à celui de la psychologie expérimentale.

La méthodologie de l'approche est celle d'un regard rétrospective, effectué par la grille de lecture fournie par le concept sartrien de « conversion », développé par Sartre dans *L'Être et le néant* (1943) principalement comme un concept ontologique, synonyme surtout à la réflexion pure ou « non complice » de la conscience, et dans les *Cahiers pour une morale* (écrits entre 1947-1948, mais publiés en 1980), comme un concept à la fois ontologique et éthique. Dans la présente approche, le concept de conversion sera utilisé comme un concept épistémologique et méthodologique, en gardant toutefois le sens général sartrien de la conversion, mais dans sa version « forte », comme le retournement du regard de la conscience vers elle-même avec pleine lucidité, qui la rend capable de se comprendre dans son authenticité. En même temps, les implications ontologiques et éthiques concernant, entre autres, l'angoisse, la mauvaise foi ou la liberté, qui ne trouvent pas leur place dans cette

⁶ Le volume significatif sur le problème de l'image chez Husserl, publié à titre posthume, est: Edmund Husserl. 1980. *Husserliana XXIII. Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung: Zur Phänomenologie der Anschaulichen Vergegenwärtigungen, Texte aus dem Nachlass (1898–1925)*. Hague/ Boston/London: Martinus Nijhoff.

approche strictement épistémique, seront laissées de côté. Procédant ainsi, l'auteur cherche à capitaliser sur le concept sartrien de conversion en l'appliquant même à l'analyse d'un thème distinct de la pensée sartrienne pour donner ainsi à celui-ci un éclairage nouveau et révélateur.

Mais avant cela, pour avoir une image du point de départ de Sartre dans l'établissement de sa vision phénoménologique, et, en même temps, un terme interne de comparaison, il faut rappeler la période de ses études universitaires, qui, sans être aucunement sous l'influence de la phénoménologie, ils préparent sa future rencontre avec elle, et dans lesquels le philosophe manifeste son intérêt théorique pour le problème de l'image.

2. La position anté-phénoménologique sur l'image

2.1. L'image dans l'art cinématographique

Le premier texte dans lequel Sartre traite expressément de l'image comme objet d'étude est une composition scolaire de 1924, alors qu'il était probablement déjà élève à l'École normale supérieure, et la perspective d'approche est principalement esthétique. Intitulé « Apologie pour le cinéma. Défense et illustration d'un Art international », l'ouvrage, assez court, qui fut publié pour la première fois bien plus tard⁷, vise, en outre de défendre le statut d'art du cinéma, à mettre en lumière les importantes conséquences pour l'esthétique de son émergence dans l'histoire.

En effet, au sein de la philosophie française, des figures importantes comme Henri Bergson et Alain (Émile Chartier) avaient déjà montré leur hostilité envers le cinéma, qu'ils plaçaient, quoique sous des angles différents, dans le domaine de l'insignifiance et de l'inauthenticité, niant ainsi sa prétention d'être un art. Ainsi, Alain, dans l'article « L'immobile », de son ouvrage *Propos sur l'esthétique* (1923), au nom de l'idéal ontologique et esthétique de l'immobilité, qu'il tente de justifier comme règle valable pour tous les arts reconnus (y compris pour le théâtre et la musique), traite avec mépris « l'art de l'écran », qui, au contraire, serait guidé par la loi du mouvement permanent, l'accusant même qu'il abuse de ses possibilités techniques en ce sens.⁸ D'autre part, Bergson, dont la théorie de la durée réhabilite le mouvement comme expression de la continuité de la vie

⁷ Sartre 1990: 388–404.

⁸ Alain 1923: 14–15.

spirituelle profonde de la conscience, paradoxalement, avait également condamné le cinéma dès 1907, dans l'œuvre *L'évolution créatrice*, estimant que le mouvement qu'il déploie n'est qu'une imitation du mouvement authentique, objectif, une « illusion mécanistique », n'étant en réalité qu'une somme d'images séparées, immobiles, enchaînées les unes aux autres d'une manière tout à fait artificielle.⁹

Conquis par le nouveau art, le jeune Sartre ne se laisse cependant pas convaincu par les arguments des deux philosophes, selon lesquels le cinéma serait quelque chose sans valeur, les considérant comme l'expression d'un état d'esprit propre à une génération passée. Il retient de la philosophie de Bergson le geste qui « détrône » les Idées immuables et impose le changement comme seule réalité authentique, refusant, en même temps, d'accepter que le mouvement sur l'écran de cinéma soit un pseudo-mouvement. Envisageant le problème de cette double perspective, Sartre s'oppose à la position conservatrice d'Alain selon laquelle l'art est le territoire exclusif de l'immuable, et il avance l'idée que l'esthétique doit accepter que le mouvement a également le droit de jouer un rôle de principe dans l'art. Ainsi la cinématographie est retirée de la zone périphérique, des préoccupations artistiques illégitimes, et, contre Bergson lui-même, Sartre décrète que l'art de l'écran est authentiquement bergsonien : « Le cinéma donne la formule d'un art bergsonien. Il inaugure la mobilité dans l'esthétique »¹⁰. De plus, contre l'accusation d'Alain que celui-là fait un usage excessif du mouvement, Sartre soutient que le cinéma,

...sage novateur, il garde des mesures. (...) Il y a trop de différences entre les deux tensions, la nôtre et celle du dehors. La mobilité de l'écran tient du milieu. Tout y change trop pour être prévu; mais, pour charmer les sens et rassurer l'esprit, tout y change suivant un rythme perçu, non point aperçu, souple lien, insinuante loi.¹¹

Ce qui fascine avant tout Sartre dans l'art cinématographique, ce sont précisément les images en mouvement, qui sont (encore) muettes et sans couleur, mais qui, en harmonie avec la musique de fond, constituent un flux continu et indivisible, comme la durée bergsonienne, qui s'empare de la conscience, non permettant à notre Moi de se manifester, de prendre

⁹ Bergson 2021: 272–273. 304–315.

¹⁰ Sartre 1990: 389.

¹¹ Sartre 1990: 389.

distance et de s'imposer, mais, au contraire, de le confisquer complètement, de l'absorber dans l'action et de l'orienter selon la volonté de celui qui manie la caméra.

Les images en mouvement ont un fort impact sur la conscience notamment du fait qu'il y a en elles de vraies personnes, placées dans un environnement naturel, normal, dépourvu de l'artificiel qui existe au théâtre, par exemple. Cela donne l'impression d'une vie concrète, authentique, hautement individualisée, à laquelle le spectateur participe réellement, c'est-à-dire à laquelle il a un accès immédiat et non censuré, de manière à la fois objective et subjective, ce qui suscite son émotion et rend ses expériences beaucoup plus intenses par rapport aux personnages et à l'histoire qui se déploie à l'écran. Dans les images qui se déroulent sous nos yeux, toutes les choses sont « réelles », pas de simples imitations, comme au théâtre, ou des symboles abstraits, comme dans la littérature, et

Le rythme, cette succession d'images longues et d'images courtes, fait de l'écoulement perpétuel des choses une symphonie organisée, il soumet le tout à une formule, il abstrait un peu – très peu – pour parfaire. (...) Bref, idéaliste discret, le film nous donne la *sensation de l'Ensemble*.¹²

En même temps, les images, extrêmement concrètes et « palpables », sont capables d'exprimer de manière suggestive tout le trouble subconscient d'une âme dévastée, si bien que « le cinéma seul peut rendre un compte exact de la psychanalyse »¹³, mais, également, elles peuvent reproduire l'abstrait, ou recomposer, avec un maximum de précision, l'illusoire et l'irrationnel que nous rencontrons souvent au niveau de la conscience. Par exemple,

La technique naturaliste du cinéma nous montre le rêve comme nous le trouvons dans notre conscience: une représentation floue. (...) L'hallucination, le rêve du film naturaliste ne sont pas bizarres, ils sont vrais: ils sont la reproduction fidèle d'un état de conscience. Le rêve dans le film cubiste, dans ce décor aux lignes accusées, aux plans lumineux qui se coupent à angles nets, tire son irréalité remarquable de ce qu'il concilie deux contraires: la précision géométrique avec une irrationnelle fluidité.¹⁴

¹² Sartre 1990: 396–397.

¹³ Sartre 1990: 398.

¹⁴ Sartre 1990: 402.

Pratiquement, dans ces lignes, Sartre prétend qu'il y a plus qu'une similitude entre un type d'image intérieure, de nature psychique, et un type d'image extérieure, à savoir leur identité formelle, soulignant ainsi la capacité des techniques cinématographiques d'« imiter » ou de reconstruire, avec des moyens spécifiques, sur le fond d'un écran matériel, un acte mental par excellence. En même temps, il caractérise le rêve, du moins le rêve hallucinogène, comme une « représentation floue », mélange de rigueur et d'irrationnel, qui crée l'impression prégnante d'irréalité, mais qui fait partie du mode propre de manifestation de la conscience. On assiste ici à une tentative de Sartre d'aborder théoriquement le phénomène de l'image au moyen à la fois de l'esthétique et de la psychologie, directions qu'il développera plus tard de façon autonome l'une de l'autre. D'ailleurs, dans le cadre de sa nouvelle orientation philosophique, comme le note Mauro Carbone,

Sartre quitte le bergsonisme et la théorie du cinéma. (...) À partir de 1933 Sartre découvrira la phénoménologie de Husserl qui lui semblera, mieux que la pensée bergsonienne, satisfaire son désir d'aller « vers le concret », y compris le « concret » des images.¹⁵

Ainsi, Sartre ne reviendra jamais, en tant que théoricien, à l'image animée projetée sur l'écran de cinéma, qui l'avait captivé dans sa jeunesse et à laquelle, selon son propre témoignage, recueilli par Simone de Beauvoir¹⁶, le philosophe doit, "par contraste", l'intuition du phénomène de contingence, présent "partout" dans l'existence humaine, et dont le concept est essentiel dans la construction de l'ontologie sartrienne.

2.2. La nature de l'image dans le *Mémoire de fin d'études*

Dans les années suivantes, Sartre a manifesté son intérêt pour le problème de l'image en travaillant principalement dans la direction psychologique et en concrétisant son travail dans l'ouvrage de fin d'études supérieures, préparé sous la direction d'Henri Delacroix, l'un des célèbres psychologues de l'époque. Soutenu en 1927 et intitulé « L'Image dans la vie psychologique: rôle et nature », il est considéré par Alain Flajoliet comme un « premier grand travail de Sartre sur l'imagination » et une « véritable

¹⁵ Carbone 2016: 18.

¹⁶ Beauvoir 1981: 181–182.

réfondation métaphysique de la psychologie de l'image »¹⁷, bien qu'il ait été peu connue car il n'a été publié que récemment¹⁸.

Dans cet ouvrage, Sartre se concentre sur l'image mentale et rejette l'opinion de nombreux psychologues contemporains avec lui selon laquelle l'image est une représentation d'un objet absent mais précédemment perçu, tandis que la perception est une représentation d'un objet présent. L'argument de Sartre est que si telle était la vérité, nous ne serions plus capables de distinguer une perception d'une image, ce qui, en réalité, nous arrive toujours spontanément. Pour sa part, il affirme la nette distinction entre les deux phénomènes psychiques, et considère en outre que l'image ne joue aucun rôle dans la constitution de la perception, ou, tout au plus, qu'elle n'a qu'un « rôle affectif ». Ainsi, comme variante de travail, il commence sa recherche par la définition suivante « provisoire » de l'image : « L'image est le substitut mental d'une perception »¹⁹.

D'autre part, Sartre n'est pas d'accord avec le fait qu'il y aurait une pensée qui fonctionne en l'absence d'images, thèse qu'il considère comme « à la mode » à son époque, mais qu'il trouve, en remontant le temps dans l'histoire de la philosophie, jusqu'à Leibniz, Descartes et Hobbes. Mais pour Sartre, au contraire, la pensée ne se manifeste que par des images, même si l'imagination est quelque chose de distinct par rapport à la pensée, et l'image « a une logique différente de celle de la pensée: laissée à elle-même, elle a un mode de développement analogue à celui des choses perçues »²⁰. Cependant, il est profondément mécontent de la conception associationniste d'Hippolyte Taine qui, bien qu'il pose « l'Image comme élément unique de l'esprit »²¹, la considère comme une simple sensation renaissante, supprimant ainsi à la fois « la *faculté* 'Imagination' », ainsi que « l'entité 'Pensée' ». Bergson lui-même,

...conserve à l'image sa nature sensorielle. Sans doute elle vient de l'esprit où elle était souvenir pur et immatériel. Mais elle ne devient image, c'est-à-dire consciente, qu'en tant qu'elle agit « par derrière » sur les centres perceptifs.

¹⁷ Flajoliet 2008: 152.

¹⁸ Sartre 2019.

¹⁹ Sartre 2019: 67.

²⁰ Sartre 2019: 138.

²¹ Sartre 2019: 81.

Elle est « sensation virtuelle », c'est-à-dire que son origine est interne et qu'elle ne correspond à aucun objet présent.²²

Le rejet de la conception qui soutient la nature sensible de l'image est un objectif essentiel de la démarche sartrienne, car celle-ci fait de l'image une chose opaque, dure, impénétrable, dépourvue de véritable souplesse, incompatible avec le mode de manifestation de la pensée. Pour cela, Sartre s'appuie sur les travaux de représentants de l'École de Würzburg, qui

...ont révélé en effet l'existence de ces images inconsistantes, fluides, fugitives, qu'on peut prendre pour des pensées pures, et qui, de fait, sont la pensée elle-même. Mais qui ne sont point des représentations mnémiques juxtaposées, qui nous apparaissent bien plutôt comme nées d'une création, d'un jaillissement continuel et comme possédant précisément tous les caractères de souplesse, de spontanéité, d'intelligence qu'on refuse à l'image ordinaire: tous les caractères de la pensée. Ils ont montré en bref que l'image n'est pas ici comme le morceau d'un puzzle dont l'assemblage formerait le processus d'idéation, mais bien plutôt comme un écrin, une gaine enveloppant la pensée elle-même.²³

Sartre prétend cependant comprendre mieux qu'eux la signification de leurs propres expériences, car ils continuaient à admettre l'existence, au-dessus de la pensée ordinaire, d'une pensée pure, exercée en l'absence d'images, tandis qu'il soutient que dans l'acte concret de la pensée, qui est toujours une pensée imaginative, la conscience procède à une synthèse permanente entre l'action de deux types de lois, qui s'influencent mutuellement de manières différentes, au sein de la vie psychique : celles qui régissent le développement des objets physiques, « lois qui ne sont autres que les lois de succession de nos perceptions »²⁴, et celles qui régissent la pensée en général, « qui sont les lois de détermination de l'espace pur *a priori* »²⁵. Dans cette activité de synthèse l'image a un rôle organisateur ; en fait, à l'origine, elle représente la réponse spécifique du corps à la perception, mais parce qu'elle se manifeste au niveau de l'esprit et peut être envisagée exclusivement pour elle-même, indépendamment de

²² Sartre 2019: 88.

²³ Sartre 2019: 117.

²⁴ Sartre 2019: 140.

²⁵ Sartre 2019: 140.

son origine ou de son rôle, elle se configure, néanmoins, comme un «réponse» sublimé.²⁶ De plus,

On ne prend conscience de son corps (affectivité-motricité) que par des images produites en général dans les limites d'un autre sens que celui qui est réellement en jeu, simples et sans lien commun dans certains cas, mais le plus souvent systématisées et plus ou moins symboliques. (...) Par suite – et contrairement aux théoriciens de l'épiphénoménisme –, notre attitude à un instant déterminé est toujours le produit de deux sortes de facteurs *au moins*: les causes externes dans lesquelles nous faisons rentrer les états physiologiques eux-mêmes, et l'image plus ou moins vague que nous avons de nous-mêmes, qui, née de ces causes externes, les déborde dès qu'elle arrive à la conscience, se développe suivant des lois autonomes, et réagit sur le physiologique.²⁷

De la relation extrêmement étroite entre l'image et le plan spirituel de la conscience, Sartre tire la conclusion qu'on ne peut plus admettre l'idée de la nature sensible de l'image, encore largement admise à l'époque, quoique pas de manière unanime, car il met en lumière des voix qui tendent à nier à l'image le caractère spécifique, ou même veulent l'éliminer complètement de la pensée ou de la vie psychique en général. Mais Sartre, bien qu'il lui dénie l'extériorité et l'objectivité, au sens que l'image n'est pas parmi les objets du monde extérieur, ni une sorte d'objet matériel, autonome et résistant à la conscience, prétend qu'elle a son propre individualité, et si elle se laisse pénétrée par l'esprit « dans toutes ses parties », c'est qu'elle est « faite de la même contexture que toute notre vie psychique ».²⁸ Aussi, malgré certains attributs spatiaux, l'image ne peut pas être considérée comme une représentation, parce que « chez un individu *normal* les seules représentations sont les perceptions »²⁹, de sorte que « toute image est non pas un objet, ni même la représentation générique d'une classe d'objets, mais un *complexus* d'objets fondus et très différents »³⁰.

Sans préciser, pour l'instant, quelle serait la composition de ce *complexus*, Sartre identifie finalement l'image, en tant que phénomène

²⁶ Sartre 2019: 164.

²⁷ Sartre 2019: 208–209.

²⁸ Sartre 2019: 221.

²⁹ Sartre 2019: 231.

³⁰ Sartre 2019: 231.

mental, à l'idée, dont elle ne se distinguerait que d'un point de vue vectoriel, ce qui implique aussi la subordination à des lois distinctes, qui pourtant agissent au niveau du psychisme dans une interpénétration permanente. Mais on remarque qu'en fait, mettant en évidence les spécificités de chacun des deux phénomènes, il accorde la prééminence à l'image, puisqu'il en vient à affirmer que « toute réalité psychologique est image »³¹, ce qui explique encore son propos initial que la pensée ne s'effectue qu'à travers des images. Ainsi la position de Sartre est que

La vie psychologique présente cette particularité que tout état mental, en tant qu'il est tourné vers l'extérieur, *est idée*, c'est-à-dire action commençante ou retenue qui doit s'achever en paroles et en gestes, et en tant qu'il est tourné vers l'intérieur, en tant qu'une introspection purement contemplative le peut mettre en pleine conscience, *est image*. L'image est toujours un substitut d'un objet de perception, qu'il soit passé ou possible. (...) Mais ce substitut n'est pas représentatif. (...) Toute image est un jaillissement spontané qui va en se resserrant et en s'individualisant davantage en profondeur. Elles possèdent toutes un formidable substrat affectif et intellectuel. Elles sont ce qu'on pourrait appeler des *synthèses primitives*, c'est-à-dire antérieures à toute autre synthèse.³²

Mais celui qui réalise ces synthèses, transformant en image, par un acte intentionnel spécifique, valorisateur et créateur, ce complexe d'éléments divers auquel Sartre se référait plus haut, c'est l'Esprit, de sorte que le philosophe considère que, pour expliquer adéquatement l'image il faut d'abord expliquer l'Esprit, bien qu'il admette aussi que cela dépasse la portée de nos connaissances actuelles. Pour autant, se tourner vers l'Esprit, c'est dépasser le plan du psychologique vers le niveau métaphysique, ce qui signifie que la psychologie ne peut offrir d'explications aux phénomènes psychiques, mais seulement à leurs composantes, que Sartre regroupe en deux grandes catégories : les perceptions et les sensations kinesthésiques, qui sont étroitement liées aux mouvements du corps. Ces mouvements corporels s'avèrent être à la base des images et, en fait, de toute notre vie psychique, en tant que *rudis datum* sur lesquelles l'Esprit s'exerce pour réaliser ses propres synthèses, qui, bien que distinctes en leur

³¹ Sartre 2019: 234.

³² Sartre 2019: 233–234.

mode de manifestation, ils ont la même nature et visent un but commun, qui exprime la tendance centrifuge de l'Esprit.

Penser, jouir, souffrir, c'est avoir conscience de notre corps en mouvement, avec l'arrière-fond de l'Esprit qui donne immédiatement une intention et une valeur à ces divers mouvements. Aussi n'y a-t-il *aucune différence de nature entre les différents phénomènes psychologiques, qu'ils soient « affectifs » ou « intellectuels »*. Ils viennent tous de mouvements du corps et chacun d'eux en est une synthèse. Or, ces synthèses se font toujours dans la même direction qui est celle de la perception. Nous tendons à constituer un espace psychique où évolueraient des objets analogues à ceux du monde extérieur. *L'image n'est que l'orientation du corps par l'Esprit vers le monde extérieur*. Et, en ce sens, tous les phénomènes de la vie psychologique, pensées, douleurs, joies, ont forme d'images.³³

Cependant, l'*analogon* imaginatif du monde perceptif, qui est une construction de l'Esprit, malgré sa force persuasive sur les croyances des individus, n'a aucune capacité de représentation, et de ce point de vue c'est un échec inévitable, car il utilise pour ses constructions un matière entièrement différente de celle de son « modèle ». Mais cela profite en fait à notre vie psychique qui, dégagée des contraintes naturellement appliquées aux actes de représentation, peut réaliser sans fin, en toute liberté, les synthèses primitives de l'Esprit, c'est-à-dire les actes imaginatifs, dont le système complexe constitue la Pensée.

Par conséquent, la conclusion du jeune Sartre concernant la nature et le rôle de l'image dans la vie psychique est que l'image est une synthèse primaire, intentionnelle et valorisante de nos mouvements corporels par l'Esprit, la forme que prennent tous nos actes psychiques internes, des émotions aux pensées, à travers lequel l'Esprit cherche à créer un *analogon* mental du monde extérieur et en même temps à orienter notre corps dans ce monde.

Pour étayer cette position, Sartre dépasse les simples méthodes et la vision de la psychologie pour se tourner vers la perspective métaphysique, ce qui était une attitude naturelle et parfaitement légitime de la part d'un étudiant en philosophie. Mais malgré la ferme critique des conceptions tant psychologiques que philosophiques influentes à l'époque sur le phénomène de l'image, ainsi que des éléments d'originalité qu'il conservera en partie plus tard dans la construction de sa conception phénoménologique de

³³ Sartre 2019: 242.

l'image, il conçoit son ouvrage dans le paradigme d'une certaine École philosophique à laquelle il appartenait à cette date, à savoir « *celle de la psychologie philosophique française de l'entre-deux-guerres* »³⁴, même s'il analyse très attentivement la psychologie tant allemande qu'anglo-saxonne, et Henri Delacroix, le professeur directeur de Sartre, établit, par une notation en les pages du *Mémoire*, sa parenté avec les théories romantiques sur l'image depuis la fin du XIX^e siècle.

En tout cas, même si Sartre mentionne le nom de Husserl dans son ouvrage, il ne le fait que d'une manière tangentielle, dans le cadre d'une approche des rapports entre logique et psychologie, et bien qu'il utilise des concepts auxquels il accordera plus tard une importance majeure dans sa propre conception phénoménologique (e.g. « intentionnalité », « *analogon* »), rien ne préfigure pour l'instant la grande rencontre avec la pensée de celui-là, qui se réalisera pour la première fois en 1930, mais surtout à partir de 1933. Cependant, cet ouvrage lui fournira une matière consistante quant à la critique des conceptions historiques et contemporaines avec lui de l'image, qu'il utilisera pleinement dans la création des deux ouvrages publiés après 9 et respectivement 13 ans de la présentation du *Mémoire* pour l'obtention du Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures: *L'Imagination* et *L'Imaginaire*, mais qui sera valorisée sous l'angle d'une tout autre vision philosophique, déjà cristallisée, qui avait dépassé le stade du simple tâtonnement théorique. C'est précisément cette vision que nous allons essayer d'aborder maintenant en utilisant comme instrument de travail le concept sartrien de « conversion », qui sera théorisé par lui après la publication des deux ouvrages mentionnés ci-dessus.

3. *Le stade de la pré-conversion*

3.1. *L'image comme objet de la réflexion impure*

La démarche se justifie aussi parce que *L'Imagination* et *L'Imaginaire*, qui, par leur contenu, sont en réelle continuité avec l'étape pré-phénoménologique sartrienne, ne sont rompus ni des étapes suivantes de la création philosophique sartrienne. Au contraire, ces travaux préparent le grand ouvrage d'« ontologie phénoménologique », *L'Être et le néant* (1943), qui expose la conception de Sartre sur la spécificité de l'homme et sur la liberté, qu'il la fonde sur une manière d'appréhender la conscience dans

³⁴ Dassonneville 2019: 18.

laquelle l'image et l'imagination, la fonction de la conscience responsable de la création des images, jouent un rôle clé, fait qui, comme on l'a déjà noté, représente l'un des principaux éléments d'originalité de la pensée de Sartre. Ainsi,

La philosophie de Sartre est distinctement considérée comme une philosophie de la liberté, mais un aspect par lequel elle se distingue des autres philosophies de la liberté est la mesure dans laquelle l'imagination est l'agent de notre liberté et le fait que le plus émouvant l'image de notre liberté est une conversion.³⁵ (...) Une « conversion » est philosophiquement la forme la plus significative de changement de rôle.³⁶

En effet, le concept de « conversion », issu de la tradition néoplatonicienne, où il représente l'orientation de la création vers son fondement absolu et le retour à lui³⁷, sera développé par Sartre de façon personnelle à partir de *L'Être et le néant*, et il signifie l'acte de la réflexion par lequel la conscience se retourne vers elle-même, se prenant pour objet et générant ainsi une image de soi, authentique ou non, mais qui a des conséquences décisives sur le projet de soi originel du Pour-soi, qui représente le choix de sa manière d'être dans le monde. En réalité, puisque le Pour-soi se perçoit spontanément du point de vue des choses du monde et de l'Autre, l'acte de réflexion de la conscience est d'abord impur, générant une fausse image d'elle-même, maintenant la conscience dans une situation ingrate, de liberté asservie. Mais l'échec de cette démarche mystificatrice, qui conduit la conscience dans une impasse, la motive à accéder, « par une sorte de *catharsis* »³⁸, à une réflexion pure et purifiante, non complice, qui, bien qu'elle soit subséquente, c'est l'originelle et lui donne la seule image authentique d'elle-même, ce qui l'amène à changer radicalement ses rapports à l'Autre et au monde. Et en fait, ceci est la véritable signification de la conversion chez Sartre.

Appliquant ce schéma général à la manière dont Sartre lui-même, dans les écrits cités, conçoit la manière dont la conscience philosophique³⁹

³⁵ Cumming 1992: 61.

³⁶ Cumming 1992: 60.

³⁷ Plotin 2002–2010.

³⁸ Sartre 1943: 190.

³⁹ Par « conscience philosophique » nous n'entendons pas ici la conscience de soi de la philosophie, mais la conscience qui s'exerce dans le cadre de la pensée

se rapporte au phénomène de l'image, il faut d'abord identifier le moment de spontanéité de cette conscience, par lequel, dirigeant son attention vers elle-même comme fonction imaginative et conscience d'image, elle se manifeste spontanément comme réflexion impure, constituante ou complice, générant une fausse image, c'est-à-dire une vision inauthentique et mystifiatrice de l'image. Ce moment est configuré par Sartre à l'aide de la formule « la métaphysique naïve de l'image »⁴⁰, qu'il critique largement dans les trois premiers chapitres de *L'Imagination*. Par conséquent, du point de vue du concept de conversion, il était essentiel pour Sartre de passer d'abord en revue les conceptions philosophiques et psychologiques les plus importantes sur l'image, de résumer leurs points de convergence et de présenter leurs principaux erreurs, qui les conduisent à une impasse inévitable, destinée à provoquer, tôt ou tard, la conversion. Pour accomplir cette tâche Sartre remonte jusqu'à l'ère moderne, analysant les conceptions sur l'image chez René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, G. W. Leibniz et David Hume.

Il est vrai que les spécialistes ont mis en doute la fidélité des présentations sartiennes à leurs conceptions.

Malheureusement, ce chapitre historique est de la pire manière de Sartre – peu clair et sans références exactes aux travaux des philosophes dont il critique les opinions, bien que ses critiques soient censées être dirigées contre les opinions spécifiques de personnes spécifiques. Toutes les théories discutées sont caractérisées d'une manière si désespérément abstraite qu'il est presque impossible d'identifier les théories et de les attribuer à leurs propres auteurs.⁴¹

Cependant, le but de Sartre n'était pas de procéder à une analyse détaillée des conceptions de ces philosophes, mais de découvrir les tendances dominantes de leurs interprétations concernant l'image. Ainsi, du point de vue de Sartre, pour Descartes pensée et imagination s'opposent totalement. Par conséquent, l'image est une chose matérielle, une sorte de signe produit dans notre cerveau par les « esprits animaux » émus à la suite de l'impression des sens et des nerfs par des corps extérieurs. Reçue par

philosophique, qui est à la fois une conscience du monde et une conscience d'elle-même.

⁴⁰ Sartre 2007: 4.

⁴¹ Warnock 2019: 23–24.

l'intellect, l'image devient la conscience de l'image et elle est alors capable de bouger l'âme, fonctionnant ainsi comme une occasion ou un facteur déclencheur pour la manifestation des idées, qui sont innées à l'âme. Cependant, parce que les esprits animaux sont émus aussi par des impressions internes, qui viennent à la fois du corps et de l'âme, Descartes ne peut expliquer la distinction spontanée que nous faisons dans l'expérience commune entre l'image-sensation, l'image-souvenir et l'image-fiction, et soutient que seul l'intellect, par un jugement logique spécifique, serait capable d'une telle discrimination.⁴²

À son tour, Spinoza, gardant la distinction radicale entre imagination et pensée, voit l'image comme un objet matériel résultat de l'affection du corps, et le souvenir comme une sorte de réapparition de cet objet dans l'esprit, suite aux stimulations mécaniques. En même temps, d'une manière contradictoire, il considère l'image une idée confuse, une pensée dégradée qui, il est vrai, peut nous tromper, mais qui peut, néanmoins, se transformer et passer dans l'intellect, « par le développement des essences enveloppées dans les images »⁴³.

Leibniz fait aussi de l'image une idée confuse, ça pour justifier l'étroit lien entre l'imagination et la pensée, car il prétend que l'idée confuse a une portée illimitée et comprend en elle-même, d'une manière vague, inconsciente, opaque, l'infini des idées claires et distinctes que l'âme ne peut, pour le moment, discerner. Mais, selon Sartre, Leibniz introduit ainsi des rapports mathématiques, quantitatifs entre l'image et l'idée, réduisant l'imagination à la pensée, qui est toujours cachée derrière elle, et déniait à l'image son côté sensible, qualitatif.⁴⁴

Hume, au contraire, réduit la pensée à un jeu de l'imagination, puisqu'il considère les images comme des impressions physiologiques, qui se ressemblent par le phénomène d'attraction, et les idées comme simples copies de ces impressions, qui durent en quelque sorte dans l'esprit. Puisque les idées et les images, c'est-à-dire les impressions, sont de même nature, leur distinction ne peut être faite que par l'esprit, selon les critères de cohérence et de continuité. Mais la manière dont l'esprit se rapporte aux

⁴² Sartre 2007: 7–9.

⁴³ Sartre 2007: 9.

⁴⁴ Sartre 2007: 10–12.

idées montre qu'elles résident en lui comme des objets opaques, dont il ne prend conscience qu'à certaines conditions.⁴⁵

Du point de vue de Sartre, les positions des quatre philosophes dessinent trois solutions au problème de l'image:

Un règne de la pensée radicalement distinct du règne de l'image – un monde de pures images – un monde de faits-images, derrière lequel il faut retrouver une pensée, qui n'apparaît qu'indirectement, comme la seule raison possible de l'organisation et de la finalité qu'on peut constater dans l'univers des images (un peu comme Dieu, dans l'argument physico-théologique, se laisse conclure de l'ordre du monde) : voilà les trois solutions que nous proposent les trois grands courants de la philosophie classique.⁴⁶

Sartre soutient que le seul critère par lequel ces solutions diffèrent les unes des autres c'est la relation entre l'image et la pensée, car sinon elles admettent toutes que l'image est une chose. En fait, il estime que si l'on accepte cette manière d'appréhender l'image, les trois solutions sont les seules possibles. Sa position est que la vision sur l'image comme chose dans la conscience exprime la « métaphysique naïve » ou l'« ontologie naïve », caractéristique de l'homme ordinaire, qui est incapable d'offrir des explications théoriques pertinentes même sur ses plus simples expériences. Celui-ci conçoit spontanément tous les modes d'existence d'après le modèle d'existence physique, et lorsqu'il reconnaît la ressemblance entre une chose et son image dans la conscience il conclut que l'image, bien qu'elle ne soit pas la chose, a les mêmes qualités que la chose, quoique atténuées. En d'autres termes, l'image de la chose serait une autre chose, située dans la conscience comme les choses ordinaires dans l'espace physique. Alors,

...de l'affirmation de l'identité d'essence entre l'image et l'objet, on passe à celle d'une identité d'existence. Puisque l'image *c'est* l'objet, on en conclut que l'image existe comme l'objet. Et, de cette façon, on constitue ce que nous appellerons la métaphysique naïve de l'image. Cette métaphysique consiste à faire de l'image une copie de la chose, existant elle-même comme une chose. (...) Mais, du fait même qu'elle est image, elle reçoit une sorte d'infériorité métaphysique par rapport à la chose qu'elle représente. En un mot (...) l'image est une moindre chose, qui a son existence propre, qui se donne à la conscience comme n'importe quelle

⁴⁵ Sartre 2007: 12–14.

⁴⁶ Sartre 2007: 19.

chose et qui entretient des rapports *externes* avec la chose dont elle est image.⁴⁷

Cette compréhension de l'image selon le modèle des choses matérielles, extérieures à la conscience, ainsi que le postulat que l'image, en tant qu'objet ou fait psychique, serait dans la conscience comme un objet dans l'espace – ce qui caractérise, selon Sartre, la conscience philosophique de l'âge moderne et contemporain – ils peuvent être assimilés au stade de la réflexion impure, dans lequel la conscience, tout en reconnaissant sa subjectivité, c'est-à-dire le statut d'être-pour-soi, se rapporte à elle-même comme à une chose, qui est un être-en-soi, aspirant à atteindre ainsi l'idéal inaccessible de l'en-soi-pour-soi, mais n'étant, après tout, qu' « un effort avorté du pour-soi pour être autrui en restant soi »⁴⁸. Ainsi, comme dans le cas la conscience en général, la réflexion sur l'image (qui est la conscience imaginative) est constitutive, car elle dépasse la simple reconnaissance (naturelle) de soi et, à partir de sa connaissance des choses, se constitue en objet ou quasi-objet, qui est quelque chose d'opaque, de transcendant à elle-même. En même temps, elle est aussi une réflexion complice, car elle est de mauvaise foi, postulant que l'image serait quelque chose qui, en réalité, elle n'est que sous le mode de ne pas être. Ce faisant, la conscience s'éloigne d'elle-même, et l'éloignement est en fait aliénation.

3.2. *Les contradictions de la conception classique de l'image*

La conséquence la plus importante de la compréhension de l'image comme chose dans la conscience est, selon Sartre, l'impossibilité de justifier la distinction entre la perception (image mentale en présence de l'objet) et l'image elle-même (image mentale en l'absence de l'objet, soit en tant que souvenir, soit en tant qu'invention de l'esprit), bien que les théoriciens reconnaissent qu'elles ne sont pas identiques. Cependant, dans l'expérience commune chaque individu les distingue spontanément et fermement par l'intervention directe du sens intérieur, ce qui prouve que les deux états mentaux ne peuvent pas avoir la même nature et ils représentent des modes d'existence différents. Incapables d'expliquer comment notre esprit fait ça, mais contraints de trouver des critères rationnels pour distinguer l'image de la perception, les psychologues et les philosophes ont pris

⁴⁷ Sartre 2007: 4–5.

⁴⁸ Sartre 1943: 196.

comme point de référence la correspondance des images mentales avec la réalité extérieure, s'efforçant de découvrir les traits de la « vraie image », c'est-à-dire celle qui a un correspondant extérieur et qu'ils appellent «perception ».

Une réponse à cette question nous offre David Hume, qui donne à la perception « stabilité, richesse et précision » par rapport à l'image, admettant que la distinction entre elles se fait spontanément, même mécaniquement. Cependant, Sartre qualifie ces traits de la perception « fort exagérées », puisque même les psychologues admettent que, d'une part, on peut avoir des perceptions « très confuses » ou avec un minimum d'intensité, et, d'autre part, on peut produire des images extrêmement vives, précises et intenses, ressemblant aux sensations.⁴⁹

C'est pourquoi Hippolyte Taine prétendait que pour établir s'il s'agit de perceptions ou des images mentales, nos images sont naturellement et en permanence soumises à un processus interne de « correction » : la vérification de leurs extériorité et localisation, c'est-à-dire s'ils ont un stimulus externe ou non. Mais il reconnaît que parfois la vérification peut échouer, et alors on prend les hallucinations comme des perceptions. Le mécanisme de correction serait une lutte entre les « sensations spontanées » et les « sensations antagonistes », ce qui semble à Sartre

...difficile à admettre. L'extériorité en effet est une qualité intrinsèque de la première représentation comme de la seconde ; ce n'est pas un rapport. Comment donc, au contact d'une impression contradictoire, la première sensation pourrait-elle perdre son extériorité ? (...) Peut-être, d'ailleurs, Taine dont le vocabulaire est, comme l'esprit, très imprécis, confond-il extériorité et objectivité. Mais la difficulté reste la même : je demande quel antagonisme mécanique pourra faire passer au subjectif une image qui s'affirme d'abord comme objet.⁵⁰

Reste à soutenir la thèse d'origine cartésienne que la discrimination entre sensation ou perception et image repose sur un jugement atteint en essayant d'établir leur compatibilité avec les caractéristiques du monde réel. Le problème est que la réalité du monde n'est pas un fait originaire mais une construction en constante mouvement, et l'appréciation des choses comme étant objectives ou subjectives peut subir des

⁴⁹ Sartre 2007: 92–93.

⁵⁰ Sartre 2007: 96–97.

transformations nombreuses et dramatiques, par le changement de référentiel et au fur et à mesure de l'évolution de l'expérience pratique et théorique de l'homme. Cela fait du jugement sur le contenu de l'esprit un processus infini et incertain, comme celui sur le monde extérieur. Mais pour Sartre cette conception est fautive, puisque n'importe qui peut immédiatement distinguer l'image de la perception.

Bien sûr, admet Sartre, dans certaines conditions d'obscurité ou de distance je peux confondre la perception d'un arbre avec celle d'un homme, mais cela ne veut pas dire que je place l'image de l'homme, créée par moi, à la place de la perception de l'arbre, mais seulement que j'ai une fautive perception, donc j'interprète mal la perception de l'arbre, erreur que je remédie immédiatement en améliorant les conditions de perception. Et si la théorie métaphysique naïve de l'image ne peut pas expliquer cela, c'est parce que, dès le début, elle admet que l'image et la perception ont la même nature, ce qui signifie, dans une large mesure, qu'elles ont la même matière, à savoir celle de la sensation ou de l'« impression », matière qui dans le cas de la perception naît en présence de l'objet, et dans le cas de l'image «renaît» en son absence. Mais Sartre soutient que si l'image et la perception avaient la même matière, nous ne pourrions jamais distinguer le rêve/l'image de la réalité.⁵¹

En outre, la compréhension de l'image comme chose dans la conscience a conduit à de nombreuses difficultés pour concevoir la relation entre image et pensée, et, implicitement, entre image et conscience. Pour lever ces difficultés, la plupart des théoriciens, de manière contradictoire, ont donné en même temps à l'image un certain statut d'« idée », sans pouvoir expliquer ce qu'il signifie et comment il pourrait se concilier avec le postulat de la matérialité de l'image. Mais pour Sartre les deux caractéristiques: « chose sensible » et « idée » ne peuvent être conciliées, car elles représentent deux types d'existence qui s'opposent, et le fait que l'image est pourtant un phénomène de conscience soulève de grands doutes sur le postulat ci-dessus, ce qu'invalide les conceptions fondées sur la métaphysique naïve de l'image.

Toute théorie de l'imagination doit satisfaire à deux exigences : elle doit rendre compte de la discrimination spontanée que l'esprit opère entre ses images et ses perceptions, – elle doit expliquer le rôle que joue l'image

⁵¹ Sartre 2007: 112–113.

dans les opérations de la pensée. Quelle que soit la forme qu'elle ait prise, la conception classique de l'image n'a pu remplir ces deux tâches essentielles : donner à l'image un contenu sensible, c'est faire d'elle une chose obéissant aux lois des choses et non à celles de la conscience ; on ôte ainsi à l'esprit toute possibilité de la distinguer des autres choses du monde. Il devient impossible, en même temps, de concevoir d'une façon quelconque le rapport de cette chose avec la pensée. Si l'on soustrait, en effet, l'image à la conscience, on enlève à cette dernière toute sa liberté. Si on l'y fait entrer, tout l'univers entre avec elle et la conscience se solidifie d'un seul coup, comme une solution sursaturée.⁵²

Par conséquent, Sartre considère qu'il est impératif d'abandonner la conception classique sur l'image et de la remplacer par une autre, capable de répondre véritablement aux exigences légitimes énoncées ci-dessus.

4. Préparation de la réflexion pure sur l'image. Le moment de la transition

En ce sens, son point de vue est que toutes les contradictions résultant de la compréhension de l'image comme chose dans la conscience auraient pu être évitées si les chercheurs avaient abandonné la métaphysique implicite de toutes leurs hypothèses et expériences concrètes et avaient respecté le suivant impératif méthodologique : puisque l'image est un fait ou une structure irréductible de la conscience, une partie de notre activité intérieure, mentale, subjective,

Le seul moyen de constituer une théorie vraie de l'existence en image serait de s'astreindre rigoureusement à ne rien avancer sur celle-ci qui n'ait directement sa source dans une expérience réflexive.⁵³

C'est bien ce qu'il veut accomplir lui-même, à l'instar de la phénoménologie husserlienne qui, en tant que « science de la conscience pure transcendante »⁵⁴, transcende l'attitude naturelle, réaliste naïve de la psychologie ordinaire et, se plaçant dans l'universel, considère bien possible la description des phénomènes de conscience à travers une intuition réflexive de ce qu'ils ont d'essentiel et d'irréductible, c'est-à-dire de leur légitimité. Ainsi, la psychologie phénoménologique de l'image réalisée par Sartre, qui est une application de la méthode

⁵² Sartre 2007: 128.

⁵³ Sartre 2007: 3.

⁵⁴ Sartre 2007: 139.

phénoménologique à une structure de la conscience, ça veut être comme une « eidétique » spéciale, conçue de découvrir l'essence ou la nature réelle de l'image, la seule qui peut constituer la prémisse de toutes les hypothèses et expériences de la psychologie empirique. Mais Sartre n'est pas un simple épigone, car il développe à sa manière les suggestions reçues de Husserl. À cet égard, Edward S. Casey souligne le fait que

...la conception sartrienne de la psychologie phénoménologique diffère de celle de Husserl sur deux points. D'abord, Sartre n'exige pas qu'une réduction phénoménologique préalable soit effectuée ; seul le phénoménologue transcendantal aurait besoin de cette réduction. Une psychologie phénoménologique reste « intramondaine » pour Sartre. Cette affirmation hétérodoxe conduit à une deuxième rupture significative avec Husserl. Au lieu de considérer que la méthode phénoménologique est affaire d'*intuition* des essences (...), Sartre fait appel à la « réflexion », qui est un acte de second ordre qui scrute les actes ordinaires de premier ordre. Pour comprendre ce que c'est qu'imaginer, il ne suffit pas d'imaginer ; il faut porter notre attention réflexive sur l'acte originel d'imaginer pour discerner sa structure eidétique.⁵⁵

D'où résulte une fois de plus la pertinence de notre démarche méthodologique de lire la conception phénoménologique sartrienne de l'image à travers la grille du concept de conversion qui, dans son sens fort, implique le passage de la réflexion impure à la réflexion pure dans la tentative de la conscience de créer une image authentique d'elle-même.

Ce que Sartre emprunte principalement à Husserl, c'est le concept d'intentionnalité de la conscience, qu'il avait emprunté, à son tour, de Franz Brentano, mais auquel il a donné une signification propre et une vraie célébrité. Pour Husserl, l'intentionnalité de la conscience signifie « la propriété d'être une 'conscience de quelque chose' »⁵⁶, donc qu'elle vise toujours un objet qui lui est extérieur, à travers ses propres contenus purs et subjectifs, qui sont en quelque sorte analogues aux qualités de l'objet, mais ne s'identifient pas à elles. Ces contenus appartiennent à la conscience, ils ont sa nature, constituant une matière spéciale, différente de la matière sensible, et ils ne se trouvent pas dans la conscience comme des choses lourdes et opaques, mais sont seulement le support sur lequel s'appuie l'intention orientée vers l'objet extérieur, auquel elle donne un sens.

⁵⁵ Casey 1981: 144.

⁵⁶ Husserl 1950: 117.

La conscience est précisément conscience « de » quelque chose ; c'est son essence de receler en soi un « sens », qui est pour ainsi dire la quintessence de « l'âme », de « l'esprit », de la « raison ». Le titre de conscience ne s'applique pas à des « complexes psychiques », à des « contenus » fondus ensemble, à des « faisceaux » (Bündel) ou des flux de « sensations » qui, faute d'avoir en soi un sens, pourraient subir n'importe quel mélange sans jamais engendrer un « sens » ; la conscience au contraire est de part en part « conscience » (...) La conscience diffère donc du tout au tout de ce que le sensualisme veut seulement y voir, de la matière qui par elle-même est en fait dénuée de sens et irrationnelle, quoique assurément accessible à la rationalisation.⁵⁷

Ainsi, l'image, qui est une structure de la conscience, c'est-à-dire un certain type de conscience, non un simple contenu de celle-ci, manifeste, comme la conscience en général, une intentionnalité dirigée vers un objet extérieur et véhiculée à travers une certaine matière subjective. De plus, l'objet extérieur peut exister dans le monde réel, sensible, mais il peut tout aussi bien ne pas exister. C'est le cas, par exemple, d'un centaure, qui n'est qu'une fiction et qui n'existe nulle part, mais, néanmoins, il ne se limite pas à notre expérience subjective ou à notre représentation comme phénomène psychique qui le vise, mais il se dessine comme un objet autonome, distinct, qui lui est transcendant.⁵⁸

Les conséquences de cette nouvelle approche de la question de l'image sont, selon Sartre, extrêmement importantes:

L'image, en devenant une structure intentionnelle, passe de l'état de contenu inerte de conscience à celui de conscience une et synthétique en relation avec un objet transcendant. L'image de mon ami Pierre n'est pas une vague phosphorescence, un sillage laissé dans ma conscience par la perception de Pierre : c'est une forme de conscience organisée qui se rapporte, à sa manière, à mon ami Pierre, c'est une des manières possibles de viser l'être réel Pierre. Ainsi, dans l'acte d'imagination, la conscience se rapporte directement à Pierre et non par l'intermédiaire d'un simulacre, qui serait *en elle*.⁵⁹

En instaurant le statut de l'image comme structure intentionnelle de la conscience, Husserl enlève le préjugé de la métaphysique naïve ou

⁵⁷ Husserl 1950: 295.

⁵⁸ Husserl 1950: 76.

⁵⁹ Sartre 2007: 147–148.

«immanentiste » de l'image, qui prétend qu'elle soit une chose matérielle insérée, on ne sait comment, parmi les contenus de la conscience. Sartre dit que cela facilite la compréhension correcte du rapport entre image et pensée et la reconnaissance des similitudes réelles entre les images matérielles ou « extérieures » (tableaux, dessins, photos) et celles mentales, psychiques que, paradoxalement, l'ancienne conception psychologique les considérait comme radicalement différentes, malgré le postulat de la matérialité de l'image mentale. Cela est possible car, du point de vue de la conception husserlienne,

...si l'image devient une certaine manière d'animer intentionnellement un contenu hylétique, on pourra fort bien assimiler la saisie d'un tableau *comme image* à l'appréhension intentionnelle d'un contenu « psychique ». Il s'agira seulement de deux espèces différentes de consciences «imageantes ».60

En d'autres termes, on peut percevoir une peinture soit comme un objet physique, qui a un contenu matériel (hylétique) exprimé par la toile, le cadre, certaines formes et couleurs, soit en se concentrant sur le sens des formes et des couleurs, qui peuvent illustrer des personnes, des choses, des scènes de la vie, etc., et dans ce dernier cas l'image joue le même rôle que l'image mentale, c'est-à-dire d'un phénomène intentionnel qui vise, au moyen d'un contenu hylétique, un objet qui lui est extérieur, transcendant.

Cela ne signifie pas qu'on puisse y avoir confusion entre perception et image, ou que la différence entre elles ne puisse être justifiée théoriquement, comme dans le cas de la conception psychologique classique. Au contraire, même si elles ont le même contenu hylétique, le concept husserlien d'intentionnalité offre un critère suffisant pour leur discrimination : car l'intention du spectateur est bien différente si son intérêt est fixé sur le tableau comme chose ou comme image. Ainsi, perception et image sont des structures ou des formes de conscience qui diffèrent l'une de l'autre par l'intention spécifique par laquelle elles s'appliquent à un certain contenu matériel, qu'elles « animent » ou informent de manières distinctes.

Du point de vue de Sartre, ceci est une vérité définitive et offre la bonne direction en vue d'éclairer le problème de la nature de l'image. Pour cela il faut savoir ce qui caractérise chacune de ces intentions, mais mais il

60 Sartre 2007: 149.

note que Husserl ne nous le dit plus. D'autre part, Sartre considère que l'identité de matière entre image et perception n'existe que pour l'image extérieure, elle n'étant valable dans le cas de l'image mentale, ce qui exprime un désaccord avec Husserl, pour qui perception et image sont des voies équivalentes par lesquelles une conscience signifiante peut devenir intuitive. D'ailleurs, il conclut qu'en ce qui concerne le souvenir, Husserl ait la même vision que l'ancienne psychologie puisqu'il prétend que celui-ci est une actualisation ou une reproduction mentale passive d'un acte perceptif accompli dans le passé.

Dans ces circonstances, Sartre soutient qu'à partir de Husserl il est difficile de réaliser la distinction correcte entre perception et image. Si un arbre que je perçois et le centaure que j'imagine deviennent tous les deux, suite à l'acte de réduction eidétique, le noème d'une noèse, c'est-à-dire le sens idéal d'un acte de conscience, quel critère puis-je utiliser pour comprendre le fait, évident pour l'expérience commune, qu'ils ont des natures radicalement distinctes ? Il ne suffit plus de donner la même réponse : l'intentionnalité, qui, étant différente dans le cas de la perception, de l'image et de la mémoire, différencierait ainsi les types de noèmes, car il faut immédiatement résoudre les problèmes suivants: l'intentionnalité dépend-elle ou non de la volonté arbitraire du sujet ?; les différents types d'intentionnalité peuvent-ils s'appliquer à n'importe quelle matière ? Dans le cas de la peinture, on a vu que sa matière peut supporter à la fois une perception et une image, mais là il s'agissait d'une image extérieure.

Or, dès qu'il s'agit d'une image mentale, chacun peut vérifier qu'il est impossible d'animer sa hylé de façon à en faire la matière d'une perception. Cette ambivalence hylétique n'est possible que dans un petit nombre de cas privilégiés (tableaux, photos, imitations, etc.). Serait-elle même admissible, qu'il faudrait encore expliquer pourquoi ma conscience intentionne une matière en image plutôt qu'en perception.⁶¹

Husserl veut expliquer cela à l'aide du concept de « motivation », mais Sartre soulève immédiatement une nouvelle question : « comment trouver des motifs d'informer une matière en image mentale plutôt qu'en

⁶¹ Sartre 2007: 156.

perception ? »⁶², pour y répondre catégoriquement : « si les matières sont de même nature il ne peut y avoir aucun motif valable »⁶³.

En fait, en utilisant la distinction faite dans *Méditations cartésiennes* (1931) entre les synthèses passives et actives de la conscience, Husserl conclut que la perception est une synthèse passive, tandis que l'image fictionnelle est une synthèse active. Et bien que Sartre soit d'accord avec cette explication, il la juge « très incomplète », car elle ne détaille pas le mode de fonctionnement de la synthèse active et n'explique si la matière de la perception est compatible ou non avec le type d'intentionnalité propre à l'image-fiction.

D'ailleurs, en faisant la distinction « synthèse active-synthèse passive », Sartre observe que Husserl creuse un fossé profond entre l'image fictionnelle, active et spontanée, et l'image-souvenir, qui est pour lui une synthèse passive. Ce *hiatus* insurmontable est qualifié par Sartre d'erreur, car il y a de nombreuses formes intermédiaires entre les deux types d'images évoqués plus haut. Sans pouvoir offrir pour le moment une solution élaborée à ce problème, Sartre soutient que toutes les formes de l'image devraient exprimer le même type de synthèse, qui ne peut pas être passive, car cela signifierait un retour à la théorie classique de l'image.

De toute façon, nous sommes renvoyés à notre constatation première : la distinction entre image mentale et perception ne saurait venir de la seule intentionnalité ; il est nécessaire mais non suffisant que les intentions diffèrent, il faut aussi que les matières soient dissemblables. Peut-être même faut-il que la matière de l'image soit elle-même spontanéité, mais une spontanéité d'un type inférieur.⁶⁴

En tout cas, dans *L'Imagination* Sartre ne se propose pas à résoudre tous les questions concernant cette fonction essentielle de la conscience et le phénomène de l'image, qui lui est étroitement corrélé. Cependant, il donne une réponse au problème central discuté dans l'ouvrage, en démontant la conception que l'image serait une chose matérielle dans la conscience et établissant ainsi un point de référence solide pour le guider dans ses nouvelles recherches, dont les orientations lui sont déjà très claires. Ainsi, il considère qu'il est absolument nécessaire de

⁶² Sartre 2007: 156.

⁶³ Sartre 2007: 156.

⁶⁴ Sartre 2007: 158.

...tenter avant tout d'acquérir une vue intuitive de la structure intentionnelle de l'image. Il faudra aussi poser la question nouvelle et délicate des rapports de l'image mentale avec l'image matérielle (tableau, photos, etc.). Il conviendra aussi de comparer la conscience d'image avec la conscience de signe, afin de délivrer définitivement la psychologie de cette erreur inadmissible qui fait de l'image un signe et du signe une image. Enfin et surtout il faudra étudier la hylé propre de l'image mentale.⁶⁵

Sartre développera toutes ces directions de recherche dans son ouvrage *L'Imaginaire*, qu'il donne un sous-titre édifiante : *Psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination*. Il marque, du point de vue de la grille de lecture que nous avons assumée, le dépassement du moment de transition, qui est représenté par la conception de Husserl, et l'approche du problème de l'image avec les moyens offerts par la réflexion pure, la seule capable de fournir des réponses adéquates sur la manière d'être de la conscience, nous permettant aussi de réaliser la description de l'essence de l'image.

5. Activation de la réflexion pure et réalisation de la conversion

Du point de vue du concept de la conversion, la réflexion pure, précisément parce qu'elle est « simple présence du pour-soi réflexif au pour-soi réfléchi »⁶⁶, ne peut se tromper lorsqu'elle nous renseigne sur la conscience et toutes ses structures. Pour cette raison, Sartre soutient, comme Descartes, la certitude « absolue » et spontanée de leur discrimination dans nos actes réflexifs. En d'autres termes, nous ne pouvons jamais nous tromper lorsque nous avons une image dans l'esprit, en croyant qu'il s'agit d'une perception, ce qui signifie que nous avons une connaissance immédiate, même si elle n'est pas explicite, de l'essence de l'image. Par conséquent, en analysant l'image dans l'acte de réflexion, nous évitons les hypothèses et les spéculations insuffisamment fondées, restons fermement au niveau de l'expérience interne et nous avons ainsi la possibilité d'explicitier cette connaissance, en mettant en évidence les traits réelles du phénomène « image ». Cela signifie que

Pour l'instant nous voulons seulement tenter une « phénoménologie » de l'image. La méthode est simple : produire en nous des images, réfléchir

⁶⁵ Sartre 2007: 158–159.

⁶⁶ Sartre 1943: 190.

sur ces images, les décrire, c'est-à-dire tenter de déterminer et de classer leurs caractères distinctifs.⁶⁷

Ce n'est qu'alors, armés de ces données incontestables, dit Sartre, que nous pourrions être pleinement justifiés à construire des théories sur la nature de l'image et sa relation avec d'autres structures de la conscience. Restant donc sur le terrain de la réflexion pure, Sartre vise à aboutir à une véritable phénoménologie de l'image, c'est-à-dire à en montrer l'essence en mettant en évidence les caractéristiques de l'image, ses différents types et la manière de leur manifestation.

5.1. *Les caractéristiques de l'image*

Sartre établit que la première caractéristique de l'image, que l'on peut mettre en évidence en faisant appel à l'activité réflexive, c'est qu'elle est une *structure de conscience*, ce qui veut dire que l'image est conscience, rien d'autre. Cela semble quelque chose évident, mais, en réalité, est caché à la compréhension commune par la soi-disant « illusion d'immanence », selon laquelle l'image serait dans la conscience comme une chose dans l'espace, et, à son tour, l'objet de l'image serait dans l'image de la même manière. Cette illusion exprime l'attitude métaphysique naïve, largement adoptée par les philosophes et les psychologues, dont parlait Sartre dans *L'Imagination*, et qu'il s'efforçait de combattre.

Bref, la chose que nous imaginons n'a pas de présence physique dans l'image, tout comme celle que nous percevons n'est pas localisée dans la perception, mais toutes deux leur sont extérieures. La perception et l'image sont deux formes concrètes d'organisation « synthétique » de la conscience, c'est-à-dire deux manières distinctes de « viser » ou de « se rapporter » à un objet nécessairement en dehors d'eux. En fait, elles sont la conscience elle-même qui, dans son dynamisme, manifeste des manières spécifiques d'intentionnalité, accomplit certains types d'exercices, de sorte que l'image n'est rien d'autre que la conscience imageante (qu' imagine), et la perception la conscience perceptive (qui perçoit).

Le mot d'image ne saurait donc désigner que le rapport de la conscience à l'objet; autrement dit, c'est une certaine façon qu'a l'objet de paraître à la conscience, ou, si l'on préfère, une certaine façon qu'a la conscience de se donner un objet. (...) Et ce serait une grave erreur de confondre cette vie de la

⁶⁷ Sartre 1986: 17.

conscience imageante, qui dure, s'organise, se désagrège, avec celle de l'objet de cette conscience, qui, pendant ce temps, peut fort bien rester immuable.⁶⁸

Si cette première caractéristique résume l'effort d'analyse critique de Sartre dans *L'Imagination*, la seconde, *l'attitude de quasi-observation*, ajoute déjà quelque chose de nouveau à sa recherche phénoménologique sur l'image. Étant donné que l'image nous présente l'objet dans ses traits concrets, physiques, sensoriels, il semble s'offrir directement à notre observation, comme tout objet de la perception; en réalité, l'objet de l'image est entièrement pensé, c'est-à-dire placé par la conscience devant elle, avec toutes les déterminations qui sont mises en évidence dans l'image, et de ce fait sa connaissance est complètement accessible, du début, à la conscience imageante. Ça fait que l'image se place quelque part entre l'acte de penser – qui, utilisant des concepts, vise immédiatement l'objet dans son essence – et la perception, qui, faisant appel aux sens, se rapproche en permanence de son objet par des projections toujours renouvelées sur lui. En effet, comme le note Annabelle Dufourcq,

... selon Sartre, ces profils imaginaires ne masquent rien, ne promettent rien et tout ce que nous savons de l'objet est donné dans l'image. Sartre veut ici confirmer que, sans l'appui de l'Être, la conscience s'anéantit. Il affirme donc que l'on ne peut rien apprendre de l'objet imaginé et que la conscience ne trouve en lui que ce qu'elle y a projeté, ce qu'elle savait déjà et a découvert auparavant au contact du réel.⁶⁹

D'ailleurs, les déterminations d'un objet de l'image sont toujours peu nombreuses et ont entre elles seulement quelques relations, précisément celles déjà établies par la conscience (et parfois elles peuvent même manquer); en outre, leurs rapports effectives avec les choses du monde sont, pratiquement, inexistantes. Au contraire, dans la perception, dont l'objet ne peut être connu d'un coup par la conscience, mais dans une succession d'actes infinis, il y a une infinité de relations possibles entre ses parties et aussi entre lui-même et les choses du monde, de sorte qu'il surprend toujours la conscience, qui le suit invariablement et ne peut jamais le contrôler.

Voilà pourquoi aussi le monde des images est un monde où il *n'arrive* rien. Je puis bien, à mon gré, faire évoluer en image tel ou tel objet, faire

⁶⁸ Sartre 1986: 21–22.

⁶⁹ Dufourcq 2012: 158.

tourner un cube, faire croître une plante, courir un cheval, il ne se produira jamais le plus petit décalage entre l'objet et la conscience. Pas une seconde de surprise : l'objet qui se meut n'est pas vivant, il ne précède jamais l'intention. Mais il n'est pas non plus inerte, passif, « agi » du dehors, comme une marionnette : la conscience ne précède jamais l'objet, l'intention se révèle à elle-même en même temps qu'elle se réalise, dans et par sa réalisation.⁷⁰

La troisième caractéristique de l'image ou de la conscience imageante, par laquelle Sartre exprime encore une fois son originalité, est qu'elle a une *attitude négative* envers l'objet visé, en ce sens qu'elle le pose non pas comme quelque chose de réel, mais comme un néant. C'est une attitude opposée à la conscience perceptive, qui pose toujours son objet comme existant. Ainsi, si dans la perception l'objet est directement accessible au sujet, l'objet imaginé, bien qu'imaginé par la conscience, ne lui permet pas d'y accéder effectivement. Mais ceci, loin d'être un handicap pour la conscience, est, comme le souligne Hadi Rizk, la manière dont elle crée le monde:

Il faut bien comprendre, cependant, que l'image pose son objet comme hors d'atteinte : l'acte de négation qui constitue l'image révèle ainsi le pouvoir qu'a la conscience de se dégager de la totalité du réel. Aussi le monde n'est-il pas le réel parce qu'il suppose le pouvoir qu'a l'imagination de tenir le réel à distance et de le ressaisir synthétiquement du point de vue d'un irréel posé en marge de tout ce qui est. Le monde est donc une totalisation qui naît de la néantisation du réel par l'imagination.⁷¹

Sartre soutient que l'acte positionnel ou la thèse d'irréalité que l'image applique à son objet peut s'exprimer de quatre manières : il est considéré soit comme inexistant, soit comme absent, soit comme existant ailleurs, ou du moins il n'est pas posé comme existant, lorsqu'on exprime un doute ou une incertitude quant à son existence. En tout cas, quand la conscience imagine une chose, celle-ci ne peut être, du moins à ce moment-là, vue, touchée, entendue, perçue sous une forme ou une autre, et donc la «synthèse intentionnelle » de ses déterminations diverses que l'image représente est une expérience intuitive du néant de son être. Ainsi,

⁷⁰ Sartre 1986: 29–30.

⁷¹ Rizk 2011: 8.

Si vive, si touchante, si forte que soit une image, elle donne son objet comme n'étant pas. Cela n'empêche pas que nous puissions réagir ensuite à cette image comme si son objet était présent, était en face de nous (...). Mais l'état ambigu et faux auquel nous arrivons ainsi ne fait que mieux mettre en relief ce qui vient d'être dit : en vain cherchons-nous par notre conduite envers l'objet à faire naître en nous la croyance qu'il existe réellement; nous pouvons masquer une seconde, mais non détruire la conscience immédiate de son néant.⁷²

Enfin, la quatrième caractéristique de l'image, qu'on retrouve un peu parmi les « suggestions » empruntées de Husserl, renvoie à *sa spontanéité* de créer et maintenir son objet, ainsi qu'à la prise de conscience non-thétique de cette spontanéité. Et, comme le note Pierre Guenancia, elle nous montre que l'imagination, en tant que structure de la conscience, est un pur dynamisme et un acte libre par excellence :

Cela veut dire qu'à certains moments, la conscience se fait librement imageante : elle ne se tourne pas vers des images conservées dans la mémoire, elle suscite ces images. Les images de la conscience sont des idoles des psychologues. Pour Sartre, il n'y a rien de tel que des images dans la conscience (il n'y a d'ailleurs rien dans une conscience), mais c'est une conscience qui se met à imaginer, elle se met dans la position de se donner un monde en images, voire un monde imaginaire. C'est cela qui est fondamental : imaginer n'est pas une affection de l'esprit par des images, un désordre de l'esprit, mais un acte, une activité, une activité spontanée, pleinement active, de la conscience.⁷³

Du fait de cette spontanéité créatrice de l'image, qui est en opposition avec la passivité de la perception, « l'objet en image n'est jamais rien de plus que la conscience qu'on en a »⁷⁴. C'est pourquoi l'objet de l'image ne peut avoir la même contexture intime ou la « chair » que celui de l'objet de la perception, étant profondément marqué par précarité, discontinuité et manque d'unité.

5.2. La classification des images

Toutes les traits présentées ci-dessus se réfèrent en premier lieu à l'image mentale. Mais il y a aussi des nombreuses images matérielles ou

⁷² Sartre 1986: 34–35.

⁷³ Guenancia 2018: 57.

⁷⁴ Sartre 1986: 37.

extérieures, que Sartre a déjà évoquées dans *L'Imagination*, parlant (en passant) des peintures, dessins, photographies. Dans *L'Imaginaire* il veut faire l'inventaire de leurs différentes formes, qui sont aussi des objets sensibles, rencontrés dans le monde physique, pour analyser leurs rapports à l'image mentale et établir si l'intentionnalité de la conscience à leur égard est la même que dans le cas de la dernière.

En ce sens, il concentre son attention, en premier lieu, sur la photographie et la caricature d'une personne, qui, en elles-mêmes, sont des choses matérielles, qu'il compare à l'image mentale de cette personne. Dans les trois cas, l'objet des images est le même : la personne de chair et d'os, qui existe au-delà et indépendamment de tous, et que chacune des images tente, à sa manière, d'évoquer. Ceci amène Sartre à dire que les trois images sont parfaitement parallèles, exprimant la même intentionnalité : celle de rendre présent en quelque sorte l'objet qui manque.

Il y a cependant une différence importante entre ces images, mais qui n'affecte pas leur nature commune. Il s'agit de la matière ou du contenu que l'intention soutient et in-forme : une matière physique dans la photographie et la caricature, et une matière psychique, interne pour l'image mentale. Dans le processus de constitution de l'image, ce contenu est utilisé comme le « représentant » de l'objet de l'image et, par conséquent, il ne peut être quelconque, mais doit avoir certaines analogies avec l'objet visé par la conscience imageante. D'ailleurs, l'objet visé peut être inexistant, entrant ainsi dans le domaine des fictions ou des créations artistiques, sans que cela change le type d'intentionnalité de la conscience à son égard. Celles-ci étant établies,

Nous dirons en conséquence que l'image est un acte qui vise dans sa corporéité un objet absent ou inexistant, à travers un contenu physique ou psychique qui ne se donne pas en propre, mais à titre de « représentant analogique » de l'objet visé. Les spécifications se feront d'après la matière, puisque l'intention informatrice reste identique. Nous distinguerons donc les images dont la matière est empruntée au monde des choses (images d'illustration, photos, caricatures, imitations d'acteurs, etc.) et celles dont la matière est empruntée au monde mental (conscience de mouvements, sentiments, etc.). Il existe des types intermédiaires qui nous présentent des synthèses d'éléments extérieurs et d'éléments psychiques, comme lorsqu'on voit un visage dans la flamme, dans les arabesques d'une

tapisserie, ou dans le cas des images hypnagogiques, que l'on construit (...) sur la base de lueurs entoptiques.⁷⁵

On voit que le principal critère de classement des images est leur matière, qui est remarquablement diversifiée, qu'elle vienne de l'esprit ou qu'elle soit tirée du monde des choses. D'autre part, matière mentale et physique ne sont pas incompatibles, puisque des images dont l'intentionnalité spécifique s'exerce sur une matière mixte sont possibles grâce à la combinaison d'éléments mentaux et sensibles. C'est pourquoi aucune distinction radicale ne peut être faite entre un monde réel, celui des choses, et un monde imaginaire, car leurs objets sont identiques, et ce qui fait la différence entre eux n'est que la manière dont la conscience se rapporte à ces objets, en les organisant et les interprétant, c'est-à-dire leur donnant un certain sens.

En d'autres termes, la discrimination entre le réel et l'imaginaire n'est réalisée que par le type d'intentionnalité de notre conscience. En fait, Sartre considère qu'il y a « quatre ou cinq » formes majeures d'intentionnalité de la conscience, qui configurent ses fonctions essentielles. Parmi elles, la fonction « réalisante » est celle qui, utilisant la perception comme outil, se concentre sur l'obtention d'informations et la réalisation d'actions strictement causales dans l'environnement, tandis que la fonction « imageante » (ou « irréalisante ») est par excellence libre et créative. Naturellement, tous les deux se soutiennent mutuellement, et l'imagination prend souvent le résultat de la perception comme matière pour ses images.

Faisant une classification si nuancée des images, Sartre veut expliquer aussi la différence entre signe et image, déjà exprimée dans *L'Imagination*. Maintenant il présente en détail les éléments distinctifs entre eux. Premièrement, si le sujet de l'image a toujours une ressemblance avec l'objet visé, le signe n'en a aucune. Ainsi, une photographie ressemble à l'homme réel qu'elle représente, mais une inscription annonçant que là-bas c'est le bureau du chef de gare ne ressemble en rien à ce bureau. L'intention de la conscience est donc dirigée vers son objet par des matières différentes dans les deux cas.⁷⁶ Deuxièmement, le signe a un simple rôle d'évocation ou de désignation de l'objet, mais l'image permet à l'intentionnalité de ma

⁷⁵ Sartre 1986: 46.

⁷⁶ Sartre 1986: 49–51.

conscience de retourner à sa matière externe, de l'observer de manière répétée, et ainsi d'enrichir son propre contenu.

La troisième distinction vise le rapport du signe et de l'image à leur objet intentionnel. Or, dans le cas du signe, la conscience intentionnelle n'est pas positionnelle, c'est-à-dire qu'elle ne place pas son objet devant elle, mais génère un jugement, donc un autre type de conscience (par exemple : je me rends compte que l'objet en question est ceci ou cela). Au contraire, la conscience intentionnelle de l'image est positionnelle, donc son objet, même absent ou inexistant, se place devant elle avec toutes ses caractéristiques physiques concrètes.⁷⁷ Enfin, la dernière différence c'est que le signe exprime toujours une conscience intentionnelle vide de tout contenu, alors que la conscience intentionnelle de l'image a un contenu plus ou moins riche. L'essentiel est que le signe et l'image ont chacun leur propre nature, il ne faut donc jamais les confondre.

Passant à l'analyse phénoménologique détaillée des différents types d'image pour mettre en évidence l'essence de chacune, Sartre trouve un moyen suggestif de présenter la structure intentionnelle de l'image et, implicitement, de décrire la fonction imageante de la conscience.

5.3. *La description phénoménologique des images*

Nous avons vu que la distinction des images se fait selon la matière sur laquelle elles reposent pour viser leur objet intentionnel, et qu'à un pôle il y a une matière physique, à l'autre une matière psychique, mais qu'existent aussi des formes qui les combinent à des degrés divers. L'image avec le contenu strictement physique est le portrait (peinture, photographie, gravure), qui reproduit assez fidèlement les traits physiques de l'objet, pour que je puisse y exercer ma conscience perceptive et pour avoir l'impression qu'il dépeint le visage d'une personne dans son individualité. Mais en réalité je sais qu'en regardant le portrait je ne vois pas en chair et en os la personne qu'il représente, qu'il n'est qu'une image avec un degré important de généralité, car

Ce que nous cherchons à travers le tableau ce n'est pas Pierre tel qu'il a pu nous apparaître avant-hier ou tel jour de l'année dernière : c'est *Pierre en*

⁷⁷ Sartre 1986: 52–54.

général, un prototype qui sert d'unité thématique à toutes les apparitions individuelles de Pierre.⁷⁸

En tout cas, la matière du portrait présente toujours des similitudes évidentes et nombreuses avec son objet. Mais cela n'est plus vrai dans le cas d'images dont la matière est beaucoup plus pauvre et qui vise l'objet moins dans son individualité que dans son essence, ce qui fait que ces images augmentent significativement leur degré de généralité par rapport au portrait. Parfois même ces images ont un statut quelque peu incertain, se situant quelque part à la frontière entre l'image et autre chose qu'elle. C'est le cas, par exemple, des spectacles dans lesquelles un acteur imite un personnage bien connu du public (homme politique, écrivain, acteur, etc.).

Usant comme matière son corps et ses mouvements, ainsi que quelques accessoires, l'acteur crée aux yeux des spectateurs l'image de ce personnage. En fait, il crée quelques signes qu'envoie au public, qui, à l'aide d'un savoir antérieur, les déchiffre d'abord en produisant un sens ou un jugement sur le personnage imité, puis les transcende et, intuitivement, il génère l'image du personnage, qu'il cible non pas dans l'abondance de ses données sensibles, mais dans certains traits spécifiques et représentatives. Mais parce qu'il est difficile de conserver l'image, la conscience du spectateur oscille tout le temps entre l'imaginaire et la synthèse perceptive.

Il arrive même souvent que la synthèse ne se passe pas entièrement : le visage et le corps de la fantaisiste ne perdent pas toute leur individualité; et cependant, sur ce visage, sur ce corps de femme, la nature expressive «Maurice Chevalier » vient d'apparaître. Il s'ensuit un état hybride, ni tout à fait perception, ni tout à fait image, qui vaudrait d'être décrit pour lui seul. Ces états sans équilibre et qui ne durent pas sont évidemment, pour le spectateur, ce qu'il y a de plus plaisant dans l'imitation. C'est qu'en effet le rapport de l'objet à la matière de l'imitation est ici un rapport de *possession*. Maurice Chevalier absent choisit, pour se manifester, le corps d'une femme.⁷⁹

Une matière encore plus pauvre, qui ne ressemble que relativement, même problématiquement à l'objet visé, c'est dans les dessins schématiques, qui consistent en quelques lignes et points diversement organisés, donc en simples schémas. Celles-ci, pour être interprétées et recevoir un sens utilisé

⁷⁸ Sartre 1986: 106.

⁷⁹ Sartre 1986: 63–64.

ensuite pour créer, par intuition intentionnelle, l'image d'un objet, exigent de nous, en plus de l'intelligence, une connaissance contextualisée multiple, capable de nous fournir possibles « clés » pour les déchiffrer. Par exemple, il faut beaucoup d'intuition et nombreux efforts cognitifs pour voir, à travers quelques lignes, un homme courir, donc pour enrichir et remplacer le schéma pauvre par une image plus complexe, vivante, même si cette image est extrêmement générale, ainsi qu'elle « sert de *prototypon* à tous les coureurs possibles »⁸⁰. De ce fait, notre image est très proche de l'idée du coureur, que nous ne pouvons différencier que par le type spécifique d'intentionnalité de la conscience, car dans l'idée il ne s'agit pas d'une conscience d'image, mais d'une conscience de signification, qui a une intentionnalité vide de tout contenu.

Dans tous les cas présentés jusqu'ici, la matière sur laquelle la conscience s'appuie pour créer ses images signifie quelque chose par elle-même, ayant une capacité représentative qui oriente en quelque sorte la conscience. Mais celle-ci a le pouvoir de créer des images à partir d'une matière qui ne veut rien dire, interprétant de diverses manières, au hasard, uniquement par le regard et faisant appel à des connaissances antérieures, arabesques sur des tapisseries, taches sur des murs, formes incertaines de flammes, rochers d'apparence humaine, etc. Ici la perception est plutôt un prétexte, et la conscience, donnant elle-même, dans un simple jeu, une certaine valeur représentative aux formes perçues, crée spontanément, sans restriction, toutes sortes de synthèses imaginatives, dont la matière contient tant éléments physiques que mentaux.⁸¹

Cependant, d'une manière surprenante, la conscience peut se borner seule, devenant « fascinée » de soi et « captive » à elle-même, générant d'autres images mixtes. Cela se produit dans l'état de demi-éveil, lorsque les sens n'ont plus leur acuité habituelle et donc la conscience ne fait plus une nette différence entre elle et les choses, s'obligeant à créer les synthèses les plus improbables. C'est ainsi qu'apparaissent les images hypnagogiques, à savoir les hallucinations, que la conscience croit véritables perceptions, mais dont la matière sont les phosphènes, donc les sensations lumineuses internes que nous éprouvons lorsque nous fermons les yeux. Alors,

⁸⁰ Sartre 1986: 107.

⁸¹ Sartre 1986: 75–79.

Dans le cas de la conscience hypnagogique, la matière est presque inséparable de la conscience qu'on en prend, parce que la prise de conscience la transforme radicalement, non seulement dans sa fonction, mais dans sa constitution même. (...) Dans la conscience hypnagogique il n'y a presque plus de rapport entre l'image et son support intuitif. De sorte que, lorsque la conscience imageante se désagrège, on ne peut pas sans beaucoup de peine retrouver, dans l'attitude perceptive, les éléments qui faisaient fonction de matière.⁸²

Présentant cette succession des types de l'image, Sartre observe qu'au fur et à mesure que sa matière s'appauvrit, la ressemblance entre l'image et son objet s'estompe jusqu'à une quasi évanescence, devenant plutôt une «équivalence» établie de diverses manières. En même temps, l'intention imaginative acquiert de plus en plus de spontanéité et est déclenchée dans une mesure croissante par la connaissance que par la matière. Cependant, cette connaissance constitutive de l'image prend la forme d'un «mouvement symbolique» de notre regard, qui guide activement la conscience afin de parvenir à une certaine synthèse imaginative. Elle n'a donc plus un caractère conceptuel ou idéationnel, mais c'est une connaissance imaginative, «dégradée» dans le plan intuitif, qui ainsi peut être intégrée à l'image, car elle «ne vise plus les rapports comme tels mais comme qualités substantielles des choses»⁸³. Mais

Nous comprenons maintenant le sens d'une telle dégradation : le savoir, au lieu de se changer en savoir percevant pour se renseigner sur l'objet présent, ou en savoir réflexif, pour se renforcer en se déterminant pour lui-même sur le plan intellectuel, accepte de se prendre dans la formation d'une image où il jette son acquis pour faire apparaître l'objet absent, mais où il se condamne à ne rien acquérir en échange. Satisfaction d'impuissant, défaitisme stérile, telle apparaît, sous cet angle négatif, la fonction imageante de la conscience. Et il s'agit bien, en effet, d'une fonction de renoncement. Mais tout renoncement, s'il fait apparaître du négatif, est cependant un acte positif.⁸⁴

La situation que nous avons décrite ci-dessus vaut pour toutes les images extérieures ou mixtes, dont la matière est trouvée par la conscience, au moins en partie, en dehors d'elle, ce qui la fait rester plus ou moins intacte

⁸² Sartre 1986: 103.

⁸³ Sartre 1986: 134.

⁸⁴ Jeanson 1965: 69.

lorsque l'image disparaît, fonctionnant comme un support relativement pérenne, réutilisable pour sa réapparition ultérieure.

Mais ce « représentant analogique » ou *l'analogon* de l'objet est dépourvu de toute extériorité dans l'image mentale, dont la matière exprime un contenu éminemment psychique, qui ne se retrouve nulle part lorsque l'acte intentionnel de la conscience imageante concrète cesse. Donc, même si la matière de l'image mentale est un objet légitime de la conscience et lui est transcendante, la conscience réflexive ne peut la séparer de l'image et ne peut la décrire, comme dans le cas de la matière des images externes ou mixtes. Mais si l'on ne peut pas réfléchir (le seul acte qui garantisse la certitude des résultats de la recherche) sur la matière psychique de l'image, il s'ensuit que pour enlever le blocage et avancer dans la connaissance, il faut sortir du cadre sécuritaire de l'expérience interne et passer à un niveau différent des recherches sur l'image.

Il nous faut donc quitter le terrain sûr de la description phénoménologique et revenir à la psychologie expérimentale. C'est-à-dire que, comme dans les sciences expérimentales, nous devons faire des hypothèses et chercher des confirmations dans l'observation et l'expérience. Ces confirmations ne nous permettront jamais de dépasser le domaine du probable.⁸⁵

Sartre établit ainsi une limite ferme, de principe, pour la psychologie phénoménologique, qui ne saurait définitivement remplacer la psychologie expérimentale. Sa position est que, même si toutes les deux s'exercent sur le monde intramondain, elles ne s'excluent pas et ne se font pas concurrence, mais que la psychologie phénoménologique doit jouer le rôle de fondement pour la psychologie empirique, dont les hypothèses auront la chance d'être beaucoup plus pertinentes si elles s'appuient sur les résultats indéniables de la première.

Par conséquent, Sartre se sent confiant de marcher lui-même dans le domaine de possible, de l'hypothétique et des conjectures, qui s'avère inévitable dans la recherche de l'image mentale, parce qu'il a derrière lui une expertise phénoménologique approfondie sur l'image en général, qu'il utilise comme cadre de référence dans le nouveau contexte de la recherche. Ainsi, ses analyses dans *L'Imaginaire* sur la nature de *l'analogon* dans l'image mentale, le rôle de l'image dans la vie psychique ou la vie imaginaire de la

⁸⁵ Sartre 1986: 112.

conscience, bien qu'elles n'appartiennent pas strictement, c'est-à-dire techniquement, à l'exercice phénoménologique proprement dit, peuvent être vues comme un effet et un prolongement de celui-ci, se dessinant naturellement à l'horizon de la pensée phénoménologique.

Cependant, pour l'instant nous ne suivrons plus Sartre dans cette partie de sa conception philosophique sur l'image, l'imagination et l'imaginaire, compte tenu de ses complexité, subtilité et richesse, traits qui nécessitent une analyse séparée et détaillée de celle-ci.

Conclusions

Maintenant il faut souligner l'importance capitale que Sartre donnait au problème de l'image et de l'imagination, car, de son point de vue, là se trouve la clé pour résoudre la question de la conscience. Car on ne peut pas comprendre la structure et le fonctionnement de la conscience si on ne connaît pas le mécanisme de ce processus psychique essentiel, ses relations avec les autres, le rôle qu'il joue dans l'activité de la conscience et la place dans la configuration de sa spécificité. Et si on ne résout pas le problème de la conscience, on ne peut pas dire rien pertinent sur le seul être qui la possède pleinement et qu'elle caractérise. Il s'agit bien sûr de l'homme, objet privilégié d'étude pour les philosophes et qui se trouve aussi au cœur de la philosophie sartrienne.

Ce n'est donc pas par hasard que Sartre a abordé le problème de l'image au début de sa carrière philosophique, présentant en ce sens le niveau de la connaissance scientifique et philosophique de son temps, en y faisant une critique systématique et historique et avançant sa propre théorie, qui exprime une position ancrée dans la perspective phénoménologique. Cette position rejette la conception largement admise sur l'image comme simple contenu de la conscience, donc comme quelque chose de différent par rapport à la conscience, une chose lourde et opaque posée là et pour laquelle la conscience serait comme un réceptacle – avançant l'hypothèse de leur profonde identité. Pour Sartre, l'image est une forme de conscience, un phénomène éminemment actif, et pour souligner qu'elle est la conscience elle-même, il l'appelle « conscience d'image ». Cela sera d'une importance décisive dans la formation de toute sa conception philosophique ultérieure.

Ainsi, *L'Imagination* et *L'Imaginaire*, au-delà de leur propre valeur, sont des travaux préliminaires, qui préparent le terrain pour le grand ouvrage publié par Sartre en 1943, *L'Être et le néant*, auquel ils fournit la

base théorique pour soutenir que, par rapport à l'être des choses, la conscience est un type d'être radicalement distinct, et cela parce qu'elle n'est pas seulement une conscience perceptive, strictement connaissante, mais aussi imageante. L'image, qui est la conscience dans l'un de ses actes spécifiques et qui engage l'invention, la créativité, lui permet d'être à la fois elle-même et autre chose qu'elle-même, se plaçant ainsi en permanence comme néant de son être et s'affirmant comme liberté. Et pour Sartre l'homme n'est que liberté et, de plus, il est « condamné » à être libre. De telles assertions, qui ont eu la capacité d'impressionner le grand public et qui ont parfois été considérées comme de simples postulats extravagants et contradictoires, ne peuvent être vraiment comprises si elles sont séparées de la conception phénoménologique sur l'image développée par Sartre.

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INCOMPATIBLE DEPLOYMENT: THE NON-CREATIVE DESTRUCTION OF THE HUMAN CONSTRUCTIONS

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Abstract: *The sketch of this somehow odd environmental philosophy topic is made from the standpoint of ontology of the human. This perspective is heuristic to more than the specific material domain discussed here. Indeed, many times we feel that the analysis of the couple construction-destruction is metaphorical, sending us to a lot of rich experience of this relationship and its meanings. The thesis is that a main cause of the present global unsustainability, leading to major risks for the human civilisation, is the absurd destruction of the material domain of the artificial world. It is the result of the unsustainable frenzy of capitalist development for private profit and is pendant of the destruction of natural biodiversity and resources. The focus is on immobile constructions, they are the working model, including for the attitude towards mobile artificial objects. The significance of destruction and the hypothesis of creative destruction are decomposed with the concepts of form, telos, validity, intention, and difference between the evil and the necessary: thus, exceeding the legitimation of fatalism: “destruction as price and precedence of construction”, and “equivalence of all types of destruction”. On the contrary, criteria of (both construction and) destruction are presented. Similarly, a holistic approach, surpassing their isolated consideration. They influence the surrounding “near space” and, through local/specific areas, the global environment, on both short intervals and long terms. The logic of bioeconomy is thus their suitable treatment. It is consonant with its legal basis, a “natural contract” sparing the natural resources and equilibria and the world civilisation. Destruction of the material human constructs as an essential element of unsustainable development signals the constitutive intertwining of the immediate, the substantive condition of the human life with the ideas of transcendence and aspiration to the lasting.*

Keywords: destruction, ontology of the human, sustainability, telos, waste.

Preamble

Mankind is now confronted with a *civilisational crisis*. It consists of crises in all the domains of the human life, in knowledge and practice. Why this

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overwhelming general spread of crises and why “civilisational” since humans have always evolved through contradictory trends issued from contradictory states and actions? The answer relates the historical and structural features of civilisation. Thus, until the constitution of the capitalist system in the Western Europe, the world developed in isolated civilisations (letting here aside their eventual relations). But capitalism was a *world system* from the beginning, i.e., from its structural fabric². The pre-modern isolated civilisations underwent their own civilisational crises, that is, their exhaustion when the social relations and organisation could no longer uphold the development of civilisational goods and environment, the social control of consensus and a horizon of betterment. Capitalism passes through the same process, generating nowadays the same malignant devastating phenomena on society, nature, individuals, values and hopes, reasons-to-be. Capitalism is not only its pink vitrine, the image of equilibria and individualistic approaches of life in different “gated communities”³ and even of nature⁴, but:

- the *entire* Earth,
- the wars⁵,
- destruction of nature despite the platform of rational knowledge the humans arrived at,

² Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 1849, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm>.

³ Which claim that, because of the human-induced transformation of nature from the beginning, the identical responsibility of all humans towards the healing of nature would follow. However, “maybe we are really in the same boat, but we are not all traveling in the same class”, Serenella Iovino, “La giustizia ambientale: *loss and damage*”, 11 nov 2022, <https://maremosso.lafeltrinelli.it/news/giustizia-ambientale-libri-serenella-iovino>.

⁴ André Gorz, « Leur écologie et la nôtre » (1974), *Le monde diplomatique*, avril 2010, p. 28, pointed already fifty years ago that capitalist is accommodating – in its fragmentary and double standard manner – to the ecological requirement of the present, but its treatment of ecology does not solve the ecological problems; thus, ecology needs a radical alternative to capitalism.

⁵ John Peter Antonacci, “Periodizing the Capitalocene as Polemocene: Militarized Ecologies of Accumulation in the Long Sixteenth Century”, *Journal of World-Systems Research*, 27(2), 2021, pp. 439–467.

- reduction of humans to the quest of survival at the level of basic needs and entertainment, removing from them the possibility of social ideals which reflect the universal human values and the universalizability of social behaviours; this reduction consists of framing the humans into particularistic mindset, and egoism

- annihilation of critical thinking leading to a non-human passivity⁶, incredibly coexisting with technological enthusiasm and moral goodwill but impotent activism.

At the level of principles of thinking, capitalism induced the *fragmented*, isolated, circumscribed perspective of the local and shied away from the *sine qua non* and interrelated *holism* without which one cannot ultimately understand the local: and thus, neither its space.

Sustainability means to have in present and future all the material resources for life as a system, then not in a country but on the scale of the whole globe. The humans have induced destructive actions and results in the environment from the beginning of their development as a species; and obviously, because every action and every result generate contradictory tendencies, including the strengthening of their negative line, the course of time did but increase the destructive actions and results. But the capitalist system is not a simple chain link in the historical chain of continuity, but a quite new and discontinuous period, where even alternative societal organisations were integrated/subordinated⁷, thus deprived of their specific ways to develop. Its harmful marks on both society and human life and nature are not a simple difference of degree of disastrous influence of humans on nature, but of gist⁸. It's already clear-cut to scientists that the capitalist amplification of treatment of material and spiritual aspects of reality has created a situation of *unsustainability* for a long time from now: if this manner of treatment will continue.

⁶Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*. Leçons sur la Phénoménologie de l'esprit professées de 1933 à 1939 à l'École des Hautes Études, réunies et publiées par Raymond Queneau. Paris: Gallimard, (1947), Gallimard, 1968, 1997, pp. 434, 435, 437.

⁷Zsuzsa Gille, "The Socialocene: From Capitalocene to Transnational Waste Regimes", *Antipode*, 23 September 2022, pp. 1-20.

⁸Jason W. Moore (ed.), *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History and the Crisis of Capitalism*. PM Press/Kairos, 2016.

In other words, the capitalist organisation of the world did not only generate a specific “geological age” of the globe but reached the stage when the *malignant consequences surpass its cultural acquisitions*, actually, it *puts the brakes* to these acquisitions.

Therefore, it is not about the “West-rest” relations, but about *capitalism* (capitalist structural relations) and the *entire human existence in its environment*. Obviously, capitalism is a hierarchical system, socially / internally and geopolitically: the Western capitalism conducting the Western highly developed countries which lead the world capitalism is guilty, so if we reduce things to geopolitical power relations and do not explain the nature of these relations and their denouement under the capitalist regime, we do neither understand their origin and *telos*⁹ and nor do we resolve them: hence, their consequences.

The capitalist *ideology* claims that desolation of both nature and the material artificial world is only a phase, a temporary interval in the victorious capitalist type construction of the planet. The message of this ideology *ad usum vulgi* is the idea of generalisation of the capitalist way of life, i.e., of its Western vitrine. But, because of both the *waste* involved in this model and the domination/exploitation/transfer of wealth structure through the capitalist (international) relations, this generalisation is not possible, not sustainable.

The claim of a temporary interval is denied by the present state of capitalism that gathers huge accumulations of wealth at the top of society and at the same time cannot assure decent, even the basic, needs – nutrition, shelter, education, culture, self-fulfilment – of millions of human beings. This unconceivable political impotence gives to the already chippy and abstract word “crisis” the weight of some more concrete ones: *collapse*¹⁰

⁹ *Telos* – a main term coined by Aristotle – means the reason-to-be of every living or inanimate entity, including of actions.

¹⁰ Societal collapse is much more than disasters – although there are bi-univocal relations between them, (Bas van Bavel, Daniel R. Curtis, Jessica Dijkman, Maïka de Keyzer, Matthew Hannaford, Eline van Onacker, Tim Soens, *Disasters and History: The Vulnerability and Resilience of Past Societies*. Oxford University Press, 2020); it is a demise of the material structures and social institutions, values and organisation of a given society.

See also, discussing “prominent risks of societal collapse”, UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (2022), *Our World at Risk: Transforming Governance for a Resilient*

and *tipping point*. Indeed, the present civilisational crisis seems to drive the humans to their extinction, to the collapse of the human society; actually, it is a tipping point which only the humans can divert towards avoiding of collapse.

Instead of introduction

Environmental philosophy is based on proofs immanent to the state of nature and, obviously, to the human-nature relations. From a philosophical standpoint, these proofs are interpreted as significances whose relationship gives a picture that is a model.

A picture or design is prepared. The moment of preparation is/could be even far away from the resulting picture: actually, in this moment the paths with their specific ends could be even very different from the final result.

Here, we start from the contemplation of *ruins*. They are traces of the former life within their walls which defended the humans living there, but which never isolated them from the larger ambient that was also their home. The life in the former constructions meant a lot of other human constructs, tools, implements, furniture, kitchen dishes, books, carpets and clothes, aesthetical preoccupations and arrangements¹¹: which all are vanished now. They did not vanish because of "*inreparabile tempus*"¹²; the

Future. (Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction, aka: GAR2022 d/d May 2022), available at <https://www.undrr.org/media/79595> (viewed September 2022).

Noam Chomsky, Principal speaker for the American Solar Energy Society 51st annual conference, University of New Mexico, June 21 2022, available at <https://interfaithearthkeepers.org/f/noam-chomsky-and-the-united-nations-warn-of-collapse?blogcategory=Analysis> (viewed 26 October 2023), added to the well-known aspects, "the deterioration of rational discourse".

¹¹ François Dagognet, *Eloge de l'objet, pour une philosophie de la marchandise*. Paris: J. Vrin, 1989, 198, 12: "Throughout history, philosophers have remained too exclusively focused on subjectivity, without understanding that it is on the contrary in things that the mind is best able to see. We must therefore carry out a real revolution, realizing that it is on the side of objects that the mind is found, much more than on the side of the subject".

¹² Publius Vergilius Maro, *Georgica*, Liber III, 284, <https://TheVirtualLibrary.org>, available at https://onemorelibrary.com/index.php/en/?option=com_djclassifieds&format=raw&view=download&task=download&fid=16432.

ruins witness either natural disasters or man-made ones. The ruins are signs of random natural punishments, but also of wars and cruelty. The difference is thus the *intention* of human acts: obviously, one could cause the fire unintentionally, but most of the ruins was caused by conscious intentions. Are the ruins not also witnesses of the state of human awareness?

We can contemplate isolated ruins of Romantic castles. They are surrounded by a beautiful friendly nature that seems to cover the remaining enclosure and to divert our attention: we rather float in nostalgia and fatalism, than to think about the significances of ruins.

But we see *compact and large areas of ruins*. War – occurring in the same repetitive pattern of “violence plus some contract”¹³ – is the climax of human-caused irrational destructions: they are “domicide”¹⁴ and no matter how far away from us are they, we are aware of them. This must involve first, in order to stop their cause, the questioning of their *context*. Why can’t we do this, since we know so much about the structure of matter? In front of ruins, we see not only that the artificial, human sign of civilisation has disappeared¹⁵, but also that nature as feature of the world, that is, nature as the world, of the only world that matters to us, rarefied. The quantity leads us to evaluate ruins in a different way¹⁶: we are no longer nostalgic, but

¹³ Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract* (1991). Translated by Elizabeth MacArthur and William Paulson. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995, p. 13.

¹⁴ John Douglas Porteous, Sandra Eileen Smith, *Domicide: The Global Destruction of Home*. McGill-Queen's Press – MQUP, 2001; “Domicide” must be recognised as an international crime: UN expert, 28 October 2022, accessed at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/10/domicide-must-be-recognised-international-crime-un-expert>, viewed 29 October 2023).

¹⁵ *Before and after satellite images show destruction in Gaza*, October 25, 2023, available at <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/10/25/middleeast/satellite-images-gaza-destruction/index.html> (viewed 27 October 2023).

¹⁶ See the scale as proportion, and thus as a criterion, in Cristian Suteanu, *Scale: Understanding the Environment*. Springer, 2022.

More precisely, the scale of size of electric cars and of their demand leads to the increase of the demand of critical materials necessary for batteries, and thus, for pressures on and imbalances of the environment. International Energy Agency (2023), *Global EV Outlook 2023: Catching up with climate ambitions*, pdf, p. 162.

afraid. Ruins means collapse: not imperfection and lack, but deletion. We are sorry, but does this mean that we escaped from fatalism?

Concluding remarks

We distinguish between natural and man-made destruction; we distinguish between military¹⁷ and civil destruction. The former distinction sends to *direct responsibility*, to the subject. The second sends to *direct responsibility*, too, and concretises it. The military destruction is not an accidental peak and limit case of the “normal” civil destruction but its permanent intermingled manifestation; and its aspects are a mirror of the problems of civil destruction; while the aspects of the latter have the same essence and evolution as the military destruction: because of their common logic, of *private interest and domination subjection relations*.

In the paper, we use the common understanding of nature on the path created in antiquity, as “developing from itself”, opposed to human-made intellectual and physical creations. Aristotle considered nature as a principle or cause of the movement, rest and change of living things, as their internal principle or cause¹⁸ and thus, as their fundamental encompassing feature.

However, this is not the only meaning. For Spinoza, the concept was much larger than the living – though just the pulsation of life was the feature of nature – as all *things*, as *existence* as such, and as concrete existence, *reality*: this is the reason of equivalence between God and nature. If we do not forget the difference between the internal *telos* – as cause of movement etc. of the living entities, and the external *telos* as cause of the inanimate things¹⁹, then we once more understand the human responsibility towards both the living nature and the reality of human

¹⁷ UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Widespread destruction by Israeli Defence Forces of civilian infrastructure in Gaza*, 08 February 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/widespread-destruction-israeli-defence-forces-civilian-infrastructure-gaza>; Indlieb Farazi Saber, *A ‘cultural genocide’: Which of Gaza’s heritage sites have been destroyed?*, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/14/a-cultural-genocide-which-of-gazas-heritage-sites-have-been-destroyed>.

¹⁸ Aristotle, *Physics*, in *The Complete Works of*. The revised Oxford translation, Edited by Jonathan Barnes (1984), Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, Volume One, 1991, II, I, 192b12-192b23, p. 19.

¹⁹ The sculptor makes the statue, etc. see Aristotle.

construction: because the internal *telos* of the living entity is depending on its environment.

What does a ruin mean?

When characterising a cracked piece of a device, a corrupted device, a deteriorated piece of clothing or a broken house, we think to that which remained: only “matter”, “simple matter”. The general and veiled, ambiguous concept of matter covers our removing from a spatial and temporal situatedness, from the former *individual* – that is, according to the etymology, *indivisible* – *unities*, *entities*. A ruin is a loss of the former individuality of objects, even of the former “objectivity”: that it was an indisputable stake for the human milieu, a “matter of fact”²⁰, an object. As an *object*, the former individual constituency of matter was *created* and, inherently, had a big complexity, and the more relationships with the world the object had, the more meanings it had. As a *ruin*, the former object became a “thing”, losing the former significances and being almost indiscernible, as debris, from the amorphous materiality.

This doesn’t mean that the ruin has no meaning. *Firstly*, it seems that the demolished status, somehow opposed to the intentions of constructors, removes to the subject its privileged position in the subject-object relation, finally positing the object – but transformed into a simple thing “without face”²¹ between other ones – as an independent primary source of reality. *Secondly*, the ruin brings about a new original meaning: that of its superiority towards the humans who do not anymore have the object and who have in front of them the difficult task to nevertheless transform it/its parts into objects, or to be deprived by the space the former construction provided; and who know that the eventual new object never will be the same as to the former, never will it contain the former meanings. *Thirdly*, the ruin is the negative of the former construction: while this one was independent, complete (having its *telos*), factual, stable, pre-delineated,

²⁰ Bruno Latour, “Why has critique run out of steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern”, *Critical Inquiry*, 30, Winter 2004, pp. 225-248.

²¹ This is an extrapolation of Antiphon’s name (*arrúthmiston* – without rhythm/form) for the indeterminate origin of things, see Aristotle, *Physics*, 193a10-193a11, p. 19.

“Vitruvian” (having its *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas*²²), thus ordered, harmonious, integrated into the milieu²³ despite its uniqueness, the ruin as a thing is incomplete, unstable, disordered, incompatible with the ambient, an accident. Therefore, the ruin shows the importance of binary terms dialectic, hiding behind all our commentaries about the complexity of meanings. And *fourthly*, and if we may equate Antiphon’s rhythm/form with determination, respectively Antiphon’s term (without rhythm/form) with lack of determination, even though the ruin gives a new determination to the environment, it itself has no determination, is debris.

The ruin is both an *object* and a *space*. If we take into account its human origin – in most cases, even if occasioned by natural disasters – the ruin is a “conceived space” becoming a “lived” one, a lasting “perceived” one²⁴. As a *space* it is “absolute”, giving by its external perimeter / surface the whole occupied by it, “relative” to surrounding bodies and landscapes, and “relational” towards them, and important from all these standpoints²⁵: actually, the ruin gives “the text” of the landscape²⁶, the meanings issued from experiencing it; and in the deep intimacy of the human person²⁷.

As an *object*, the ruin is an entity defined by its history²⁸, namely, by the relation and process of negation of the antecedent construction: or by

²²Jesper Magnusson, *Objects vs. Things*, 2013, available at <https://philosophiesresarc.wordpress.com/2013/03/11/objects-vs-things/> (viewed 4 October 2023).

²³ Augustin Berque, *La Pensée paysagère* (2008). Bastia : Éoliennes, 2016.

²⁴ Lefebvre, Henri, *La production de l'espace*. Paris: Anthropos, 1974, p. 43.

²⁵ Letting aside Aristotle’s discussion of space, let’s remind David Harvey, “The Dialectics of Spacetime”, Bertell Ollman, Tony Smith, (eds.) *Dialectics for the New Century*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, pp. 90-108, p 95: “Space is neither absolute, relative or relational in itself, but it can become one or all simultaneously depending on the circumstances”.

²⁶ Augustin Berque, *La Pensée paysagère* ; Francesca D’Alessandris, « La pensée des lieux de Paul Ricœur à l’épreuve du paysage », *Études Ricœuriennes / Ricœur Studies*, Vol 12, No 2, 2021, pp. 31-43.

²⁷ Gaston Bachelard, *La Poétique de l'espace*. Paris: PUF, 1957, pp. 28, 31.

²⁸ Idea developed also in a physical chemistry theory explaining the transition from non-living to living, see Abhishek Sharma, Dániel Czégel, Michael Lachmann, Christopher P. Kempes, Sara I. Walker & Leroy Cronin, “Assembly theory explains and quantifies selection and evolution”, *Nature*, 622, 12 October 2023, p. 321.

this construction negated in specific ways. The former constructed object became a thing, but this thing is only an intermediary of those whose intention was just to equate construction and destruction and to reduce the former to debris in order to more transforming the space into periodical destruction followed by constructions entirely subordinated to the end of its landowners. *The “production of space” is not made by all humans in the same way.* This is why the dominant psychology to approach the landscapes filled with constructions and ruins was to think about these contents as ordinary and even infra-ordinary²⁹. This was because of its commodification: that alienates and, including by war – a chief commodity – generates a human-nature space marked by destruction and deepening of contradictory and dreadful evolution.

Although the most intensive impression of ruin is in cities, its feature as destruction generalises in the entire human and human-governed space: “Professional pesticides were killing our countryside as well as our cities”³⁰.

Reminder

Traditionally, the human thinking and, here it is, philosophy, were subject-centred. Apart from the religious transfiguration, all the languages reveal that the world with its objects was conceived of from the standpoint of humans, as a result of the human demiurge: their meanings and constitution were created by man. The indeterminate stuff of his surroundings were *things*, in all the three meanings emphasised by

For the grasping of the *differentia specifica* of a landscape with constructions or ruins, its history means *contextualization*. See Michael Schwalbe, *Decontextualization and the Cycle of Violence*, November 3, 2023, available at <https://www.counterpunch.org/2023/11/03/decontextualization-and-the-cycle-of-violence/> (accessed 4 November 2023).

²⁹ Questioned in present architectural views. See *How should we take account of, question, describe what happens every day and recurs everyday: the banal, the quotidian, the obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual?*, taken from Georges Perec, *Approaches to What? The Infra-Ordinary*, 1973, available at <https://counterintuitivetyologies.com/Peripheries-Peripherocene> (viewed 5 October 2023).

³⁰ Andy Merrifield, “Amateur urbanism”, *City*, 19 (5), 2015, pp. 753–762.

Heidegger³¹ (the narrower: all inanimate and animate entities which can be sensed and, more than to be present/present-at-hand³² – according to the metaphysical feature – to be learnable; the wider: “every affair or transaction, something that is in this or that condition, the things that happen in the world – occurrences, events” or “whatever is named”; and the widest: “something which is not nothing”³³). And, the undetermined whatever (the things) became *objects* – each of them a unique unity of properties – uncovered by the humans through naming them (as Plato said), through decomposing, inquiring and interpreting them (as the natural language suggests, and as in philosophy, see Aristotle), thus through creating them. Briefly, *the subject created the object*. Obviously, we can say with Heidegger that we can understand the things only by considering the entire history and art: but only if things and objects are synonyms, the same. Since they are not strictly, we say this only in regard of objects.

In the course of the human exploration and experience / practice, the objects were autonomised from their creators; and they were and are, indeed. The subject-object feedback was discovered and it really exists. The subject became to be understood as being no longer surrounded by a neutral, passive environment and infinite in its capacity to absorb and dissolves the human dirt object, but as an active context. Marx’s emphasis that the human existence – i.e., conditions / context – determines his social conscience had not in view to annul the creative role of the human mind and ideas, but only to draw attention on the above-mentioned feedback and the context dependence of ideas. The ideas do not form within an etherical space but in a dense prosaic world underlying the prosaic life

³¹ Martin Heidegger, *What Is a Thing?* (1935-1936), Translated by W. B. Barton, Jr. and Vera Deutsch with an analysis by Eugene T. Gendlin. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1967.

³² In *Zollikon Seminars* 2001, Heidegger insisted that in *What Is a Thing* “presence as the [metaphysical] determination of being is abandoned”, p. 182 (apud Dahstrom, Daniel. *Heidegger’s works in English*, available at <http://www.beyng.com/hb/hbheid.html#WhatIsaThing>, accessed 12 October 2023. Here, *Zollikon Seminars: Protocols – Conversations – Letters*, Edited by Medard Boss (1987). Translated by Franz K. Mayr and Richard R. Askay, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001).

³³ Martin Heidegger, *What Is a Thing?*, pp. 5, 6.

without which there are no ideas, and are impregnated by all that which we call *material culture* whose “presence and power”³⁴ do not negate the ideas but strengthen them.

Destruction

What does destruction mean, apart from the significances already got in the etymology that describes the first guise of an essential result of the human activity? Its root (*struo, -ere, -uxi, -uctum* – to pile up, to collect, and from here to build, to erect, and even to put order, to prepare, to cover, to fill, so to create, to compose), kept in the tree itself showing that all these actions are social effort³⁵ (*construo, -ere, -uxi, -uctum* – to pile up, to accumulate, to construct, to erect), was broken down (*destruo, -ere, -uxi, -uctum*), signalling ruin, annihilation.

However, to what degree? Aristotle’s constituents of things – *matter* and *form* – specify it: the result of destruction is a definite loss of form; and to some extent, even to a large one, even of matter. Consequently, the former *telos* of a given construction was wiped out. But, assuming the modern bricks of reality, also the *energy* deployed in the former construction was wasted. And also, the infinite wealth of *information*: because the destruction of civilisation is erasing of information.

Creation is positioning as a twofold *singularity*: as a process of creation and as its result. Thus, destruction annihilates the singularities without which the existence has no colours of reality: without singularities, the existence is grey, “without form”, if we once more take Antiphon’s formula for the primordial origin of reality.

Creative destruction

The most powerful sentiment in front of ruins is pessimism. But is this statement not an exaggeration? When all is said and done, the ruins are substituted with new constructions: new habitats with new, and perhaps (or surely) better utensils and means of life.

³⁴ Bill Brown, (2001), “Thing Theory”, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 28, No. 1, *Things*, Autumn 2001, pp. 1-22 (p. 3).

³⁵ *Conatus, -us* – effort, trial, tentative (and from them, propensity); *conamen, -inis* – elan, effort.

This reassuring belief induces us to view destruction in the ordinary pattern of fatalism *and* optimism. A destruction is, after all, “creative”³⁶: it must be initiated and must take place because otherwise there is no space for construction. But can we infer that every destruction would be creative?

Here, and continuing the etymological meanings, we distinguish between *destruction*, that is a property / significance related to the human beings, a fact made by them and underwent by them, and *disappearance/dissipation/vanishing*, that is a property related to things. And because everything has meanings only in relation with humans, the properties related to things exist as graspable by humans³⁷. This is the reason of the use of these synonyms – which, as all synonyms, never overlap perfectly – as reciprocal metaphors for the two types of properties. Nevertheless, we can distinguish between *ontology*, as analysis of the principles of being, and the *ontology of the human*, that discusses the principles of the human being. The latter contains concepts which characterise only the existence of the human being, as for instance, the perceived or not rarity, emphasised by Sartre³⁸. Like all these types of concepts, they can be explained also with the general ontological ones: destruction is annihilation of an individual entity and thus, of the balance of individual-particular-general; or (actually, and) destruction is a difference towards the former *identity* but also a new identity, of different form, with different meanings³⁹. So, does the new identity not signal that destruction would be creative?

Criteria of creativity in destruction

No matter how complex it is, a construction is a structure. Its identity, its uniqueness is the first one focuses on, constructors and beneficiaries as well. Taking over Aristotle’s model of living beings, they consider it as an *organism*, its parts and aspects being necessarily subordinated to the *telos* of the whole structure, to be functional in its integrity and safe. When these requirements / conditions are no longer met, the structure is de-structured.

³⁶ Joseph A. Schumpeter, (2003), *Capitalism, Socialism, Democracy* (1942). London & New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 81.

³⁷ See *disappearance* and its never absolutely overlapping synonyms, *extinction, dissipation, fading, melting away, disintegration, dissolution* etc.

³⁸ J.-P. Sartre, *Critique de la raison dialectique (précédé de Questions de méthode)*. Tome I. Théorie des ensembles pratiques. Paris: Gallimard, 1960.

³⁹ Here Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (1968), Translated by Paul Patton, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, is the most helpful.

Sometimes people take from it some pieces they consider useful, letting the rest to ruin. Not the course of time accomplishes this task, but the desertification of buildings, the oblivion of usefulness of *tools* and everyday objects and their harmony with us. Other times the structures are razed to the ground, the demolition leaving behind a mass of difficultly discernible rubbish. Or, the dismembering is itself an engineering, the pieces are carefully sorted and sent to be recycled.

Anyway, the cleaning of terrain from ruins is the most difficult, costly and, most of times, sad activity. The humans who do this are not robots, even though they must act as if they would be⁴⁰.

But would the feelings in front of destruction be the criterion of envisaging it? After all, the dominant thinking even in present is that of the social division of labour equated with power relations according to which the workers – here, we do think to those of cleaning the terrain and those of sanitation (but rather without the latest tools workshop), the collectors and those sorting the garbage, do we? – are necessary, inevitable and never visible, as if they would not exist, as if they would not be part of Spinoza's (and not of Hobbes's)⁴¹ *multitude*. And the cliché of fatal resignation depicts the ruin as “natural”, inevitable, inherent to the successive moments of development – thus “dialectical” and progress thrusting, as the capitalist ideology chants. It presumes that as the construction was planned, so its destruction was, consequently it is “human”. If so, the first criterion to examine the destruction of human structures is its *planned* or *unplanned* feature.

Still, what kind of planning or unplanning? If a structure is already in ruin, independently of the persons who decide to capitalize the ground by constructing something on it, the total destruction of the former construction is only a continuation of the given state, isn't it? Actually, only the *intention* to destroy a *valid* material configuration, built through the physical and intellectual effort of many people, transforms the dismantling into a planned *evil* destruction. Consequently, it is not tantamount to the *ad hoc* definitive destruction of a ruin, and nor to the one of an obsolete

⁴⁰ Is this not the position of a human acting as a destructive tool in front of his functional tasks, and his/her trauma?

⁴¹ Difference analysed in Paolo Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude: For an Analysis of Contemporary Forms of Life* (2003). Translated by Isabella Bertolotti, James Cascaito, Andrea Casson. Los Angeles, New York: Semiotext(e) / Foreign Agents, 2004.

construction. The planned evil destruction has nothing to do with the inherent destruction involved in the betterment of the human construction.

But is it not “creative”? Let’s see. A new construction is erected in the place of the former, but this simple model of change is not enough; neither the substitution of the old with the new. In order to be creative, the physical disintegration must reduce as much as possible the *waste* of materials and the *damage* of the surrounding milieu, on short and especially long terms. Namely: if the waste of materials and the damage of environment are bigger than those resulted after the new construction, this one is the effect of a savage, irrational destruction, and brings (new) malignant shocks to the balance of raw materials and environment, *sine qua non* for the sustainability of the human life. Accordingly, the *state* of the object of destruction – the former man-made construction, but also different natural habitats – is another criterion for the decision to destroy, and thus for judging the destruction. The weighting of *waste*, *damage* and *state of the object*, its degree of validity / invalidity, are what signal an “efficient”⁴² destructive “action”.

Criteria of creativity in construction

But what is a *valid* structure? It fulfils the functions it was conceived for and assures good feelings to people who use it. And although any object from reality emerges but also degrades, perishes, a man-made structure that satisfies the above requirements even by *repairing* it⁴³, by *rehabilitating* it – first of all because every structure of this type needs maintenance – is valid.

But would every renovation be valid, since it is expensive? The habitual analysis compares the cost of renewing with the cost of obliteration, obviously to the latter adding the promise of future gains by capitalizing the terrain and/or the rests of materials. However, this analysis ignores the price of damage to the environment made by both the destruction of the existent structure and the new construction.

⁴² Tadeusz Kotarbiński, *Praxiology. An Introduction to the Science of Efficient Action* (1955). Translated from the Polish by Olgierd Woitasiewicz. New York: Pergamon Press, 1965.

⁴³ Ana Bazac, “Repair: A Dislocating Concept and Its Vicissitudes”, *Wisdom*, 2 (9), 2017, pp. 6-17.

Already in 1909 Jakob von Uexküll⁴⁴ drew attention on the basic importance of the ambient, the “near milieu” of living beings, more precisely of species – this perceived or felt *Umwelt* being the “receptacle” (one of Plato’s terms for space) of their individual home, *Heimat* (in fact, house) – and the architects take into account it. But are those who plan the destruction of structures taking into account the “*Umwelt*”? Logically, they should do, or rather are obliged to do this: but, as we know, many sidestep the law. Anyway, since a valid structure is always friendly towards the “*Umwelt*”, harmoniously integrated in it, a *necessary* destruction is the same. Any rejection of respecting the milieu transforms the destruction into an *irrational* devastation.

The whole and the specified actions

Yet, the *Umwelt* with its *Heimaten* is part of the general *Umgebung*/Environment. As paradoxical as it sounds⁴⁵, the dominant theory influencing the common ideology is that the individual’s eventual harmful action is not so important because it would be absorbed, dissolved in the whole environment⁴⁶, or that he/she must consume (as frugally as he/she can) as an individual. But as we see, the *mankind is a whole* directed to act in the same dominant capitalist way and thus, transforms the global environment, the water, air, land, the living beings and the human material and spiritual creations.

However, long time ago Plato’s dialectic highlighted that the whole is constituted of many parts which themselves are constituted from parts, thus the parts being wholes and the wholes being parts (*Parmenides*). Concerning our topic, the whole is the whole nature of the Earth – with all its parts /aspects – and not only the surroundings of the individual or group of individuals. Accordingly, nature is not a simple agglomeration /

⁴⁴ Jakob von Uexküll, *A Forray Into the Worlds of Animals and Humans (Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen, 1934)*. Translated by Joseph D. O’Neil, Introduction by Dorion Sagan, Afterword by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young. Minneapolis, London: University of Minneapolis Press, 2010.

⁴⁵ The paradoxical anti-ecological dominant theory is related to – actually, it arises from – the modern doctrine of the utmost freedom of private business.

⁴⁶ Heidegger “rejects any sense of moral responsibility beyond the [local] world of immediate experience”, David Harvey, (1996), *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1996, p. 314.

addition of separate habitats which can be treated in an isolated way and thus, its whole could be treated in the same manner. And because every human action is a bifurcation point, neither the “part” – the surroundings of the individual – can be seen as simply being adjusted by the environment that would annihilate the inadequate and unacceptable deeds.

Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen demonstrated fifty years ago that the only manner to keep, not the abstract balance and harmony of nature, as all the benevolent and imbued with ecological spirit people say, but simply the matter and energy necessary for the future generations, is to use it in the most *anticipative* and *parsimonious* manner possible. Since the Earth is an open thermodynamic system only with respect of energy⁴⁷, and “matter, too, is subject to an irrevocable dissipation”⁴⁸, it results that the squandering of matter is *absurd* – incongruent with the real state of things – and it must stop.

But wouldn't that mean stopping progress? On the contrary. The “minimal bioeconomic program” – from which we retain “the production of all instruments of war, not only of war itself, should be prohibited completely”, “durable goods be made still more durable”, and to cure ourselves of morbid craving for extravagant gadgetry” and “fashion”⁴⁹ – would fuel the innovative spirit of people. *To have* in a different way than in the present consumerist society – not to be ascetic, but to enjoy life – entails the enrichment of human meanings and pleasures. And this means *rational economization* of all the material resources, irrespective of⁵⁰ the discovery of new chemical and biochemical compounds, and including by revisiting the relations between destruction, construction, restoration, renovation, repair. This economization is the result of the perspective of *holistic interdependence* demonstrated by science⁵¹, and surpasses the private type reckoning of the “productive” use of “*Umwelt*” by discharging the waste and pollution in the external public space and by assuming this would mean “economy”

⁴⁷ Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, “Energy and Economic Myths.” *Southern Economic Journal*, 41(3), Jan. 1975, pp. 347-381 (p. 363).

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 352.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 377.

⁵⁰ John Polimeni, Kozo Mayumi, Mario Giampietro and Blake Alcott, *The Jevons Paradox and the Myth of Resource Efficiency Improvements*. The Earthscan, 2007.

⁵¹ For example, Elena Helerea, Marius D. Calin and Cristian Musuroi, “Water Energy Nexus and Energy Transition—A Review”, *Energies*, 16, 2023, 1879.

and ecological responsibility. There is no good modernisation on the basis of wasting and polluting the global environment; and the disintegration of parts of the common space, the “local” destructions, do not remain local, as well as the improvement of local organisation and community centred practices without relating construction – that is, also, production and use – in privileged *places* to the used resources from outside: the global space remains harmed and impotent and does not stop the transformation of *other places* into ruins⁵².

The bioeconomic view of Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen⁵³ is consonant with Ludwig von Bertalanffy's *General System Theory* (1968), and with Peter A. Corning's *The Synergism Hypothesis: A Theory of Progressive Evolution* (1983). The more efficient extraction of matter and energy through complexification through synergic processes is / can be equiponderated by rational, thus anticipative control of this effect: and this is also a synergic process leading to a more, in fact, the only functional state of society's existence in its environment. If man is a “self-made” being⁵⁴, his persistence as development of his unique value-making rationality is assured only by outstripping its robotic side that, letting aside the “mechanistic stimulus-response (S-R) scheme conditioning, according to the pattern of animal experiment”, was /is “both an expression of and a powerful motive force in industrialized mass society. It was the basis for behavioral engineering in commercial, economic, political, and other advertising and propaganda; the expanding economy of the ‘affluent society’ could not subsist without such manipulation”⁵⁵. As a result, the bioeconomic view involves a critique of

⁵² As the wedding hall in the Nuseirat refugee camp in Gaza, *No Place for Joy: Israel Bombs Gaza Wedding Hall, Kills 26 People*, November 2, 2023, available at <https://www.palestinechronicle.com/no-place-for-joy-israel-bombs-gaza-wedding-hall-kills-26-people/> (accessed 3 November 2023).

⁵³ Kozo Mayumi, *The Origins of Ecological Economics: The Bioeconomics of Georgescu-Roegen*, Routledge, 2001.

⁵⁴ Peter A. Corning, *Synergistic Selection: How Cooperation Has Shaped Evolution and the Rise of Humankind*. New Jersey: World Scientific, 2018.

⁵⁵ Ludwig von Bertalanffy, *General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications*, New York: George Braziller, 1968, pp. 89, 207.

But see also C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*. London: Oxford University Press, 1959, p. 175 – the cheerful robot.

the system theory⁵⁶, including with the emphasis of the history and principles of this critique⁵⁷.

The price

Today we know the scientific proofs of destruction of biodiversity and natural balance – and of the conditions of life of local communities – made by private profit driven constructions⁵⁸ and / or marked by the logic of private profit.

And we know that the world community and the whole nature of the Earth are connected: by natural interdependencies and also by the human management, concretely, by the contradictory, because capitalist global management.

Accordingly, the private profit pattern of economic management – traditionally transferring the price of pollution, waste and devastation *abroad*, to former colonies and dependent “allies”, and transferring the cost of ecological treatment of materials in the whole private economic cycle to the state and communities – does not improve, but worsen the establishing of a sustainable nature-society system. The private profit culture led to the ignorance of escalating pollution and waste in the frenzy of profit driven destruction and construction made by ordinary people in quest of their survival: *according to the model of well-offs*.

When thinking logically

Philosophically, the capitalist societal order was founded on the *social contract* theory, having its ancient origin in the social organism allegory where the parts appeared to be “naturally” subordinated to the head. The social contract theory was – and is – the law of “subjective wars” for

⁵⁶ Richard Levins, “Dialectics and Systems Theory”, *Dialectics for the New Century*, Edited by Bertell Ollman and Tony Smith. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, pp. 26-49.

⁵⁷ John Bellamy Foster, (2008), “The Dialectics of Nature and Marxist Ecology”, *Dialectics for the New Century*, Edited by Bertell Ollman and Tony Smith. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008, pp. 50-82.

⁵⁸ Kay Van Damme, Lisa Banfield, “Past and present human impacts on the biodiversity of Socotra Island (Yemen): implications for future conservation”, *Zoology in the Middle East*, Biodiversity Conservation in the Arabian Peninsula, Supplementum 3, 2011, pp. 31–88: pollution and waste, the construction of roads and highway – necessary for tourism – letting alone the destruction of traditional grazing system have devastating influence on the natural equilibria.

dominance of some political actors on other ones. “For the subjective wars, things didn't exist in themselves”⁵⁹, their destruction follows without stopping, despite eventual walls and fences cutting the unitary landscape into unsustainable fragments, but just using them to deepen the warfare⁶⁰.

The more the material components of the human environment, including those created by the human endeavour, became globally unified and damaged by the past and present century, the more the “objective war”, pendant of the subjective ones, appears as the climax of the human irrationality. This objective war is just the *war against nature, against the whole environment*. “At stake is the Earth in its totality, and humanity, collectively. Global history enters nature; global nature enters history: this is something utterly new in philosophy”⁶¹. And “If we must renew our ties with a history's foundations, that is a clear indication that we are seeing its end”⁶².

A new pact to sign with the world, the *natural contract*, is thus the law of the objective war.

However, the law is a form. It is *sine qua non*, but it is not enough. *It must be filled with contents*. Which are the worldly processes of redesigning the economic, political, social structural relations determining a real moral ecology / ecological ethics which include the destruction-construction system with all its results. The path of human development of all and in harmony with nature – actually, respecting matter, energy and information as bases of reality – is thus a transition from fetishising isolated *objects* to cherishing *practices* integrating and better specifying them.

Technically, the insertion of destruction as dereliction of land forsaken for a positive “reconstruction” by nature – always “assisted” by

⁵⁹ Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*, p. 10.

⁶⁰ The incredible post 1989' walls in the war relations have a warning in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book Five, (*The Melian Dialogue: 5.84-116*), available at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/historians/thucyde/thucydides8.html>), 114.: “the Melians showing no signs of yielding, the generals at once betook themselves to hostilities, and drew a line of circumvallation round the Melians, dividing the work among the different states”): because despite the wall and the victory of Athens, this city was defeated 11 years over.

⁶¹ Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*, p. 3.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 14.

an anticipative holistic view generated by a new dominant culture of *everyone's care for all and the whole world* – and called *the third landscape*⁶³ is a way worth to be considered. In a mixed expression this way has an epistemological function: it shows the importance of *change of perspective* in order to grasp reality. The distortion made by present representations of landscape can be *corrected*.

Instead of conclusions

The man-made structures are not nature, do not grow by themselves. Their deployment interferes in a complex manner with the environment, inducing its stress, imbalances, and even destruction. Nature has, nevertheless, a big flexibility, plasticity, and adapts to artificial objects, somehow integrating them within it. Then the natural-artificial landscape is brutally destroyed by targeting “only” the artificial part, buildings, roads, dams, nuclear power plants, or only “common” chemical plants, tunnels, water reservoirs, water desalinisation plants. The stress, imbalances, destruction of nature result: instantaneously and on long term, plausibly even irremediably.

The model of the human constructions is for every artificial object, thus for every human action. The deployed or erected structure is a pole of the human activity, a stake of all types of human experiences: because it signifies the *location*, the frame of all the human situations, of their lastingness, and the peculiarity of human deeds. Consequently, the destruction of locations, of homes by humans is pair with the extermination of humans by humans.

Analysed from an ontological standpoint, the human construction shows the *determinations* between the individual and the general: they are based on the human ability to give determinations, and more, to give determinations which have constructive meanings for the human species. In this respect, construction is *definite in the human reality*: people valorise it and thus, it is a stake. On the contrary, destruction is not able to give determinations / determinations with constructive meanings in the human reality.

Likewise, construction involves *correction* in a permanent process, thus includes also *valid* destruction. It emphasises the *responsibility* of the

⁶³ Gilles Clément, *Manifeste du Tiers Paysage*. Montreuil : Sujet/Objet, 2004.

actors planning and erecting it. Conversely, the *malignant* destruction is not a correction at all and shows the lack of responsibility of the actors undertaking it.

Therefore, historically and socially determined, the man-made destruction is part of the *ontology of the human*, as a response to *historically and socially determined existential conditions*. This response is, consequently, not absolute and inevitable, but generated by primitive ignorance and treatment of resources and human labour. And just this type of historical and social conditioning forbids the ontology of the human to being metaphysics, a deduction from principles from which the human reality would arise automatically. The man-made destruction is not tantamount to the inherent decay and annihilation of independent (substantial)⁶⁴ things.

Rather, the man-made destruction sends to other founding concepts, *intention, repair, economization, holism, cooperative imagination*. The claim “to take man not as reactive automaton or robot but as an active Personality system”⁶⁵ fits just with the anticipative construction of structures and devices, so as to prevent both the deployment of uninhabitable habitats for living beings and man and the transformation of structures into tragic survival envelopes⁶⁶ and defence tools. Therefore, even the above concepts are not independent and isolated intellectual tools: the processes of repair of existing structures must not be considered on a par with those of ruins and ruined spaces; the latter processes *continue* the wasteful use of resources from the former intentional destruction, as well as the waste of the human effort and creativity: the post-destruction repair is not an inherent solving as a simple cancellation of the former intentional destruction; it is a tragic wasteful deployment of the human actuality.

The distinction between *malignant* destruction of valid constructions – that can be negated by man’s rationality – and *necessary* destruction, pendant / correspondent to construction, is still a part of human ontology: always as a conclusion. In history, the late – very late – incapacity to consider this distinction was caused by knowledge shortcomings. In the “mature” modernity of the last 150 years this cause was substituted by the societal cause of capitalist tenets and relations. This substitution generated

⁶⁴ In its etymological and also Aristotelian sense.

⁶⁵ Ludwig von Bertalanffy, p. 208.

⁶⁶ Paul Virilio, *Bunker Archeology*. Princeton Architectural Press, 1997.

the myth of capitalist creative destruction as the only basis of development and betterment of the human condition.

In fact, not only that there is a huge difference between the wars anterior to this interval – since the wars from the last 150 years involved the *knowledge* of their malignant feature, they being contemporary with the new “law of war imposing restrained behaviour to reduce and even avoid unnecessary destruction” – but the capitalist development was not and is not based on a one way leading from the inherent, inevitable destruction of the old to give room to the new that alone would assure progress. On the contrary, it is paralleled by an equally strong “conservative drive” led by the private interest, “to limit, and frequently inhibit, technological innovation in ways which are necessary for them to maintain their control over the various processes of production, delivery, and consumption”⁶⁷.

Historically, the humans and the modern entrepreneurs were interested only in the *desired output* of their endeavour. An *epistemology of blindness* or neglect of the *whole output*, thus including waste, has developed and it underpinned the practical endeavour itself.

But the capitalist type economic logic is more and so important that the conscience of waste and its harms, although present in the last decades, is *not yet dominant*: neither in theory and lesser in practice. To change this an *epistemological rupture* is needed, but this rupture has an exterior determinism. Theoretically, the human construction system must be *anticipative*, related to the anticipation of global and public interest, in order to destruct as late as possible, in as easy way and without harms to environment as possible.

The human constructions are not nature, but they are part of what we call environment. Consequently, their treatment is as ecologically necessary as that of plants and animals, of rocks and oceans, and is intertwined with the ecological treatment of nature. However, the human position towards the material constructs is not only a question of theoretical understanding, and its backwardness is corresponding to the backwardness of the global practical positions towards the human and natural environment.

⁶⁷ Simon Glezos, “Creative Destruction versus Restrictive Practices: Deleuze, Schumpeter and Capitalism’s uneasy relationship with technical innovation”, *C-Theory*, 2010, accessed at <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/ctheory/article/view/14685> (viewed 3 October 2023).

More than a century ago, the World War One signalled that capitalism entered its *system crisis*, the capitalist structural relations generating more and inconceivably *more cruel destruction than the construction they would stimulate*. The system crisis showed that the beautiful development of science and arts is not depending on destruction, and destruction is not the “price” paid for this development. The capitalist system crisis pointed out that if it is not solved through the transformation of the system itself, its processes of decay accelerate as a *civilisational crisis*. As it continues and deepens, this civilisational crisis is much more difficult to solve. The degree of destruction of both nature and society and man is the measure of the civilisational crisis and assesses the directions of the human endeavour to reverse it and the difficulty of this endeavour. Therefore, the conscience of the meanings of destruction is vital, and philosophy is fulfilling / must fulfil its part in the duty and the only way of overturning the phase of existential risk jeopardising the human civilisation.

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- (Virgil, *Georgics*, 3, line 284, J.B. Greenough ed., 1900, available at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0058%3Abook%3D3%3Acard%3D284>, translated as "irreparable hour").
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WAYS OF JUSTIFYING THE PRESENCE OF ETHICAL STANDARDS IN PEDAGOGY

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Abstract: *The article addresses issues related to how ethical standards in pedagogy can be justified. This is an issue that lies in the area of theoretical research. The main problem of the article is as follows: How can the presence of ethical standards in pedagogy be justified? The answer to this question is based on two models of the relationship between pedagogy and ethics.*

In this context, one can speak of pedagogy that subjects educational activity to ethical evaluation (model 1) and one that excludes this evaluation, or at least excludes its extra-disciplinary conditions (model 2). The adoption of the former results in an approach where pedagogy merely 'translates' general ethical standards into its own environmental and development contexts. The adoption of the latter, however, will lead to the presence in pedagogy of a conventional way of introducing ethical standards, often expressed in the form of a code. Then the standards will also be produced in the area of pedagogy itself.

Keywords: *pedagogy, ethics, normative pedagogy, descriptive pedagogy, model, justification.*

Introduction

The combination of such two issues as ethics and pedagogy in one sentence immediately arouses a rich domain of associations, themes and problems. Being aware of this, I want to make it clear that with my article I only want to speak in the discussion and not attempt to systematize the ethical-pedagogical themes or problems present in the scientific debate.

This article will address issues related to the way ethical norms are justified in pedagogy. Thus, this is an issue that is located in the area of theoretical exploration. I understand justification itself as a process that legitimizes a certain state of affairs. This 'state of affairs' is the presence of ethical standards in pedagogy, which in turn demands justification. I adopt this as a starting hypothesis, the justification of which I will provide in the course of my research.

The main question of the article should be formulated as follows: How can the presence of ethical standards in pedagogy be justified? To answer this question, first of all, it is necessary to consider models of the

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relationship between pedagogy and ethics. This will be shown on the definitional level of both sciences. These findings will make it possible to point out, I think, different types of forms of the presence of ethical norms in pedagogy and this will presuppose the identification of different ways of justifying them. On this basis, it will be possible to present the characteristics of ethical standards (and entire ethical systems) existing in the science of education dependent on the way of justifying their presence.

The definitional relationship between pedagogy and ethics

The first step in the search for the relationship and its specificity between pedagogy and ethics is to analyze the definitional approaches of each science. Ethics is defined as: "the theory of an act (that is, its material object) in terms of moral obligation (that is, its formal object)"². Pedagogy, on the other hand, is "the science of education, the subject of which is educational activity aimed at equipping society as a whole - and especially the younger generation - with knowledge, general and professional skills, interests, value systems, attitudes and beliefs, as well as preparing them to influence their own development"³. Seemingly, these two scientific disciplines have no definitional connection to each other. However, in order to see this connection, it is necessary to take a closer look at the understanding of 'act' in ethics. Traditionally, ethics has distinguished in the field of human activity between two types of it: *actus humanus* and *actus hominis*. The first term indicates such human activity of which a person is aware and fulfills it in freedom. The second term, on the other hand, speaks of activity to which man is passively subjected. Figuratively, the following statements apply to these two human activities: "I act" and "something happens in me." In addition, the first activity is called an act, and the second is called an activation⁴. At this point, it can be seen that the "theory of action" cited in the definition of ethics refers only to conscious and free human activity. Part of this activity is educational activity, which, according to the above definition, is the subject of pedagogy. Thus, the definitional relationship

² A. Szostek, *Pogadanki z etyki*, Tygodnik Katolicki „Niedziela”, Częstochowa 2008, p. 33.

³ W. Okoń, *Nowy słownik pedagogiczny*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warszawa 2007, p. 300.

⁴ Cf. A. Szostek, *Pogadanki...*, p. 35. K. Wojtyła sees the analysis of human activity in the triad: 'man acts'. - 'something happens in man' - 'something happens to man'. See K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Towarzystwo Naukowej KUL, Lublin, 2011, p. 112.

between the two scientific disciplines is highlighted. It centers in the area of 'activity'. Pedagogy deals with educational activity and ethics is the moral evaluation of activity, in this case it will be the moral evaluation of educational activity. It can be tentatively assumed that this relationship grants ethics the right to make a moral evaluation of educational activities. In this way, ethics would make itself a discipline superior to pedagogy. At this point, the question arises whether pedagogy agrees with such an arrangement.

Addressing the presence of ethical norms in pedagogy, one can generally point to such a practice of pedagogy that allows the use of evaluative sentences and one that excludes them. In other words, in the former situation we are dealing with the consent of pedagogy to the evaluation of its activities by ethics, in the latter - with opposition. The first position can be called normative pedagogy⁵ (value-based) and the other descriptive (descriptive) pedagogy. Urszula Morszczyńska introduces a different nomenclature, but points to the same problem. She writes that "in modern pedagogy, two currents of consideration related to two intellectual perspectives have become quite prominent: modernist (Enlightenment, modern) and post-modernist (post-industrial, post-modern). [...] This change also applies to communication in the process of upbringing, and its most prominent manifestation is to be the abandonment of normativity going so far as to completely eliminate standards from educational interactions"⁶. The conclusion boils down to the same statement: it is possible to speak of a pedagogy that subjects educational activity to evaluation (model 1) and one that excludes this evaluation, or at least excludes its extradisciplinary determinants (model 2). One can also assume such a situation, in which pedagogy, on the basis of its own research, will claim to create ethical standards. It then becomes a discipline superior to ethics (model 3). Ethics then submits itself to the specific, individual, unique situations in which the individual finds himself. Such an

⁵ I do not refer to the name "normative pedagogy" in this article only as a pedagogical direction.

⁶ U. Morszczyńska, *Normy w pedagogice. Aksjologiczne i metodologiczne wyznaczniki statusu zdań o powinnościach*, Księgarnia Akademicka, Kraków 2009, p. 357.

understanding of ethics is called situational ethics or ethical situationism⁷. This issue is primarily concerned with ethics and its identity and goes beyond the scope of the matter addressed in this article, so it will not be developed further.

From the point of view of justifying the existence of ethical standards in pedagogy, we can talk about two models of the relationship between pedagogy and ethics. The first shows substantive cooperation between these disciplines. Nevertheless, with regard to the plane of moral norms, it should be noted that pedagogy is, in this view, a science subordinate to ethics. In extreme cases, when moral standards are given a dominant role in the entire process of education, pedagogy is denied the status of a science altogether. An example of this approach can be seen in the position of Jacek Woroniecki (1878-1949). In his introduction to Catholic Educational Ethics, he wrote: "Pedagogy as a separate science, endowed with its own internal unity, does not exist; it is - when it comes to upbringing - one of the main components of ethics, and at the same time its test and crowning..."⁸. On the other hand, a different model is present, which recognizes the separateness and independence of pedagogy from ethics. This approach is evident primarily in empirical pedagogy. H. H. Krüger uses the following names to describe it (to)-: experimental pedagogy or descriptive or critical-rationalist science of education⁹. At the same time, he explains that its basic principle "is founded on the given, the positive, the facts, and all issues going beyond this, such as normative problems, should be rejected as useless and speculative"¹⁰. M. Nowak recognizes this approach also in some positions of humanistic pedagogy¹¹.

To sum up, two ways of doing pedagogy are drawn today: normative and descriptive. In the area of normative pedagogy, there is a very clear connection between the science of education and ethics and its symptom is

⁷ T. Biesaga, *Sytuacjonizm etyczny*, in: *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, v. 9, Polskie Towarzystwo św. Tomasza z Akwinu, Lublin 2006, pp. 293-296.

⁸ J. Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza*, v. 1, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, Lublin 1986, v. 7.

⁹ Cf. H.H. Krüger, *Metody badań w pedagogice*, Pedagogika GWP, Gdańsk 2007, p. 31.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹¹ Cf. M. Nowak, *Teorie i koncepcje wychowania*, Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2008, p. 239.

the presence of goals in the process of education, the formulation of which is fundamentally influenced by ethics. In the area of descriptive pedagogy, on the other hand, such a connection is not directly visible and can even be said to be intentionally rejected. Thus, it can be tentatively assumed that ethical norms are present in normative pedagogy and absent in descriptive pedagogy. Such a statement, although it seems to be a logical consequence, is nevertheless very superficial and thus untrue. Why? The following exploration will show that the difference between normative and descriptive pedagogy lies not in the (no)presence of moral norms in education, but in their specific justification¹².

Justifying the presence of ethical standards in normative pedagogy

Normative pedagogy is oriented towards the permanent evaluation of educational activities from the perspective of accepted norms.

This approach has been present in pedagogical thinking and work since the beginning of the emergence of pedagogy as a scientific discipline. With the emergence of philosophical thought, pedagogy found its place in the area of so-called practical philosophy¹³. When pedagogy increasingly became an independent discipline in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, it did not deny its connection with other disciplines, in particular with ethics. This was emphasized above all by the Father of scientific pedagogy, Jan Frederick Herbart (1776-1841). He pointed to two auxiliary disciplines for pedagogy. The first was psychology and the second was ethics. The first provided knowledge regarding the current state of development of the pupil and the second provided knowledge regarding the purpose of upbringing, from which the system of upbringing was then derived. Thus,

¹² I understand justification here as indicating "what justifies someone's conduct, some action or state of affairs." Cf. <https://sjp.pwn.pl/slowniki/usprawiedliwi%C4%87.html> [23.01.2020]

¹³ An illustration of this well-known thesis can be found in W. Jaeger's comment: "... the peculiarity of the place which the Greeks occupy in the universal history of education lies [...] in the drive, stronger than anything else, to seek a comprehensive form, and in the philosophical, penetrating thought for the laws underlying human nature and for the norms which flow from these laws in the field of personal conduct and in the organization of society." – W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, v.1, Instytut Wydawniczy PAX, Warszawa 1962, p. 25.

it is the area of teleology of upbringing that is the natural place where pedagogy and ethics meet. This positioning of ethics in relation to pedagogy is indicated by the very title of J. F. Herbart's main work, *General Pedagogy Derived from the Purpose of Education*.

Sergei Hessen (1887-1950), recognizing the necessary connection between pedagogy and philosophy¹⁴, wrote that "... where philosophy is aware of the sameness of its issues and the peculiarity of its method, pedagogical thought also lives and flourishes. On the other hand, if pedagogical thought is drowned out by technical and political matters, we have every reason to look for the causes of its degeneration in the negation of the intrinsic nature of philosophical cognition"¹⁵. Similarly, Bogdan Nawroczyński (1882-1974) argued that pedagogy is a normative science, since it "evaluates the means of upbringing in view of the purpose of this activity"¹⁶. Such pedagogues as K. Kotłowski and S. Kunowski also present a similar position in this area. Examples of the relationship between pedagogy and ethics in the area of normative pedagogy are numerous.

Based on the above, it can be said that the normativity of pedagogical actions is expressed primarily in the teleological and axiological aspects of the educational process. Following Mieczysław Łobocki (1929-2012), it should be stated that the goal is "a certain postulated state to be achieved as a result of educational actions"¹⁷. It is the formulation of the goals and (related) values of upbringing that at the same time becomes not only an element that organizes, but also evaluates the entire educational process. Hence, M. Łobocki explicitly calls them educational standards¹⁸. At the same time, he adds that views on the goals of upbringing depend largely on "the presented philosophical, worldview or religious orientation of those who deal with them professionally, but not only. These also include

¹⁴ Cf. S. Hessen, *Podstawy pedagogiki*, Wydawnictwo „Żak”, Warszawa 1997, p. 425: "In addition to those parts of general pedagogy - which are direct applications of the relevant philosophical branches..."

¹⁵ S. Hessen, *Podstawy...*, p. 428.

¹⁶ B. Nawroczyński, *Zasady nauczania*, Ossolineum, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków 1961, p. 12.

¹⁷ M. Łobocki, *Teoria wychowania w zarysie*, Impuls, Kraków 2010, p. 120.

¹⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

the orientations of parents, educators and teachers, and especially of educational theorists or educators in general...."¹⁹.

On the basis of his analysis, Józef Górniewicz distinguishes "five sources for the derivation of the goals of upbringing, first - human nature, second - timeless values, third - social values, fourth - the vision of the future world contained in ideology, and fifth - religious values"²⁰. It is worth noting that all the indicated sources of goals are not strictly within the field of pedagogy. This, in turn, means that pedagogy as a science does not create ethical standards but only 'translates' general norms to its own environmental and developmental contexts. Thus, the presence of standards in normative pedagogy is, if one may say so, 'borrowed' and not strictly belonging to the science of education itself. This observation indicates that the justification for the presence of standards in pedagogy should be sought - generally speaking - in its connection with philosophy and especially with ethics. Thus, the *a priori* anthropological and axiological assumptions of the various pedagogical currents will justify their decisions regarding the formulated goals of upbringing and the resulting standards.

Consistent with the above, the specific features of the system of ethical norms present in pedagogy are revealed. First, they build a certain coherent whole, and are not just separate and independent judgments. This whole is characterized by a certain structure, in which it is possible to identify the supreme norm and the subordinate sets of lower standards. A very interesting scheme of the relationship of individual educational norms with each other is shown by M. Nowak²¹. It shows that the standards used in pedagogy are closely related to social norms and these, in turn, derive from even more general philosophical assumptions²².

Secondly, the coherent totality of the normative system in pedagogy is also expressed in the fact that the same ethics, i.e. the same supreme norm, applies in the various areas of educational activity (in the various pedagogical subdisciplines), but described taking into account the problem situations of the subdisciplines concerned. In other words, by means of the deductive method, the content of the main goal of education is transferred

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 119.

²⁰ J. Górniewicz, *Teoria wychowania (wybrane problemy)*, Olsztyn 2008, p. 78.

²¹ M. Nowak, *Teorie...*, pp. 370–371.

²² Cf. M. Jeziorański, Indywidualne i społeczne cele wychowania religijno-moralnego, „Ateneum Kapłańskie” 171(2018), v. 2(657), pp. 259-260.

to specific goals, tailored to the specific circumstances of educational work. Thus, in this presuppositional context, there can be no question of different ethics or ethos in pedagogy, e.g., 'ethos of a teacher', 'ethos of an educator of the Prison Service', 'ethos of a vocational counselor', etc., but one ethic, which can be called 'pedagogical ethics'. It covers all areas of educational activity with the same ethical *corpus*, but expressed in the language peculiar to each pedagogical sub-discipline. Such a system is characterized by high cohesiveness, permanence (sometimes even rigidity) and low ability to 'see' exceptional situations.

Justifying the presence of ethical standards in descriptive pedagogy

The situation is fundamentally different in the second model of the relationship between pedagogy and ethics, that is, in such a view in which pedagogy does not allow into the area of its own activities and research value standards imposed on it by ethics²³. As shown above, such pedagogy has generally been called non-normative or descriptive pedagogy. It grows out of the positivist understanding of science in general.

In modernity, there has been a change in the science-making question from: "why" to: "how". And although the origins of this approach can be traced as far back as ancient Greek thought, in the 19th century it was strongly expressed primarily by August Comte (1798-1857). As P. Jaroszyński writes: "according to Comte, what matters in scientific cognition is the knowledge of laws, which we come to know starting from sense cognition, without resorting to hidden beings and causes"²⁴. This change is related to the change that took place at a deeper - ontological - level, and can be described as a shift from a teleological to a disteological conception of being²⁵.

It should be noted from the outset that it would be a futile effort to search for such an educational system in the area of descriptive pedagogy, which would not have any evaluative sentence in its assumptions. Here,

²³ For more on the reasons for this situation, see P. Magier, *O potrzebie etyki w pedagogice*, „Forum Pedagogiczne” 2016/2 p. 1, pp. 159-162.

²⁴ P. Jaroszyński, *Nauka*, w: *Powszechna encyklopedia filozofii*, red. A. Maryniarczyk, v. 7, Polskie Towarzystwo św. Tomasza z Akwinu, Lublin 2006, p. 535.

²⁵ On the importance of this transition for values in pedagogy see: M. Jeziorański, *Od wartości do powinności w ujęciu aksjologii personalistycznej*, in: *Życie wartościowe w perspektywie aksjologii pedagogicznej*, ed. A. Cudowska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Katedra, Gdańsk 2018, pp. 81-91.

ethical norms are also present, but they are justified in a fundamentally different way. They arrive at the educational process from two different sides. To get an idea of their importance, it is worth citing some examples.

One of the first pedagogues who confronted this problem consciously was Édouard Claparède (1873-1940). In the spirit of positivism, he postulated in a fundamental way that "the mind of the scholar should be completely free, liberated from all superstitions, from all philosophical apriorism"²⁶. On the other hand, however - referring to Karl Groos (1861-1946) - the Swiss pedagogue invokes the category of "teleological unity"²⁷, which is expressed in the fact that "knowledge is always only a means, and that it is therefore contrary to nature to administer it alone without linking to some end whose attainment it should make possible"²⁸. This goal is derived primarily from the biological conditions of child development and not from philosophical assumptions. A similar approach is presented by such pedagogues as Ellen Key (1849-1926), Maria Montessori (1870-1952), Janusz Korczak (1878-1942) and many others.

Today, it is believed that the anti-pedagogical current²⁹ is the most radical in its rejection of ethical norms in the process of upbringing. P. Magier notes that "the main thesis of anti-pedagogy expresses the conviction that there is no validity (need) for purposeful upbringing, and thus postulates the rejection of upbringing as such"³⁰. Therefore, it is worth taking a closer look at this issue. From the point of view of the issue at hand, an important category in the anti-pedagogical literature is responsibility. It where the legitimacy or lack thereof of the application of ethical norms in upbringing is focused in. Hubertus von Schoenebeck writes: "'Responsibly' - This is the crux of the problem. Who has the right to set the rules of responsibility in dealing with children?"³¹ and adds, "the

²⁶ E. Claparède, *Wychowanie funkcjonalne*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie „Żak”, Warszawa 2006, p. 42.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

²⁹ H. von Schoenebeck calls this current "apedagogy". See H. von Schoenebeck, *Wolność od wychowania*, Impuls, Kraków 2008, p. 24. Without addressing terminological issues at this point, I will use the term "anti-pedagogy".

³⁰ P. Magier, *Esej postantypedagogiczny*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 2016, p. 73.

³¹ H. von Schoenebeck, *Wolność...*, p. 22.

fear of seeming irresponsible causes us to talk and act with children as if they are incapable of assessing for themselves the dangers of their actions. This fear makes adults relate to children as if they were beings who are not yet human. As if children are incapable of responsibility"³². In his view, on the other hand, the child knows what is good for him: he said: "he knows - according to the horizon of his experiences and evaluations, as any human being"³³. It is worth noting that the German pedagogue does not abolish the concept of responsibility, but admits it to each person in relation to his own decisions. Thus, the presence of ethical norms is possible (even necessary!) in upbringing, but it comes from the educator's own discernment of the good and responsibility for its implementation.

Similarly, the issue of responsibility is presented by Jesper Juul (1948-2019). He points out that the child is responsible for the sphere of his own senses, feelings and needs. As the child grows, responsibility in other areas of life comes in³⁴. The Danish pedagogue immediately warns against the naive conclusion that this approach results in children being able to "do everything their own way"³⁵. Instead, it is about recognizing the child's rights to their own needs, desires, experiences, feelings; looking at their needs from their point of view; responding to their actions with understanding without marginalizing your own position at the same time³⁶.

Based on the above examples, it can be concluded that the first way to justify the presence of ethical standards in education is to turn to the biological conditions of human development. It is worth noting that not all educators, representing this approach, explicitly present their methodological position, as, for example, E. Claparède did. It is much more common to speak of apriori presuppositionlessness, which in fact is rather a kind of ignorance. This problem was already pointed out by S. Hessen when he wrote that "the attempt to liberate pedagogy from its traditional dependence on philosophy and 'elevate' it to a true experimental science, even an experimental one, involves the postulate that the starting point in

³² Ibid., p. 22.

³³ Ibid., p. 32.

³⁴ J. Juul, *Twoje kompetentne dziecko. Dlaczego powinniśmy traktować dzieci poważniej?*, Wydawnictwo MiND, Podkowa Leśna 2012, p. 141.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 141.

³⁶ Cf. Ibid., p. 142.

education should be 'the child itself' and not the 'goals' set by adults. In this way, pedagogy falls into dependence on child physiology and psychology as sciences that do not go beyond the child, apprehended as a purely natural being"³⁷. Władysław Dawid (1859-1914) made similar statements when he wrote: "knowledge of the means, the causal relationship of things, the mechanism of action teaches us nothing about the purpose of action. [...] Psychology, experiential pedagogy reveals to us the laws governing spiritual life, makes us comprehend this life as a necessary relationship of certain causes, conditions, effects; but it does not say: what content and purpose we are to give to this life"³⁸. The statements presented above support the thesis that moving pedagogy away from philosophical considerations does not give it freedom from the normative dimension, but shifts it towards biological developmental considerations. They in themselves do not yet constitute ethical norms, but often this approach grows out of - not always explicitly declared - naturalism, which calls these very processes good³⁹, and this is already an ethical resolution.

The second way that allows the presence of ethical norms in upbringing (here it should be said more broadly: in pedagogy) is the positivist way of doing science itself and the associated methodology aimed at the search for reliable and objective knowledge⁴⁰, and at the same time capable of being "expressed in the language of mathematics"⁴¹. Hence, the reliability and objectivity of scientific cognition and its intercommunicative nature became the main ethical norms for practicing pedagogy. At first explicitly and only present in the so-called quantitative and then also qualitative research. Very soon the area of ethical issues related to the interference / presence of the researcher in various dimensions and areas of the private life of the subjects was also noted.

Józef Lipiec, addressing the issue of the presence of ethical principles in science in general, writes that: "obvious and historically unchanging (supra-historical) is the canon of ethical principles governing relations

³⁷ S. Hessen, *O sprzecznościach i jedności wychowania*, Wydawnictwo „Żak”, Warszawa 1997, p. 88.

³⁸ W. Dawid, *O duszy nauczycielstwa*, „Nasza Księgarnia”, Warszawa 1927, pp. 16-17.

³⁹ Cf. G.L. Gutek, *Filozofia dla pedagogów*, Pedagogika GWP, Gdańsk 2007, pp. 73-77.

⁴⁰ Cf. P. Magier, *Metateoria pedagogiki chrześcijańskiej*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 2019, p. 61.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

within the world of science. They boil down to a just and honest accounting with all other researchers, according to the rule of 'to each what is due to him'"⁴². Addressing the issue of ethics in qualitative research, which falls most often within descriptive pedagogy, Uwe Flick points to three levels of this problem: the first is expressed in the fact that "the quality of research is a necessary condition for its ethical reliability"⁴³; the second shows that "ethical issues (data protection, concern for the welfare of respondents, respect for their views and privacy, etc.) are seen as aspects of the quality of qualitative research"⁴⁴. And third: "conducting research according to quality standards can affect ethical issues"⁴⁵. This includes, for example, a situation in which the conduct of an interview very much involves the respondent on the emotional and experiential side which causes a conflict between "methodological standards and ethical concern to mitigate the effects of confronting the research with certain aspects of their lives"⁴⁶. Sylwia Ciuk and Dominika Latusek-Jurczak emphasize that "no matter what the attitude of researchers to attempts to institutionalize ethical issues is, the postulate of the validity of ethics in practice is usually taken for granted"⁴⁷.

Based on the issues presented above, it should be noted that ethical standards are also present in descriptive pedagogy. However, they have, as a rule, a different justification. Most often, as S. Ciuk, D. Latusek-Jurczak note: "the importance of ethical issues in empirical research - both qualitative and quantitative - is reflected in numerous ethical codes and institutional regulations controlling the work of researchers"⁴⁸. Thus, this is the conventional way to justify ethical standards in pedagogy. On this basis, various types of ethical codes are created. This does not exclude the systematization of the norms given in the code around a single supreme norm (which is often the case), but the way of its selection and subsequent

⁴² J. Lipiec, *Etyka badań naukowych*, w: *Podstawy metodologii badań w pedagogice*, ed. S. Palka, Pedagogika GWP, Gdańsk 2010, pp. 362-363.

⁴³ U. Flick, *Jakość w badaniach jakościowych*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2011, p. 32.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ S. Ciuk, D. Latusek-Jurczak, *Etyka w badaniach jakościowych*, w: *Badania jakościowe*, red. D. Jemielniak, t. 1. Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2012, p. 23.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

operationalization is essentially conventional. A number of codes on the activities of a pedagogue are cited by A. Zakrzewska⁴⁹ along with the analysis of their meaning and content.

The main feature of these standards is their weaker relationship to each other. In this situation, individual subdisciplines can inductively build their own set of them, which also allows to a greater extent for the occurrence of exceptional situations, that is, those that the assumed ethical standards do not cover.

Summary

Two different models of the presence of ethical standards in pedagogy and their justification will be presented to summarize the above analysis. The model - by virtue of the fact that it plays "an intermediary role both in terms of the creation of theory and in relation to practice"⁵⁰ - simplifies the studied reality to its essential elements. This, on the one hand, it allows for a clearer grasp of the relationships between the studied elements, but, on the other hand, it should be borne in mind that the model is an idealization of reality. With this caveat, one should also approach the two models presented below, which stem from the division into two ways of doing pedagogy: normative and descriptive. The models presented to justify the presence of ethical norms in pedagogy will indicate (1) the source of the standards, (2) how they are actualized in pedagogy, and (3) the characteristics of the system of ethical norms thus created.

1. Normative pedagogy assumes the paramount importance of ethics in the area of teleology (and axiology) of education. Thus, one can speak of: (ad 1) the exogenous origin of ethical norms, (ad 2) the deductive method as a way of realizing them in pedagogy, and (ad 3) the resulting coherent system of ethical norms with the indication of the supreme standard.

2. Descriptive pedagogy assumes a dissociation from ethics. As shown in the article, the adoption of such an assumption does not result in the absence of (ethical) norms in descriptive pedagogy, but another way of justifying it. In this situation, it is possible to speak of (ad 1) the endogenous origin of ethical standards, since they arise from the analysis of

⁴⁹ Cf. A. Zakrzewska, *Kodeks etyki nauczycielskiej – snobizm czy potrzeba?*, in: *Po co etyka pedagogom?*, ed. W. Sawczuk, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2007, pp. 283-291.

⁵⁰ F.W. Kron, *Pedagogika. Kluczowe zagadnienia*, GWP, Gdańsk 2012, p. 267.

the subject reality; (ad 2) the inductive way of their realization; and (ad 3) the conventional system of ethical standards, often expressed in the form of code.

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DESIGN AND VALIDATION OF A TOOL TO MEASURE ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOR AND ETHICAL COMMITMENT TO THE 2030 AGENDA AND SUSTAINABILITY IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Aware of the need for training on the objectives of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs as part of the comprehensive training of university students, the need arises for tools to assess the acquisition of knowledge, attitudes and commitments of students with these subjects. Method: An instrumental design was carried out combining content validity through expert judgment with construct validity based on Exploratory Factor Analysis through the application of the questionnaire to a pilot group of 351 university students from 10 Spanish universities (7 public and 3 private universities). Results: The results showed a scale of 23 items with three factors (knowledge, affectivity, and action), which allow measuring the knowledge and commitment of young people to sustainability. Conclusion: This tool presents evidence of validity and reliability for its application in Spanish university students; and fills the existing gap in the literature with respect to tools on sustainability and ethical commitment.*

Keywords: *sustainability, Agenda 2030, social justice, social responsibility.*

1. Introducción

La Universidad es el lugar por excelencia de la búsqueda de la verdad por eso, los problemas que afectan al momento presente de la sociedad deben ser objetos de estudio en diversas líneas de investigación y, sobre todo, desde una razón abierta hacia el desarrollo y transformación social (Barrio Maestre, 2022). La Agenda 2030, que Naciones Unidas presentó al mundo en el año 2015 con sus 17 Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible, requiere de una reflexión y de una fundamentación para que el concepto de sostenibilidad se transfiera en todas sus facetas (Alonso-Sainz, 2021). Considerando la formación de los universitarios como una auténtica

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formación integral, no podemos estar ajenos al cambio de paradigma y ampliación del concepto de sostenibilidad para lo que se necesita una nueva forma de estudio y “de pensamiento, que crean un movimiento crítico capaz de influenciar en las decisiones a todos los niveles. Y en este proceso, el papel de la Universidad es crucial como organismo de formar a personas en el liderazgo social” (De la Rosa *et al.*, 2019). Porque dando una buena educación universitaria trabajamos para el bien común, porque este no sólo es bienestar, es mucho más (Unesco, 2015).

La CRUE (Conferencia de Rectores de la Universidad Española) desde el año 2001 ha estado trabajando en esta línea y señala: “La Conferencia de Rectores de las Universidades Españolas (2001) considera que la Universidad debe asumir un papel protagonista en los procesos de desarrollo humano, explorando y llevando a la práctica nuevas estrategias destinadas a construir una sociedad más justa y participativa”. La primera investigación fue en 2011, donde sólo se tenía en cuenta la formación de los estudiantes universitarios en la conciencia ambiental, pero sirvió para descubrir que, esta no evolucionaba mucho durante los años universitarios. Este resultado dio origen a iniciativas posteriores, como el grupo CRUE-Sostenibilidad, llevado por expertos, los cuales vieron que, parte del problema radicaba en la poca formación en sostenibilidad del profesorado porque apenas conocían el concepto de sostenibilidad y, tampoco, en la universidad había un compromiso institucional, así como, dificultad para la práctica de la inclusión y poca investigación en sostenibilidad.

En 2015 la CRUE, después de varios años de estudio e investigación, “la Estrategia Universidad 2015 (Ministerio de Educación, 2010)” (CRUE, 2015), creó la comisión de sostenibilidad para promover el desarrollo, la CADEP, para conseguir que la comunidad universitaria se implicase en la sostenibilidad y la responsabilidad social (CRUE, 2015). A partir de esta iniciativa podemos ver en la revisión bibliográfica cómo se empezó a trabajar en estos temas (aunque ya había habido algunas iniciativas anteriores sobre todo de medio ambiente); como, por ejemplo, incluyendo la sostenibilidad en las aulas dándole una base de valores y de ética para que en el futuro los universitarios se sintiesen comprometidos (Azcárate, Navarrete y García, 2012) que, buscando la sostenibilidad curricular universitaria, realizaron una investigación cualitativa para ver cómo tres docentes trabajaban la sostenibilidad en las aulas, esta iniciativa supuso una toma de contacto con algo que iba llegando al sistema educativo.

Por ello, se entiende que, “la educación superior ha de promulgar que la calidad, en sus diferentes frentes, debe ir asociada a la responsabilidad social y al desarrollo sostenible” (Sánchez *et al.*, 2018); este equipo de investigadores de varias universidades españolas (Proyecto EDINSOST) elaboraron un cuestionario para medir el nivel de sostenibilidad de los estudiantes de los grados de Ingenierías TIC, el proyecto trabaja para introducir la competencia de sostenibilidad en el sistema universitario español. También, Martínez Valdés y Juárez-Hernández (2019) crearon un instrumento, diseñando un cuestionario para evaluar la formación en sostenibilidad de los alumnos en educación superior. El objetivo de la investigación era ver cuánta atención se da a los temas de sostenibilidad con los alumnos universitarios y si ellos son capaces de valorarlo.

Otra iniciativa fue, el equipo de profesores de la Universidad de Córdoba, Villamandos, Gomera y Antúnez que llevan treinta años trabajando para la educación ambiental de los universitarios y en el año, 2019, se fueron derivando a un concepto más amplio de sostenibilidad, acercándose a los objetivos de la Agenda 2030, hacia una universidad más sostenible donde el medio ambiente es una parte más (Antúnez, 2017).

Como catalizador presentan la formación del profesorado algo fundamental en el conocimiento y el compromiso con la sostenibilidad y la investigación (Villamandos *et al.*, 2019), porque los que imparten la docencia son los profesores, los que programan y organizan las clases, también (Antúnez, 2017). De ahí su importancia para la consecución y la aplicación informativa de la Agenda 2030.

Otro estudio interesante donde se puede ver cómo el concepto de sostenibilidad va abriéndose a la transversalidad de los 17 Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible es, el que realizaron, Callejón Gil, Rosales Pérez, Torroba Díaz y Lorente Aguilera de la Universidad de Málaga (2022). El objetivo de la investigación era medir el conocimiento, la actitud y el comportamiento ambiental hacia el desarrollo sostenible. La muestra fue de 203 estudiantes universitarios españoles de estudios de finanzas y contabilidad de universidades públicas y privadas. Los resultados mostraron que los alumnos tienen un alto conocimiento y buena actitud, pero el comportamiento era moderado, por lo que una de las conclusiones a la que se llegó es con el conocimiento no es suficiente y consideran que creando “un sentido de responsabilidad en el alumnado asegurará el impulso de una visión global sobre los impactos de un comportamiento

sostenible en el mundo empresarial” (Callejón Gil *et al.*, 2022). Porque no sabemos hacia dónde vamos.

La revisión de la literatura demuestra que existe una escasez de herramientas que permitan medir la conciencia ética y sostenible de los universitarios desde un plano competencial que incluya no solo los conocimientos (saber), sino también el saber hacer y el saber ser. Estos tres aspectos se encuentran alineados con las políticas internacionales de fomentar una educación competencial enfocada al bien común.

Actualmente, se están implementando numerosas iniciativas para fomentar en los estudiantes la conciencia sostenible, su papel como agentes de cambio social y el conocimiento de los objetivos y metas que propone la Agenda 2030. Si bien estas iniciativas son numerosas, hacen falta instrumentos que ayuden a medir el impacto real que tienen en la formación de los universitarios y en su transformación personal para lograr que, se involucren y se comprometan con convencimiento, desde sus acciones diarias en el cuidado del medio ambiente, la lucha contra las desigualdades sociales, el empoderamiento de la mujer, el consumo responsable y la transición energética.

2. Diseño de la herramienta para ver el grado de compromiso ético de los universitarios ante la sostenibilidad.

El análisis se ha realizado desde cuatro principios de la justicia social (De la Calle y Giménez Armentia, 2016):

- Bien común: El conjunto de condiciones de la vida social y comunitaria que hacen posible a las asociaciones y a cada uno de sus miembros el logro más pleno de la propia perfección, y que ha de servir de principio rector para todas las decisiones personales, comunitarias y de la autoridad política.
- Solidaridad: Se trata de un principio tanto metafísico como ético que pone de relieve el carácter homogéneo- sólido- del conjunto y totalidad de la sociedad, así como la necesidad de que las voluntades libres de los individuos que la forman lo asuman como pauta de acción para la defensa de esta. Indica la sociabilidad esencial de las personas, y marca el camino para la unidad y la igualdad entre todos.
- Principio de subsidiariedad: Es un principio de acción que se propone garantizar no solo los derechos del individuo frente a una organización colectiva, sino también los derechos naturales de las personas y de las comunidades o formaciones sociales primarias e intermedias, de modo

que la comunidad superior debe respetar a las inferiores y a los individuos para que realicen aquellas actividades para las que están plenamente capacitados y legitimados.

- Destino universal de los bienes: Principio ético del orden social que establece que toda persona tiene derecho a los bienes materiales que responden a sus necesidades primarias y que garantizan su existencia y pleno desarrollo.

A partir de estos cuatro principios se elaboraron distintos ítems para medir el grado en que estos principios se integraban en los tres elementos de una competencia: grado de conocimiento (dimensión intelectual), grado de motivación (dimensión afectiva), compromiso en la acción (dimensión volitiva), porque consideramos que “no se puede imponer la sostenibilidad en las aulas o reducirlo a un contenido más, sino que se trata de abordar todo el proceso educativo desde una visión holística”. (Azcárate *et al.*, 2012).

Consideramos que fundamentar en estos principios de justicia social la medición de las iniciativas educativas, que realicen en el ámbito de la Agenda 2030 y de la sostenibilidad permitirá comprobar la transferencia realizada a los universitarios de calado que, los lleve a transformar la sociedad, porque la responsabilidad social es algo que hay que vivir porque se cree en la dignidad de la persona y el valor de esta. (De la Calle y Armentia, 2016). Comprometerse con la sostenibilidad significa llevar una forma de vida solidaria, justa y ética.

Formando desde estos supuestos a los universitarios tratamos de despertar la preocupación por las próximas generaciones, por la familia cercana que, muchas veces, son los primeros necesitados de apoyo y acompañamiento, sin olvidar nuestro deber ciudadano porque el bien común exige de la participación y el compromiso de todos.

También nos debe interpelar el sufrimiento de las personas, los lugares más pobres y las dificultades que viven día a día, así como la preocupación por el planeta y todas las políticas que pueden mejorarlo. Todas estas actitudes en los universitarios pueden colaborar para conseguir un mundo más humano y justo y han sido tomadas en consideración en la elaboración de la herramienta.

2.1. Metodología

-Método

El diseño del cuestionario se ha realizado en varias fases, analizándose de forma sucesiva tanto la validez de contenido como la validez de constructo de la herramienta (CVOC-D). Para ello, se realizó en primer lugar una validación a través del juicio de expertos y posteriormente para la realización de la validez de constructo se aplicó el instrumento a una muestra de 351 estudiantes universitarios españoles y posteriormente, se realizó un análisis factorial exploratorio de los datos obtenidos. Por tanto, se ha realizado un diseño de tipo instrumental y de corte transversal (Ato *et al.*, 2013)

-Participantes

En la validación de expertos participaron un total de nueve profesores universitarios de tres universidades españolas (dos universidades privadas y una universidad pública). Los expertos fueron elegidos en base a su conocimiento en las áreas de ética, responsabilidad y pedagogía social.

En la validación del constructo participaron un total de 351 estudiantes universitarios (provenientes de 7 universidades públicas y 3 universidades privadas) de los cuales un 29,9% estudiaban carreras incluidas en la Facultad de Educación y Psicología, un 22% en la Facultad de Ciencias Sociales y Económicas, un 19,4% de la Facultad de Ciencias de la Comunicación, 18,6% en la Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud, 2,9% en la Facultad de Ciencias Experimentales y un 7,2% en la Escuela Politécnica Superior.

El cuestionario se aplicó de forma online y antes de contestar a las preguntas, se explicaba el objetivo de la investigación y se pedía a los participantes el consentimiento informado. Los estudiantes no recibieron ningún tipo de compensación por su participación en el estudio. Los datos fueron tomados de forma totalmente anónima y se siguieron las recomendaciones de la declaración de Helsinki sobre buenas prácticas en las investigaciones con personas.

-Procedimiento

Para diseñar y validar la herramienta se realizaron las siguientes fases: 1) revisión de la literatura 2) redacción de los ítems del cuestionario 3)

validación de contenido a través de un grupo de expertos 4) aplicación a un grupo piloto 6) validación de constructo. Para los análisis se utilizó el paquete estadístico SPSS versión 26.0.

2.2. Resultados

-Diseño

La elaboración de los distintos ítems se realizó siguiendo los principios de la ética social descritos anteriormente y generando ítems en base a tres dimensiones: *dimensión intelectual* (grado de conocimiento que tienen los universitarios de los distintos aspectos de la sostenibilidad y la Agenda 2030), *dimensión afectiva* (grado en que los estudiantes se encuentran motivados e interpelados por las metas de la Agenda 2030 y la sostenibilidad) y *dimensión volitiva* (grado en que con sus acciones demuestran el compromiso adquirido con la justicia social y el cuidado del medio ambiente). Se generaron un total de 26 ítems.

-Validación del contenido

La versión inicial de cuestionario se envió a un total de nueve expertos que calificaron los ítems en base a tres criterios: coherencia, claridad y relevancia. Las calificaciones se otorgaban en una escala Likert de 1 a 6. Siguiendo a García Ramos se calculó el grado de acuerdo entre los expertos, considerando que aquellos ítems con una puntuación igual o superior a cinco en las distintas categorías indican buenas medidas de validez.

Tabla 1

Validación del juicio de expertos

	Coherencia	Claridad	Relevancia
1. Utilizo la palabra sostenibilidad en mi entorno con conocimiento	5,56	5,44	5,22
2. Me intereso por conocer cómo funcionan las instituciones políticas de mi país.	5,78	5,78	5,78
3. Conozco los deberes del Estado en relación con el desarrollo de la ciudadanía.	5,33	5,56	5,67
4. Conozco los programas electorales de los partidos políticos.	5,33	5,89	5,22

5. Reconozco los 17 Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible	4,67	4,44	4,67
6. Ejercicio mi derecho al voto con conocimiento	5,44	5,56	5,33
7. Conozco la cadena de producción de los bienes que consumo.	5,56	5,78	5,33
8. Al comprar conozco el impacto de mi consumo.	5,89	5,89	5,89
9. Me impresiona ver el sufrimiento ajeno.	5,67	5,56	5,78
10. Me afecta ver la destrucción del planeta.	5,89	5,89	5,89
11. La dignidad del otro es el criterio de mis acciones.	5,44	5,33	5,56
12. Desde mi profesión quiero contribuir a mejorar la justicia social.	5,89	5,67	6,00
13. Las desigualdades me provocan tristeza	5,67	4,89	5,33
14. Aprovecho al máximo mi formación universitaria.	5,78	6,00	5,44
15. Me entusiasmo fácilmente por las causas sociales.	5,78	5,56	5,78
16. Priorizo la atención a las necesidades de las personas que sufren.	5,89	5,78	5,78
17. Me entristece observar los totalitarismos vigentes en el mundo.	5,56	5,78	5,33
18. Soy consciente de la falta de recursos con la que viven muchas personas.	5,89	5,89	5,89
19. Pienso en el mundo que van a encontrar las futuras generaciones.	5,89	5,44	5,67
20. Me considero una persona sostenible.	5,11	5,11	5,00
21. Se impulsa la sostenibilidad desde mi universidad.	6,00	6,00	5,78
22. Asumo responsabilidades en mi universidad.	5,67	5,33	5,78
23. Asumo responsabilidades en mi familia.	5,56	5,44	5,56
24. Asumo responsabilidades en otros grupos en los que estoy.	5,56	5,44	5,56
25. Aprovecho las oportunidades de	5,00	4,56	4,33

vivir en un país democrático.

26. Uso con responsabilidad los recursos naturales (agua, electricidad, combustibles...).

5,89 5,89 5,89

Tras la validación de los expertos se eliminaron los ítems 5, 13 y 25. De esta forma, el cuestionario quedó compuesto por 23 ítems agrupados en tres dimensiones.

Tabla 2

Factores arrojados a partir del AFE

	Factor		
	Afectividad	Conocimiento	Acción
1. Utilizo la palabra sostenibilidad en mi entorno.		.329	
2. Me intereso por conocer cómo funcionan las instituciones políticas de mi país.		.673	
3. Conozco los deberes del Estado en relación con el desarrollo de la ciudadanía.		.776	
4. Conozco los programas electorales de los partidos políticos.		.791	
5. Ejercicio mi derecho al voto con conocimiento		.514	
6. Conozco la cadena de producción de los bienes que consumo.		.612	
7. Al comprar conozco el impacto de mi consumo.		.350	

8. Me impresiona ver el sufrimiento ajeno.	.807
	.599
9. Me afecta la destrucción del planeta	
10. La dignidad del otro es el criterio de mis acciones.	.595
11. Desde mi profesión quiero contribuir a mejorar la justicia social.	.838
12. Aprovecho al máximo la formación universitaria.	.399
13. Me entusiasmo fácilmente por las causas sociales.	.696
14. Priorizo la atención a las necesidades de las personas que sufren.	.695
15. Me entristece observar los totalitarismos vigentes en el mundo.	.528
16. Soy consciente de la falta de recursos con la que viven muchas personas.	.370
17. Pienso en el mundo que van a encontrar las futuras generaciones.	.481

18. Me considero una persona sostenible.	.660
19. Se impulsa la sostenibilidad desde mi universidad.	.373
20. Asumo responsabilidades en mi universidad.	.647
21. Asumo responsabilidades en mi familia.	.904
22. Asumo responsabilidades en otros grupos en los que estoy.	.823
23. Uso con responsabilidad los recursos naturales (agua, electricidad, combustibles...).	.430

4. Discusión

La importancia de la formación de los estudiantes universitarios en materia de sostenibilidad y desarrollo sostenible se torna una misión acuciante para las universidades (Bonnet, 2017; Giménez *et al.*, 2020; Ramos Torres, 2020). Sin embargo, el 23,8% de los estudiantes a los que se aplicó la prueba piloto manifestaron no tener ningún conocimiento sobre los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible y la Agenda 2030. A pesar de todas las iniciativas que ya han comenzado en las universidades españolas, queda un largo camino por hacer.

En este sentido, no solo es necesario implementar iniciativas educativas concretas, sino también disponer de herramientas que permitan medir la eficacia de dichas intervenciones y el impacto de la formación universitaria en la transformación de los estudiantes y, en su toma de conciencia como agentes de cambio social. La revisión de la literatura realizada había mostrado la existencia de algunas herramientas sobre actitudes de los jóvenes hacia la sostenibilidad validados para estudiantes de determinados grados (Callejón *et al.*, 2022) así como la medición de la labor del compromiso de los docentes con la introducción de estos contenidos en su currículum (Azcarate *et al.*, 2012).

Sin embargo, no se cuenta con herramientas que permitan medir no solo las actitudes, sino que partan de un enfoque competencial que asuma las tres dimensiones de la persona: inteligencia, afectividad y voluntad (Crespi y García-Ramos, 2020). Esta herramienta se encuentra, por tanto, alineada con las políticas internacionales de desarrollo de competencias en el espacio de educación superior, que permitan no solo la adquisición de conocimientos, sino la formación de estudiantes que posean también las habilidades y actitudes necesarias para generar más allá de su ámbito profesional (Bellamy, 2021; Fulford, 2022).

En un momento, en el que en el panorama internacional distintas voces están reclamando la importancia de las Humanidades en la formación de los estudiantes (Barrio, 2022; Brant *et al.*, 2022; Esteban Bara, 2022; Higgins, 2021; Ibáñez Ayuso, 2023; Lamb *et al.*, 2019; Torralba, 2022; Villacís *et al.*, 2021), este cuestionario viene a ratificar esta carencia porque, está basado precisamente en un profundo conocimiento de la ética social como fundamento de la justicia social.

Consideramos que el hecho de que los estudiantes universitarios realicen este cuestionario genera una oportunidad para la reflexión y para despertar en ellos un sentido de una ciudadanía socialmente responsable y cívicamente comprometida. De hecho, esta investigación se enmarca en los enfoques del aprendizaje democrático (Biesta, 2019).

Si bien esta herramienta dota al campo educativo de algo válido y fiable para la medición de un constructo como es la sostenibilidad en los jóvenes universitarios porque, apenas se cuentan con instrumentos. También, cabe señalar que esta herramienta de autoinforme tiene las limitaciones propias de este tipo de herramientas de autopercepción. Por ello, se anima a los futuros investigadores a complementar esta herramienta con otro tipo de informes y técnicas que permitan complementar los resultados obtenidos con otros datos que den mayor objetividad a los datos propios de la subjetividad de los estudiantes.

5. Conclusiones

La validación de contenido y constructo realizado en este estudio permite afirmar que esta herramienta puede emplearse en estudios relacionados con la sostenibilidad y la Agenda 2030 en universidades españolas. El AFE ha permitido corroborar la estructura teórica validada por expertos y generar una herramienta con tres dimensiones (conocimiento, afectividad y acción) que posibilita la realización de estudios en este campo.

Asimismo, este estudio ha mostrado reportar primeras evidencias sobre el desconocimiento de los estudiantes sobre los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible y la Agenda 2030, lo que respalda aún más la importancia de implementar y evaluar en las universidades acciones que

ayuden a empoderar a los estudiantes y a que se visualicen como agentes de cambio social.

Por consiguiente, dada la relevancia internacional de esta temática, se anima a otros investigadores a validar esta herramienta en otros contextos y países para que poco a poco, se logre una sociedad más justa.

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Anton Adămuț, *Dacă tăceai, filosof rămâneai?*, Editura Junimea, Iași, 2024, 370 p., ISBN 978-973-37-2655-2

Cartea lui Anton Adămuț, *Dacă tăceai, filosof rămâneai?*, cuprinde șapte eseuri, variate tematic, unitare stilistic, publicate cu aceleași titluri, dar într-o formă considerabil mai redusă, în mai multe reviste de specialitate. Primul eseu, „Dacă tăceai/scriai, filosof rămâneai?“, tematizează „tăcerea“, printre altele, ca instrument analitic al distincției metafilosofice dintre, așa cum sugerează și formula conținută în titlu, pretinsul filosof/sofist (potențial asociat cu „vorbăria“, cu dorința de succes etc.) și adevăratul filosof/dialecticianul (căruia îi sunt atribuite mai curând reținerea, raportul optim între tăcere și exprimare, văzute, generic, ca mijloace, adesea necesare, în căutarea adevărului), în cadrul unei analize comparative dintre metafilosofia lui Platon și cea a lui Boethius. Dat fiind că distincția amintită este discutată și în termeni ai relației platonice dintre discursul scris, „scriitura“, și oralitate (dialog, cuvântare), una dintre observațiile studiului, care adaugă „lectura“, poate ca un termen mediu între scris și oralitate, este că „de la Platon la Boethius lectura devine tăcută, lectura orală lasă scriitura în zona unui simulacru de oralitate, în timp ce lectura tăcută separă scrisul de oralitate și o transformă într-un obiect autonom cu caracteristici proprii...” (p. 30). Astfel de observații sunt rezultatul abordării complementare a două probleme: „critica platoniciană a scriiturii și asimilarea filosofiei dialecticii orale“, pe de o parte, și „valorizarea tăcerii, a scriiturii și lecturii la Boethius“ (p. 18).

Eseul „Asupra râsului homeric – «categoric, nimeni nu se aseamănă lui Homer»“ este un comentariu amplu, detaliat și bogat în exemple, referințe și semnificații istorice și culturale al mai multor studii pe tema râsului în poemele homerice. Printre observațiile și concluziile cu caracter mai general ale comentariului pot fi amintite (sub sugestia, tot generală, dar sugestivă pentru contextul discuțiilor, aparținând lui Samuel Butler, potrivit căreia „dincolo de dragoste și război există și o altă idee pe care Homer nu o pierde niciodată din vedere, anume neîncrederea și antipatia poetului față de ideile timpului său cu privire la zei și profeții“ (p. 49)): mai întâi, „râsul din *Iliada* I nu este batjocoritor, el exprimă unitate, ușurare și bucurie. În *Odiseea* VIII, scena este comică și ridicolă, și totuși nu de încornoratul Hefaiostos râd zeii, ci de soția infidelă“, Afrodita, „și de amantul ei“ (p. 84), Ares; apoi, că „râsul religiei homerice este strâns legat

de corp, care corp este, deopotrivă, obiect și subiect al răsului. Hefaistos e o figură convocată des când zeii râd. În *Iliada* (și) diformitățile lui Hefaistos amuză pe zei, în *Odiseea* amuză pe zei postura amanților prinși în flagrant de Hefaistos.” (p. 92)

Al treilea eseu, „Un loc obscur din Aristotel: *delphikí máchaira*”, este, cel puțin într-o măsură semnificativă, o analiză a semnificațiilor și interpretărilor atribuite expresiei „cuțitul delfic” (*delphikí máchaira*). Expresia este folosită de Aristotel în cadrul unui argument celebru din *Politica* (referitor la distincția „de natură” dintre femei și sclavi) care se bazează pe distincția, cu valoare de principiu, dintre lucruri care pot fi folosite în mai multe scopuri (cum este cuțitul delfic) și lucruri care sunt destinate pentru a servi unui singur scop, acestea fiind, „prin natura lor”, superioare primelor. Eseul este, de asemenea, o analiză, pornind de la unele dintre semnificațiile expresiei „cuțitul delfic”, a mai multor interpretări, clasice și moderne, ale argumentului lui Aristotel și ale principiului pe care se bazează.

Studiul „*Dynamis, exousía* și paradoxul *felix culpa* – intersecții” este, în primul rând, poate, o analiză a semnificațiilor, în scrierile religioase creștine și în textele antice clasice, ale celui de-al treilea termen, aparent paradoxal din punct de vedere teologic și moral, al „vinii fericite” (*felix culpa*), pe fondul relației dintre primii doi termeni, „putere” (*dynamis*) și „autoritate” (*exousía*). Studiul conține atât nenumărate trimiteri la texte religioase, filiații, atitudini și poziții teologice, cât și interpretări ale semnificațiilor filosofice, etice, în primul rând, spre exemplu, la Augustin, Toma din Aquino și Leibniz, ale paradoxului vinii fericite. Din perspectivă teologică, paradoxul „vorbește de căderea lui Adam ca fiind norocoasă de vreme ce fără ea umanitatea un ar fi experimentat bucuria de nedepășit a Răscumpărării”, și prin aceasta el „devine permanent și, prin consecință, influent” (p. 184). Din punct de vedere filosofic, sunt comentate în detaliu încercările de evitare a „dificultăților morale și capcanelor metafizice care stau în spatele concepției *felix culpa*” (pp. 201-202), adică a ideii că „binele poate proveni din rău” (p. 204), la Toma din Aquino, că „răul însuși e pus în slujba binelui” (p. 209), la Augustin și Leibniz.

Eseul „Chestiuni augustiniene: *lingua graeca, curiositas, apophatismus*” tratează, mai întâi, problema relației lui Augustin cu limba și cultura greacă, în general, dar și a importanței limbii grecești, printre altele, ca instrument de clarificare conceptuală și doctrinară și de analiză critică, pentru Augustin. Apoi, explorează relația dintre curiozitate și credință,

statutul și importanța epistemologică și morală a curiozității în lucrările lui Augustin și în cadrul tradiției intelectuale căreia Augustin îi aparține. În fine, încearcă să plaseze unele elemente ce pot fi considerate de teologie negativă, amplu exemplificate, comentate și dezvoltate, într-un context mai larg al „metafizicii, moralei și misticii” lui Augustin.

Studiul „Hegel – *Noctuas Athenas afferre (Vitam impendere vero)*” este o cercetare amplă și detaliată, a mai multor aspecte, cu caracter istoric și biografic, referitoare la Hegel (cum ar fi, spre exemplu, „raporturile lui Hegel cu francmasoneria”), a unei varietăți de teme ale metafilosofiei hegeliene (cum sunt, spre exemplu, cele asociate în mod tradițional simbolisticii bufniței Minervei), și filosofiei hegeliene în general (spre exemplu, tema „sfârșitului istoriei”, „dialectica Stăpânului și Sclavului”), precum și o analiză a receptării unora dintre aceste teme în filosofia contemporană.

Eseul „Ocurența «Caesar» în textele lui A. N. Whitehead” conține o prezentare detaliată și o analiză amănunțită a contextelor în care, în lucrările sale „filosofice și eseistice” (p. 337), Whitehead folosește numele/expresia „Caesar”, unul dintre scopurile eseului fiind aceea de a sugera - direct, prin concluzii extrase din exemplele identificate, sau indirect, prin asocieri, interpretări, extrapolări -, în ce măsură folosirea numelui/expresiei „Caesar” este - fiind vorba, în cele mai multe cazuri, de contexte de filosofie a limbajului, de analiză logică și lingvistică, și deci de analiză formală -, „întâmplătoare” (p. 338) sau nu. De aici, (i) relațiile complexe, pe care eseul le pune în evidență, între semnificațiile istorice ale formulelor analizate - „Caesar” ca parte a unui eveniment (pp. 337-339), „Caesar” ca nume, „Caesar” ca „exemplu” (pp. 345-346), „Caesar” în „Caesar a trecut Rubiconul” (pp. 347-348) etc. -, și cele formale sau semiformale pentru care formulele amintite sunt folosite ca ilustrări; și astfel (ii) efortul, ușor de constatat de-a lungul întregului studiu, de a contura un metalimbaj care să exprime și să justifice aceste relații.

Bogată tematic, variată din punct de vedere al perspectivelor luate în considerare în cadrul fiecărui comentariu și a fiecărei analize, interesantă și atractivă prin concluziile obținute, surprinzătoare prin asocierile și dezvoltările construite, cartea lui Anton Adămuț este, prin obiectivele propuse și mijloacele puse în joc pentru realizarea lor, o colecție valoroasă de exerciții academice; prin varietatea și consistența surselor și ilustrărilor pe care le conține, este un instrument de studiu deosebit de util.

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