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Rethinking Culture and Cultural Analysis

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Herausgegeben von
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(Hg./Eds.)

Rethinking Culture and Cultural Analysis

Neudenken von Kultur und Kulturanalyse

culture – discourse – history

Herausgegeben von

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Contens / Inhaltsverzeichnis

Preface

As the title of the present volume indicates, the ideas presented here concentrate on reflecting on the concept of culture, as well as about the topics of cultural analysis themselves. In this sense, culture is not to be observed merely as a *theoretical object*. Rather, certain *thematic objects* which a culturally conditioned reflection tends to aim at should also be taken into account, regardless of whether they are in a strict sense philosophical ones or not. The relationship between these two dimensions of reflection had a crucial influence on 20th-century thought insofar as it made philosophy speak up for a phenomenon which, until then, had not yet received any relevant scientific confirmation. Nowadays, we witness a variety of scholarly activity—for example in the rediscoveries of Ernst Cassirer's oeuvre or that of Georg Simmel's socio-cultural analyses—which, by developing their topics, have contributed to a growing interest in the question of how a cultural conception of human being, its systems of knowledge, and social organization is to be understood.

The concept of culture thus ceased to be an object only for philosophic study and started to extend into other areas of study, which evidently included natural science as well. At the same time, political actors and mass media benefitted from incorporating the concept of culture into narratives of national identity and difference, which in many cases tended toward an ideologized and substantialized status of the concept itself. Unfortunately, philosophical thought was not always able to find the necessary communicative spaces which would have allowed for a critical reflection of these narratives. On the other hand, the reflections upon cultural analysis do not always question the concept of culture itself. In this way, contemporary philosophy suffers a double confrontation: not only with its own concepts of culture, but also with the many varieties of this concept and the polysemy of the themes they deal with in other disciplines. This state of the matter, however, is not entirely new. Within the period from the *Enlightenment* up to the height of *cultural philosophy* in the 20th century, we can distinguish two different stadiums within the theoretical thought about the cultural universe.

In the first stadium, the concept of culture appears tightly connected to an essentially normative function. The enlightenment's ideal of emancipation from tutelage, from superstition, and from oppressive social systems implied an idea of culture based on the distinction between barbarism and civilization. Kant, with his

formula of the categorical imperative, considered the solution for the civilized person's exemplary life to lie in moral education, whereas Friedrich Schiller conceived the aesthetic education of humanity to be the true emancipatory project of *cultivation (Bildung)*. The fact that this normative function of the concept of culture resonated in later ethnographical studies, the term thereby gaining a comparative function, can be seen in the research conducted on so-called *primitive societies*. The holistic conceptions of cultural phenomena, already present in Giovanni Battista Vico's or Johann Gottfried Herder's writings, were applied to the observation of groups with strong communitarian identities, whose customs were essentially reflected in mythical beliefs and magical rites. Works as those by Edward Burnett Tylor, Emile Durkheim, Franz Boas, or Bronislaw Malinowski became highly relevant for a better understanding as well as a consistent decentralization of the concept of culture—for the idea that man's mental structures are not regulated exclusively by propositional meanings and therefore contain all those social forms that at their roots are connected to a mythical vision of the world and nature.

The second stadium, which evolves almost two centuries after the first, benefits from the development of the social sciences and anthropology and can be interpreted as a veritable *cultural turn* in philosophical thought. Through this evolution, the concept of culture acquires a critical function, in the restricted sense of the word. If we look for a philosophical trait which especially characterizes this stadium, we can find it in the words of Ernst Cassirer, in the first volume of his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*. There he stressed the necessity of passing from Kant's critique of reason to a critique of culture, that is, a process which would constitute the basis of a *philosophy of culture*. Cassirer considers—and so does Georg Simmel—philosophical reflection on culture to be an integral study of external forms, symbolic forms like myth, language, religion, art, and science. Humans use these in order to symbolize and express their world-experience, and to represent and schematize their processes of individuation. In this philosophical sense, therefore, culture is conceived as a critical form of understanding the mental and social manifestations of human experience. At the same time, it is dissociated from modern schemes of interpretation which are based on the distinction between civilization and barbarism, and their application to the discrimination of ways of life regarded as inferior.

This critical function of the concept of culture had—and continues to have—a major influence on contemporary thought. The conceptual eclipse which the cultural category of the barbarian involved, in an era which was characterized by discourses on postcolonialism and globalization, shows us how very important it is to grasp the idea of culture by recognizing how the process of human individuation is defined by social experiences. Cassirer's work already made a point in this regard.

Although this historical background clearly indicates that the idea of culture never had a specific theoretical center, one enormous challenge to philosophy persists: to investigate the methodological value and the scope of the idea of culture. Nowadays, for example, we can witness a growing tendency to treat the relations between nations as intercultural relations. On the other hand, and not less importantly, the broad spectrum of conceptions of culture—resulting from the Kantian tradition of *sophisticated civilization* (*high culture*) as well as from Herder's *national spirit*—increases the need for philosophical reflection on this phenomenon while also rendering the task more difficult.

The texts in this collection are revised versions of presentations given at the Coimbra International Conference on the Semantics of Culture *Why "Culture"?*, held on November 24-25, 2011. If one wishes to identify a common thread among them and to succinctly describe this central theme, then it can only be expressed as the idea that the phenomenon of culture cannot be reduced to a substantialist vision of the diversity of manifestations of society and human being. However, if one were to accept the concept of culture as a starting point for observing these manifestations, then it should also be adopted as a starting point for critical questioning, that is, for *problematizing*, not just as a theoretical *solution*. The texts in this volume contribute to this problematization by pointing out—each with its own perspective of analysis, of course—articulations of the phenomenon of culture as a theoretical object and as a thematic object. Therefore, it is up to the reader to find the connection between these two objects in the texts and thereby make his or her own contribution to its questioning and deepening.

Joaquim Braga and Christian Möckel

Vorwort

Wie der Titel des vorliegenden Sammelbandes bereits anzeigt, stellen die Überlegungen, die hier präsentiert werden, sowohl das Nachdenken über den Begriff der Kultur als auch das Nachdenken über die Thematiken der Kulturanalyse selbst in den Vordergrund. Es handelt sich so gesehen darum, die Kultur nicht lediglich als *theoretisches Objekt* zu betrachten, sondern sich auch auf bestimmte *thematische Objekte* zu beziehen, die gewöhnlich das Ziel einer sich auf kulturelle Voraussetzungen gründenden Reflexion sind, seien diese im strengen Sinne philosophische oder auch außerphilosophische. Die Beziehung zwischen diesen beiden Gegenstandsdimensionen charakterisierte auf entscheidende Weise das Denken im 20. Jahrhundert, indem es die Philosophie selbst dahin brachte, einem Phänomen eine Stimme zu geben, das noch keine relevante wissenschaftliche Bestätigung erhalten zu haben schien. Heute finden wir, u.a. mit der Wiederentdeckung des Werkes von Ernst Cassirer oder der der sozio-kulturellen Analysen Georg Simmels, vielfältige wissenschaftliche Gebiete vor, die, durch die Ausarbeitung ihrer Thematiken, zu einem Nachdenken darüber beigetragen haben, was unter einer kulturellen Vision des menschlichen Daseins, seiner Systeme der Erkenntnis und der sozialen Organisation verstanden wird.

Der Begriff der Kultur hörte in diesem Maße auf, lediglich eine philosophische Beschäftigung zu sein und erweiterte sich in die Überlegungen anderer Wissenschaften hinein, was ganz offensichtlich auch die Naturwissenschaften einschloß. Gleichzeitig haben sich die politischen Akteure und die Massenmedien des Kulturbegriffs bemächtigt, um Diskurse der nationalen Identität bzw. Differenz zu befördern, die in vielen Fällen zur Ideologisierung und Substantialisierung des Begriffs selbst tendieren. Unglücklicherweise hat es das philosophische Denken nicht immer vermocht, die nötigen Kommunikationsräume zu finden, die es ihm erlaubt hätten, diese Diskurse kritisch zu hinterfragen. Auf der anderen Seite stellt das Nachdenken über die kulturelle Analyse den Begriff der Kultur selbst nicht immer in Frage. Auf diese Weise sieht sich die gegenwärtige Philosophie in eine zweifache Konfrontation gestellt: sowohl mit ihren Konzepten von Kultur als auch mit den vielfältigen Versionen des Kulturbegriffes und der Polysemie der disziplinären Thematiken, die sich mit diesen Versionen verbinden. Diese Sachlage ist allerdings keine völlig neue. So lassen sich zwei verschiedene Stadien des theoretischen Denkens über das kulturelle Universum ausmachen, die abgesteckt

werden können von der Periode der *Aufklärung* bis hin zur Blüte der *Kultur-philosophie* im 20. Jahrhundert.

Im ersten Stadium finden wir den Begriff der Kultur eng mit einer essentiell normativen Funktion verwoben. Das aufklärerische Ideal einer Befreiung aus der Unmündigkeit, vom Aberglauben und von den bedrückenden sozialen Systemen brachte eine Idee von Kultur mit sich, die sich auf die Unterscheidung zwischen Barbarei und Zivilisiertheit gründete. Wenn Immanuel Kant mit seiner Formel des kategorischen Imperativs in der moralischen Erziehung die Lösung für das exemplarische Leben des zivilisierten Menschen zu finden suchte, so sah Friedrich Schiller bereits in der ästhetischen Erziehung des Menschenwesens das wahre emanzipatorische Projekt der *Bildung*. Daß diese normative Funktion des Kulturbegriffs in den späteren ethnographischen Studien nachhallen sollte und der Begriff so eine komparative Funktion gewann, ist eine Tatsache, die sich in den Forschungen über die sogenannten *primitiven Gesellschaften* aufweisen läßt. Die holistischen Konzeptionen der kulturellen Phänomene, die bereits in den Schriften Giovanni Battista Vicos und Johann Gottfried Herders präsent waren, wurden auf die Beobachtung von Gruppen mit einer starken kommunitarischen Identität, deren Sitten sich wesentlich in mythischen Überzeugungen und magischen Riten niederschlugen, angewandt. Werke wie die von Edward Burnett Tylor, Emile Durkheim, Franz Boas oder Bronislaw Malinowski erlangten eine große Relevanz für ein besseres Verständnis und eine konsequente Dezentralisierung des Kulturbegriffs, für die Idee, daß die psychischen Strukturen des Menschen nicht nur durch propositionale Bedeutungen geregelt werden und auf diese Weise alle jene sozialen Formen einschließen, die eine Wurzelverbindung mit einer mythischen Vision der Welt und der Natur besitzen.

Das zweite Stadium, das sich in Bezug auf das erste fast zwei Jahrhunderte später entfaltet, wird teilweise durch die Entwicklung der Sozialwissenschaften und der Anthropologie begünstigt und kann als ein wahrhafter *cultural turn* im philosophischen Denken interpretiert werden. Genau hierbei gewinnt der Begriff der Kultur eine, im strengen Wortsinne, kritische Funktion. Wenn wir nach einer philosophischen Charakteristik suchen, die dieses Stadium im Besonderen auszeichnet, dann können wir sie in den Worten Ernst Cassirers finden, mit denen er im ersten Band seiner *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* die Notwendigkeit angemahnt hat, von der Kantischen Kritik der Vernunft zu einer Kritik der Kultur oder, mit anderen Worten, zu einem Prozeß überzugehen, der die Grundlage einer *Kulturphilosophie* abgeben würde. Cassirer sieht − wie übrigens auch Georg Simmel − das philosophische Nachdenken über die Kultur als ein integrales Studium der äußeren Formen (der symbolischen Formen wie der Mythos, die Sprache, die Religion, die Kunst und die Wissenschaft), die die Menschen benutzen, um ihre

Welterfahrung zu symbolisieren und auszudrücken, ebenso um ihre Prozesse der Individuation darzustellen und zu schematisieren. In diesem philosophischen Sinne wird die Kultur folglich als eine kritische Verstehensform der psychischen und sozialen Manifestationen der Erfahrungen des Menschen aufgefaßt, die sich andererseits von den modernen Interpretationsschemata distanziert, die auf der Unterscheidung zwischen Zivilisiertheit und Barbarei basieren, und von deren Anwendung auf Lebensformen, die als niedere betrachtet werden.

Diese kritische Funktion des Kulturbegriffs hatte – und fährt fort zu haben – eine große Auswirkung auf das zeitgenössische Denken. Die Finsternis der kulturellen Kategorie des Barbaren in einer Ära, die durch die Diskurse um den Postkolonialismus und die Globalisierung charakterisiert war, zeigt uns, wie extrem wichtig es ist, die Idee der Kultur ausgehend von einem Verständnis her zu fassen, das, wie bereits durch Cassirer dargelegt worden war, die Prozesse der Individuation des Menschen durch seine sozialen Erlebnisse hindurch einbezieht. Ungeachtet dieser historischen Fundierungen, die klar aufzeigen, daß die Kulturidee niemals ein spezifisches theoretisches Zentrum besaß, besteht aber die enorme Herausforderung an die Philosophie fort, über den methodologischen Wert und die Reichweite der Idee der Kultur nachzudenken, und dies zu einer Zeit, in der man beispielsweise zunehmend dazu übergeht, die Beziehungen zwischen den Völkern als interkulturelle Beziehungen zu fassen. Andererseits, und nicht weniger wichtig, macht das breite Angebot an Kulturkonzeptionen, die sich sowohl der Kantischen Tradition der *Hochkultur* als auch der Herderschen Tradition des *Volksgeistes* bedienen, das philosophische Nachdenken über dieses Phänomen noch notwendiger, während es ihm gleichzeitig einen höheren Grad an Schwierigkeit verleiht.

Wenn es in allen in der vorliegenden Ausgabe präsentierten Texten, die überarbeitete Fassungen von Beiträgen darstellen, die am 24./25. November 2011 auf der Coimbra International Conference on the Semantics of Culture *Why „Culture"?* gehalten wurden, sinngemäß einen roten Faden gibt, und wenn man diesen roten Faden in knappen Worten zum Ausdruck bringen will, dann kann dies nur in der Formulierung der Idee geschehen, daß das Phänomen der Kultur sich nicht auf eine substantialistische Vision der mannigfaltigen Manifestationen der Gesellschaft und des menschlichen Daseins reduzieren läßt. Wer es aber akzeptiert, den Kulturbegriff als Ausgangspunkt der Beobachtung dieser Manifestationen zu nehmen, sollte ihn dann auch als Ausgangspunkt ihrer Hinterfragung akzeptieren, d.h. als *Problematisierung,* und nicht lediglich als bloße theoretische *Lösung.* Der Inhalt des vorliegenden Bandes bildet einen Beitrag zu dieser Problematisierung, indem jeder der Texte, unter verschiedenen Winkeln der Analyse versteht sich, die Artikulation des Phänomens der Kultur als theoretisches Objekt und als

thematisches Objekt aufweist. Es ist daher am Leser, in den Texten den Zusammenhang zwischen diesen beiden Objekten zu finden und so ebenfalls zu seinem Hinterfragen und Vertiefen einen Beitrag zu leisten.

Joaquim Braga und Christian Möckel

Culture as Externalized Information

Oswald Schwemmer

Today we have a reactivation of an almost eternal discussion: the discussion about the humanity's special position in the world of life, that means the discussion about the difference between animals and human beings. The traditional points of difference—first of all the human language but also the capability of learning and even a moral sense—are common points at issue, which didn't find a common solution. Representatives of cognitive psychology, neuropsychology, anthropology and other empirical disciplines argue against the human difference whereas usually philosophers still stick to the traditional position of a human difference, even though with some additional qualifications.

And indeed: We have to admit, that there are systems of interaction and communication in the world of animals, which at least in some respects show a similarity with human language. And as to learning, we have a—at least a partly astonishing—capability of not only individual but in some cases also collective learning. And even as to morals some forms of behavior are found which, if it were a behavior of human beings, we would not hesitate to call it a moral one.

So the unqualified reference to language, learning and moral behavior doesn't provide a reliable foundation for the human difference. We should search no longer for this foundation in pure phenomena, which we can describe in different ways. Instead, we must analyze the way in which these phenomena are realized or come into being. In this perspective we don't have to refer to phenomenal or substantial things but to structural characteristics. In other words: We don't have to look for what is the case but how is that, what is the case, brought about.

In anticipation of my arguments I offer as my main thesis a structural difference between human and animal communication, learning and interacting. However we may label these forms of activities: we have to admit that they are realized not only by the individuals out of their individual capacities but also by potentialities, which possess their own dynamic existence. For there are not only the individuals, which communicate, learn and interact but there are also media between all these individuals: media with their own form of existence, which support and continue all these activities.

The brightest example of these media is language. That means: human language consisting in a self-contained system of phonetic elements like words or phrases. The decisive feature of this linguistic system is its self-contained functioning, or, as Ernst Cassirer would formulate it, its "innere" or "immanente Form"[1], its internal or immanent form.

2. The circular relation between self-configuration of language and usage by the speaker

This immanent form of the media consists in different ways of self-organization or—as I would prefer to name it—of self-configuration. To avoid a misunderstanding of this self-configuration I have to add immediately an explaining remark.

As a language in function, that means as a vivid language in use, we have not only the linguistic system but also the speaker and, when there is a written language, the writer. In general: A vivid language exists only in its use, as a spoken or written language.

At first glance the assertion of a linguistic self-configuration seems to be inconsistent with the insight in the reliance of language on its use. Indeed, we have here a complex circular relation: the user of a language in a sense is, however small, creating a linguistic form and at the same time does it in performing a set of linguistic patterns. The language he uses provides not only a set of linguistic patterns but also characteristic modes of processing such patterns: phonetic, semantic and syntactic patterns.

To understand this circular relationship we have to realize that language, vivid language, cannot be grasped as a store of fixed phrases and construction rules. In contrast to many structuralistic views which concentrate their view on the structure or the system of language I want to argue in favor of a procedural view within which we have to analyze the different factors of the linguistic usage. The main difficulty in this procedural view is to identify the different factors of this usage.

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1   The phrase „immanente Form" is found only two times in Cassirer's published work: cf. Cassirer, Ernst, Gesammelte Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe, (ECW) Band 1, Hamburg 1998, p. 350, and ECW 16, Hamburg 2003, p. 116, the phrase „innere Form" however 44 times and in addition to that—inflected—in 26 further instances.

3. Speaking and thinking

To start this factor analysis in a first step I concentrate upon the relationship between speaking and thinking. The question about the relationship between speaking and thinking is as old as philosophy. Plato answered this question roughly with a concise formula: Thinking is silent speaking with oneself.[2]

In spite of the classical status of this answer nobody today would maintain such an identity of thinking and speaking. Even if we usually articulate our thoughts in sentences, these sentences belong to a different dimension than our thoughts in our mental life. Unlike our thoughts sentences are sensually perceptual—that is phonetically or visibly presented. Therefore, they are quite well identifiable objects. This is not the case with thoughts. Thoughts are rather impulses of articulation and configuration than explicit modes of expression. Between our thinking and our speaking remains a structural difference: a gap which we cannot cover up but with a certain skill more or less bridge.

The structural difference between thinking and speaking doesn't mean that there is no relationship between thinking and speaking. On the contrary, both are intertwined in a comprehensive thinking-speaking process.

The first factor which we should analyze is the internal dynamic of language, a dynamic which is a dynamic of its own. You can prove that in a very simple way: Generally we don't have to search for each word if we speak. Even when our speaking is paused, because we search for the right phrase, our speech "flows"—even though not regularly and unhindered. We come—so to speak—through with our speech. And thereby we make use of the immanent idiomatic structure of our language.

The idioms of our language are phrases—very often very short phrases—with a dynamic impulse: that means with an impulse to continue these phrases and thereby to connect them with fitting other phrases in a direction aimed at.

So we have to distinguish two factors of speaking. The first factor we find in the—usually piecemeal—configuration of the used phrases. The internal configuration of such a phrase defines the idiomatic character of our speaking. These phrases support our speaking—even if partially—and open the direction for their continuation.

This continuation secondly brings something new into play: the second factor is the personal style of the speaker. This style includes—to use a term of Maurice Merleau-Ponty—the way of "being to the world". That means that we are geared

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2   Plato, *Sophistes* 263e and *Theaitetos* 190a.

towards our world in a certain outlook on it. And this outlook is like a guiding line which—in a very general way—permeates our feeling, thinking and acting. And it permeates all this not like a rule but like an atmosphere influencing our mood: only influencing in a rather suggestive and not determining in a decisive way.

Crystallized or fossilized types of those styles we find above all in the different professionalized spheres of our societies. A politician for example confronted with his supporters will develop a motivating, confronted with his opponents a denouncing, and confronted with the public in a style which presents himself as a competent and responsible people's representative. These types of professionalized style very often lose their credibility because of their stereotyped form and with that also their calculated effect.

This observation is—by the way—an argument in favor of a certain creativity in developing one's own style. Too much predictability makes the understanding of an utterance more difficult. We need both: well-established idiomatic phrases and individual departures from them. So on the borders of the used idiomatic phrases our own impulses must adjust the direction of our speaking: be it in a new turn, be it in a continuation or be it in a reinforcement of that what was already said.

As a first result of this description of the idiomatic structure within the development of our speaking we can establish a relationship between given idiomatic phrases at our disposal on the one hand and impulses of continuation and connection which are realized only in the speech situation on the other hand.

Thinking in this perspective is no more a self-contained and totally self-configurating activity but a sequence of impulses which intervene in the idiomatically moved course of our speaking. From a structural point of view thinking is a phenomenon of interventions on a field of phrases. When we try to isolate these interventions—and that means: when we try to describe our thinking only by referring to these interventions then we will fail. There is no identifiable set of interventions as such, namely interventions without any relation to the course of phrases, within which they intervene. The situation is like that of Saint Augustine, when he wrote in his Confessions: "So what is time? When nobody asks me about it, I know it. But when I want to explain it to a questioner I don't know it."[3] We talk of thinking and thoughts everywhere and over and over again—and we are convinced that we then speak about something everybody knows and we therefore don't have to explain. But when we are asked to explain it then we have to confess that we cannot answer the question—at least not in an adequate way.

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3   Augustinus, *Confessiones*, liber XI, 14: „Quid est ergo tempus? Si nemo ex me quaerat, scio; si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio."

To make this more plausible you can test it with yourself. Put yourself into the following situation: You want to write a very important work or to write the manuscript for a very important lecture. You know—in rough outline—your theme but not how to present it. If you don't have more than this idea you will not make progress. So you have to change your strategy. Instead of thinking only about your theme you write a sentence on your sheet—no matter how significant or not. It must only be understandable for you. And then you will see: Referring to this first sentence—be it in favor or against of it, be it commenting, continuing or explaining it—you are on the way to articulate yourself, that is: you are on the way to think.

And by the way: These ways of referring don't always have to be ways in the field of meaning. Sometimes we react to sound assonances, phonetic alliterations, rhythmic patterns and melodic lines of the phrases and sentences. In those cases we would be influenced by the sounding "matter" of the linguistic utterances.

At this point of my presentation I have to interject a general remark: The last mentioned features of speaking are features which belong also to other fields of expression: fields like music and dancing, painting and building and many other forms of articulation. And all these other fields belong to the realm of our cultures, where configurations have developed and now belong to the standard of a cultural tradition. My concentration on thinking and speaking was due to the fact, that thinking and speaking represent a classic example for all these ways of configuration in our culture: an example which has been discussed by philosophers since the beginning of philosophy. Therefore—even after discussing only this classical example—I already dare to sum up my analysis of the relation between thinking and speaking in a more general conclusion.

4. Culture as externalized information

The point of this conclusion is that we need a structured incentive in order to think. And this incentive comes from outside of our thinking. This incentive, as I tried to explain it, is not yet the result of a thinking process. But without it this process would not even get going. And beyond it—and this is a decisive factor—this process would be without any direction.

In a rather figurative speech we can label this factor of directing our thinking—and thereby also our speaking—in a literal sense a form of information: a form of internal formation. And in so far as this form of internal formation comes from outside the thinking and speaking user of the language we are dealing with externalized information.

And just this makes the difference between human beings and animals. As I had to concede: there are animals—usually we refer to primates, especially to chimpanzees, but also to some other animals like the Newcaledonian crow or bees—there are animals which perform astonishing feats especially in using tools and learning to behave. But—as I tried to argue—they do it without a self-contained system of information. Such a system is, as Charles Sanders Peirce would label it, a "third" between the two agents.

This "third" is characterized by its own development. But, as we already had to realize, it is not a development already and only by its given structure. This development starts and keeps going by the use of this structure. Resulting from the use of this "third" at the same time it is like an arsenal for a further use. This circular relation defines tradition. And the process of becoming a tradition defines the possibility of culture. Culture is the externalized information which is established by the formation of a tradition.

With this central thesis I try to characterize the human difference I dealt with at the beginning. But I explained this thesis only by looking to the formation and information of thinking and speaking. Now I want to illustrate it by analyzing at least a second form of cultural formation and information: the form of pictorial formation.

5. Thinking and speaking versus seeing

At the outset we have to mention a fundamental difference between thinking and speaking on the one hand and seeing on the other hand. Thinking and speaking are activities which we have to start and to steer even if not, as we have seen, in every detail. Seeing however is a process which we can steer, but which we usually, that is when we are awake and have our eyes open, we don't have to start explicitly. And this is the case with all our senses and constitutes a general difference between thinking and speaking on the one hand and perceiving on the other hand.

The continual happening of seeing in a high degree is formed by and within this happening. Everything what we see we see through all that what we have seen. The corresponding connection by the way is true for all our sense perceptions. And when we see or perceive in general then we see or perceive something as the case of a pattern. Such patterns develop during our perceiving life and because of that depend on the environments within which we have grown up.

6. Seeing and overlooking

A second difference we find in the realm of the seen. This is a difference we find explicitly in the English language: the difference between images of our imagination and painted pictures. While the images of our imagination arise in the contingencies of our life, the painted pictures are made in a process of making something visible.

This making something visible creates a significant difference between seeing and painting. When we see something we see it as a configuration or as a case of a pattern. By this configuration differences of visibility emerge. For example, usually we don't become aware of the space in between the thematic objects to which we direct our attention.

A very clear example we find in the drawings of children. When they draw the house of the family, they usually draw the right number, but not the right arrangement of the windows. For they not become aware of the space in between the windows. In principle, this is a general character of seeing: In looking at something we select certain aspects of the seen and neglect other ones. To look at something is overlooking to miss the rest of what could be seen.

And we can go a step further. If we didn't overlook so many aspects of the seen, we wouldn't see anything, because we wouldn't be able to identify anything. When all aspects are of an equal importance for their visibility, then there remains no importance at all. So overlooking is a structural condition for seeing at all. We need different levels of importance, of standing out in our seeing if we want to see something.

7. Symbolic pregnance

In general, we can ascertain that in all forms of perceiving we have to refer to patterns or configurations which create different levels of perceivable presence. In his major work "The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms" Ernst Cassirer labels this configurating phenomenon "symbolic pregnance". His definition however refers only to the result of this pregnance and not to the configurating process itself. This result is the capability to identify something within our perception and by that turning it into an item which can be referred to by a nonintuitive symbol. I quote the passage:

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> By symbolic pregnance we mean the way in which a perception as a 'sensory' experience contains at the same time a certain nonintuitive 'meaning' which it immediately and concretely represents.[4]

And later he states rather emphatically that this process of symbolic pregnance is "an independent and autonomous determination", namely of the internal form of our perception and its relation to the general process of symbolization.

> We have designated as symbolic pregnance the relation in consequence of which the sensory embraces a meaning and represents it immediately for consciousness: this pregnance can be reduced neither to merely reproductive processes nor to mediated intellectual processes—it must ultimately be recognized as an independent and autonomous determination, without which neither an object nor a subject, neither a unity of the thing nor a unity of the self would be given to us.[5]

Although Cassirer lends a central importance to symbolic pregnance there are only few places in his published work where he explicates the process of the formation of this pregnance. Most places we find in his unpublished papers, especially in the meanwhile edited published third volume.

8. Seeing versus painting

Back to the analysis of the process of configuration in seeing we now compare it with something corresponding in the process of painting.

To realize this comparison I only look at those paintings which are paintings of what we see. Corresponding to the ascertainment of the different levels of presence for our seeing we distinguish in seeing between figure or thematic objects and background, surroundings or the spaces in between. While for our seeing

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4   Cassirer, Ernst, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 3, *The Phenomenology of Knowledge*. New Haven 1957, p. 202. Quoted in: Krois, John Michael, *Cassirer. Symbolic Forms and History*. New Haven and London 1987, p. 54.

5   Op. Cit., p. 235.

background, surroundings and spaces in between are mostly of lower importance or even not consciously perceived, the painter by contrast has—at least usually—to paint background, surroundings and spaces in between with the same care as his thematic objects. And even if the painter depicts the parts of his painting with less care, which for the viewer are of less importance or even unimportant, he has to think about them and to paint them. Therefore, his view on the painting is a comprehensive one, which contains every part of the painting.

This structural difference between the view of the viewer and the view of the painter we can characterize by a shift of pregnance: Where the pregnance of the seen for the average viewer arises from overlooking all the already mentioned aspects of lower importance or visual presence, in painting these less important and less present aspects are of the same importance and presence as the thematic objects. But if we look at a painting—and in this case I refer to a representational realistic painting—we usually don't perceive all the details with the same attention.

To do a test: One of the most or even the most celebrated and well-known painting beyond doubt is Leonardo's portrait of La Gioconda or the so called Mona Lisa. And now my question: Do you remember the background of this painting? I guess that only art historians and especially interested people can give an affirmative answer, although just this background is a very special one. For Leonardo painted—to mention only one of the background objects—a rather unlikely water reservoir on the top of a mountain. And he developed whole theories about "vene d'aqua" (the veins of water).[6]

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6   Cf. Kemp, Martin, Leonardo da Vinci. The Marvellous Works of Nature and Man. Oxford 1981, p. 265.
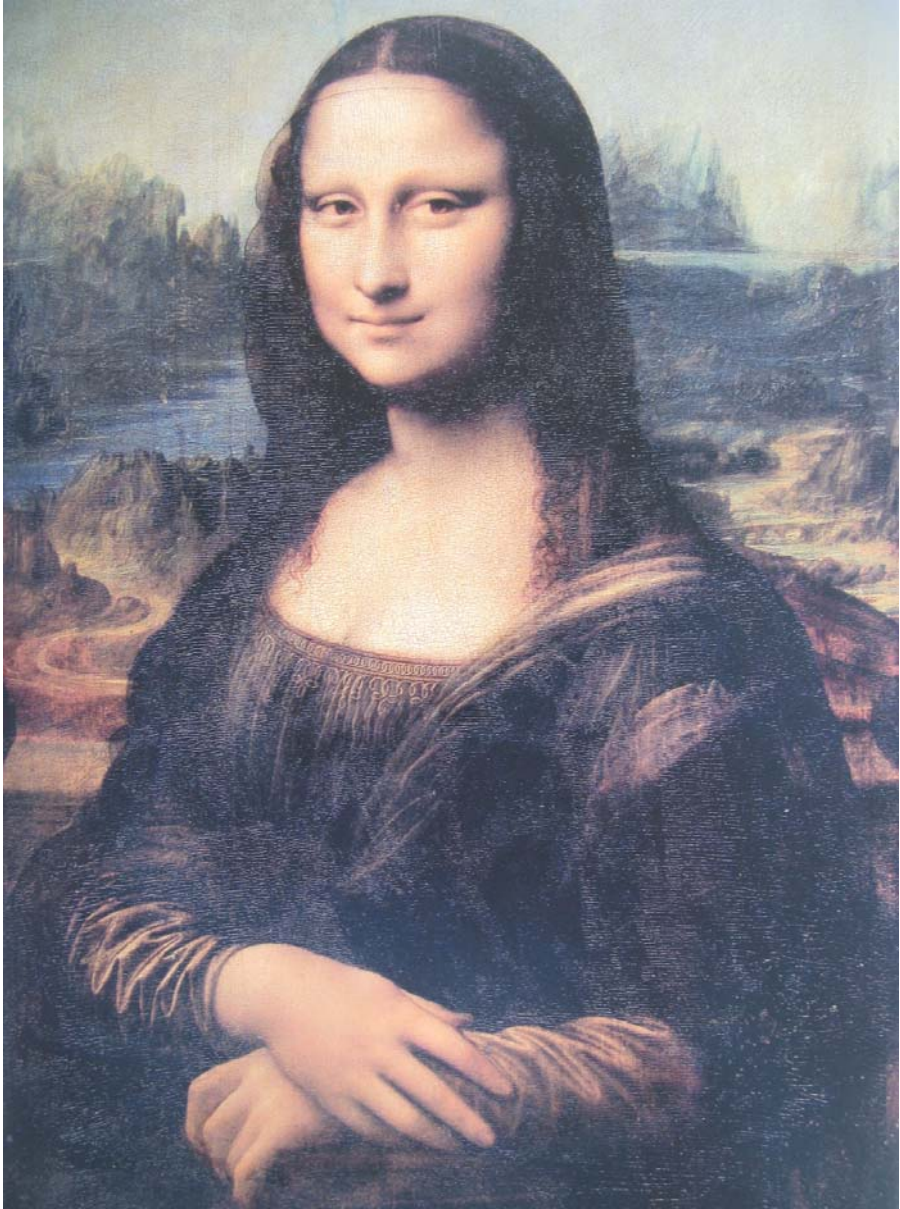
To sum up: In painting we find a shifting of pregnance in comparison to our everyday seeing. What in this seeing is of a weaker presence gains in painting, namely in painting the background, the surroundings and the spaces in between, an own form of presence: of the presence just of this background, these surroundings and spaces in between. The painting of this background, these surroundings and spaces in between creates a way of visual equality between all that is made visible. In the picture of the painter will be established so to speak a grassroots democracy of the altogether visible, within which the supremacy of the objects is abolished.

To look at something that is painted in a picture is to lead our view to a very special arrangement of lines and colors: to a configuration which is created by the painting of the picture and which didn't exist before.

9. What is a picture and what is art

In this way, in the history of painting arose changing traditions of pictorial configuration which influenced our seeing in a rather imperceptible way. And this imperceptibility over and over again led to the conviction that the just adopted perspectives within which somebody saw the pictures around him was a matter of course. The result of this certainty usually was a dogmatic assessment of the presented pictures as art or as non-art. Today we generally have a very loose view of art: art is defined by the market and the museum. As long as a picture fetches high prices on the market or is a museum piece it has to be art. When it will be removed from the museum or loses its price on the market then it is no longer a work of art.

In this context it is interesting that we have in different cultures a different understanding not only of what is a good or a bad picture but even of what is a picture at all. In our European tradition we identify a picture or rather the extension of a picture by its frame or—if there is no frame at all—by the special material texture of the painted surface in its difference to the wall where it is hanging on. But just this very basic feature of a picture we don't find in Chinese culture. I quote a paragraph of an article of Meyer Shapiro (in my English translation):

> In China, where painting was a reputable art, the owner didn't hesitate when there was a finely painted landscape to write on the not painted surface a commenting verse or a prose sentence or to put his

stamp on a prominent place of the surface of the picture. The picture's background hardly was seen as a part of the sign itself: figure and background for the eye don't form an inseparable unity.[7]

10. Polarities of pictorial representation

The general difference between seeing and painting can be interpreted by further differentiations, which also are labeled as polarities or even paradoxes of pictorial representation.

10.1. Transparency and opaqueness

There is for instance the difference between transparency and opaqueness. This difference comes into being because the painting of the transparent—for example of the sky, of a window or of a look through something at all—is a painting with colors which are opaque. We would also have a corresponding situation if somebody presented this looking through simply by letting the canvas empty. For the material nature of the canvas remains opaque. In the end this difference results from the basic difference between seeing—namely as a looking through—and painting—that is to cover material surfaces with material colors.

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7   Schapiro, Meyer, Über einige Probleme in der Semiotik der visuellen Kunst: Feld und Medium beim Bild-Zeichen, in: Boehm, Gottfried (Hg.), *Was ist ein Bild?* München 1994,[3] 2001, p. 257.

Is it a flag or is it a painted flag?
Is it a painted flag or is it concrete painting?
Is it a flag or is it concrete painting?

10.2. Plane and depth

Only the picture—or more precisely restricted to the pictures without a frame—only the frameless pictures show the simultaneousness of a plane and a depth. This "integration of the incompatible"[8] is based in seeing: namely in the relation of a focusing and accompanying perceiving on the one side and in the relation of the subject or the object and the framework of the other side. Where the picture totally fills the whole field of viewing—as it does on the flag pictures of Jasper Johns—the referring orientation is missing. The locating environment in the accompanying perceiving and the boundary of the picture deprives the perception of its self-perception *as* the perception of a picture. The picture in this case is no longer a picture with a clear dividing line between itself and the wall or wherever it is placed. It as it were disappears into a part of the perception of the whole surroundings wherein you are. Here the comment of Max Imdahl, a German art historian, to these Flag Pictures:

Is it a flag or is it a painted flag?
Is it a painted flag or is it concrete painting?
Is it a flag or is it concrete painting?

A well brought about situation of this kind you find in the fresco of Andrea Pozzo, which simulates in a "trompe-l'œil"-effect a dome on the ceiling of San Ignazio at Rome:

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8   Polyani, Michael, Was ist ein Bild? In: Boehm, Gottfried (Ed.), op. cit., p. 155.

When you look at it within certain limits of your position, then you perceive the fresco as a real dome with its spatial character. Just this possibility of pretending false facts by specially painted pictures is an argument for defining a picture referring to its dividing line from its surroundings—and after all that is: referring at least to the function of a frame. The demarcation of a picture from all what we see belongs to the concept of a picture, if we want to distinguish at all pictures from reality. To pictures belongs a "frame-effect", which has to ensure the identity of the picture against the surrounding reality—and this regardless whether there exists a frame or not.

10.3. Picture and sculpture

In the field of arts not only pictures are defined by their visibility but also sculptures. But in difference to pictures we have to go around the sculptures when we want to see them completely. The picture by contrast shows itself—at least in principle—as a whole at the same time—even if some effects may change with the position of the viewer.

But also when the position of the viewer all in all doesn't matter we have to admit that complete visibility of the picture from one position at the same time doesn't mean that we also realize all aspects of the picture at this same time. Usually we need some time when we want to perceive all things and aspects of a picture—and this not only, as we have seen, as to the background, the surroundings and the spaces in between but also to the thematic object itself.

As an additional remark on the portrait of Mona Lisa I can try to give an example for the usually belatedly—if at all—noticed detail within the thematic part of the painting. Of central importance in general is the face of a portrayed person and in this face the eyes. And now my question: Did you see at the first glance that Mona Lisa didn't have eyebrows on the picture? At least as to me: I didn't.

So we can sum up: As far how as we look at what they show there is a structural difference between pictures and sculptures. But as to what we perceive there in principle is no difference between them. The simultaneity of the shown by the picture doesn't bring about the simultaneity of the seen: that is of the thematically or explicitly seen.
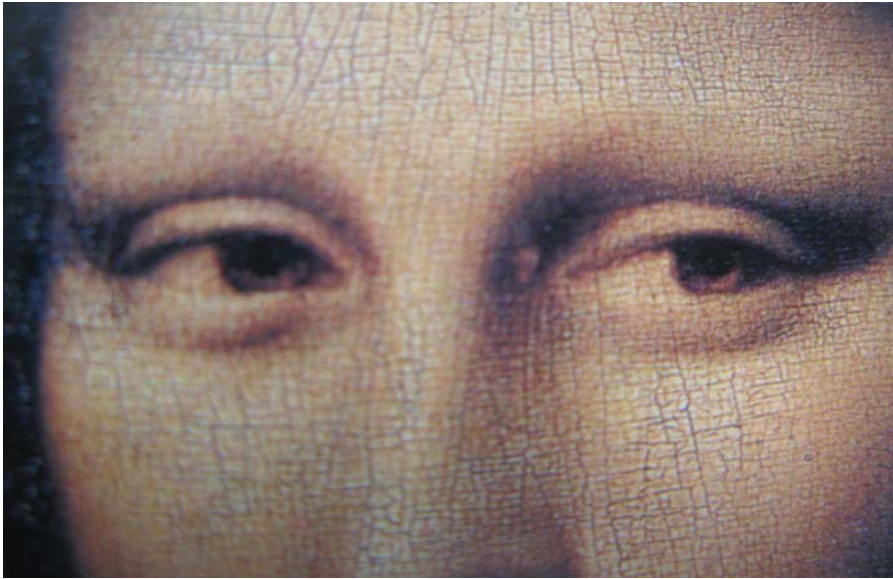
10.4. Detail and the whole

Among the experts the polarity between the details and the whole is mentioned as a central feature to characterize art. Especially Alfred North Whitehead referred to this polarity when he wrote about art and—even more generally—about truth and beauty. I quote two paragraphs from his work "Adventures of Ideas":

> This [that is the relation between detail and the whole] is exactly what we find in great Art. The very details of its compositions live supremely in their own right. They make their own claim to individuality, and yet contribute to the whole. Each such detail receives an access of grandeur from the whole, and yet manifests an individuality claiming attention in its own right.
> As an example, the sculpture and the tracery in a Gothic cathedral—Chartres for instance—subserve the harmony. They lead the eye upward to the vaulting above, and they lead the eye onward horizontally to the supreme symbolism of the altar. They claim attention by their beauty of detail. Yet they shun attention by guiding the eye to grasp the significance of the whole. Yet the sculpture and the tracery could not perform this service apart from their supreme

individuality, evoking a wealth of feeling in their own right. Each detail claims a permanent existence for its own sake, and then surrenders it for the sake of the whole composition.[9]

This concept of an individualized whole and a simultaneously holistic individualization according to Whitehead also can be characterized of dissonant relationships. I quote again a paragraph from "Adventures of Ideas":

> Again, the value of discord arises from this importance of the forceful individuality of the details. This discord enhances the whole, when it serves to substantiate the individuality of the parts. It brings into emphatic feeling their claim to existence in their own right. It rescues the whole from the tameness of merely qualitative harmony.[10]

Gottfried Boehm, a German art historian, emphasizes the polarity of detail and the whole—even if without a further explanation and so mentioned rather in passing—as the fundamental "iconic difference". I quote him:

> The relationship between the illustrated whole and all the details which are included in this whole (the details of color, of form, of figure, and so on) will be in some way optimized by the artist. The rules for this are historically variable, characterized by styles, orders of genre, orders of customers and so on. Pictures—however they may take shape—aren't meeting places of details which can be arranged any way but units of meaning. They unfold the relation between their visible totality and the richness of the represented variety. The historical spectrum of a possible mutual determination of this iconic difference is really rich.[11]

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9   Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (1933). New York/London 1967, p. 282.
10 Ibid., 282f.
11 Boehm, Gottfried, Die Wiederkehr der Bilder, in: Boehm Gottfried (ed.), op.cit., p. 30. (My translation)

In a later publication Gottfried Boehm gives an additional short hint to the iconic difference: "The iconic difference visualizes a rule of the difference, of the visual contrast, wherein at the same time a seeing together is prepared."[12]

According to this remark the material realization of the picture will be seen together with a sensible configuration which in the eyes of the viewer let emerge the "content" of the picture: "We see the one in the other."[13]

11. The many dimensions of externalized information

After this rather fragmentary analysis of the relation between seeing and painting we have to ask again whether and why we can talk of externalized information. Indeed, pictures are something external between the individual actors. The pictures have their own material reality and therefore exist usually as self-contained and just therefore as externalized objects. And they incorporate messages for the viewers that characterize them as information.

And like thinking and speaking also painting and seeing develop different traditions which define a specific cultural perspective. Before the time of globalization we easily could distinguish between different cultures with their own traditions of painting and seeing. And within one cultural tradition we still can distinguish different epochs in which different forms of painting and seeing developed. In this respect we find a general parallelism of thinking and speaking with painting and seeing.

But there are also some structural differences. For speaking is an activity we can control even if this activity develops within—and by the way: not as—the flow of idiomatic units of the used language. Seeing in comparison develops simply by performing it. To this performance, however, belongs that we can look attentively at something or not and that we can look in a certain direction. In both cases we have the possibility to steer our looking. Also, language differentiates between seeing and looking.

As to the possibility of influencing it we find no such difference between speaking and painting. But as to the produced results we find a fundamental difference. For first of all, linguistic oral utterances are ephemeral occurrences: once said in the most cases they are forgotten. Only if we have special forms of

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12 Boehm, Gottfried, Jenseits der Sprache? Anmerkungen zur Logik der Bilder, in: Maar, Christa / Burda, Hubert (eds.), *Iconic Turn. Die neue Macht der Bilder*. Köln 2004, p. 41. (My translation)

13 Op.cit., p. 40. (My translation)

speaking which are institutionalized, formalized or simply stylized—like public announcements, judgments or ritualized performances—, only then we keep at least some phrases or expressed thoughts. But in comparison to all that was articulated what is remembered is even in those cases a tiny, in fact an extremely tiny part. Nevertheless speaking is moving a lot in our mind. And in so far speaking has an effect on the thinking of the listeners. These listeners may remember the content of what was said without remembering what was said word by word. So usually we don't memorize exactly that what we heard.

Looking at a picture in contrast to this hearing of words is looking just at what we see. As I tried to argue in favor of an internal differentiation between more and less noticed parts of a picture this difference—like the difference between figure and background—is an objective difference, namely a difference which is painted as this difference.

Another difference seems to be more important. It is the difference between the "language" of the linguistic field and of the pictorial field (to speak metaphorically): both "languages" have a different semantic and grammatical structure. As to semantics or meaning we find no similarity between words as phonetic units and their meaning. But in painting we find a corresponding similarity—at least if the paintings refer to some object at all. But also when they are abstract paintings they show us what they refer to, namely that what they are. They show themselves. And above all: they don't have to have a conceptual meaning, but as pure pictures and not used as signs for something else they remain in the realm of sensuality. Pictures speak the language of the sensual.

As to the linguistic grammar we have a set of rules which structure the semantic use and which—at least in the standard languages—permeate the whole language, especially the written language, in a comprehensive way. And in addition to that they are not immortal but have a long life.

Against this in painting we find styles which could be comparable with a grammar. But those styles are of a limited extension, for example of personal styles, styles of a period or styles of different schools or trends. Therefore styles don't prescribe their realization as grammatical rules do. They usually don't know mistakes but only deviations which in many cases aren't refused but even admired.

To sum up: In referring to two types of our articulated expression we found the externalization of information to be the fundamental structure of two fields of culture: of thinking and speaking and of painting and seeing. Beyond it there exist other fields of articulated expression and thereby many dimensions of externalized information. Music, mathematics and technology are only three further examples.

12. Operative and organizing symbolic forms

We can label all these forms of externalized information as symbolization. According to Ernst Cassirer we could speak about different symbolic forms which build the multidimensional realm of culture. But unlike—or in addition to—Ernst Cassirer I propose to distinguish at least two types of symbolic forms: symbolic forms which are defined by types of operating the externalization of information and types of socially organizing the externalization of information.

For example, the five mentioned symbolic forms—language, pictures, music, mathematics and technology—are operative symbolic forms. But science, myth, religion, art, law and morality are forms of organizing a community by employing some or even all of the available operative symbolic forms. Both types of symbolic forms are characteristic for a culture, but they are this in different ways: The operative symbolic forms are so to speak the "mechanisms" which constitute the externalization of information. The organizing symbolic forms not only employ the operative symbolic forms but also organize these symbolic forms according to certain ideas or ideals about the internal structure of interaction and communication.

The operative symbolic forms according to a certain stage of development can refer to internal criteria, which can be used to control right or wrong realizations. The organizing symbolic forms by contrast historically develop structures of external authorities which are contingent. Both types of symbolic forms usually are intertwined in a mostly rather indissoluble way. And that is why we never will find a clearly ordered and harmonized symbolic paradise but live in our earthy home. The paradise is a product of pure thinking but our home is the vivid, demanding and inspiring reality we live in. Let's stay in this reality and work on some steps—however small they may be—of its cultivation.

The Rhetoric of Culture.

Hans Blumenberg, Ernst Cassirer and the Legacy of Herder

Jeffrey Andrew Barash

At an early point in his essay "An Anthropological Approach to the Current Status of Rhetoric" ("Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik" [1971]), Hans Blumenberg presented critical remarks concerning Ernst Cassirer's characterization of the human animal as the *animal symbolicum*. He wrote that the theory of the symbol that Cassirer developed in his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* presupposed that human symbolic creations arise from activity that Cassirer took to be self-evident, activity through which the human "essence" (*Wesen*) is brought to expression.[1] And Blumenberg reproved this assumption since, according to him, it failed to reflect on the *biological* prerequisites which underlie the cultural edifice in which the symbolic structuring of reality finds its source.

Blumenberg's reference in this passage to the fundamental status of human biological existence underlying human culture merits reflection. For, in relating the symbolic realm of culture to its biological preconditions, Blumenberg clearly does not fall back upon contemporary cognitive or neuro-physiological theories which extrapolate from scientific discourse to formulate the conception of a human nature at the level of corporeal mechanisms. The critique of Cassirer's presupposition concerning a human "essence" that is brought to the fore by the symbolic activity of cultural production therefore raises the question concerning the precise implications of Blumenberg's critique and the sense of the biological preconditions he is proposing. In pursuing Blumenberg's critique of Cassirer more closely, my aim will be to engage in analysis of his interpretation of the relation of biology to culture that is of central importance for the concept of philosophical anthropology more generally.

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1 Blumenberg, Hans, Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik, in: *Wirklichkeiten in denen wir leben. Aufsätze und eine Rede,* Stuttgart 1981, p. 114. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

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I.

In the essay "Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik" Blumenberg's critique of Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms characterizes this philosophy in terms of a suggestive metaphor: it is qualified as an "anthropology of rich humanity" (*Anthropologie des reichen Menschen*). It is rich, Blumenberg explains, since in taking as self-evident the symbol-forming capabilities with which the human animal is endowed, Cassirer also takes for granted the human capacity for survival. "The enrichment of naked existence", as Blumenberg writes, "stands in no functional relation to its possibility."[2] Against this anthropology of rich humanity Blumenberg opposes an equally suggestive counter metaphor: that of "poor humanity" (*des armen Menschen*) which, in comparison with other creatures of the animal kingdom, is weak in instinctual endowment. Poor humanity is obliged to compensate for its deficiency by means of its own artifices. Whereas at a biological level, instinct assigns to other animals purposeful tasks to insure optimal natural possibilities of survival, the paucity of instinct in the human animal corresponds to a lack of such natural assurance. Or, as Blumenberg suggestively termed it in a later work: "[human] self-preservation is not self-evident".[3] In the perspective of poor humanity, what is missing at the biological level is by no means redeemed in other realms of human existence, for cultural productions outfit humans with no unquestioned, self-evident truths. This is why culture, for poor humanity, requires not only a general capacity for language and symbolic expression but, more specifically, for "rhetoric" through which communication and persuasion can be adapted to situations of profound incertitude, where no clear and naturally given solutions are available. Here the human animal must rely on provisional claims to truth depending on metaphorical modes of expression through which it may adapt itself to the particular historical situation in which it finds itself and toward which its action is addressed.

In the context of Blumenberg's elaboration of the metaphors of "rich" and "poor" conceptions of humanity, he related the anthropology of rich humanity to what he took to be the exemplary representatives of this attitude. At the beginning of "Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik", Blumenberg singled out Plato as the classic expression of this position. Plato's conception of absolute truth transcending the fluctuations of the empirical realm, as Blumenberg

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2   „Die Anreicherung der nackten Existenz steht in keinem Funktionszusammenhang zu ihrer Möglichkeit"; ibid., p. 114.

3   „Unselbstverständlichkeit der Selbsterhaltung"; Blumenberg, Hans, *Beschreibung des Menschen*, Frankfurt am Main 2006, p. 215.

noted, accounts for his great disdain for rhetorical argument and for all conceptions of provisional truth, relative to a given situation, which Plato equated with sophism[4]. As a further expression of the philosophy of "rich humanity", Blumenberg singled out Descartes' modern renewal of metaphysics in his attempt to reestablish its absolute claim on the basis of modern models of mathematics and mechanics. Where scientific proof was lacking, such as in particular situations calling for ethical judgment, Descartes recognized the need for action on the basis of criteria which could not admit of scientific certitude, and he here acknowledged the role of a provisional morals, the famous *morale par provision* he proposed in the *Discours de la méthode*. But a merely provisional morality could not, in its incertitude, be admitted as a permanent feature of human life, and he considered it to be a stage to be maintained until scientific insight might permit the elaboration of a *morale definitive*. If the *morale definitive* intended to render any recourse to rhetorical persuasion superfluous, Blumenberg pointed out that even the preliminary phase of the *morale provisoire* left little room for rhetorical argument and for the kind of situational truth it favored.[5]

In this presentation of the anthropology of "rich humanity", Blumenberg affiliated Cassirer's thought with these philosophical tendencies that posited the possibility of attaining absolute evidence and definitive truth. In his essay "Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik", Blumenberg did not dwell on the connection between Cassirer and these earlier metaphysical thinkers, nor did he explain how the philosophy of rich humanity he identified with the philosophy of symbolic forms might constitute another and more recent expression of their anti-rhetorical quest for certitude beyond the vicissitudes of historical experience. This might at first sight appear to be highly paradoxical. Did Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms not relinquish all metaphysical claims to ultimate truth and, in designating the human animal as an *animal symbolicum*, set this animal resolutely in an ongoing historical process of symbolic self-creation in which no ultimate truth could ever be attained? In spite of Cassirer's apparent failure to take the question of biological survival into account, does Blumenberg's characterization of his anthropology in line with representatives of metaphysical thinking not produce something of a caricature of his position?

These questions are important not only for an elucidation of the respective positions of Cassirer or Blumenberg, but for a clarification of the relation of biology and culture in the framework of a philosophical anthropology toward which Blumenberg aimed. Although no precise response to these questions may be

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4   Ibid., p. 106-107; on Plato's attitude toward rhetoric see for example *The Statesman*, 304d.

5   Blumenberg, Hans, Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik, p. 110.

found in the essay "Anthropologische Annäherung", Blumenberg's address, "In Remembrance of Ernst Cassirer" ("Ernst Cassirers gedenkend"), presented in 1974 on the occasion of his acceptance of the Kuno Fischer prize, provides some important indications concerning Blumenberg's interpretation. In this and other essays and works, Blumenberg brings into question what he takes to be the tacit affiliation of Cassirer's reflection on history with the metaphysical tradition Blumenberg associates with the philosophy of "rich humanity".

In the essay "Ernst Cassirers gedenkend", Blumenberg examined more closely the historical dimension of Cassirer's thought, after acknowledging that Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms represented an original philosophy of historical self-reflection. Nonetheless, the weakness of this philosophy, as Blumenberg interpreted it in this 1974 essay, lay in Cassirer's incapacity to realize the inner tendency that Blumenberg situated at the heart of his thought, in other words the tendency "not to be of service to the self-confirmation of the present" ("der Selbstbestätigung von Gegenwarten nicht dienstbar zu machen").[6] Cassirer's inability to avoid subservience to the needs of the present, as Blumenberg interpreted it, concerned Cassirer's unquestioning acceptance of the presupposition that the movement of the past toward the present, bringing forth the idea of scientific rationality affirmed by the present, is an orientation toward definitive progress. In spite of his idea of an open-ended development of human culture, and his refusal to disqualify as simply irrational archaic, mythical forms of thought, Cassirer proposed a global vision of the mythical process in which all human thought is endowed with seeds of rationality which the mythological process of development brings to expression. Human history constitutes the progressive realization that rationality provides a more coherent vision of reality than myth, which calls for the gradual overcoming of mythical belief. As he succinctly restated his critique of Cassirer in *Arbeit am Mythos*:

> There is a final system of the symbolic forms; in terms of this presupposition, every return of mythical 'categories' is excluded or is considered to be an aesthetic anachronism.[7]

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6   Blumenberg, Hans, Ernst Cassirers gedenkend bei Entgegennahme des Kuno-Fischer-Preises der Universität Heidelberg, in: *Wirklichkeiten in denen wir leben. Aufsätze und eine Rede,* Stuttgart 1981, p. 168.

7   „Es gibt ein letztes System der symbolischen Formen; unter dieser Voraussetzung ist jede Wiederkehr mythischer ‚Kategorien' ausgeschlossen oder als ästhetischer Anachronismus zu betrachten." - Blumenberg, Hans, *Arbeit am Mythos,* Frankfurt am Main 2006, p. 186.

In his later work *Höhlenausgänge*, Blumenberg reiterated this critique of Cassirer and he did so with particular vehemence in passages where he explicitly compared Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms to Platonic metaphysics. Blumenberg presented this critique most forcefully in his remarks on Cassirer's interpretation of the allegory of the cavern in Plato's *Republic*. Blumenberg cited in this context a sentence taken from Cassirer's late work, *An Essay on Man*, published in 1944. In this work Cassirer had written: "Without symbols the life of man would be like that of the prisoners in the cave, according to the famous allegory of Plato." And Blumenberg added: "nothing is less correct (*richtig*)" than this statement of Cassirer.[8] Blumenberg's critique in this passage did, indeed, identify a paradox in Cassirer's analysis. Since for Cassirer we structure the experiential world in relation to symbolic forms, which are necessary preconditions of all experience, it is impossible, as Blumenberg emphasized, to appeal to any form of comprehension *outside* the realm of symbols. Moreover, since in Cassirer's perspective symbols operate only in the immanent sphere of historical becoming, it is equally impossible to set symbolic thinking on a plane comparable to the supersensible realm of the Platonic ideas. And yet, in comparing the realm of symbols with that of truth beyond the cave, this passage would seem to admit a Platonic distinction between the cave's illusory realm and supersensible truth—a distinction that Cassirer's own philosophy hardly authorized. Here Blumenberg manifested a certain suspicion of what appears to be Cassirer's tacit subservience to the fundamental assumptions of Platonic idealism, a subservience that proved so compelling that it at times conflicted with the fundamental tenets of Cassirer's basic insight.

Cassirer's presupposition concerning ultimate truth, if it is never stated in metaphysical terms, nonetheless implicitly oriented his teleological vision of history, in which scientific and ethical rationality come resolutely to the fore in the process of human development. In *Arbeit am Mythos* Blumenberg elaborated a concept of the historicity of myth which could not be reconciled with the teleological vision Cassirer proposed. And in this perspective, the anthropology of poor humanity, resting on the conviction that no final evidence is possible for finite human beings, placed in question not only the absolute claims of the metaphysics of Plato or of Descartes, but also the rationalist epistemology which guided Cassirer's reflection on history.

Here we reach the essential point: if in the text "Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik", Blumenberg criticized Cassirer's tendency to take the symbol-creating capacity of the human animal for granted, this was because in failing to account for the biological capacity of humans, he also overlooked a

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8   Blumenberg, Hans, *Höhlenausgänge*, p. 167.

possible source of symbolic forms that was hardly compatible with the teleological perspective of a rationalist epistemology of history that Cassirer presupposed. In referring to Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms as an "anthropology of rich humanity", Blumenberg sought to place this biological source in a singular light: not for the failure of Cassirer's philosophy in regard to any particular biological processes or to given biological theories, but rather for its incapacity to appreciate the way in which this biological source of human culture calls for a more radical perspective on the *historicity* of human existence than that which Cassirer's rationalist teleology of history was able to furnish. Placed in the perspective of an "anthropology of poor humanity", the need for constant acts of compensation due to the absence of a fixed instinctual human nature come to expression in rhetoric and the metaphors through which it is oriented, adapting the human animal to the provisional forms of truth called to the fore by the constantly changing, contingent and unpredictable situations in which it is placed. What the biological basis undergirding human culture requires is thus a more radical theory of human historicity which Blumenberg's "anthropology of poor humanity" seeks to provide.

II.

In "Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik" Blumenberg related the anthropology of "poor humanity" to the position of the Sophists, whom Plato had accused of skepticism. Indeed, in relying on rhetorical argument tailored to the need to persuade in specific circumstances, they had renounced the quest for absolute truth. Later expressions of this outlook of the Sophists embraced what Blumenberg described as an anthropological radicalization of their initial standpoint. This later position, far from considering humans to be richly endowed beings, spontaneously outfitted with language and other symbol-creating faculties capable of providing an all-encompassing grasp of reality, were *Mängelwesen*: beings characterized by their fundamental weakness or lack. If in the space of this short essay, Blumenberg did not identify the precise source of this notion of the human *Mängelwesen*, later writings, such as *Beschreibung des Menschen*, returned to this theme and traced its origin to the thought of Johann Gottfried Herder.[9] The *biological* reference of this concept of the *Mängelwesen*, which served as the model of Blumenberg's concept of poor humanity came to light in Herder's early writings, above all in his *Preisschrift*, written in 1772, *Treatise on the Origin of*

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9   Blumenberg, Hans, *Beschreibung des Menschen*, p. 218.

Language (*Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache).* Here the instinctual poverty of humans in comparison to other animals is the essential quality that Herder identified as the source of language: "So outcast and abandoned", are humans at the outset, "that they are not endowed with a language through which to express their lack".[10] And the human animal must bring forth language out of its own capacities in order to compensate for the natural weakness of its instinctual endowment.

If Blumenberg did not explicitly contrast Herder's position to that of Plato, it is perfectly consonant with his interpretation that Herder's theory of the origin of language took Plato and the metaphysical tradition he inaugurated as its target. In *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* Herder rejected the vision of humanity that Plato had evoked in the allegory of the cave in book seven of the *Republic,* a humanity trapped in the shadows cast by the feeble light of the sensuous world: "blind with open eyes and crippled with healthy limbs", according to Herder's paraphrase of this celebrated Platonic depiction of human experience in the sensuous realm.[11] Against this metaphysical depiction of the shadowy forms of the sensuous world which Plato contrasted with the light of reason, Herder opposed a radically different view of sensuous and rational faculties, which he considered to form an interwoven whole. Here was Herder's epoch-making conception of an interrelated totality of human capacities—characterized as *Besonnenheit* ("thoughtfulness" or "circumspection")—through which the ability to speak arises. Reason, far from revealing truth in abstraction from sensuous being, "expresses itself" (*äussert sich*), as Herder wrote, "through its sensuousness".[12] Language integrates the fluctuating, manifold and perspectival aspect—the "point of view" ("Sehepunkt")[13] —of the sensuous world at the heart of the rational capacities it brings to expression.

Although he did not enter into a description of Herder's frontal attack on the Platonic tradition, Blumenberg in his work *The Legibility of the World* (*Die Lesbarkeit der Welt* [(1986]), reflected on the theoretical standpoint through which Herder brought that tradition into question: the assumption concerning the fundamentally perspectival character of human thought which language expresses. In this work, Blumenberg emphasized Herder's contribution to this theory through his transformation of an earlier idea of the perspectival character of human

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10 „So verwaiset und verlassen … dass es selbst nicht mit einer Sprache begabt ist, seine Mängel zu äußern". - Herder, Johann Gottfried, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache,* Stuttgart 1966, p. 24.

11 „mit offenen Augen blind und mit gesunden Gliedern ungelenk", Ibid, p. 82.

12 „äussert sich unter seiner Sinnlichkeit", Ibid., p. 30.

13 Ibid, p. 31.

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understanding formulated in Leibniz's rationalist metaphysics, which bore a marked affinity with the Platonic tradition. If Leibniz believed, indeed, that human understanding was always tied to a singular perspective, his idea was nonetheless grounded in the metaphysical conviction that an infinite singularity of perspectives could be harmonized in the vision of a rationally intelligible totality. Herder's theory of language led him to the conviction that the sensuous roots with which reason is interwoven binds human understanding to the irreducible singularity of perspective expressed in the point of view, the *Sehepunkt* of a people and of an epoch in which this perspective arises. His idea of historical singularity undermined the assumption that any one people or epoch might rise so completely beyond the historical perspective in which it is rooted that it might attain definitive truth or a final vision of history as a whole. On this basis, Herder questioned not only the metaphysical claims of reason in the sense of Plato or, as Blumenberg noted, in the more modern expression of Leibniz, but the *historical* supremacy of any form of rational criteria which ascribe to a given *present* the capacity to speak in the name of "reason" itself, a reason that forgets its origins in the sensuous manifold of a singular perspective that language articulates. Here, as Blumenberg clearly saw in *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt*, lay Herder's contempt for all forms of *Gelehrtensprache* which assumed that the criteria of logical clarity and distinction were the ultimate signs of truth. Against this presupposition Herder sought to reappraise the truth value of metaphor and of rhetoric: "It seems to me," as he wrote against the proponents of a unique scholarly language in his early work *Fragments: On more Recent German Literature* (*Fragmente: Über die neuere deutsche Literatur*): "that we may let it talk itself away, since it is nothing more than a scholarly language: no poetic, oratorical, or beautiful language".[14] Here too lies the source of Herder's implacable hostility to the uniform ideals of rationality based on contemporary Enlightenment conceptions of reason and incarnated in Diderot's *Encyclopedia*. "Herder considered the *Encyclopedia*", as Blumenberg wrote,

> to be the greatest mistake: the illusion that the results of reason might be fortified to put the seal on their definitive character.[15]

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14 „Mich dünkt … wir können ihn wegsprechen lassen; denn sie soll ja nichts als gelehrte Sprache sein: keine Poetische, Oratorische oder schöne [Sprache]"; - Herder, Johann Gottfried, Über die Bildung einer Sprache, in: *Über die neuere deutsche Literatur. Fragmente*, I, 11, *Werke*, vol. 1, München 1984, p. 187.

15 „Herder sah in der Enzyklopädie den grossen Irrtum: die Verführung, das Resultat der Vernunft festzumachen, um ihre Endgültigkeit zu besiegeln"; - Blumenberg, Hans, *Die Lesbarkeit der Welt,* Frankfurt am Main 1986, p. 177.

In accepting the claim that the Enlightenment had bequeathed concerning the progressive movement of rationality in history, Cassirer's thought, from this perspective, brought this problematic assumption to belated expression.

As interpreted by Hans Blumenberg, the critique of all forms of rationality that claimed to establish an all-encompassing validity on the basis of a *present* theoretical conception of reality calls for a subtle reevaluation of the notion of scientific truth, and above all of biological preconditions underlying cultural productions. It clearly questions any narrow definition which would establish a theory of biological truth on the basis of theoretical criteria drawn from any given present and from any all-encompassing presuppositions concerning the nature of the human organism, even where they are drawn from the latest results of the neurosciences or of genetics. Like all rationally developing theory, biology itself must be drawn from an historically changing perspective which is incapable of producing ultimate responses to the question concerning who human beings might be.

In his critique of the presuppositions of an anthropology of "rich humanity", Blumenberg was very much aware that the anthropology of "poor humanity" had been supported above all in the works of 20th century critics of the Enlightenment's legacy. Herder's notion of the instinctual poverty of the human *Mängelwesen*, as Blumenberg noted in the essay "Anthropologische Annäherung an die Aktualität der Rhetorik", had found one of its principal expressions in the philosophical anthropology of Arnold Gehlen who, in his work, *Der Mensch* (1940), had explicitly borrowed this concept from Herder. It was Gehlen above all who examined in depth the presupposition that human existence in its unpredictable contingency is by no means assured. And in this, according to Blumenberg, he transformed the central theme of anthropology itself: "It can and must still be asked, how it might be that humanity exists at all".[16] According to Gehlen's well-known theory, this instinctual poverty and lack of natural forms of organization require compensation which is achieved through a complex series of mediations leading to institutional organization of human activity. As suggestive as this contribution might be, Blumenberg questioned Gehlen's emphasis on the sovereign status of inherited institutions, what he termed Gehlen's "institutional absolutism" ("Absolutismus der Institutionen").[17] Gehlen justified institutional formations, not through rationalizable norms, but in virtue of the "conditions of naked self-conservation" ("der Bedingungen der nackten Selbsterhaltung").[18] Here,

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16 „… es könne und müsse allein noch gefragt werden, wie der Mensch überhaupt zu existieren vermag"; Blumenberg, Hans, *Beschreibung des Menschen*, p. 217.

17 Blumenberg, Hans, Anthropologische Annäherung, p. 115.

18 Blumenberg, Hans, *Höhlenausgänge*, p. 812.

as Blumenberg stated in his work *Höhlenausgänge*, was the ultimate anti-Platonic stance, barring any way out of the Platonic cavern and any possibility of attaining evidence beyond the pure facticity of human survival itself.

As he questioned what he took to be Cassirer's too-ready acknowledgement of the progressive historical movement of rationalization, so Gehlen's reification of the institutional dimension of human development, even to the point of resisting rational critique, seemed to be inadequate. Each of them, for the opposite reasons, was incapable of doing justice to the open-endedness of the human situation.[19] As a "Mängelwesen", in accord with the poor anthropological conception of humanity, human vision is profoundly limited to the situation in which it finds itself, but this situation, in its constant movement, calls forth developments which are unforeseeable. The novelty of each situation calls for a renewal of rhetoric and metaphor, and this is precisely because the human essence, and the human perspective in which it is interpreted, is continually being remade.

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19 On Gehlen's anthropology, Blumenberg thus writes: „Allerdings gibt es [...] bei Gehlen für die Errungenschaften der Evolution als Leistungen eine Anfälligkeit durch Kontingenz: ihre rationale Kritikbelastbarkeit hat Grenzen, und an diesen wird das reduzierte Mängelwesen sich selbst wieder zu dem Problem, das es einmal gewesen war." - Blumenberg, Hans, *Beschreibung des Menschen*, p. 217.

Individual Essences: Names and Persons

Paul Cortois

Wittgenstein famously asked what it could mean to say, about a person, that I saw her or him as a soul. Is that any different from seeing her or him just as a person? To see a human individual as a person already seems to bring along a lot of radical interpretive consequences. Such consequences concern ascriptions of properties, to be sure, but, at least as much, specific ways of treating the being in question and entertaining specific attitudes towards him or her. Now, whatever it could mean that a human individual is seen or ought to be seen as the bearer of a *soul*, it seems possible (*pace* Hume) to interpret that view in the same sense, though in a 'different language', as in the phrase that this individual is a *person*. We cannot very well explain what the former phrase would mean, or supply as a surplus meaning, but many of us do have the feeling that it expresses a significant, be it metaphorical, truth. The closest one may come to a less metaphorical explanation would be in terms of 'possessing an essence', or so I presume.

A related question classically adds to this the conceptual complications of identity: if things have, in general, some kind of individual identity, what is added to the consideration of individual human beings as persons by attributing to them identity, so as to make their *identity* a matter of *personal* identity, and their *personhood* a matter of personal *identity*? I will not here try to address the puzzles of personal identity, to be sure, but my topic will touch upon at least one aspect of that puzzling question (or cluster of questions). I just want to ask, whether the ascription of personhood, 'soul-likeness', and perhaps even personal identity, could have anything in particular to do with the *name* the supposed bearer of it bears. In this contribution I will suggest an affirmative answer to the latter question. I will sketch what I think is a substantive relation between proper names and persons. This relation may be developed in a number of ways, two of which will be privileged here: a more or less Cassirean[1] and a more or less Kripkean view of proper names, including also a way to see the link between these at first sight completely diverging theories. For this purpose I will build on remarks made by

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1   Especially as developed in Cassirer, Ernst, *Sprache und Mythos. Ein Beitrag zum Problem der Götternamen,* Berlin / Leipzig, 1925 (*Language and Myth,* transl. by Susanne Langer, New York 1946).

Peter Geach and Arnold Burms[2] concerning the connection between proper names, thus conceived, and what could roughly be termed magical symbols (such as relics). Moreover, closing the conceptual circle of issues and notions discussed, I will suggest that this substantive relation between persons, names and symbols can best be viewed in terms, indeed, of *essences*—of 'individual essences'. And if this turns out to be the case, it may be that a view of persons in terms of individual essences may in turn be closely connected to whatever it is that is expressed in the language of souls and soul-likeness. In subsequent papers, I will attempt to show that this analysis not only applies to persons but to all individuals that possess a proper name, such as places, cities, artworks and the like,[3] as well as to *their* 'souls'.

How does this relate to a philosophy of culture? One: the very approach stressing the impact of the naming practice on our view on persons already betrays a special type of 'culturalist' approach. Two: the sequels on places, artworks and cities will show more clearly the relevance of this approach for a philosophy of culture, given the special status of their objects. Three: talk of individual essences, just as any essence-talk, is not about *real* essences. In my view, the latter do not exist. It is about symbolic matters, which elsewhere I introduce, in a more general sense, as *symbolic* essences. Here, I will not argue explicitly either for the negative claim or for the affirmative proposition just mentioned. Implicitly, the symbolic status of what I do call individual essences here will be somewhat clarified already, I hope, once you see the point to which the main examples as well as my main authors, Cassirer and Burms, converge.

1. Cassirer on name magic and meaning in myth

> … in the higher reaches of mythology, the Faustian word seemed ever to hold good: here it was always assumed that the essence of each mythical figure could be directly [read off] from its name. The notion that name and essence bear a necessary and internal relation to each other, that the name does not merely denote but actually is the essence of its object, that the

2   Geach, P., The Perils of Pauline, in: *Review of Metaphysics* 23 (1969), pp. 287-300. Burms, A.; Proper Names and Magical Symbols, in, *Leuvense Bijdragen* 67 (1978), pp. 309-317.
3   For an application to cities see my "Cities as individual essences: Lisbon's Pessoas" (forthcoming).

> potency of the real thing [essence] is contained in the name—that is one of the fundamental assumptions of the mythmaking consciousness itself.[4]

In these lines, taken from the first pages of Sprache und Mythos, Ernst Cassirer starts to develop his views on meaning in myth, and on the close connection between the latter and the way proper names function in myth (as they still largely do in daily life today). This register of insights will lead him, and us, to the guiding motif of name magic in the sense that our ordinary practices of naming still share a lot of the symbolic and ritualistic character that initiated the corresponding mythical practices in the first place.

What, to start, are characteristic traits of Cassirer's views on mythical meaning, especially in so far as naming practices are concerned? In fact, the mythical framework is the context of origin of naming, while it is also "the common matrix"[5] of meaning. 'Meaning', however, should be understood in a liberal way. There are important reasons, in fact, to withhold this notion from what is going on in myth, and these will soon become clear. However, I will use a broadened sense of 'meaning' to include what Cassirer more often calls 'significance' (*Bedeutsamkeit*) in myth, since it is decisive that what is going on in the mythical framework is strongly connected to what is called 'meaning' in a strict sense.[6] The practice of naming, then, is a 'first' practice of speech, and all this arose in the connection of mythical consciousness. I will not here attempt to summarize Cassirer's rather elaborate view on the origin of language, myth, and naming, but focus on a few central traits. According to the elaborate view, generally speaking, myth (in the guise of special intensifications of experience) and language (in the guise of names for these intensifications) arose together, calling forth each other in a primary breakthrough of consciousness in front of these intense experiences.

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4   "… im Bereich der höheren Mythologie schien immer wieder das Faustische Wort sich zu bewähren: Hier glaubte man das *Wesen* jeder einzelnen mythischen Gestalt unmittelbar aus ihren *Namen* ablesen zu können. Daß Name und Wesen in einem innerlich notwendigem Verhältnis zueinander stehen, daß der Name das Wesen nicht nur bezeichnet, sondern daß er das Wesen selbst ist und daß die Kraft des Wesens in ihm beschlossen liegt: dies gehört zu den Grundvoraussetzungen der mythischen Anschauung selbst." The translation is Susanne Langer's, slightly altered (see the expressions in square brackets) in order to render Cassirer's original expression and intention more closely. See Cassirer, Ernst, *Sprache und Mythos, o.c.*, p. 229, and Langer's translation, *o.c.*, p. 3.

5   Cassirer, Ernst, *Language and Myth*, p.44 = "der gemeinsame Mutterboden", *Sprache und Mythos*, p. 266.

6   The tendency in Cassirer is to confine 'meaning' to the '*reine Bedeutungsfunktion*' of thought (manifesting itself in science and philosophy), which in turn has the epistemic and semantic distance of the *Darstellungsfunktion* (in ordinary language) as a presupposition.

One central characteristic of meaning in myth and mythic language highlighted by Cassirer and further dealt with by Susanne Langer, has to do with what I would call *conflation meaning* (a notion, by the way, that does not occur in either Cassirer's or Langer's work). As I see it, the originality of a Cassirean conception of myth has to do with this characterization. What I mean is that in the mythical mode of producing meanings, including linguistic meaning and proper names, a conflation occurs between the two kinds of aspects that in any post-mythical framework have to be strictly distinguished when considering whichever kind of semantic phenomena. These couples of aspects may be and have been designated by several dually opposite notions: alternatively, the meaning term and the meant, the naming term and the named, the concept and the conceived, the signifier and the signified, the image and the thing (*Sache*, the 'sake') imaged or conceived. Although the dual couples differ among each other in several respects, they also seem to possess a recurrent common core: meaning requires a distance that would allow for a relation of (call it) representation or even presentation (*Darstellung*) to arise.

My point, however, is that, according to Cassirer, the transgression of this principle, by means of a conflation of the poles involved, is key to understanding myth as already a way of meaning, fundamentally different as it may be from our common ways of meaning (based on *Darstellung* and distance). Conflation expresses the core of the mythical way of seeing, inchoative naming, and perhaps already originary classifying of the world and its remarkable phenomena: they are all based upon this basic pattern of conflating the meaning pole and its correlate or pole of 'content'. The meaning is the meant, the naming is the named, etc. Such a conflation or fusion runs counter to any ordinary conception of meaning. The latter is especially clear when taking a discursive model of meaning as paradigmatic. And indeed, as soon as the meaning (word, name, signifier, sign, concept, term… and the meant (thing, denotatum, signified, object … are confused or fused, discursive meaning seems to be drowned in paradox. For example, in natural languages as they developed, the word 'bird' has nothing semantically birdlike about it. Or take the well known paradoxes of the use/mention type, that can also be considered as instances of mixing up the word as a material datum with its ideal meaning: "Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands;" "Amsterdam consists of nine characters;" "The capital of the Netherlands consists of nine characters". Conflations of signifying and signified leading to paradox or unintelligibility are not confined to linguistic meaning, however. Suppose I lend you a 50 € bill, and when you bring it back I would take a close look at it, and refuse it, saying: "I already suspected you were going to cheat on me; this is not the same note as the one I lent you". Would you not rightly declare me mentally disturbed? So it might look as if nothing but confusion could arise from conflation. If you confuse the material

object with its meaning, you don't even understand that there may be such a thing as an identical meaning shared by two words or numerically or otherwise distinct objects.

Nevertheless within the Cassirer-Langer view on myth, conflation is an original and characteristic way of meaning-as-significance. Rather than exemplifying this claim extensively or presenting it through summaries of abstract arguments or of the genesis narrative of these phenomena as they see it, I confine myself here to an everyday example that would be representative for such a view. Suppose we were not talking about money or other symbolic phenomena the meaning of which relies on substitution or equivalence, but, say, about a watch of mine, a watch—but not any old watch; or a photograph I possess—but not just any old photograph. Suppose my father gave me his very old watch as an heirloom, and I lost it, would I not be the disturbed one if I told myself "this is no problem at all; I am going to find me a completely identical-looking watch". In this case, the supposition that an object with an identical meaning could exist is the aberration. So it is essential in such contexts that the meaning is determined by the very object (sometimes a word) in its material identity. Such an example, although taken from the life-world *we* live in, could have been taken from any cultural period. It is clear that we are talking about phenomena and situations that appear (and so, *are*) full of meaning, and that no confusion or inconsistency or unintelligibility is looming large in most situations of this kind, at least not as long as we interpret them within the bounds of a mythical framework. Now if these situations are meaningful, how do they relate to our usual conception of meaning?

Let us start from the separation between the meaning item and the meant reality that seems presupposed in ordinary meaning. What is defining for mythic conflation, then, is the absence of that distance:

> exactly this *separation* of the ideal from the real, the gap between a world of immediate being and a world of mediate meaning, this opposition between 'image' and 'thing' is alien [to myth] … The 'image' does not present the 'thing' – it *is* the thing; it does not just represent it, it works as the thing, in such a way that it comes in place of it in its immediate presence.[7]

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7   My translation. Cassirer, Ernst, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*. 2. Teil. *Das mythische Denken*. Darmstadt 1977, p. 51: "…gerade diese *Trennung* des Ideellen vom Reellen, diese Scheidung zwischen einer Welt des unmittelbaren Seins und einer Welt der mittelbaren Bedeutung, dieser Gegensatz von 'Bild' und 'Sache', [ist dem Mythos] fremd … Das 'Bild' stellt die 'Sache' nicht

The reference to *images* (of things) juxtaposed to the reference to *words* (about things) in the passage is due to the view that word and image, language and myth arise as co-origins of symbolic consciousness. Both words and images are expected, from a 'later' point of view, to be correlates of realities (verbalized or imaged). In both cases, myth conflates them with these realities, so as to make them coincide with the latter. They are not really 'about' phenomena or realities, they are identical with them.

Let us now go deeper into the question what would be the 'logic' of such conflation processes. In *Sprache und Mythos*, Cassirer develops this view on the co-origination of myth and language by taking his point of departure in a genesis narrative (itself a myth, some would say today) about the origins of religion: Hermann Usener's notion[8] of *Augenblicksgötter*.[9] 'First' divinities would have originated as flash-like awakenings of consciousness at being confronted with instantaneously overwhelming or astounding phenomena. The important thing is that they arise as realities the moment they are given *names* through the exclamations immediately accompanying these flashes of consciousness: and in view of the conflation theory, they *coincide* with these names. After that genetic story, the more decisive question in the sequel of the book is asked structurally: what is going on here, and how to understand what makes the process possible? This is answered in terms of the theory of the *radical metaphor* or 'root metaphor'—a term that is in turn borrowed from another major thinker on myth from the generation preceding Cassirer's own: Max Müller[10]. Cassirer deepens Müller's view of *die radikale Metaphor*, conceiving it as the basic process making possible all subsequent individual and localized metaphors in special as well as in everyday languages. This Cassirer does by elaborating on two types of processes which might strike us as corresponding to the axes, respectively of metaphor (in a more technical) sense and of metonymy.[11] It seems that these processes, and their

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dar – es *ist* die Sache; es vertritt sie nicht nur, sondern es wirkt gleich ihr, so daß es sie in ihre unmittelbaren Gegenwart ersetzt."

8   In his *Götternamen. Versuch einer Lehre von der religiösen Begriffsbildung*, 1896.

9   A notion, in fact, that has found its way (not, to be sure, without undergoing shifts of meaning) to the English speaking world of popular culture as 'momentary gods'.

10 Whereas the notion of *conflation* was devised (by me) to distinguish Cassirer's view from, as well as express Cassirer's critique on, Müller's theory of myth as based on a *confusion* between two names or etymologies (the so-called language-disease view on myth): see Cassirer, Ernst, *Sprache und Mythos*, p. 229-34 = *Language and Myth*, p. 3-9.

11 These processes might also be put in the framework of the double aspect view of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes in Jakobson's later theory ("The Double Aspect of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances" 1956). The story of how Cassirer and Jakobson met and extensively discussed the foundations of linguistics together is well known. (Both were also

combined workings, jointly (and implicitly) define what he considers to be the fundamental metaphorization process that may be seen in a single breath as the root of both language and myth in their very first *Formgebungen*. Metaphor in this sense is not some kind of transfer within the vocabulary of already constituted language; it is the birth of the first verbalized responses to what in the stream of experience struck human beings as so special as to be called (by a later interpretation) 'sacred' or 'godlike'.

The processes Cassirer defines are on the one hand intensification, on the other *pars pro toto*. Intensification (*Intensivierung, Verdichtung*) is condensation into one focal point of a total situation experienced as striking. This is the only centre of attention, or, in Cassirer's own metaphorical way of putting it: the only point that radiates as a source of intense light in a sea of surrounding darkness. This is intuitively what will result in naming the godlike moment or place. This process is clarified by Cassirer via a contrastive comparison with the ordinary logic of discursive thought:

> if we contrast [the] form of logical conception by species and genera with the primitive form of mythic and linguistic conception, we find immediately that the two represent entirely different *tendencies* of thought. Whereas in the former a concentric expansion over ever-widening spheres of perception and conception takes place, we find exactly the opposite movement of thought giving rise to mythic ideation. The mental view is not widened,[12] but compressed; it is, so to speak, distilled into a single point. Only by this process of distillation is the particular essence found and extracted which is to bear the special accent of 'significance'. All light is concentrated in one focal point of 'meaning', while everything that lies outside these focal points of verbal or mythic conception remains practically invisible. It remains 'unremarked' because, and in so far as, it remains unsupplied with any linguistic or mythic 'marker'.[13]

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deeply interested in speech pathologies such as aphasia, as is clear both from *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* vol. 3 and from Jakobson's 1956 article.)

12 *I.e.*, as it is the case in the ever-growing expansion of the sphere of concepts, where the differentiations of the subsumed within the whole are not annihilated, but stressed.

13 Cassirer, Ernst, *Language and Myth*, p. 90-91 = *Sprache und Mythos*, p. 304-5. "Stellen wir [der] Form der logischen Art- und Gattungsbegriffe die Urform der mythischen Begriffe gegenüber, so zeigt sich alsbald, daß beide ganz verschiedenen *Tendenzen* des Denkens angehören. Wenn in dem einen Falle eine konzentrische Ausdehnung über immer weitere Anschauungs- und Begriffskreise stattfindet, so entstehen die Sprachbegriffe und die mythischen Begriffe ursprünglich in der entgegengesetzten Bewegung des Geistes. Die Anschauung wird nicht erweitert, sondern sie

It seems natural to associate this intensification promoting "certain contents of perception [as] verbal-mythical centers of force, centers of significance"[14] with what we consider as the condensation (*Verdichtung*) of meanings effectuated in metaphor in a more ordinary sense: a metaphor considered as an item taken from a 'column' or vertically given list of possible substitutions for one given verbalization of an experiential content.

On the other hand, it is standard to consider the complementary 'horizontal' axis of shifting meanings generally called metonymy, after de Saussure. Cassirer doesn't mention either this axis or any specific linguistic theory separately (be it de Saussure, or the very notion of metonymy or *Verschiebung*). What he does say, however, reminds a later reader of that axis or process of metonymy: and he points out what, precisely in this process, seems to him key to understanding the kernel of mythic meaning. What he takes to be that kernel, then, is the tendency to take the part for the whole and to see the whole *condensed*, indeed, *in the part*. So, while focusing now on part–and–whole conflation, Cassirer considers what linguists tend to see as the second axis, as somehow the foundation of the first. Rather than juxtaposing two dimensions of mythic 'meaning', his analysis follows the archeological logic of digging deeper and deeper, so that the 'last layer'—the one we would tend to see as a 'generalized metonymy', as it were, becomes the basis of the condensation that we consider typical for metaphor and, thus, the basis of metaphor itself.

> Every part of a whole is the whole itself; every specimen is *equivalent* to the entire species. The part does not merely represent the whole, or the specimen its class; they are identical with the totality to which they belong [sie *sind* beides]: not merely as mediating aids to reflective thought, but as genuine presences which actually contain the power, significance and efficacy of the whole. Here one is reminded forcefully of the principle which might be called the basic principle of verbal as well as mythical

wird zusammengedrängt; sie wird gewissermaßen auf einen einzigen Punkt zusammengezogen. In dieser Zusammendrängung wird erst dasjenige Moment gefunden und herausgehoben, auf das der Akzent der 'Bedeutung' gelegt wird. Alles Licht ist daher hier wie in einem Punkt, dem Brennpunkt der 'Bedeutung', versammelt, während all dasjenige, was ausserhalb dieser Brennpunkte der sprachlichen und mythischen Auffassung liegt, so gut wie unsichtbar bleibt. Es bleibt 'unbemerkt', weil und sofern es mit keinem sprachlichen oder mythischen 'Merkzeichen' versehen ist."

14 *Ibid.* p.91 = p. 305: "… [während] einzelne Anschauungsinhalte zu sprachlich-mythischen Kraftzentren, zu Mittelpunkten der 'Bedeutsamkeit' [werden]".

'metaphor'—the principle of *pars pro toto* … What significance the part in question may have in the structure and coherence of the whole, what function it fulfills, is relatively unimportant—the mere fact that it is or has been a part, that it has been connected to the whole, no matter how casually, is enough to lend it the full significance and power of that greater unity.[15]

Applying this 'mystic relationship'—indeed, we are close to the late Lévy-Bruhl of the *Carnets* with world-views governed by affective participation—to the question of naming, Cassirer notes: "If, under the totemistic conception of the world, a group or clan is organized by totems, and if its individual members take their names from the totem animal or plant, this is … a matter of genuine community of essence".[16] That the 'logic of participation' implied here is really another expression of the idea of conflation can be seen, for instance, in the following way. When it is said, in the 'normal' case, that the symbolic sign signifies its signified, what seems to be minimally implied is that there is a clear distinction between sign and signified object (and that the object intended by the symbolic sign is reached via the connotation or connotations carried by the sign, and so on). Moreover, the sign must be seen as *intending* the signified. Now, what if someone would give in to the temptation to phrase the latter as 'the sign must be seen as *belonging to* the signified'? You would certainly ask: what is such a dangerously ambiguous formula supposed to tell us? If it means that sign and signified are correlated, that would seem innocuous enough, but it would add nothing. (Perhaps, it would somehow suggest that in certain contexts, they are related in a more natural than conventional way, and that might often seem to be the case for myth and ritual.) On the other hand, the formula might also mean that, literally, the sign is *part of* the signified; and

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15 *Ibid.*, p. 92 = p. 305-6. "Jeder Teil eines Ganzen erscheint dem Ganzen selbst, jedes Exemplar einer Art oder Gattung erscheint der Gattung als solcher *äquivalent*. Der Teil räpresentiert nicht etwa nur das Ganze, das Individuum oder die Art vertritt nicht nur die Gattung, sondern sie *sind* beides; sie stellen beides nicht nur für die mittelbare Reflexion dar, sondern sie fassen unmittelbar die Kraft des Ganzen, seine Bedeutung und Wirksamkeit in sich. Hier läßt sich vor allem an jenes Prinzip erinnern, das man als das eigentliche Grundprinzip der sprachlichen sowohl wie der mythischen 'Metapher' bezeichnen kann: an das Prinzip das man gewöhnlich als den Grundsatz des 'Pars pro toto' ausspricht. … Welche Bedeutung dieser Teil für den Aufbau und den *Zusammenhang* des Ganzen besitzt, welche *Funktion* er innerhalb desselben erfüllt, ist hierbei relativ gleichgültig – es genügt, daß er ihm überhaupt angehört oder angehört hat, daß er in einer noch so lockeren Verbindung mit ihm gestanden hat, um ihm die volle magische Kraft und Bedeutsamkeit zu sichern."

16 *Ibid.*, p.93 = p.306. "Wenn, z.B. im totemistischen Weltbild eine Gruppe oder ein Clan sich totemistisch gliedert und wenn die einzelnen Individuen sich nach ihren Totemtieren oder Totempflanzen *benennen*, so handelt es sich hierbei stets … um eine reale Wesensgemeinschaft."

that, if anything, would be odd. It would mean that a symbol, like a name or an image, is really a part, a piece or parcel of what it is supposed to be 'about'. But in that case, how could it signify its object, a relation that seems to require a distance—the distance required for a representation—or even for a presentation? And if it could signify it, how could this be anything else than an error or a confusion?[17] Well, the answer in terms of Cassirean views about meaning *stricto sensu* versus conflates meaning could be expressed by means of the contrast between contexts where thought revolves around a discursive conceptual content, and contexts that do pertain to language but are somehow devoid of conceptual content. As we saw, the logic of conceptual contents obeys to the principles of generalization and correlative differentiation: the more a certain restricted content is placed within an enlarged framework via the empirical discovery and conceptual construction of a set of descriptive properties, the more clearly also its specificity will be revealed (rather than being submerged). In the opposite case, only the singular focal point is laden with an utmost tension, and since it is everything, by a reversal it becomes the 'essence' or identity of the whole—identical to the whole. The paradigm case of a speech act where the conceptual content is thus reduced, even as it occurs in discursively developed cultures, is the practice of naming; here the magical symbol or the remnants thereof take over from the conceptual. Although Cassirer is not explicitly developing a standpoint with respect to the classical theory of proper names and reference, I think his writings contain the resources to see which way he would go in that respect.

In fact, strictly speaking, in Cassirer the mythical framework antedates the rise of a worldview containing essences, in so far as the latter presuppose concepts and objects. Nevertheless, the mythical context in general would allow us to speak, in a loose parlance, of quasi-essences corresponding to names in something like the following way. Articulating Usener's story—via the hypostases of experiences into correlatively arising gods and god-names, emerging from the stream of consciousness, something like substantial beings, fixated through names, are born. They get substantialized, for example, in a second phase after the stage of the *Augenblicksgötter*—the *Sondergötter* or functional or special gods[18] each of them hypostatizing a specified function of great practical importance (such as fertility). (This was seen as a stage preceding their personalization.) One could say, in

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17   Here I will take just the case of proper naming as representing all other sign-signified relations.

18   As they are especially well documented in the *indigitamenta* of the Romans.

general, that the proper name of a god, or a person, or a (special) place, renders the god, person or place present: it contains the 'essence' as a *presentia realis*.[19]

> In the most salient way the incapacity of mythical thinking to get a grip on something merely semantic, something purely ideal and of the register of meaning is expressed in the position it gives to language. Myth and language are constantly involved in a mutual interplay and brushing. Their contents sustain and condition each other. Next to image magic there is word magic and name magic, and this is an integral and constitutive part of the mythical worldview. However, the decisive presupposition, here again, is that words and names don't possess a mere function of representation, but that in both of them the very object and its real powers are contained. It is also true for the word and the name that they don't mean – they are, and they are at work.[20]

That they "don't *mean*", has the meaning that they don't (re)present, that they don't mean conceptually—that they are conceptually empty, and so, I conclude, if there is an essence (or identity) that they are, or evoke, that must be an *empty essence* (or identity). There is, strictly speaking, no connotation for the proper name, in this view, as there would have to be in a classical theory of the reference of proper names being determined by a description. What the proper name lacks, is what the word in its full functioning has gained. Otherwise said, this congenital defect of the proper name makes it possible, in turn, for it, to 'refer directly'—be it in a fusional mythical way – a way, which makes it stick, so to say, to the object that itself is, or is part of. The name is part *of* and, thus, wholly present *in* its object.

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19 No doubt the passages in Cassirer on real presence (*e.g., o.c.*, p. 92 = p. 305) contain an implicit reference, among others, to passages in Hegel's *Aesthetik* on the Athenian gods that are really present in the gods' images carried around in procession.

20 My translation. Cassirer; Ernst, *Philosophie der symbolsichen Formen. Vol 2. Das mythische Denken, o.c.,* p. 54. "Am prägnantesten drückt sich [das] Unvermögen des mythischen Denkens, ein bloß Bedeutungsmäßiges, ein rein Ideelles und Signifikatives zu erfassen, in der Stellung aus, die hier der Sprache gegeben wird. Mythos und Sprache stehen in ständiger wechselseitiger Berührung – ihre Inhalte tragen und bedingen einander. Neben dem Bildzauber steht der Wort- und Namenszauber, der einen integrierenden Bestandteil der magischen Weltansicht ausmacht. Aber die entscheidende Voraussetzung liegt auch hier darin, daß das Wort und der Name keine bloße Darstellungsfunktion besitzen, sondern daß in beiden der Gegenstand selbst und seine realen *Kräfte* enthalten sind. Auch das Wort und der Name bedeuten nicht, sondern sie sind und wirken."

2. Kripke, Geach, Burms: on naming

Could one find among contemporary theories of reference and naming properly so-called a view that would correspond to this 'intuitive' vision of Cassirer's? Cassirer developed this kind of thoughts intuitively indeed, in the sense of digging deep without, however, bringing to the case the whole apparatus of his technical knowledge in the philosophy of language. My aim is to argue for an affirmative answer to this question; it is to be found in the existing literature, analytic in nature. In the analytic philosophy of language, there clearly is a view, by now become standard, that corresponds quite well to the major intuitions expressed by Cassirer—minus a certain amount of 'synthetical' considerations on his part, and adding on the other hand an amount of technical specifications that do not immediately belong to his view. I mean the view called the 'causal theory of reference', or alternatively the 'direct theory of reference', ascribed to Saul Kripke and after him also to Hilary Putnam.

To be sure, two preliminary remarks are due: first, neither Kripke nor Putnam have ever noticed, let alone subscribed to, such an affinity (nor have they recognized the likeness of their views with two versions of an analogous view on reference and naming, mentioned below). They simply have not considered a Cassirean view on these matters, not even in Langer's reformulation[21] that might have been more familiar to them. This is certainly due, among other things, to the much broader framework within which Cassirer's views were developed and that they would have had to consider to put the latter into perspective. Second, it is only in and through the versions by Burms and Geach that the affinity will become visible and appreciable.

Kripke's work and even more Putnam's version that takes its point of departure in the Twin Earth thought experiment, aimed to prove the causal theory as much for the case of kind terms as for the case of proper names: both natural kinds and individuals have essences. This generalization is not relevant in the Cassirer-Langer view, and neither is it in the Burms-Geach versions. No more is it an extension that I wish to argue for in connection with their views. As far as Cassirer and Langer are concerned, this remark should not be taken to suggest that there is no connection at all between Kripke's view and their approach, in as much as kind terms (and concepts in general) are considered. To the contrary; the connection that does subsist is a negative one, however: Cassirer and Langer are clearly representatives of what I would call the 'classical theory of the symbol' that contradicts direct theories

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[21] As it may be extracted and reconstructed from *Philosophy in a New Key*, ch. 2 and 3.

of reference at that level. Classical symbol theory, I argue elsewhere, [22] is the theory according to which (i) there is, in the domain of signs, a more than gradual difference between signals and symbols, and this difference is mainly due to the role of the conceptual contents (and the correlative acts that generate them) called 'connotations' (initially by Mill) or Fregean senses; and (ii) these conceptual contents determine the reference of kind terms and other terms that are 'filled with content', i.e. the description theory of reference holds for kind terms and the like. In this latter respect, both Cassirer and Langer join the club founded by Frege, Russell etc. Although the description theory does not seem wedded in general to classical symbol theory (because of the role of (i) in the latter, putting the stress on symbols), conversely the classical theory seems wedded to descriptivism. To repeat, this seems to be the case at least for semantic items *eo ipso* possessing conceptual content: in that case it seems typical for the classical theory to require that conceptual content *determines* reference and mediates for our referring abilities (which corresponds also to a Fregean insight, or so it is put in a certain received view). Thus, Cassirer and Langer certainly are at odds with direct theories of reference in that respect: they presuppose 'meanings in the head' – or so Putnam and related opponents would say. We first describe the object mentally or conceptually, and then check whether there's anything outside that fits the description.

However, when talking about semantic items not *eo ipso* possessing conceptual content (or for which the possession of it might at least be the object of a serious contention), the classical theory cannot require *a priori* that reference of these items is determined by descriptions. We saw indeed that for Cassirer there are intrinsic reasons in his philosophy of symbolism and of language to deny descriptive content to proper names, at least in so far as the latter's workings rely on a mechanism of meaning and referring that is bound to their origin in the mythical frame. This, I mentioned (without elaborating the argument) is indeed the case: for Cassirer our ordinary practices of naming, although not identical to their mythical predecessors (since we do not generally conflate the name with the named), nevertheless extend the original functioning of naming acts by their ability to make the named individual immediately accessible to our meaning and referring intentions, and evoking her as if presented lively and really—even, and especially, in her absence. Since, however, the absence of the denoted is typically the classical theorist's argument for distinguishing symbols from signals and for accepting connotations as the distinguishing mark enabling us to do so, it would follow that

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22 Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer on Meaning Conflation in Symbolic Thought, in: *Omega. Indian Journal of Science and Religion* 8 (2009), pp. 24-47.

either the proper name does have a connotation 'in disguise', or else it must have a way of evoking the absent object to the mind *beyond* the connoting act. Given the above view of the name's emptiness of content, it seems to follow that the latter possibility must hold. So there must be a kind of capacity in speech allowing us to refer while rendering the absent present to the mind; in this reading, Cassirer (and Langer) are positively taking leave of the classical descriptivist view for the case of proper names. This is tantamount to positing something like a 'magic' of names. The ability to refer directly to something or someone as if it were pointing to a descriptively empty essence, gives us an alternative characterization for the name magic evoked especially in the fourth paragraph of *Sprache und Mythos*.[23] Ironically or not, the very same qualification would be uttered as an *objection* against mentalist obscurantism by Kripkeans, as it was uttered by them against descriptivists: how could referring *via* a mental content such as a description result from something else than a magical power enabling us to determine whether there is anything out there satisfying that description? Giving up on mental content seemed the way out of that tangle of obscure powers.

Next, I want to show that and how at least some Kripkean views on proper names and their referents do not escape from name magic—to the contrary—and how that is not a vice but a virtue of direct theories.

In his 1969 (!) "Perils of Pauline" paper, Peter Geach introduced the notion of apostolic succession. This he did, antedating Kripke, in order to undermine (at least in part) the descriptivist view, at least for proper names. Geach focused in particular on Russell's version: there is no definite description that could be claimed to do the job of fixing the reference of the name. The examples Geach constructs already involve the cases of fiction and error, as in Kripke: suppose I am wrong about the night I dreamt about Pauline, I'd have to withdraw my description of her as the girl I dreamt of that very night, but I wouldn't have to stop using her name to refer to her.[24] Here it is not clear, however, whether Geach already has taken the step to claim that no description at all is needed, or is just stating that there is never a particular description that can be needed to do the job.[25] Anyway, we are clearly on our way to a direct and causal theory, since in addition he says (something Searle for example remained silent about at the time) that the workings of reference by names are operated through a chain involving an initial "baptismal formula (…) as

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23   p. 266-280 = p. 44-62. In the original there are no paragraph titles; Langer added "Word magic" as a title for §4.

24   "The Perils of Pauline", p. 289-90.

25   Oddly enough this ambiguity itself involves a case of a problem related to one Geach actually goes on to deal with in the sequel of the article: the case of ambiguity in propositional attitudes such as the Quinean 'I want a sloop'.

a valid sacramental form" and "apostolic succession … right up to the object named". [26]

Whether or not Geach invoked the analogy of sacramental forms and the "Catholic doctrine [that] a man is a true bishop if there is in fact a chain of consecrations going back to the Apostles"[27] in more than a decorative way, is not clear since he doesn't go on to elaborate the comparison. A titillating remark or an innovative path for substantive thought? That it could be the latter becomes clear only in the paper "Proper Names and Magical Symbols" by Arnold Burms, written some ten years later. Without recurring to Geach, Burms makes the point that no one—not excepting Kripke—seems to have noticed about Kripke's seminal work: the causal view on proper names might be read as containing the strong suggestion that a certain kind of symbolic magic is at work in our practices of reference. Interestingly, the revolt against a certain kind of magical theory ascribed to the descriptivist (be it in the opposite guise of his mentalist leanings) was one of the quasi official motives, or at least slogans, of the new movement. What is the parallel about?

As the title suggests, it is possible to see a parallel between proper names and certain types of magical or ritual symbols. The symbols Burms is intending are foremost evocative symbols that are of special importance for persons who operate with them, and that one would tend to describe as 'strongly embodied'. Intuitively, strong embodiment points to such characteristics as irreplaceability and uniqueness of the materially given symbol, and the impossibility to give an explicit paraphrase of the content that would be represented by this symbol in its material givenness. Spontaneously, we might surmise that a strongly embodied symbol is quite decisive as a piece of existential meaning in subjective terms. And indeed, to stress that it is in fact the material object in its very external givenness that is decisive for its importance, does not deny of that subjective import. It does point to the fact, however, that it is not the internal mental content that is at stake, but the arbitrary and contingent way a certain material thing has imposed itself as being of the utmost importance to us. This type of material objects are the ones that may be called, sometimes in a strict but often also in an extended sense, '*relics*'. Now, it is Burms' contention that at least at one decisive level, proper names function in precisely the way relics do; and that the causal theory of reference allows for an account of this fact that was not available in standard descriptive theories and contradicts them.

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26 *A.c.,* p. 288-9.
27 *A.c.,* p. 289.

I can hardly reconstruct Burms' intricate and ingenuous argument here. So I will render it in a slightly adapted version. The key element in the parallel is the recognition of the 'externalist' aspect both of the mechanism of reference to individuals and of the way relics are meaningful in people's lives. With the proper name the success of my referring act and means depends not on the mental contents I associate with it (my beliefs, the acquaintance I possess with the object, my knowledge or error about the object) but on the proper placement of the name within the chain that began with a baptism and was transferred by the participants in the communication. The name and the *denotatum* are decisive: if the link has been properly made and properly handed down, it will be maintained. This ought not to imply that connotations are inexistent; they might be associated with the name, but they cannot determine the successful reference. Beliefs and descriptions may even be important, in the sense that in case a thorough mistake deviated the community's use of the name somehow systematically, a new baptism may be needed and an according change of reference remains possible;[28] but it will, again, be the new baptism and the subsequent chain of usage, that will determine the new course of things. With relics, things follow an analogous route. Let us take an example of a very banal everyday object that is turned into a relic for its possessor.

In the posthumously discovered correspondence of Alain-Fournier, a master of magical realism in literary fiction, a letter he had written at the age of, say, twenty-two turned up. In that letter to a friend he recounts how in the pocket of a jacket he was wearing already years before, he suddenly found a juniper berry. It was an almost unrecognizably shriveled berry. But he then remembered that years ago he had been making a long walk with his mother through their native Sologne heathland—that happens to be the scenery of *Le grand Meaulnes*—and had picked that berry and put it away in that pocket. He writes to his friend, who had been his fellow adolescent adventurer journeying through the same planes: "I have bitten that berry, and I wish I could send it to you, so that you could bite it as well and sense in it the taste of the desert landscapes of our childhood." As in the case of the proper name, I would argue that it is not primarily the beliefs and desires in Alain-Fournier's mind that are decisive for the value of the juniper berry, but the fact that it is indeed this berry, materially identical to itself and to the berry that was once plucked by him. Of course, he has to have the relevant belief from the moment on he discovers it, but later on, when asked, he would consider the berry as having possessed that value all the time, also before he had become aware of it. And he would consider it to keep its value even if he would envisage the possibility

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28 This … is needed to account for the cases of referential change adduced by Garreth Evans in "The Causal Theory of Names": Evans, G., and Altham, J. E. J. in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 47 (1973), pp. 187-225.

that someday he'd be incapable of remembering or recognizing it. It is impossible for him, on the other hand, to tell himself: if in the end this turns out to be a different berry, it will keep its value for me all the same, and I will stick to my intention and mental content whether or not I manage to go on believing anyhow. The object, in itself absolutely insignificant, becomes of the utmost significance for a given person by being materially, historically, causally related to a certain initial event. The continuity of 'physical history' throughout the transfer from hand to hand was able to keep the initial object identical to itself for the participants in the practice. Connotations and other mental contents may be important: when I discover that I was radically mistaken about the object, I may have to replace my most cherished value judgments and all that surrounds it. But the 'real thing' is what for some completely historical and contingent reason got 'charged' with significance beyond any 'reality value' in the first place, and that 'real thing' will remain decisive in the end. What I believe or do not believe will have to adapt to this external factor – unless, perhaps, I (wish to) get trapped in a "je sais bien … mais quand même …" pattern.[29]

3. Names and persons

Can we hear dim "Back to Cassirer?" echoes somewhere in the back of our imaging brain parts? Little as I am inspired by the scholastic exercise of a comparison between diverse thinkers, some strange affinities may be lurking from behind the corners of canonizingly classified positions of philosophies across the continental/incontinental divide. My aim here is to focus on the philosophy of proper names and what it can tell us on how to view persons. First issue, first similarity and/or dissimilarity: Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of symbolic forms tries to capture and encompass *all* forms of the symbolically operative mind. This he does as much by way of contrasting symbolic forms (myth, speech, thought) among each other, as by way of stressing their common ground in forms of symbolic activity.

Arnold Burms' work in turn stresses contrasts between science and manifest images of the world (if we recur to Wilfrid Sellars' terminology): and the common practices, for instance of ritualizing, of speech, of naming and much else are the ones that are most interesting for a philosopher: not science but paradoxes of the

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29 Mannoni, Octave, «Je sais bien, mais quand même», in : Id., *Clefs pour l'imaginaire ou l'Autre Scène*, Éd. du Seuil, 1969.

ordinary will learn us what is implied for our life-forms by the common practices of naming people by their proper name, or of being attached to friends and blood relatives as well as to the relics they left us, and so on. Science, on the other hand, is our way of objectifying the world of experiences for us and giving us a maximally cognitive, *i.e.* relatively external picture of this world in terms of matters of fact. The main commonality between the scientific and the manifest image consists in the fact that both are in the end rooted in experience: science, in turn, is but a sophistication and correction of empirically gained common sense.

The importance of this parallel is in the remark that for both thinkers symbolism is crucial and omnipresent, not to be left behind by some supra-symbolic thought system, be it a metaphysics that would pretend to stand above science. For Cassirer, however, there is an evolution of the mind from conflatory significance to pure semantic meaning. At the same time, the latter progressive-evolutionary view is compensated for by the insight that myth can never be scot-free repressed.[30] (Of this we will see an example in a moment.) Burms on his side prefers to call the contrasting forms symbolism takes on in one case 'strongly embodied', in the other 'weakly embodied', without denying that culture might evolve to an overall and far-reaching emphasis on the latter. And certainly, evolving towards a dominance of scientific and technical rationality could not count on his applause. In his case, a certain priority of the manifest image is implied. This comparative state of affairs is all just meant as a background, however, for the second issue.

Second issue: there is more specifically the point of comparison that should have struck the reader in the second section above. What I read in (or into) Cassirer as a case of 'empty essence', or empty identity as true Cassireans might prefer to say, is certainly one of a kind with what I termed a type of externalism in Burms' case. The externality of the referent, not captured in a wealth of connotations, and the corresponding externality of the name bring to the fore the same point. They imply the fact that there is no way to encapsulate the named individual, object or person, in a web of descriptive properties. It escapes. In Burms' more analytical style of reasoning, this insight is expressed through thought experiments such as stories with identical[31] twins or clones. Not only do we suppose in common sense reasoning that the referent of '*X*', the individual X that we once learned to denote

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30 No more can myth become dominant again without falling back in an often barbaric totalitarianism, as politics in the twentieth century has shown (see *The Myth of the State*).

31 I am of course using here and in a number of occurrences that follow the term 'identical' in the loose sense in which it is currently being used in non-philosophical discourse. In a number of case it should be replaced by 'empirically indistinguishable' to be made rigorous or at least regimented.

by this name can only be X, whatever may happen to X and to her identical twin Y.[32] Especially we would not be tempted to say that the following story sounded convincing: say, I was in love with X and she was with me; now, suddenly X irreversibly disappears from the scene (and I notice that fact); so I decide to go on with Y. Perhaps some would try to force a sense in the story thus: given that Y *ex hypothesi* has the same properties as X, I just 'decide' to be in love with Y. Others, of the same obedience, will prefer to go on like this: I decide that I was in fact (also?) already in love with Y.

The *ex absurdo* example, however, brings us to the point I wish to make. Why do we say we love X or are attached to X, but not to Y? I would say, and I guess Burms would say, that it means, among other things, that I consider X as a person, or a soul (and probably Y as well). Whatever the philosophical conundra about personal identity—whether there is such a thing; what it would consist in—there certainly is a crucial set of aspects about personhood that has to do with the issues brought up by these thought experiments. There are in fact at least two aspects I would like to deal with briefly now: one, personhood itself has to do with this 'empty essence' or 'externality' we were trying to get a hold on. And two, personhood has to do with the proper name attached to the empty essence we are referring to when naming it/her/him or speaking to it/her/him.

One, and here I take a start from Burms: what does the externality of reference by naming mean? Persons may be said to have, or be, these 'individual essences', or 'souls' we took as a point of departure. The concept of a person is not formed by mental contents of mine, nor are persons the objective correlates of mental contents (as sets of properties, for example, that correspond to descriptive predicates I attribute or utter). That they are persons or essences means that they are (and I cannot but believe that they are)—just themselves, each this one personal being called such-and-such. Keiko-san is Keiko-san, much as she has changed after all these years, uniquely herself, and she is not identical—cannot be identical—to her 'identical' twin or clone. (And moreover, I could not believe otherwise.) In Cassirer, notably enough, such an externalism of the proper name and of the identity or individual essence that would belong to it as its reference, is combined with an internalist philosophy of mental content. That should mean that the predicative and relational functions of language are very different from the naming and denotative ones. Propositional content and the mental character of it and of the corresponding acts are what language is all about, as soon as concepts come into the play, i.e. as soon as the *Darstellungsfunktion* is superimposed on the

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32 I am abstracting here from the extreme cases of fission and branching dealt with in S. Shoemaker, Garrett, Perry, Rigterink, and others.

Ausdrucksfunktion and symbols rise beyond the original state of conflation. Internalism or mentalism of the 'classical symbol' representing its object, especially in the discursive register of language, is combined with externalism of the name pointing at its object. Both are complementary, as discursive and other representative symbols are called for once it comes to articulating content. Pure meanings are, in a way, the *telos* that is implicit in the originary conflated significance. In Burms' way, there is no such *telos*; but the complementarity of science and the manifest is real, and reflects the fact that (at least this type of semantic) externalism[33] belongs to the life-world rather than to the sphere of empirical and mathematical theories. The concept of a person is a crucial ingredient of the manifest world; we do see each other and ourselves in such terms, without being able to explain what—if anything—could count as a theoretical justification of such an interpretation. In this framework I cannot expound in any detail Burms' views on personal identity, and on the link he sees between persons and relics.[34] It will be clear however, that no more than persons (and in particular the persons we are attached to) do the relics we cherish depend for the value they possess for us on their descriptive qualities. The watch I want has to be the one watch my grandfather wore, not an empirically indistinguishable one. Nevertheless, the full picture is more complicated and qualities do play a role, I would add. We do wish that our loved ones (in particular the ones who are alive) would remain more or less 'the same' (and here I mean *qua* qualities). Moreover we wish they remain more or less the same *for us*, in that we would and will be in a position to still *see* them *as* the ones they once were for us. Equally, in the parallel order of symbols that stand for them, in general we do not like the idea that a relic that reminds us of them (the dead ones as well as the living ones) would have turned completely worn-out.[35]

Two: what is the importance of the proper name in all this talk of individual essences and persons? That is to say, does it merely reflect the genesis of those essences—or is it somehow constitutive for them? For Cassirer in *Sprache und Mythos* it is clear that the notion of a person arises out of the original mixture of language and myth: persons are the referents of names for *Augenblicksgötter* substantialized first into *Sondergötter*, then in personalities. To 'apply' this to a

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33   In another sense, we might say that, to the contrary, an attitude one might call epistemic externalism (the holding of an external point of view) is typical for the scientific image.

34   See for example Burms, A. & Breeur, R., Persons and Relics, in: *Ratio (new series)* 21 (2008), pp. 134-146.

35   The juniper berry notwithstanding. In some cases the change of properties (sometimes to the point of non-recognition) enhances the value of the relic. In most cases, however, a mere assurance that the remnant is the historical continuation of the original object is not really satisfactory. Otherwise the shards of the heirloom would mean as much to us as the object in its unimpaired state.

person in the ordinary sense man learned from this practice of personification of divine hypostases. The name creates the substance—though not out of nothing: a continuing stream of experiences gets fixated, or rather: fixed points in the stream draw all attention to them. To explain how such a substance is animated with the characteristics we deem decisive for a person would require a long story of origins and is not our subject here. Just two antagonistic tendencies[36] in Cassirer have to be pointed out: one the one hand, he stresses that *Urphänomene* such as the interpretation of ourselves and our fellow beings as persons are ineradicable and originate in the mythical layer of our being. To do away with myth would mean to do away with our very sources of being human and creating meaning (and in particular creating the decisive meanings at stake). On the other hand, the category of a person, just as any other figure of thought, had to evolve from its immersion in the mythico-religious nexus into the expression of a truly spiritual self-understanding of man, and in this way Cassirer never stopped thinking in terms of a progress of the mind. Such a view, opposing that nexus presumably bound up with 'material magic' to a spiritual view and creation of our world, has become questionable. Believing in the performative power of language is not just a trait we had to leave behind; the name was and still is crucial in the way we make each other into persons (whether or not we agree to read this making as a making up, and what is thus made as a 'social construction').

Rather than proceeding to argue for this thesis here, however, I will give just two examples of text fragments, one from philosophy and one from poetry, that may show how persons become bearers—or rather are seen as bearers—of a kind of soul or personhood in close connection with the fact of being or becoming bearers of a proper personal name—the fact of being properly named.

> When John loves Mary, he loves her for the particular person that she is—irreplaceable. Her being Mary conditions the intentionality of his feelings, and provides him with reasons for all that he does for her. It is because she is Mary that he sends her flowers, courts her, desires her and marries her. But this idea of a 'particular person,' whose dominant feature is precisely that she is who she is, is not countenanced by science. A science of human behavior would do its best to rid the human world of such a description, so as to find the real cause of John's infatuation [: h]e loves Mary because of her smell, or because of some other feature that she shares with Jane, Rosemary or Inez. Even if the quality that draws him to

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36   Some would prefer to say 'complementary'.

> Mary is not shared by any other woman, it is still the quality, not the individual, that draws him. Science recognizes no such thing as an 'individual essence'. [Over against this, t]he descriptions under which Mary is perceived by John make essential reference to her name, and to the individuality that is captured in it. … Science, if given exclusive sovereignty over truth, threatens the aims of love.[37]

Sometimes we may lose our sense of being who we are along with losing our name. There is a poem by Tomas Tranströmer called "The Name" that evokes some such experience. At the same time it may serve as a transition from the *topos* of this essay, the personal name, to another *topos* I would go on to discuss in terms of individual essences: spaces that become places, *topoi* with names and souls. This is achieved, among other things, by being named. In that connection, we would have to start talking about things being named by proper place-names—such as 'Dartmouth', to revisit a famous and deliberately chosen one; or 'Venice', or 'Florence', or 'Balbec', places like cities, real or imaginary, places to remember involuntarily. There clearly is a further link—or at least a link ought to be there that calls for clarification—between the two kinds of individual essences, persons and places, that are the main referents of proper names. How I see that further link, I have to postpone for another occasion. Here I merely record with Tranströmer the story of a person losing his personhood with his name, disappearing in a location without a name as in a black hole, a non-place so to say. In order to regain some of his self and his place, he has to regain the name. As if there were nothing more to it than that—a cloth he was wearing; nothing more to it but—a dignified and dignifying cloth; the name.

> I grow sleepy during the car journey and I drive in
> under the trees at the side of the road. I curl up in the
> back seat and sleep. For how long? Hours. Dusk
> has fallen.
>
> Suddenly I'm awake and don't know where I am.
> Wide awake, but it doesn't help. Where am I? WHO
> am I? I am something that wakens in a back seat,
> twists about in panic like a cat in a sack. Who?

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37   Scruton, R., "Intention" and "Will", in: *Modern Philosophy*, London 1994, pp. 246-250 (passim).

At last my life returns. My name appears like an
angel. Outside the walls a trumpet signal blows (as
in the *Leonora* Overture) and the rescuing footsteps
come down the overlong stairway. It is I! It is I!

But impossible to forget the fifteen-second struggle
in the hell of oblivion, a few meters from the main
road, where the traffic drives past with its lights on.[38]

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38 *The Great Enigma: New Collected Poems.* Translated by Robin Fulton. 2006.

Künste und Multikulturalität.

Das Theater als interkulturelles Dialogfeld

João Maria Bernardo Ascenso André

Im Kontext der Multikulturalität, die die zeitgenössische Gesellschaft charakterisiert, und der verschiedenen Typen von Antworten, mit denen man sowohl politisch als auch kulturell auf diese Multikulturalität antwortet, von der Ablehnung des Anderen bis zur friedlichen Koexistenz oder zur dialogischen Interaktion, spielen die Künste und die Formen, wie sie fortwährend durch interkulturelle Dialoge durchlässig bleiben, eine sehr spezielle und besondere Rolle. In der Tat werden seit langem Programme des Zusammentreffens implementiert und die Fruchtbarkeit der Interaktionen aufgezeigt, was nicht unbemerkt bzw. unverstanden geschehen kann, man denke z.B. an die Malerei: Picasso und die afrikanische Kunst oder Manet und die japanische Kunst, man denke an die Musik: Cage oder der Fluxus und die orientalische Musik, man denke ans Theater, Artaud und das Balinesische Theater, aber auch Craig, Brecht, Copeau oder Claudel … Oft nutzen die Künstler ihr Kenntnis der Künste anderer Kulturen, um deren Techniken, Bilder, Klänge oder Inhalte in die eigenen Werke zu inkorporieren. Andererseits aber, wenn wir den Begriff der „Inkommensurabilität" in Erwägung ziehen, wie ihn Thomas Kuhn als einen der zentralen Begriffe in seine Analyse der „paradigmatischen Diversität" innerhalb der Wissenschaftsgeschichte aufgenommen hat, und der leicht auf das Gebiet des kulturellen Pluralismus und der Haltungen und Beziehungen, die er hervorruft, übertragen werden kann,[1] dann dürfte einer der Bereiche, in denen dieser Begriff eine breite Anwendbarkeit zu haben scheint, in der Tat der der Ästhetik und der der Kunstgeschichte sein.

Die Differenzen zwischen den Schulen und Richtungen lassen sich leicht als Unterschiede zwischen klaren Paradigmen (in einem erweiterten Kuhnschen Sinne) konfigurieren und die Beziehungen zwischen diesen verschiedenen Paradigmen scheinen zugleich Beziehungen der „interpragmatischen Inkommensurabilität" zu sein, wenn wir unter dieser Inkommensurabilität die Unmöglichkeit verstehen,

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1 Zum Begriff der Inkommensurabilität und seiner Übertragung auf das Gebiet der Debatte und der Konfrontation zwischen den Kulturen, siehe André ‚João Maria**,** Interpretações do mundo e multiculturalismo: incomensurabilidade e diálogo entre culturas, in: *Revista Filosófica de Coimbra*, XVIII/35 (2009), pp. 7-42.

künstlerische und technische Ausdrücke des Vollzuges, die innerhalb einer bestimmten Tendenz, im Rahmen einer anderen ästhetischen Tendenz geschaffen wurden, zu analysieren. Dennoch dokumentieren die oben erwähnten Fälle, trotz aller Inkommensurabilität, die die Beziehungen zwischen den unterschiedlichen „ästhetischen Paradigmen" charakterisiert, daß die Tatsache gewiß ist, daß eine Mischung von Ethnien nicht aufhört, sich mit bemerkenswerten praktischen Wirkungen zu realisieren, die zeigen, daß der kulturelle Dialog zwischen den in unterschiedlichen Kulturen wurzelnden Kunstformen nicht nur möglich, sondern auch in höchstem Maße fruchtbar ist.

Es ist noch wichtig zu bemerken, daß in der gegenwärtigen Welt die Wege der Interkulturalität gerade auf demjenigen Gebiet der Künste, das man im eigentlichen Wortsinne das der Ideen nennt, am zugänglichsten hervorzutreten scheinen. Auch wenn sowohl auf der philosophischen wie auf der religiösen Ebene Erfahrungen des interkulturellen Dialoges existieren, so dürfen doch die Schwierigkeiten bei ihrer Konkretisierung nicht vernachlässigt werden, vor allem, weil es auf diesen Ebenen in der Regel in erster Linie die epistemische Dimension ist, in der sich gerade die Inkommensurabilität zwischen den Kulturen am leichtesten in der Wichtigkeit manifestiert, die dem Wahrheitsbegriff in der entsprechenden Debatte zukommt.

Somit ist es das Ziel des vorliegenden Beitrages zu zeigen, wie der interkulturelle Dialog, der durch die Inkommensurabilität zwischen den Kulturen auf dem Feld des Denkens und der Ideen Schwierigkeiten zu bereiten scheint, nicht nur möglich, sondern auf dem Feld der Künste bereits selbst zur Realität geworden ist, wobei unter ihnen die performativen Künste und die Theaterkünste unsere besondere Aufmerksamkeit verdienen. Dazu tragen bestimmte Voraussetzungen, Prinzipien und Operatoren bei, deren Erklärung nachstehend versucht werden soll, und die sowohl die Bedingungen beleuchten können, unter denen dieser Dialog sich vollzieht, als auch die Instrumentarien, die es erlauben, ihn zu konkretisieren.

1. Der erste Begriff, der auf eine operationale Weise bestimmt werden soll, und der den Kontext berücksichtigt, in dem wir uns bewegen, ist der Begriff der Kultur. Es ist ganz offensichtlich, daß es viele Definitionen gibt, die vor allem im Umfeld der Sozialwissenschaften und der Kulturforschung vorgelegt worden sind. Von der Definition Edward Tylors (1872-1917),[2] formuliert gegen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts, über die strukturalistischen, funktionalistischen Bestimmungen oder die dem symbolischen Interaktionismus eigenen, bis hin zur Definition von Geertz, nach dem die Kultur „ein System von Symbolen [ist], dank derer der Mensch seiner

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2   Tylor, Edward, *La civilisation primitive*, Paris 1876-1878, vol. 1, p. 1.

eigenen Erfahrung einen Sinn beilegt",[3] wäre es möglich, eine Vielzahl von Vorschlägen vorzubringen, wie dieser Begriff zu bestimmen ist.[4] Im Umfeld der Studien zum Multikulturalismus könnte man auch den gesellschaftlichen Kulturbegriff anführen, der von Kymlicka vorgelegt wurde, wonach die Kultur „ihren Mitgliedern sinnhafte Lebensformen bietet, durch das ganze Ensemble der menschlichen Aktivitäten hindurch, die das soziale, bildungsmäßige, religiöse, regenerative und wirtschaftliche Leben einschließen, die öffentliche und die private Sphäre umfassend", und dabei die Tendenz habend, sich „territorial zu konzentrieren" und sich „auf eine gemeinsame Sprache zu stützen".[5]

Wenn Patrice Pavis versucht, eine Theorie der Kultur als eine Theorie der Inszenierung zu artikulieren, um die Rolle des Theaters im Zusammentreffen der Kulturen zu untersuchen, dann behilft er sich vor allem mit dem Vorschlag Camilleris, der die Kultur bestimmt als eine „Art von bestimmbaren Modulationen, Beugungen, die unsere Vorstellungen, Gefühle, Verhaltensrichtlinien, mit einem Wort, all die Aspekte unserer Psyche und zugleich unseres biologischen Organismus, unter dem Einfluß der Gruppe annehmen".[6] Diese Definition verdient eine besondere Aufmerksamkeit, die dem dynamischen Charakter geschuldet ist, der sie durchdringt und der eine Annäherung der szenischen Elemente an die kulturellen Elemente erlaubt.

Jedoch, wenn man die Virtualitäten dieses von Patrice Pavis gemachten Vorschlages vor allem für den Typ der semiotischen Analyse anerkennt, die er in Hinblick auf die Form zu realisieren versucht, wie das Theater das Zusammentreffen der Kulturen verwirklicht, dann scheint mir, daß es der Begriff von Ian Watson − in einer Einleitung in die kulturelle Debatte im Kontext der Kulturanthropologie von Eugene Barba − ist, der durch den ihn charakterisierenden synthetischen Charakter und seine Operationalität eine ausreichend fruchtbare Definition ermöglicht, die den Rahmen in Betracht zieht, in dem wir uns und in dem sich die Ziele dieser Untersuchung bewegen:

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3   Geertz, C., *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York 1973, p. 250. (Übersetzung der Herausgeber)

4   Zur Geschichte des Begriffes der Kultur in den Sozialwissenschaften siehe Cuche, Denys, *A noção de cultura nas ciências sociais*, trad. de Miguel Serras Pereira, Lisboa 2003.

5   Kymlicka, Will, *Ciudadanía multicultural*, trad. de C. Castells Auleda, Barcelona 1996, p. 112. (Übersetzung der Herausgeber.)

6   Camilleri, Camille, Cultures et sociétés: caractères et fonctions, in: *Les amis de Sèvres*, nº 4 (1974), p. 16, zitiert bei Pavis, Patrice, *Le théâtre au croisement des cultures*, Paris 1990, p. 14. (Übersetzung der Herausgeber.)

> Die Kultur, sagt er, ist ein holistisches Ganzes, mit einem mit Deter-
> minanten verknüpften Palimpsest, was unter anderem sozio-historische
> Identität, Systeme des mythisch-religiösen Glaubens, der Rituale, der
> Verwandtschaft, der Ethnizität, des nationalen Erbes, Wertesysteme,
> verschiedene Weisen kreativen Ausdrucks ebenso wie soziales Verhalten in
> sich faßt.[7]

Wenn man den dynamischen Charakter der von Pavis vorgeschlagenen Definition
mit dem Elementenreichtum verknüpft, die dieser Begriff Watsons bereit hält,
dann, so denke ich, können wir in der entsprechenden Synthese eine gute
Definition finden, die es uns erlaubt, in der Untersuchung der Rolle voranzu-
kommen, die die Künste im Allgemeinen und das Theater im Besonderen im
Rahmen der interkulturellen Debatte spielen können.

2. Es besteht weiter die Notwendigkeit aufzuklären, daß, wenn man von der
Interkulturalität oder dem „interkulturellen Dialog" in der Praxis der Künste
spricht, diese Ausdrücke verschiedenste Phänomene abdecken, die in ihrer
Besonderheit in Betracht gezogen werden müssen.[8] In erster Linie ist dasjenige,
was in diesem Dialog zusammentrifft, nicht immer und notwendigerweise ein und
dasselbe. So kann sich in einigen Fällen die Begegnung mittels der Aneignung eines
Textes, einer Erzählung, eines Mythos oder von Charakteren des Erbes einer
bestimmten Kultur realisieren, die durch ein Theaterstück oder eine Inszenierung
(*mise en scène*) in ein anderes kulturelles Milieu transportiert worden sind und sich in
ihrer anfänglichen Reinheit erhalten können oder auch nicht, oder sich in Elemente
einschreiben bzw. sich mit Elementen mischen, die am Erbe der anderen Kultur
teilhaben. In anderen Fällen kann sich das Zusammentreffen mittels Transponieren
einer Darstellungs- oder Arbeitsmethode, einer Interpretationstechnik, von
szenischen oder szenographischen Elementen, kurz von all jenem verwirklichen,
was letztendlich viel mehr mit dem Körper in der Darstellungssituation als im
Grunde genommen mit den expliziten kulturellen Inhalten und mit der ihnen
eigenen Semantik zu tun hat.

Andererseits konkretisiert sich der Prozeß der Interaktion nicht immer auf ein
und dieselbe Weise. In einigen Fällen kann er Mischformen entspringen lassen, in

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7   Watson, Ian, Introduction. Contexting Barba, in: Watson, Ian (Ed.), *Negotiating Cultures. Eugenio Barba and the intercultural debate*, Manchester 2002, p. 2.

8   Siehe in dieser Hinsicht die von Josette Féral zu Beginn seiner Untersuchung der Interkulturalität im Théâtre du Soleil formulierten relevanten Fragen: "L'orient revisité. L'interculturalisme au théâtre", in: Féral, Josette, *Trajectoires du Soleil. Autour d'Arianne Mnouchkine*, Paris 1998, pp. 225-226.

denen die Verflechtung total ist, wobei sich so ein Endprodukt bildet, dessen Modell letztendlich das der Kreolisierung der Sprache ist, aus der eine Art von Neokultur resultiert, die Aspekte und Charakteristiken jeder einzelnen der Kulturen in Interaktion in sich vereint. In anderen Fällen kommt es im Grunde nicht bis zu diesem Fusionszustand, weil die Elemente, die so etwas wie Darlehensanträge an eine andere Kultur sind, in einer Art paralleler Koexistenz mit den Elementen der anderen Kultur verbleiben, wodurch wir eine bloße Transponierung und Transferierung haben, jedoch keine wirkliche Einschreibung oder Vermischung der einen Kultur in die andere bzw. mit der anderen. Schließlich kann der Fall vorkommen, bei dem es nicht dazu kommt, daß eine eigentliche Transponierung der Elemente der einen Kultur in ein Produkt der anderen Kultur vorliegt, sondern lediglich eine einfache Beeinflussung oder Inspirationsquelle, was es erlaubt, im Endprodukt die Färbung oder die Gegenwart einer anderen Kultur zu erkennen, jedoch nicht die speziellen kulturellen Elemente in ihren Details, in ihren Einzelheiten, in ihrer eigenen Logik und in ihrer speziellen Konsistenz.

Eine besondere Wichtigkeit kommt denjenigen Beziehungen zu, die die transponierten Elemente mit der Ausgangskultur unterhalten: es kann eine völlige Absorption dieser Elemente im endgültigen Kunstwerk vorliegen, auf die Weise, daß ihre Bande mit der Ausgangskultur nicht mehr wahrnehmbar sind, oder so, daß sie in der Form, wie diese Transponierung verwirklicht ist, noch ein Echo des ganzen Horizontes und des Hintergrundes der Ausgangskultur bilden können, und dies so, daß ohne eine Referenz auf diese ursprüngliche Kultur das Endprodukt auch nicht wirklich verstanden und wahrhaft gesehen wird.

3. Noch auf der einführenden Ebene, und bevor wir tiefer in die Analyse der Beziehungen zwischen dem Theater und der Interkulturalität eintreten, erscheint es mir wichtig, das festzuhalten, was ich als die prinzipiellen Operatoren des interkulturellen Dialoges ansehe. Die Aktivierung des einen oder anderen Operators hat bedeutsame Konsequenzen sowohl für den Typus der kulturellen Interaktion, die sich in einem bestimmten Prozeß oder in einem bestimmten Ereignis verwirklicht, als auch für den Erfolg, der in dieser Interaktion erzielt wird. Es gilt drei Operatoren des interkulturellen Dialogs zu unterscheiden, die unsere Aufmerksamt verdienen: die Erkenntnis (*Episteme*), das mythisch-symbolische Denken und das Ritual.

Die Erkenntnis (*Episteme*) bezieht sich grundsätzlich auf die Wahrheitsansprüche einer Kultur und auf die Form, wie diese Ansprüche in den kulturellen Interaktionsprozessen zueinander in Beziehung treten. Jede Kultur ist dadurch charakterisiert, daß sie eine bestimmte Weltsicht impliziert, in der die Vorstellungen der Welt und das entsprechende Wissen Sinn gewinnen. Das bedeutet, daß jede

Kultur, explizit oder implizit, einen kognitiven Inhalt besitzt, durch den wir von der Wahrheit hinsichtlich der Wirklichkeit Besitz ergreifen, was in (konkreten und abstrakten) Begriffen, in Theorien oder in Ideen zum Ausdruck kommt. Es ist eben diese Ebene des Denkens, die ich die epistemische Ebene nenne und die vielfach in den interkulturellen Debatten mobilisiert wird, wobei es zudem in den meisten Fällen genau diejenige Ebene ist, auf der sich die größten Schwierigkeiten und Hindernisse für die Realisierung eben dieser Debatten und für das Bewirken von Verständigung und Konsens abzeichnen.

Das mythisch-symbolische Denken stellt einen zweiten Operator der zwischenkulturellen Interaktion dar. Wenn wir von diesem Typus des Denkens sprechen, dann meinen wir grundsätzlich die narrativen Strukturen symbolischen Charakters. In ihnen kondensieren in komprimierter Form und oftmals in der Erzählform kulturelle Traditionen, durch die der Mensch befähigt worden ist, seine Beziehung zur Welt und zu dem, was jenseits der Welt ist, in der Form des Heiligen oder Religiösen auszudrücken. Außerdem leiten sich vom mythisch-symbolischen Denken Strukturierungen ab, die das menschliche Verhalten in den Verhältnissen konfigurieren, die das Individuum mit sich selbst, mit den Anderen und mit der Welt unterhält. Die Beziehung des mythisch-symbolischen Denkens zur Theorie ist nicht so explizit wie es sich bei der Erkenntnis (*Episteme*) verhält, weil sie ihrer Natur nach häufig unbewußt oder vorbewußt gegeben ist, weshalb hier die sogenannte Inkommensurabilität nicht mit dem gleichen konzeptuellen Gewicht auftritt.

Obwohl die Mythen noch nicht im vollen Sinne des Begriffs universal sind, schon weil jede Kultur ihre spezifischen Mythen und Symbole haben kann, ist es andererseits jedoch möglich, zwischen den Mythen der einen Kultur und denen der anderen gemeinsame Züge zu finden, weil dafür die Brücken auf der Ebene des mythisch-symbolischen Denkens erleichternder und zugänglicher sind.

Wenn wir uns noch weiter von der Sphäre der Logik und des Reiches der *theoria* entfernen, dann finden wir schließlich einen dritten Operator der kulturellen Interaktion vor, den wir das Ritual nennen. Der Mensch und die menschlichen Kulturen bestehen nicht nur aus Denken, sondern auch aus Aktion, Verhalten, Partizipation, Emotion und Leben. Rituale sind Ereignisse, in denen der Mensch seine Beziehung zur Welt und zu den Anderen mit einer Intensität lebt, die starke Momente ins alltägliche Dahinfließen einprägt, in denen die Lebensenergie die Schranken des profanen Raumes und der profanen Zeit sprengt und qualitativ davon verschiedene Beziehungen und anthropologisch markante Erlebnisse etabliert.

Das Ritual ist, wie Johan Huizinga sehr gut bemerkt hat, ein heiliges Spiel. Es geschieht genau durch die Vermittlung des „Spiels", daß das Ritual sich Künsten

wie dem Tanz, der Musik oder dem Theater annähert. Außerdem ist, wie Gadamer gut erkannt hatte, die anthropologische Grundlage unserer Kunsterfahrung von drei Begriffen gekennzeichnet: Spiel, Symbol und Fest.[9] Es sind genau diese drei Begriffe, die auch die menschliche Erfahrung des Rituals kennzeichnen. Im Ritual spielt man, im Ritual hat man Teil an der ontologischen Gemeinschaft, die durch das Symbol charakterisiert ist, und im Ritual zelebriert man feierlich das Leben. Deshalb sind die rituellen Feierlichkeiten der Reaktivierung des mythisch-symbolischen Bodens der unterschiedlichen Kulturen förderliche Momente, ebenso förderlich der Partizipation an der tiefen Sinneinheit, an die sie - die Feierlichkeiten - uns erinnern. Eine gewisse Konvertibilität zwischen Kunst und Ritual erlaubt uns somit, die Fruchtbarkeit einzufangen, die die Rituale im Kontext der kulturellen und künstlerischen Interaktionen annehmen können. Und wenn diese Interaktionen auf der Ebene des Denkens mehr oder weniger offensichtliche Schwierigkeiten und Hindernisse auf sich ziehen, dann tendieren diese Hindernisse auf der Ebene der Gesten, mit denen in jeder Kultur das Leben künstlerisch zelebriert wird, dazu, sich aufzulösen und in der Liturgie unserer gemeinschaftlichen Menschheit der Konvergenz Platz zu machen.

Die drei angesprochenen Operatoren nehmen das Zentrum der Prozesse der kulturellen Interaktion ein. Und obwohl auf dem Gebiet der Künste vor allem das Ritual und, in gewissem Maße, auch das mythisch-symbolische Denken die häufigsten und offensichtlichsten Operatoren zu sein scheinen, bedeutet dies jedoch nicht, daß in einigen Fällen nicht die epistemische Ebene mobilisiert wäre, wo es doch immer die kognitive Komponente der Kulturen ist, die einen relevanten Platz einnimmt, wie es beim Rekurs auf theoretische Texte, auf spezifische konzeptionelle Gliederungen, auf Wirklichkeitsdarstellungen, die unter der Form des wahrhaftigen Glaubens angenommen werden, der Fall ist. Deshalb dürfen wir, wenn wir im Kontext künstlerischer Manifestationen vom interkulturellen Dialog sprechen, keinen dieser drei Operatoren verwerfen.

4. Es gibt im Umfeld der Künste und, spezieller, des Theaters viele und vielfältige Formen der Annäherung an die Interkulturalität, wobei die einen je nach der spezifischen Art des in Frage stehenden Objektes adäquater sind als die anderen: der Typ der Präsenz zwischenkultureller Interaktionen, das Moment des Prozesses, in dem die Begegnungen gegeben sind, die Koexistenzen, die Interaktionen oder Fusionen, die Modelle oder die Metaphern, von denen ausgehend die Beziehungen gedacht und die Operatoren in diesem Vorgang des Zusammentreffens aktiviert

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9 Cf. Gadamer, Hans-Georg, Die Aktualität des Schönen, in: ders., *Gesammelte Werke, Bd. VIII. Ästhetik und Poetik I*, Tübingen 1993, pp. 94-142.

werden. Ausgehend von einer semiotischen Matrix nimmt Patrice Pavis in einer Sammlung von Studien zum Ort des Theaters im Zusammentreffen der Kulturen eine Analyse vor, die grundsätzlich vom Modell bzw. von den Prozessen der Übersetzung inspiriert ist.[10] Indem er angesichts des Panoramas der europäischen Bühne einige prinzipielle Exponenten der theatralischen Interkulturalität als Referenzpunkt nutzt, offeriert er uns eine minutiöse Analyse der Mechanismen, der Strategien und der Verfahren, durch die jeder einzelne der betreffenden Regisseure die Interkulturalität verwirklicht.

Die in fast allen, dieses Werk Patrice Pavis' umfassenden Studien auftauchende große Metapher ist die der Sanduhr, die aus zwei Kugeln gebildet wird, einer oberen und einer unteren, und aus einer Verengung zwischen ihnen beiden, die ein langsames Durchlaufen des Sandes von der einen zur anderen erlaubt. Der Tatsache geschuldet, daß es das Übersetzungsmodell ist, das hier privilegiert wird, entspricht jede der beiden Kugeln der Sanduhr einer bestimmten Kultur: die obere Kugel steht für die Quellenkultur, die den Ausgangspunkt für die Arbeit der kulturellen Begegnung bildet, und die untere Kugel für die Zielkultur, die Bestimmungskultur, die aus Negationsprozessen und dem kulturellen Austausch beim Übergang eines bestimmten Produktes (Legenden, Mythen, Symbole) von der oberen zur unteren Kugel entsteht.

Dieser Übergang geht jedoch nicht in einer unmittelbaren Form vonstatten, sondern durchläuft eine Reihe von Filtern, die sich sowohl in der Sphäre der oberen Kugel als auch in der Sphäre der unteren Kugel befinden. Was die im Rahmen der Quellenkultur aufzufindenden Filter betrifft, so sind in erster Linie die den Subkulturen oder spezifischen Künsten verhafteten kulturellen Modellierungen und künstlerischen Modellierungen festzuhalten, deren Transponierung in diesem Prozeß der kulturellen Interaktion unterliegen. Diesen ist in Richtung der Ziel- oder Bestimmungskultur ein Ensemble von acht anderen Filtern hinzuzufügen, bei denen sich Pavis explizit auf die Umarbeiter und auf das bezieht, was mit ihnen anvisiert wird: die Arbeit der Adaptation, die vorbereitende Arbeit der Schauspieler, die Wahl der theatralischen Formen, die theatralische Darstellung der Kultur, die Rezeptionsbearbeiter, durch die sich die Aneignung der Kultur im Prozeß der Übertragung vollzieht, die privilegierten Ebenen (narrative, thematische, formale, ideologische etc.) der Lesbarkeit, aber auch die soziologischen und/oder anthropologischen und kulturellen Modellierungen, und die Arbeit der Rekonstruktion oder der Transformation, die der Zuschauer am Ende dieses ganzen Prozesses realisiert.

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10   Pavis, Patrice, *Le théâtre au croisement des cultures*, idem.

Die Transponierung der kulturellen Elemente (seien sie Mythen, Erzählungen oder eben bereits ausgebildete theatralische Produkte) stellt, wie wir sehen, einen komplexen Prozeß dar, voll von aufeinanderfolgenden Spaltungen und Ablagerungen, die einander bedingen. Dieser Prozeß ist durch [s]eine minutiöse Analyse in der Lage, zumindest zu erklären, wie man zu einem endgültigen Ergebnis gelangt, das letztendlich noch bzw. immer von den Aneignungsformen des Zuschauers selbst abhängt.[11] Es ist zudem wichtig zu beachten, daß dieser Prozeß zwischen zwei Extremen oszilliert: einem, das sich in eine profunde Aktivität dieser Filter übersetzt, die, indem sie die Quellkultur zerreiben, sie total demaskieren können, und dem anderen, das einer passiven Assimilierung des Materials im Übergang entspricht, weil die entsprechenden Umarbeitungen (Anpassungen) an die Zielkultur mittels ihrer Filter so nicht vollbracht werden, entspricht auf diese Weise das Endergebnis doch mehr einem künstlichen Transplantat als einem organisch zustande gekommenen.

In der Studie, in der Patrice Pavis die spezifischen Probleme intergestischer und interkultureller Art der theatralischen Übersetzung im eigentlichen und engen Sinne[12] konkret analysiert, wird eine weitere Reihe von Elementen und Verfahren zwischen dem Quellentext in der Quellenkultur und dem Ergebnistext in der Zielkultur präsentiert, was äußerst interessant ist und uns eine Idee davon gibt, wie der Prozeß der Übersetzung schon als solcher nicht nur ein Prozeß ist, der ausschließlich als im Text zentriert betrachtet werden kann, sondern als einer, der weitere Vermittlungen voraussetzt, die auf bedeutsame Weise das Endresultat beeinflussen. So hat man außer der textlichen auch die dramaturgische und die szenische Konkretisierung in Betracht zu ziehen, die alle für die rezeptive Konkretisierung als deren Endresultat der Umwandlung des Textes im Übersetzungsprozeß als bestimmend fungieren. Es findet sich so ein Ensemble der Elemente, die diese Operation in etwas umwandeln, welches mehr als eine bloße translinguistische Operation ist. Deshalb „eignet sich der Zuschauer", wie Pavis feststellt,

> den Text nicht anders als am Schluß einer Kaskade von Konkretisie-rungen, Zwischen- und unvollständigen Übersetzungen an, die selbst wieder auf jeder Etappe den Quellentext verengen oder erweitern, aus ihm einen Text machen, um immer etwas zu finden, immer etwas zu bilden. Es ist nicht übertrieben zu sagen, daß die Übersetzung für die Bühne

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11 Idem, ibidem, p. 24.

12 Die Studie trägt den Titel "Vers une spécifité de la traduction théâtrale: la traduction intergestuelle et interculturelle", pp. 135-170.

gleichzeitig eine dramaturgische Analyse ist, ein Inszenieren und eine Mitteilung an das Publikum.[13]

Das Publikum, als Adressat der Übersetzung, setzt danach dasjenige in die Praxis um, was man seine hermeneutische Kompetenz, aber auch seine rhythmische, psychologische und auditive Kompetenzen nennen kann, die alle irgendwie rückwirkend den eigentlichen Übersetzungsprozeß bedingen.

In diesem ganzen Prozeß ist außerdem zu beachten, daß auf der vorverbalen Ebene und auf der explizit verbalen Ebene simultan gespielt wird, wenn die Umwandlungsprozesse auf der vorverbalen Ebene eine besondere Prägung zwischen der „Spielplazierung" des Quellentextes und der „Spielplazierung" des Zieltextes erlangen, dem Übergang von der textlichen Konkretisierung zur dramaturgischen Konkretisierung entsprechend, und daß das sich danach, schon durch die Vermittlung der Verbalisierung in der Zielsprache, in die zukünftige Inszenierung verlängert. In diesen Prozessen verdient auch dasjenige besondere Erwähnung, was Patrice Pavis die Theorie des *language-body* nennt, wenn er diesen als „die Allianz der Darstellung der Sache und der Darstellung des Wortes [betrachtet], was, angewandt auf die theatralische Artikulation, daher *die Allianz des gesprochenen Textes und der (vokalen und physischen) Gesten ist, die ihre Artikulation begleiten*, die spezifische Schlinge, die den Text mit der Geste zusammenhält." Oder: „der *language-body* ist eine der Sprache und der Kultur eigentümliche Regulierung des (gestischen und vokalen) Rhythmus und des Textes. Sie ist gleichzeitig eine *gesprochene Handlung* und ein *handelndes Wort*."[14] Ein Übersetzungsprozeß (und, so würden wir sagen, jeglicher Prozeß einer kulturellen Transponierung mit Hilfe einer Theateraufführung) impliziert immer auch eine Visualisierung des *language-body* in der Ausgangskultur und seine Transponierung in den *language-body* der Zielkultur, was bedeutet, daß sowohl die Übersetzungsarbeit als auch der kulturelle szenische Übertragungsprozeß nicht nur eine Übersetzung der Worte, sondern auch eine „Übersetzung" der Gesten einschließt, denn die Kultur im Theater teilt sich nicht nur durch die verbale Sprache mit, sondern vielmehr vor allem durch die Körpersprache, den Diskurs als Bewegung, die Vertonung und den Rhythmus, das Wort und seine ganze physische Unterstützung mit.

Durch den Begriff des *language-body* und seine Rolle bei der Übersetzung und bei der kulturellen Transponierung in der Darstellungssituation verstehen wir, wie äußerst wichtig es ist, eine Semiotik und eine Semantik der Kultur durch einen Pragmatismus der Kultur zu komplettieren, der notwendigerweise aus dem besteht,

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13 Idem, ibidem, p. 141. (Übersetzung der Herausgeber.)
14 Idem, ibidem, 151. (Übersetzung der Herausgeber.)

das wir eine Körperlehre (Somatologie) der Kultur nennen: die Kulturen gehen durch den Körper hindurch und teilen sich auch durch den Körper mit, und deshalb ist, selbst wenn eine Analyse der Interkulturalität im Theater ausgehend vom Modell der Übersetzung vorgenommen wird, die Bedeutung, die die Verkörperung (Somatisierung) der Kultur besitzt, und die Art und Weise, wie der interkulturelle Dialog sich nicht nur in die verbale Sprache eingräbt, sondern auch in die Körpersprache und in den gestischen Rhythmus, aus dem sie hervorgegangen ist, keineswegs zu ignorieren, unbeachtet zu lassen.

5. Ungeachtet der Fruchtbarkeit und der Virtualitäten, die die Analyse von Patrice Pavis mit sich führt, kann ich nicht anders, als das Übersetzungsmodell, von dem ausgehend sie durchgeführt wurde, gewisser Weise als Verkürzung zu betrachten, vor allem weil ich der Ansicht bin, daß der Übersetzungsprozeß letztlich den Primat und die Vorherrschaft einer bestimmten Kultur impliziert, jener nämlich, die in dieser Analyse als Zielkultur behandelt wird, weshalb eine Ausdehnung dieses Modells auf die Prozesse des Zusammentreffens der Kulturen bedeutet, sowohl im Allgemeinen als auch auf dem spezifisch theatralischen Feld anzuerkennen, daß es Macht- und Kraftbeziehungen gibt, die im interkulturellen Dialog immer gegenwärtig sind, und daß es unmöglich ist, die Interaktionsprozesse zwischen den verschiedenen Kulturen außerhalb der Asymmetrien aufzufassen, die eine Kultur zur Beherrscherin der anderen transponieren. Gewiß gibt es bestimmte Phänomene der kulturellen Transponierung, die mit Bezug auf dieses Modell auf legitime Weise analysiert werden können. Es ist jedoch auch darauf hinzuweisen, daß sich weder alle Arbeiten zeitgenössischer Regisseure auf dem Gebiet des interkulturellen Dialoges auf dieses Modell beschränken, noch daß durch die vom französischen Autor unternommene Analyse die gesamte Interkulturalität auf dem Gebiet des Theaters zufriedenstellend erfaßt wurde, in allen ihren Strategien und in allen ihren Konsequenzen. Der Fall Peter Brock belegt eben genau dies.

6. In der theatralischen Arbeit Peter Brooks wird die Interkulturalität als Projekt und als Realität grundsätzlich durch drei verschiedene Typen von Strategien und Optionen vergegenwärtigt, von denen jede einzelne verschiedene Prozesse kulturellen Austausches entspringen läßt, wobei deren Zielstellungen nicht notwendigerweise zusammenfallen, sondern nur einige Aspekte, Voraussetzungen und Prinzipien gemeinsam haben, die ihnen eine gewisse Einheit, Kohärenz und Konsistenz geben. So können wir zwischen der Kreation und Komposition des Centre Internationale de Recherches Théâtrales, seinen Reisen nach Iran, Afrika und Amerika und den Stücken unterscheiden, in denen der Regisseur versucht, einen Prozeß kultureller Vermittlung effektiv zu verwirklichen, der sich in

Theaterstücken konkretisiert, die mit der Realisierung einer Transponierung eigentümlicher kultureller Welten der einen in andere Kulturen, in denen die Theaterstücke aufgeführt werden, endet.

Im Horizont des Centre Internationale de Recherches Théâtrales (CIRT) finden sich zwei Schlüsselideen, wobei die eine wie die andere seine interkulturelle Dynamik vergegenwärtigen. Einerseits versteht sich das CIRT als ein Punkt, in dem die unterschiedlichsten Kulturen konvergieren, andererseits wird es jedoch als ein Zentrum akzeptiert, das berufen ist, sein heterogenes Ensemble zu den Völkern und Regionen zu bringen, zu denen das westliche Theater niemals vorgedrungen war.[15] Jedoch weit mehr als sich eine Fusion der Kulturen zum Ziel zu setzen, setzt Brook von Anfang an als Arbeitsperspektive auf die Untersuchung dessen, was jenseits der Kulturen ist, oder, visiert er mittels einer interkulturellen Strategie eine Art transkulturelle Realität an. In diesem Kontext spielt das Prinzip der Komplementarität eine zentrale Rolle: der Mensch ist ein beschränktes Wesen (Mängelwesen) und kann an den Anderen dasjenige finden, was er an sich weder zu finden noch zu realisieren vermag.[16] Eine derartige Komplementarität zeigt sich vor allem zwischen dem Primat der Sprache und dem des Körpers. Diese Komplementarität, die die Arbeit des CIRT immer ausgezeichnet hat, wird natürlich auch in seinen Produkten auf die Weise reflektiert, daß ein durch eine Gruppe von Personen, die aus unterschiedlichsten Kulturen kommen, geschaffenes Werk sich durch den Beitrag, den jede einzelne gemäß den spezifischen Charakterzügen ihrer eigenen Kultur in die kollektive Arbeit einbringt, als bereichert erweist.

Die Reisen, die das CIRT unternimmt, bilden die zweite Strategie, die Interkulturalität durch die eigene Gruppe zu verwirklichen. Sie werden unmittelbar von Anfang an unternommen, und ihre erste Phase ist durch die Reise in den Iran gekennzeichnet, im Zusammenhang mit der Aufführung von Peter Brooks Stück *Orghast* 1971 in Persepolis. Diese Erfahrung wird grundsätzlich durch die dreimonatige Reise nach Afrika, Ende 1972 und Anfang 1973, vertieft, auf der fünf Länder Westafrikas durchquert wurden. Die Zielstellung war einfach: die Beziehung zwischen Theater und Publikum vertiefen, einem Publikum, das, weil ohne irgendwelche Theatergewohnheiten, absolut offen und disponibel ist. Im Gepäck hatte man keinerlei fertiges Theaterstück, sondern lediglich die Fähigkeit zu improvisieren und eine lebendige Beziehung mit denen herzustellen, die sich in der Mitte des Dorfes niedergelassen hatten, wo die Theaterspiele stattfanden.

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15 Brook, Peter, *Más allá del espacio vacío. Escritos sobre teatro, cine y ópera (1947-1987)*, trad. de E. Stupía, Barcelona 2001, p. 182.

16 Idem, *Entre deux silences*, trad. de Marie Hélène Estienne, Paris 2006, p. 59.

Die bewegendste Sache, die wir entdeckt haben," wird Peter Brock in einem Interview hinsichtlich dieser Erfahrungen sagen, „ist die, daß die tiefgründigste Beziehung, die wir mit irgendwem in Afrika hergestellt haben, dank gewisser Klänge existieren konnte − oder dank gewisser Bewegungen, die als abstrakte qualifiziert werden könnten − und, noch genauer, dank eines gewissen Typs von Gesängen, die auf eine eigentümliche Weise interpretiert werden.[17]

Die interkulturelle Kommunikation vermochte es auf diese Weise, in der afrikanischen Erfahrung die Möglichkeit der Existenz einer transkulturellen Dimension zu [ver-]stärken, in der Menschen und Völker unterschiedlicher Kulturen einander verstehen und miteinander kommunizieren können.

Die dritte Etappe dieses interkulturellen Nomadentums schließlich ist von der Erfahrung des CIRT in den Vereinigten Staaten und vom Treffen mit dem Bauerntheater von Luís Valdez im Jahre 1973 gekennzeichnet. Indem sie fühlten, daß es die Forschung rund um die Energie der Theaterarbeit war, die sie vereinte, entwickelten sie eine Reihe von gemeinsamen Sitzungen, bei denen sie den Radius des Austausches erweiterten, was das indianische Reservat von Lech Lake in Colorado, The Native American Theatre Ensemble in Minnesota und noch diversifizierte Sitzungen mit verschiedenen Typen von Gruppen, amerikanischen, chinesischen und sogar Mitgliedern des Theaterlabors von Grotowski, in New York, einschloß.

Der dritte Typ von Interkulturalität, gefördert durch die Theaterarbeit von Peter Brook, findet sich in der bedeutsamen Sammlung seiner Stücke, unter denen natürlich der *Mahabharata* hervorragt, hat aber auch in der ersten Arbeit des CIRT, die in Persepolis aufgeführt wurde, einen äußerst bedeutsamen Meilenstein. *Orghast* ist, außer der Vielfalt der Ethnien und Nationalitäten, die die Arbeitsgruppe auszeichnet (Schauspieler und Techniker kamen aus zwanzig verschiedenen Ländern), und außer der Tatsache, in einem Raum aufgeführt worden zu sein (Iran, genauer, in den Ruinen von Persepolis), der sich als ein Symbol oder als eine Brücke zwischen Orient und Okzident anbietet, in der Tat sowohl durch sein Experimentieren rund um die Sprache als auch durch die im Stück zusammengeführten und bearbeiteten Materialien ein klares Beispiel eines interkulturellen Projektes eben dieses Regisseurs. Es handelt sich hier um eine Art Rückkehr zur den Quellen der Sprache und zu ihrer Musikalität, zu ihrer Fähigkeit, Gefühle und

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17 Idem, *Entre deux silences*, Übers. von Marie Hélène Estienne, Paris 2006, p. 59. (Übersetzung der Herausgeber.)

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Realitätswahrnehmungen zu kreieren und zu übermitteln, unabhängig von der Sprache, die jeder der Schauspieler seine eigene nennt. Indem Peter Brook für eine erfundene Sprache optiert, in der die physische Dimension der Klanggesten eine der wichtigsten Merkmale war, schuf er so die Möglichkeit eines transkulturellen Verstehens nicht nur der Schauspieler unter sich, sondern auch zwischen Schauspielern und Publikum. Andererseits verkörpern die Materialien, aus denen das Stück aufgebaut ist, andere alte Adern wie Abstraktionen, abgeleitet aus literarischen Quellen, Anspielungen auf andere griechische und römische Mythen, zoroastrische Rituale und orientalische Legenden, wobei sie eine Vielfalt von kulturellen Überlieferungen in ihre eigene Verfaßtheit einführen.

Andere Erfahrungen jedoch, durchlaufen mit einer klaren intellektuellen Prägung, sind *Die Iks* und *Konferenz der Vögel* und die kürzlich aufgeführten *Le costume* und *Tierno Bokar*. Das Projekt mit dem größten Atem im Rahmen der Interkulturalität im Theater ist jedoch zweifellos der *Mahabharata*, in welchem der Regisseur [ver-]sucht, dieses Hindu-Gedicht zu transponieren, das das längste der Weltliteratur ist und das die Geschichte des Kampfes zwischen den Pandava und den Kaurava, unter den Augen und unter Begleitung des Gottes Krishna, darstellt. Der schlichte Bühnenraum des *Mahabharata* transformiert die Vorstellung in etwas, das sich zwischen dem Ritus und der Zeremonie eines Spieles positioniert, das gleichzeitig eine Reise, eine Geschichte und eine Theologie ist. Man kann sagen, daß Peter Brook mit diesem Theaterstück bei der Suche nach den wahrhaft transkulturellen Zentren eine interkulturelle Inkursion zeichnet. Die Probleme des *Mahabharata* sind Probleme, die vor einem kulturellen Hintergrund, der zur Hindu-Kultur gehört, angesprochen werden, die aber gleichzeitig Probleme der gesamten Menschheit und aller Zeiten sind. Brooks Theaterarbeit ist somit das Rückführen eines Schatzes, der in einem spezifischen Kern der Menschheit ruht, zur gesamten Menschheit, und dies mit Hilfe eines Ensembles von Schauspielern, die genau diese Universalität in ihrer spezifischen und verkürzten Vielfalt darstellen.[18]

7. Da die diversen charakteristischen Strategietypen der interkulturellen Dimension der Theaterarbeit Peter Brooks nunmehr geklärt sind, ist es jetzt möglich, einige Prinzipien, Voraussetzungen oder charakteristische Züge seiner interkulturellen

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18 Es ist hervorzuheben, daß der *Mahabharata* den interkulturellen Weg Peter Brooks in der Welt des Theaters nicht beschließt. Das Stück *Le costume* des südafrikanischen Schriftstellers Can Themba, die Premiere war 1999, das in Sophiatown spielt, einer Schwarzenstadt in Südafrika, und das Stück *Tierno Bokar*, das sich auf einen Text von Amadou Hampaté Bâ stützt, inszeniert 2004, das von der Lehre des Tierno Bokar, eines Sufimeisters in Schwarzafrika im Kontext der französischen Kolonisation handelt, sind zwei Beispiele dafür, wie der Regisseur fortfährt Wege zu beschreiten, auf denen er versucht, mit dem Leben und der Kultur der afrikanischen Völker in einen Dialog zu treten.

Ästhetik aufzuführen, um uns danach mit einigen der Instrumentarien zu beschäftigen, die durch ihn privilegiert wurden, um eben diese Ästhetik zu konkretisieren.

Das erste Prinzip, das die interkulturelle Haltung des Autors bestimmt, ist die stereoskopische Auffassung der theatralischen Wahrheit. Mit anderen Worten, für Peter Brook ist es unwahrscheinlich, daß die Wahrheit auszumachen ist, wenn man lediglich von einem Gesichtspunkt ausgeht, sondern vielmehr nur dann, wenn vervielfältige Gesichtspunkte hinsichtlich der Realität herangezogen werden, kann es einen Zugang zur tieferen Natur der Dinge und der Wirklichkeit geben. In diesem Sinne ist zu beachten, daß die Wahrheit im Theater keine monotone Wahrheit ist, sondern eine multiple,[19] die sich ereignet, wenn eine Verbrennung aller der Elemente gegeben ist, die bei der Herstellung des Theaterwerkes, beim Zusammentreffen der Beiträge, mit denen die unterschiedlichsten Teilnehmer es anreichern, konkurrieren.

Ein zweites Prinzip der interkulturellen Haltung im Bereich des Theaters findet sich in der Wichtigkeit des Schweigens. Das Schweigen ist nämlich die Bedingung dafür, daß etwas geschieht, daß eine Stimme auftritt, daß der Diskurs in seine Pluralität von Perspektiven und in seinen Reichtum und in seine Fruchtbarkeit einbricht. Das bedeutet, daß das Schweigen nicht notwendigerweise ein Schweigen ohne Leben oder ein Schweigen ohne Ausdruck sein muß, auch kein undurchsichtiges Schweigen. Im Gegenteil, das Schweigen kann ein Mittel der Vereinigung und der Wiedervereinigung der Personen sein und so den Ausgangspunkt für eine gemeinsame Entdeckung der Existenz und ihrer Umwandlung in Kunst bilden. Genau dies ist die Unterscheidung, die der Autor zwischen „dem bleiernen Schweigen" und „dem wahren Schweigen", das zum Leben erweckt, macht.[20] Ein komplementäres Prinzip dieses Schweigens ist die Haltung des Hörens. Wenn vom Hören ausgegangen wird, oder wenn geschwiegen wird, so daß die Stimme des Anderen uns erreichen kann, dann wächst man in Richtung auf den Anderen und in Richtung auf die theatralische Wahrheit über sich hinaus.

Ein weiteres Grundprinzip der Theaterästhetik Peter Brooks, eine unvermeidliche Bedingung seiner Interkulturalität, ist das Prinzip der Relation bzw.

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19 Brook, Peter, *Más allá del espacio vacío*, p. 188.

20 Brook, Peter, *Entre deux silences*, p. 5. In *Threads of time* wird sich der Autor auf diese beiden Weisen des Schweigens mit folgenden Worten beziehen: "Warum existieren zwei Schweigen: ein Schweigen, das nicht mehr sein kann als das Fehlen des Geräuschs, kann untätig sein, oder, am anderen Endpunkt des Skala, gibt es ein Nichts, das unendlich lebendig ist, und alle Zellen des Körpers können von der Aktivität dieses zweiten Schweigens durchdrungen und belebt sein." (Brook, Peter, *Hilos de tiempo*, trad. de Susana Cantero, Madrid 2003, p. 165). (Übersetzung der Herausgeber.)

Beziehung. Vom ersten seiner Bücher an, von seiner ersten Seite an sucht der Autor klar werden zu lassen, daß das theatralische Faktum grundsätzlich und wesentlich ein relationales Faktum ist.[21] Die Beziehung, die der Schauspieler einerseits mit dem Raum herstellt, in dem er sich bewegt, und die, die der Schauspieler andererseits mit dem Publikum herstellt, das ihn beobachtet, machen das Wesen des Theaters aus. Außer dieser Relation zwischen Schauspielern und Publikum gibt es jedoch noch andere Zusammenhänge, die im Theaterereignis als bestimmende fungieren. Peter Brook bezieht sich ausdrücklich auf den Zusammenhang zwischen dem Autor und seinem Innenraum und auf den Zusammenhang zwischen einem Schauspieler und anderen Schauspielern.[22] In dem Kontext, in dem wir uns bewegen, kommt dieser letzten Beziehung eine spezielle Rolle zu, wenn wir in Betracht ziehen, daß wir uns im Falle der Schauspieler, mit denen Peter Brook arbeitet, angesichts eines interethischen und interkulturellen Gewebes befinden, dessen im Ereignis des theatralischen Faktums wirksame Konsequenzen natürlich unvermeidlich sind.

Ein letztes Prinzip der Brookschen Theaterästhetik besteht in dem, was wir die angeborene Mestizierung des Theaters nennen können, oder in der Idee, nach der das Theater nicht rein sein kann. Das Theater an sich ist aus multiplen Materialien gewebt, ist mit dem Magen vergleichbar, in dem die Nahrung sich sowohl in Exkremente als auch in Träume umwandelt,[23] ist aus lebender Materie und für lebendige Personen gemacht, die verschieden, endlich und wechselseitig sind. Genau deshalb nennt es der Regisseur auch eine „Bastardkunst".[24]

8. Sich auf diese Prinzipien und Voraussetzungen stützend entfaltet Peter Brook seine Arbeit, die auf einer Reihe von Instrumentarien und Verfahren beruht, die wir so verstehen können, daß sie letztlich auch seiner interkulturellen Strategie dienen.

Das erste Instrumentarium, auf das wir uns beziehen können, ist das des Teppichs als Darstellungsraum. Dieser Teppich ist so etwas wie die Kondensierung des Bodens, und in seine Einfachheit und Weberei ist Offenheit nach allen möglichen Böden, nach allen Völkern und allen Kulturen hin eingefügt. Das Brooksche theatralische Spiel erweist sich als im Teppich verwurzelt, sei es auf der Ebene der Probenarbeit der Schauspieler, sei es auf der Ebene der Improvisation, die sich vor dem wachsamen und neugierigen Auge der afrikanischen

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21 Brook, Peter, *O espaço vazio*, trad. de Rui Lopes, Lisboa 2008, p. 7.

22 Idem, *La puerta abierta. Reflexiones sobre la interpretación y el teatro*, Übers. von G. M. Bartolomé, Barcelona 1999, pp. 42-43.

23 Brook, Peter, *Más allá del espacio vacío*, p. 107.

24 Brook, Peter, La merde et le ciel, in: *Théâtre 1968*, nº 1, 1968, p. 14, zitiert bei Banu, Georges, *Peter Brook, De Timon d'Athènes à la Tempête ou le metteur et le scène en cercle*, Paris 1991, p. 160.

Bevölkerungen entfaltet, sei es auf der Ebene des Bühnenbildes einiger der Aufführungen. Auf der anderen Seite überträgt der auf den Fußboden gelegte Teppich eine Offenheit des theatralischen Raumes nach allen Seiten hin und hin zum Publikum, das ihn so umrunden kann, um sich in die Vorstellung zu integrieren.[25] Gewebt aus vielerlei Fäden ist der Teppich ein Symbol des pluralen Charakters derjenigen, die ihn besetzen und derjenigen pluralen Beziehungen, die mit seiner Hilfe mit einem Publikum eingegangen werden, das in seiner Zusammensetzung verschieden und heterogen ist.

Ein anderes Instrumentarium oder ein weiteres Verfahren der Ästhetik Peter Brooks, die grundlegend in seiner interkulturellen Dynamik zum Ausdruck kommt, ist die Improvisation als Kommunikationsform und als Methodologie, ein Schauspiel zu konzipieren und zu vollenden. Improvisation ist nicht nur das Kreieren von Gesten, Bewegungen, Spielen und Interaktionen sowohl zwischen den Schauspielern als auch der Schauspieler mit dem Publikum. Was die Improvisation mehr als alles Andere definiert, ist Ihre Offenheit und ihre Disponibilität für das Unvorhergesehene.[26] Die Improvisation ist die Einführung der Leere, damit sich eine dreifache Beziehung einstellen möge: die Beziehung des Schauspielers mit sich selbst, die des Schauspielers mit anderen Schauspielern und die der Schauspieler zum Publikum. Sie ist gleichzeitig eine Befreiung und eine Energiezirkulation, sie ist das Freisetzen des Flüssigen im Inneren einer Gruppe.

Ein drittes Instrumentarium, auf das Peter Brook in der interkulturellen Dynamik seiner Ästhetik zurückgreift, entspricht den vorverbalen Vokalklängen, die sowohl in den Proben der Gruppe als auch in einigen Theateraufführungen verwendet werden, oder den verbalen Klängen, die jedoch in den Sprachen unbekannt sind, und die ihre Wirksamkeit auf einer außervokalen oder vorvokalen Ebene ausüben. Es ist alles vor allem ein körperliches Spiel, in welchem diese Laute wurzeln und das sowohl expressiv als auch empfänglich dafür ist, die verschiedenen Akteure in die Kommunikation einzuführen, unabhängig von ihren ethnischen oder kulturellen Zugehörigkeiten.[27] Es ist die emotionale Dimension des Tones, die in den Vordergrund tritt und es ist die physische Dimension des Tones und der hervorgehobenen Stimme, seine körper- bzw. leibhafte Dimension, weil das Wort als ein Ton etwas ist, das durch den eigenen Körper bzw. Leib produziert und durch den eigenen Körper wahrgenommen wird. Deshalb kann es am Grunde der tiefsten Quellen des Theaters und Schauspiels eine wahrhafte interkulturelle Konvergenz geben.

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25 Banu, Georges, *Peter Brook, De Timon d'Athènes à la Tempête ou le metteur et le scène en cercle*, Paris 1991, p. 38.

26 Idem, ibidem, p. 138.

27 Brook, Peter, *Climat de confiance. Entretiens menés par Pierre Macduff*, Paris 2007, p. 62.

Ein zum Tonmittel komplementäres Instrumentarium ist natürlich das Körperinstrumentarium. Ist es doch der Körper bzw. der Leib, sind es doch seine Mittel, ist es doch sein expressives Vermögen, worin letztlich die Fähigkeit des Menschen wurzelt, mit anderen zu kommunizieren, indem die Barriere der kulturellen und sprachlichen Unterschiede überwunden wird. Denn, so hebt Brook hervor, „die Leiber aller Rassen unseres Planeten sind mehr oder weniger gleich ... Das Instrument des Leibes ist dasselbe in allen Teilen, was sich wandelt, sind die kulturellen Stile und Einflüsse."[28] Was wichtig ist, ist das Vermögen zu hören, ist das Vermögen, die Kodes und die Impulse zu hören, die sich im Leib verbergen und die sich an der Wurzel der kulturellen Formen befinden.[29]

Ein letztes, als Rekurs auf die interkulturelle Dynamik der Arbeit Peter Brooks genutztes Instrumentarium ist die Gestalt des Geschichtenerzählers. Geschichten erzählen ist einer der Ausdrucksformen, die am besten die Wirklichkeit des Theaters übersetzen, in dem Maße, in dem die Erzählung eine der ausdrück-stärksten und wirkmächtigsten Formen ist, um an einem gemeinsamen Interesse zu partizipieren, um die Aufmerksamkeit auf die Welt und auf die Realität zu richten, die übertragen werden soll. Deshalb ist die Theaterarbeit an die Erzählerarbeit assimilierbar.[30] Zwei der für die Interkulturalität Peter Brooks bedeutendsten Stücke, der *Mahabharata* und die *Konferenz der Vögel*, greifen auf dieses Instrumentarium als Übersetzungsform der interkulturellen Dynamik, die sie durchzieht, zurück. Diese Funktion einer lebendigen Bezeugung einer Geschichte, einer Kultur und einer Tradition macht aus dem Erzähler eines der vermittelnden Prinzipien des interkulturellen Dialoges, den das Theater Peter Brooks zu befördern beansprucht.

Ich möchte diese Referenzen auf die Instrumentarien und auf die interkulturelle Strategie Peter Brooks damit beschließen, daß ich die Aufmerksamkeit auf den Prozeß lenke, durch den er angesichts der Vielfalt der Kulturen sich hindurcharbeitet, um zu einem Ergebnis zu gelangen, das statt Auflösung, diffusem Synkretismus und folkloristischer Mischung eine wahrhafte Bereicherung darstellt. Dieser Prozeß ist genau das, was wir den Prozeß der Entfernung oder Elimination des Oberflächlichen, Stereotypen, Tiefelosen und den Vorgang der Konzentration auf dasjenige nennen, was beim Blick hinter das Stereotype aufscheint. Dies impliziert, daß jeder Schauspieler gleichzeitig eine gewisse Distanz hinsichtlich seiner eigenen Kultur und deren Stereotype einnimmt, um ihr Wesentliches erreichen und freilegen zu können. Es handelt sich im Grunde darum, dasjenige zu suchen, was einer Kultur wirksam Leben einhaucht, damit sie eine fruchtbare

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28 Brook, Peter, *La Puerta abierta*, p. 27. (Übersetzung der Herausgeber.)

29 Idem, *Hilos de tiempo*, p. 218.

30 Croyden, Margaret, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

Interaktion mit anderen Kulturen und mit dem, was ihnen Lebendigkeit gibt, ausprägen kann.

Wir würden resümierend sagen, daß die Haltung Peter Brooks im Angesicht der Multikulturalität der gegenwärtigen Welt gleichzeitig die der Suche nach einer Transkulturalität ist, die das Menschliche als etwas definiert, daß er jenseits der kulturellen und ethnischen Differenzen der Personen findet, die seinen Schauspielen beiwohnen, jenseits der Schauspieler, die in die entsprechende Montage eintreten, und die Haltung der Intensivierung einer Interkulturalität, die sich auf die Entdeckung der wahren Differenzen stützt, die, einmal artikuliert und kombiniert, aus dem Prozeß des theatralischen Schaffens einen Raum der Bereicherung, der Harmonie und des menschlichen Konzertes in einer Polyphonie von Stimmen, Gesten und Mythen und verschiedenen kulturellen Horizonten machen.

Mythisch-magisches Denken als Kulturform und Kulturleistung.

Eine Fragestellung bei Ernst Cassirer und Claude Lévi-Strauss

Christian Möckel

1. Methodische Vorbemerkungen

In seinen letzten Lebensjahren, insbesondere nach seiner Bekanntschaft mit Roman Jakobson und der Strukturalistischen Linguistik im Jahre 1941, deutet Ernst Cassirer seine Philosophie der symbolischen Formen als einen Strukturalismus, wobei er den zentralen Begriff der symbolischen Form explizit als Strukturbegriff verstanden wissen will und ebenso den Begriff der Gestalt als Strukturbegriff definiert. Dies hat in jüngster Zeit die Überlegung aufkommen lassen, Cassirers Philosophie könne und müsse als ein − ungenutzter − Ansatz „strukturalistischen Denkens avant la lettre" betrachtet werden. Da sich Cassirer intensiv mit dem mythischen Denken auseinandergesetzt und eine wegweisende Phänomenologie des mythischen Denkens entworfen hat, liegt die Frage nahe, inwieweit dieser strukturalistische Ansatz Parallelen in der Strukturalen Anthropologie Claude Lévi-Strauss' findet, die ebenfalls die Erforschung der mythischen Lebens- und Denkform zum zentralen Gegenstand hat. Lévi-Stauss selbst erklärt 1971 in einem Brief an Werner Hofmann, daß ihm bei der Lektüre eines Cassirerschen Artikels aus dem Jahre 1933[1] der Eindruck entstanden wäre, dieser entspreche „très exactement à ma propre pensée".[2] Dieses Bekenntnis wirft zudem die Frage auf, die sich durch die Lektüre von Schriften wie *La pensée sauvage* (1962) noch erhärtet, inwieweit im philosophisch relevanten Werk Lévi-Strauss' von einem symboltheoretischen Denken und sogar von einer sinngemäßen Anwendung des Begriffs der symbolischen Formen auszugehen ist. Diese beiden, sich methodologisch ergänzenden Fragen bilden einen relativ neuen und äußerst interessanten Gegenstand für die Cassirerforschung.

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1 Cassirer, Ernst, Le langage et la construction du monde des objectes, in: *Journal de psychologie*, vol. 30 (1933), Nr. 1-4, pp. 18-44.

2 Hofmann, Werner, Meine Wege zu Cassirer. Eine Skizze, in: *Cassirer Studies,* vol. II: *Theory of Figuration*, Napoli 2009, pp. 53-64, hier: p. 55.

Komparative Studien zur Philosophie der symbolischen Formen Ernst Cassirers und zur strukturalen Anthropologie (Ethnologie) von Claude Lévi-Strauss gehören in Frankreich schon seit geraumer Zeit zur wissenschaftlichen Praxis. Begonnen haben diese mit einem Vergleich der beiden „approches de l'étude du mythe", den Roger Silverstone 1976 vorgelegt hat.[3] Als neueste und exemplarische Untersuchung darf die von Muriel Van Vliet im Juni 2011 an der Universität Rennes erfolgreich verteidigte Dissertation *Esthétique et anthropologie selon Ernst Cassirer* gelten, die eine komparative Studie zu Cassirer und Lévi-Strauss enthält.[4] Ausdruck des intensiven Interesses an diesen vergleichenden Studien sind auch Kolloquien und Workshops. So fand im Januar 2011 an der Universität Amiens ein von Laurent Perreau und Jeffrey Andrew Barash organisiertes Kolloquium statt, das die Philosophie der symbolischen Formen mit der strukturalen Anthropologie konfrontierte, und dies u.a. anhand der fast zeitgleichen Beiträge beider Wissenschaftler in der New Yorker Zeitschrift *Word*[5] und des 4. Bandes von Lévi-Strauss' *Mythologiques*[6]. Im Februar 2011 folgte am Collège de France in Paris eine Journée d'étude, organisiert von Dimitri Lorrain, zur Aktualität Cassirers, auf dem auch die erwähnten komparativen Studien eine Rolle spielten.

In Portugal existieren Studien zu diesem Thema zwar bislang nicht, allerdings fand 2008 ein Internationales Kolloquium zum 100. Geburtstag von Lévi-Strauss und Merleau-Ponty statt, dessen Beiträge an der Universität Lissabon (Centro da Filosofia da Ciência) unter dem Titel *Corps et Signes* veröffentlicht wurden. Im Beitrag Étienne Bimbenets findet der Einfluß Cassirers im Zusammenhang mit Merleau-Ponty explizit Erwähnung.[7]

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3   Silverstone, Roger, Ernst Cassirer and Claude Lévy-Strauss. Two Approaches to the study of Myth, in: *Archives des sciences sociales des religions* (1976) vol. 41, pp. 25-36.

4   Van Vliet, Muriel, *Esthétique et anthropologie selon Ernst Cassirer. Une introduction aux sciences humaines*, 2 tomes. Thèse. Université de Rennes 1. Thèse soutenue à Rennes Le 25 juin 2011. Chapitre 7: „Esthétique et Anthropologie humaniste: Ernst Cassirer et Claude Lévi-Strauss", pp. 344-409. Die Dissertation erscheint in Kürze als Buch : Muriel Van Vliet, *La forme selon Ernst Cassirer − De la morphologie au structuralisme*, Rennes 2013.

5   Cassirer, Ernst, Structuralism in modern linguistics, in: *Word. Journal of the Linguistic Circle of New York*, vol. 1 Nr. 1 (1945), pp. 99-120; Lévi-Strauss, Claude, L'analyse structurale en linguistique et en anthropologie, in: ebd., vol. 1 Nr. 2 (1945), pp. 1-21.

6   Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Mythologiques,* tome 4: *L'homme nu, »la Finale«* (1971), Paris 2009, pp. 575-588.

7   Bimbenet, Étienne, Merleau-Ponty − Lévi-Strauss: l'échange n'a pas eu lieu, in: Mercury, Jean-Yves, e Nabais, Nuno (Ed.), *Corps et Signes. No Centenário do Nascimento de Claude Lévi-Strauss e Maurice Merleau-Ponty*. III Colóquio Internacional Filosofia das Ciências Humanas. Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa. (Colecção Documenta - vol. 5), pp. 77-96, hier: 80f.

Weder in der deutschen Strukturalismusforschung noch in der deutschen Cassirerforschung gibt es bislang spezielle, tiefgründige Studien, die das Denken Cassirers und Lévi-Strauss' nach philosophischen Gesichtspunkten vergleichen, auf einander beziehen. In zwei Beiträgen (1999, 2002) hat der 2010 verstorbene John M. Krois diese Frage berührt, dabei allerdings mehr die grundsätzlichen Unterschiede zwischen beiden Denkern betont. Lévi-Strauss sei auf der Suche nach „ahistorischen ‚Tiefenstrukturen' im Symbolprozeß" gewesen, während Cassirer sich für die „Ordnung der Veränderungen und die relativen Invarianzen von Gliedern eines funktionalen Zusammenhanges" interessiert habe.[8] Dagegen hat der bereits erwähnte Kunsthistoriker Werner Hofmann kürzlich in den *Cassirer Studies* auf offensichtliche Parallelen im Denken beider aufmerksam gemacht; dieser Beitrag dient − wie auch die Dissertationsschrift Van Vliets − den nachstehenden Überlegungen als methodische Orientierung.

Für die deutsche Cassirerforschung muß in dieser Frage ein insgesamt unbefriedigender Zustand konstatiert werden, den auch Krois 1999 als „nicht zufriedenstellend" bezeichnet hatte.[9] Ein Forschungsprojekt, das ich seit einiger Zeit vorbereite, soll diesen Zustand ein Stück weit ändern. Das Projekt wird einen Vergleich des philosophisch-methodologischen Instrumentariums beider Denker am Beispiel ihrer Mythostheorien samt ihrer Kulturtheorien zum Ziel haben. Diese Theorien sind nach meinem Dafürhalten ein methodisch sinnvoller Ausgangs-punkt, da sie ein Kernthema sowohl der Philosophie der symbolischen Formen als auch der strukturalen Anthropologie (Ethnologie) darstellen.

Im nachstehenden Beitrag werden zunächst einige methodische Fragen auf der Grundlage erster eigener Vorarbeiten und der Überlegungen thematisiert, die Muriel van Vliet und Werner Hofmann vorgelegt haben. Im zweiten Teil sollen Rechercheergebnisse zur Diskussion gestellt werden, die mythisch-magisches Denken als Kulturform und als Kulturleistung sowohl in Cassirers *An Essay on Man* (1944) und *The Myth of the State* (1946) als auch in Lévi-Strauss' *La pensée sauvage* (1962) vergleichend aufweisen.

1. Den methodischen Rahmen für eine solche komparative Recherche kann ein von Van Vliet vorgeschlagenes Verfahren dienen, „relire l'oeuvre de Cassirer à l'aune du développements que Claude Lévy-Strauss mène en ethnologie et en esthétique",[10] um Cassirer als Vordenker des Strukturalismus, ja einer

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8   Krois, John M., Zur Darstellung von symbolischen und sozialen Strukturen. (Ernst Cassirer und Pierre Bourdieu), in: *Mitteilungen des Institutes für Wissenschaft und Kunst*. 54. Jg., 1999, Nr. 2-3, pp. 8-13, hier p. 8.

9   Ebd., p. 8.

10 Van Vliet, Muriel, *Esthétique et anthropologie selon Ernst Cassirer*, p. 280.

„anthropologie structurale" begreifen zu können. Andererseits läßt sich offensichtlich Lévi-Strauss gelegentlich besser verstehen, wenn er „à l'aune" der Philosophie der symbolischen Formen gelesen wird. Ein derartiges methodisches Verfahren wirft die Frage einer Verschränkbarkeit oder gar gegenseitigen Ergänzung (Komplementarität) von Philosophie der symbolischen Formen und strukturaler Anthropologie auf. Selbstverständlich sind dabei die z.B. von Krois betonten grundsätzlichen methodologischen und sachlichen Unterschiede im wissenschaftlichen Werk beider Denker, die „Suche nach ahistorischen sozialen Strukturen" einerseits und die Thematisierung „symbolischer Formen der Kultur als historisch veränderbare Systeme" andererseits, im Auge zu behalten.

2. Eine der Fragen, die sich einer komparativen Untersuchung sofort stellen, ist die, ob der Begriff der Form, insbesondere der der symbolischen Form, mit dem Strukturbegriff, den Cassirer bereits sehr früh in seinen Werken verwendet, verglichen oder gar gleichgesetzt werden kann, bzw. ob sich der Begriff der symbolischen Form nach und nach zu dem der Struktur gewandelt hat. Cassirer selbst suggeriert in seinen letzten Schriften einen solchen Gedanken, wenn er seine Philosophie der symbolischen Formen, insbesondere seine Phänomenologie der Sprache, als einen modernen linguistischen Strukturalismus, „the expression of a general tendency of thought that, in these last decades, has become more and more prominent in almost all fields of scientific research", verstanden wissen will.[11] Zu überprüfen ist auch der damit in Zusammenhang stehende Gedanke Cassirers, daß der deutsche Begriff der „Gestalt" den Begriff der „Struktur" vorwegnehme bzw. diesen bereits zum Ausdruck bringe.[12] Lévi-Strauss wiederum macht auf die Bedeutung des von Bühler gebrauchten Begriffs der Gestalt (Gestaltpsychologie) für den linguistischen Strukturalismus aufmerksam.[13]

3. Hieran schließt sich die eigentliche Frage der Recherche an, ob der Strukturbegriff des Ethnologen Lévi-Strauss mit dem im philosophischen Werk Cassirers exzessiv anzutreffenden Terminus überhaupt verglichen oder sogar identifiziert werden kann. Dies impliziert wiederum die philologische Frage, ob der

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11 Cassirer, Ernst, Structuralism in Modern Linguistics, in: *Gesammelte Werke. Hamburger Ausgabe.* Hrsg. von Birgit Recki. (ECW) Bd. 24: *Aufsätze und kleinere Schriften 1941-1946.* Hamburg 2007, pp. 299-320, hier: p. 320.

12 „When studying the phenomena of sense perception, the Gestalt psychologists had become aware of the fact that sense perception has a definite structure." – Ebd., p. 320.

13 „Was die linguistischen Strukturalisten angeht, so haben Trubetzkoi und Jakobson oft gesagt, was sie der Gestaltpsychologie und insbesondere den Arbeiten K[arl] Bühlers verdanken." – Lévi-Strauss, Claude, 16. Kap. Nachtrag zu Kap. 15 [Der Strukturbegriff in der Ethnologie], in: *Strukturale Anthropologie* I. (1958) Frankfurt / Main 1977, p. 348.

französische Ausdruck »structure« und der deutsche Terminus »Struktur« denn eine identische Bedeutung besitzen. Bezug zu nehmen wäre ebenfalls auf den Strukturbegriff der Linguistik, wie ihn Roman Jakobson gebraucht, da Cassirer von diesem 1941 auf der Schiffsüberfahrt nach New York entscheidende Anregungen erfuhr, über sein Verhältnis zum aufkommenden linguistischen Strukturalismus nachzudenken.[14] Bekanntlich ist auch das strukturalistische Denken Lévi-Strauss' und seine Anwendung auf die Ethnologie durch Jakobson inspiriert worden.

4. Außerdem ergibt sich die Notwendigkeit, sich eingehend mit dem Thema Symbol und Symbolisierung im strukturalistischen Denken von Lévi-Strauss zu befassen, das hier ohne Zweifel eine wichtige Rolle gespielt hat. Es läßt sich vielfach belegen, z.B. in Lévi-Strauss' „Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Maus"[15], daß er den Symbolcharakter der Kultur klar erkannt und benannt hat. In seinen Schriften finden sich viele Belege für eine Einsicht in den Symbolcharakter des Denkens, was im nachfolgenden 2. Teil des Beitrages belegt werden wird.

5. Ausgehend von dem Aufweis des Symbolcharakters der Kultur bei Lévi-Strauss ist im Weiteren zu prüfen, ob hierbei eine − z.B. von Hofmann und Van Vliet behauptete − Nähe zum Symbolverständnis Cassirers vorliegt. Sich auf Lévi-Strauss' *La penseé sauvage* (1962) beziehend spricht Hofmann u.a. von einem ins Auge springenden „Paralleldenken der beiden Philosophen" und von methodischen Gemeinsamkeiten bei der Deutung der sinnstiftenden Klassifikation von Namen, Sachen etc. im mythischen bzw. totemistischen Denken, wobei die Klassifikation von beiden als geistige, symbolisierende und bedeutungsgebende Leistung verstanden werde.[16] Van Vliet hebt u.a. hervor, daß sich bei beiden Denkern als gemeinsamer Ausgangspunkt des symboltheoretischen Denkens die Überzeugung vom Primat der Bedeutung gegenüber allen anderen Elementen des Systems finde.[17] In dem Zusammenhang ist auch der Vermutung nachzugehen,

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14 „Er [Jakobson] stellte sich Ernst vor und berichtete, daß er Linguist von Beruf und ein großer Bewunderer seiner Schriften sei. Er war glücklich, ihn [Cassirer] so unerwartet zu treffen, und es dauerte keine Viertelstunde und die beiden befanden sich in ein wissenschaftliches Gespräch vertieft. Das Gespräch dauerte lange … fast die ganzen vierzehn Tage der Überfahrt und schien für beide Teile äußerst anregend und fruchtbar … die beiden Gelehrten sprachen über ihre Sprachprobleme mit größtem Eifer." − Cassirer, Toni, *Mein Leben mit Ernst Cassirer.* Hamburg 2003, p. 284f.

15 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Maus*, Paris 1950, p. XIX.

16 Hofmann, Werner, Meine Wege zu Cassirer, a.a.o., p. 56, zuvor: 55.

17 „Tous deux partagent malgré la signification sur tout autre élément du système, qu'il s'agisse même de la notion de sujet ou de celle d'objet, de la notion aussi du moi et de toi. La fonction symbolique constitue le noyau mouvant de leurs deux systèmes ouvert". − Van Vliet, Muriel, *Esthétique et anthropologie selon Ernst Cassirer*, p. 346.

daß Lévi-Strauss bei seiner Anwendung der Symboltheorie auf das mythisch-magische bzw. totemistische Denken die Cassirersche Kategorie der „symbolischen Prägnanz"[18] bemüht. Dies impliziert die Frage, ob sich bei Lévi-Strauss, ähnlich wie bei Merleau-Ponty, ein Verständnis von symbolischer Prägnanz aufweisen läßt.[19]

6. Anwendung findet der - im Einzelnen zu vergleichende und zu qualifizierende - symboltheoretische und strukturalistische Ansatz bei beiden Wissenschaftlern auf die Untersuchung der mythischen Lebens- und Sozialform und auf das mythisch-magische oder totemistische Denken. Letzteres wird als ein Verfahren von strukturierender bzw. strukturierter Weltwahrnehmung, sinnhafter Weltkonstitution und Weltbewältigung gedeutet, dem eine eigene Logik oder Rationalitätsform innewohnt, die eine in sich stimmige Totalität von Bedeutungen auszubilden erlaubt. Der sowohl von Cassirer als auch von Lévi-Strauss intensiv thematisierte Bezug von mythisch-magischer und empirisch-analytischer Klassifikation Menschen, Lebewesen und Dinge betreffend bildet einen weiteren wichtigen Strang der komparativen Untersuchung der philosophischen Instrumentarien beider Wissenschaftler. Während ganz klar weder Cassirer noch Lévi-Strauss die Behauptung eines simplen »vorlogischen« Denkens teilen, wie sie Lucién Lévy-Bruhl vertritt,[20] springt eine solche Gemeinsamkeit bei der Zurückweisung einer

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18 „Wir müssen von der 'Sinnpraegnanz' als Urphaenomen ausgehen – hinter dieses Phaenomen, daß jedes zeitlich-Momentane das 'Ganze' irgend wie darstellt, mit-in sich schließt, und zwar unmittelbar, können wir nicht zurück. " − Cassirer, Ernst, Praesentation und Repraesentation, in: ders., *Symbolische Prägnanz, Ausdrucksphänomen und ›Wiener Kreis‹*. Hrsg. von Christian Möckel. (*Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*. [ECN] Bd. 4) Hamburg 2011, p. 7. „Eine Wahrnehmung ist praegnant – nicht schlechthin durch ihre "Qualitäten", sondern durch den Bedeutungsgehalt, den sie in sich schliesst. Es kommt ihr neben ihrem unmittelbaren ›Inhalt‹ eine bestimmte ›Funktion‹ zu, einen ›Sinnkomplex‹ als Ganzes darzustellen, zu symbolisieren, dem Bewusstsein unmittelbar als solchen gegenwärtig zu machen". − Cassirer, Ernst, Praegnanz, symbolische Ideation, in: ebd., p. 51.

19 Van Vliet, Muriel *Esthétique et anthropologie selon Ernst Cassirer*, p. 361.

20 "Lucien Lévy-Bruhl has given one of the most thorough and fascinating analyses of the structure of the ›primitive‹ mind. This analysis is based upon the presupposition that ‚primitive mentality is toto caelo different from modern mentality'. [Lucien Lévy-Bruhl: *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*. Introduction, pp. 2, 6, 21.] Between the two modes of thinking there is no point of contact; they are separated from each other by an insurmountable gulf. Primitive mind is a ›prelogical‹ mind. Its concepts are not to be explained in terms of our logic or our psychology. In order to describe the structure of primitive mind Lévy-Bruhl had to introduce a new language and new categories for which there seemed to be no analogy in our own behaviour, our thoughts, our customs and institutions. According to Lévy-Bruhl the fundamental and irreconcilable contrast between ‚primitive' and ‚civilized' mentality lies in the fact that the former is governed by 'collective representations'. … But if we admit this definition - can we really say

Intellektualisierung des mythisch-magischen Denkens,[21] wie sie Frazer und Tylor vorschlagen, nicht so einfach ins Auge. Bezüglich der Nähe und Vergleichbarkeit von mythisch-magischem und wissenschaftlichem Denken sehe ich einen entscheidenden Unterschied der beiden Autoren offenbar werden. Obwohl beide die Eigenständigkeit und autonome Selbstgenügsamkeit einer mythisch-magischen bzw. totemistischen Logik des Denkens, Klassifizierens und Bedeutungsgebens betonen, die einer eigenen mythischen Lebens- und Sozialform korreliert und deren Bedürfnis nach der Etablierung einer Ordnung im Universum zu befriedigen vermag, betont Cassirer stärker den unüberwindbaren Unterschied zwischen mythisch-magischer und wissenschaftlich-theoretischer Rationalität,[22] während es Lévi-Strauss vorzieht, von einer parallelen, alternativen, vorgreifenden oder vergleichbaren Logik zu sprechen.[23]

7. Eine komparative Untersuchung sollte sich in erster Linie um mögliche Parallelen im Denken beider Wissenschaftler, weniger um die Frage des copyright am strukturalistischen Denken bemühen, obwohl auch das durchaus eine interessante wissenschafts- und philosophiegeschichtliche Frage sein dürfte. Die eher biographische Frage, ob Cassirer und Lévi-Strauss persönlich voneinander Notiz nahmen, ob der Jüngere (1908 – 2009) die Schriften, Vorträge, Theorien etc. des Älteren (1874 − 1945) zur Kenntnis nimmt, ob also vielleicht sogar von einer philosophischen Beeinflussung Lévi-Strauss' durch Ernst Cassirer gesprochen

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that the civilized mind has ceased living in a world of collective representations, that all this has become a remote and dark past, a thing that has faded away and sunk into insignificance in modern culture?" − Cassirer, Ernst, The Myth of the State. Its Origin and Its Meaning. Third Part: The Myth of the Twentieth Century, in: ders., *Zu Philosophie und Politik*. Hrsg. von John M. Krois und Christian Möckel. (*Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*. [ECN] Bd. 9) Hamburg 2008, p. 178f. Auch Lévi-Strauss erwähnt, daß es Lévy-Bruhl unerträglich gewesen sei, "daß der Wilde »komplexe Kenntnisse« besitzt und der Analyse und Beweisführung fähig ist". − Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, Frankfurt / Main 1973, p. 289.

21 „In his [Frazer's - C.M.] book the difference between the primitive mind and the mind of civilized man is almost obliterated. The primitive acts and thinks like a real philosopher." − Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State*, New Haven 1946, p. 10. Obwohl Lévi-Strauss totemistisches und wissenschaftliches Denken nicht gleichsetzt, sondern wie Cassirer die Eigenständigkeit des ersteren betont, unterstreicht er doch immer wieder den quasi wissenschaftlichen Charakter des »wilden« Denkens, wenn er dieses als „Wissenschaft vom Konkreten" deutet. − Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, 1. Kap., pp. 11-48.

22 „Myth is nontheoretical in its very meaning and essence. It defies and challenges our fundamental categories of thought. Its logic … is incommensurate with all our conceptions of empirical or scientific truth". − Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man. An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*. New Haven 1944, p. 73.

23 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, 1. Kap., pp. 13, 23f., 25, 27, 34.

werden muß, wird im vorliegenden Beitrag nicht berührt.[24] Nachzugehen wäre wohl vor allem möglichen indirekten Vermittlungen über Jakobson, Merleau-Ponty u.a. Heißt es doch bei Lévi-Strauss selbst in seinem Brief an Werner Hofmann: „Il est d'ailleurs possible que quelque chose de l'enseignement de Cassirer me soit parvenu, sans que je le sache, par l'intermédiaire de Roman Jakobson que, je crois, le connaissait personnellement". Merleau-Ponty wiederum, mit dem Lévi-Strauss persönlich verkehrt und dem er *La pensée sauvage* gewidmet hat, verwendet in seinem Hauptwerk *Phénoménologie de la Perception* (1945) nicht nur viele der Autoren, auf die sich Cassirer permanent bezieht, sondern erwähnt auch Cassirer selbst mehrfach.

Im nachstehenden 2. Teil meines Beitrages wird der These nachgegangen, daß Lévi-Strauss in seinem Werk *La pensée sauvage*, ähnlich wie Cassirer in seinem Spätwerk, die Symbolisierungsleistungen des mythisch-magischen Bewußtseins, des totemistischen Denkens bewußt thematisiert, benennt und diese als originäre Kulturleistungen auffaßt.

2. Mythos als Kulturform und Kulturleistung

2.1. Mythos, Wissenschaft, Struktur

Werfen wir zunächst einen Blick auf die Thematisierung des Strukturgedankens in beiden Theorien des Mythos als Kulturform, da sich die methodologische Rechtfertigung einer komparativen Studie nicht zuletzt auf die Erwartung gründet, hierbei auf gewisse Parallelen zu stoßen. Allerdings beschränken wir uns hier auf seinen Aufweis und stellen noch nicht die methodisch unerläßliche Frage, ob wir es in beiden Fällen mit ein und demselben Strukturbegriff zu tun haben.

So stellt für Lévi-Strauss das mythisch-magische Denken „ein genau artikuliertes System" dar, das „in dieser Hinsicht unabhängig [ist] von dem anderen System, das die Wissenschaft später begründen wird".[25] Dieses Denken vollbringe, wie auch das wissenschaftliche, ein „Strukturieren" des Erlebten und Beobachteten, wobei ihm nur eine begrenzte Zahl von möglichen Strukturen zur Verfügung steht.[26] Im Unterschied zur späteren analytisch-unterscheidend vorgehenden Wissenschaft besteht „die Eigenart des mythischen Denkens" in der Funktion,

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24 „J'ai très peu fréquenté l'œuvre de Cassirer et je ne crois donc pas avoir été influencé par elle." − Claude Lévi-Strauss an Werner Hofmann, 25. Oktober 1971, in: Hofmann, Werner, Meine Wege zu Cassirer, p. 55.

25 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 25.

26 Ebd., p. 23.

notwendig verfaßte „strukturierte Gesamtheiten zu erarbeiten", und dies „durch Verwendung der Überreste von [zufälligen - C.M.] Ereignissen".[27] In der „Ordnung der Mittel und Zwecke" würden im mythisch-magischen bzw. ‚wilden' Denken „dem [zufälligen - C.M.] Ereignis und der [notwendigen - C.M.] Struktur" klar definierte Funktionen zugewiesen, die denen im wissenschaftlichen Denken diametral entgegengesetzt sind: Das mythische oder totemistische Denken schafft notwendige Strukturen mittels zufälliger Ereignisse, während das wissenschaftliche Denken zufällige Ereignisse mittels notwendig verfaßter Strukturen hervorbringt.[28] Aus diesem Grunde spricht Lévi-Strauss von einem prekären Gleichgewicht zwischen Struktur und Ereignis.[29] Außerdem nehmen Mythen - wie auch Riten - die „ereignishaften Ganzheiten" auseinander und setzen sie wieder neu d.h. modifiziert zusammen.[30]

Auch in der Cassirerschen Phänomenologie des mythischen Denkens findet sich der Strukturgedanke klar ausgesprochen. So spricht er ganz allgemein von der Aufgabe der Kulturphilosophie, „the structure of language, myth, religion, art and science" zu beschreiben, um einen Einblick zu erhalten in „the fundamental structure of each of these human activities".[31] Wenn er in dem Zusammenhang fordert, „the form of primitive mythical thought" sowohl in seiner historischen Entwicklung zu verfolgen als auch analytisch-strukturell zu betrachten,[32] dann heißt das mit anderen Worten, am Mythos sowohl Form*geschichte* als auch Form*analyse* zu betreiben, wie dies in nachgelassen Texten zur Geschichte und zum Mythos ausgeführt wird.[33] Geht es Cassirer doch um „the general structural principles", die allen menschlichen Tätigkeitsformen zugrunde liegen. Diese Strukturprinzipien gründen wiederum in „particular historical and sociological conditions". Methodologisch habe dabei aber das Bedeutungsproblem „precedence over the problem of historical development", habe „this structural view of culture" ihrer historischen Betrachtung grundsätzlich voranzugehen.[34]

Mit anderen Worten, obwohl Mythos samt Magie ausschließlich in empirischen, d.h. historischen und sozialen Kontexten beschrieben werden müssen, biete allein ihre strukturelle, formanalytische Aufklärung die Gewähr, sie als das zu verstehen, was sie sind. Dem mythischen Denken wird eine eigene „fundamental structure"

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27 Ebd., p. 35.

28 Ebd., pp. 36, 38f.

29 Ebd., p. 44.

30 Ebd., p. 48.

31 Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 68.

32 Ebd., p. 68f.

33 Möckel, Christian, „Lebendige Formen". Zu Ernst Cassirers Konzept der „Formwissenschaft", in: *Logos + Episteme* (Iaşi) Issue 3, vol. 2, 2011, pp. 375-379.

34 Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 69.

zugeschrieben, der sowohl ein allgemeines als auch ein speziell mythisch-magisches Strukturprinzip korreliert.[35] Struktur und Prinzip lassen sich jedoch nicht einfach analytisch, durch Zerlegung in letzte begriffliche Elemente erfassen. Vielmehr müssen die konkreten und direkten mythischen Ausdrucksphänomene, die den Gefühlen und Empfindungen ihren Wert oder Sinn geben, verstanden werden als „the whole of this expression in order to become aware of the structure of myth and primitive religion".[36] Diese Argumentation impliziert, daß mythisch-magisches Denken kein irrationales, willkürliches Phantasieren ist, sondern eine strukturie-rende Leistung, die wiederum auf bestimmte Strukturmuster zurückgreifen kann. Diese will Cassirer aufklären und benennen, da sie für ihn die ,Logik' des Mythos ausmachen.

2. 2. Mythos und Magie als Symbolisierungsleistungen

Das Mythische gilt Cassirer als „emotion turned into an image", als ein Gefühl, das „assumes a definite shape". Dies impliziert einen aktiven Prozeß, der eine Symbolisierungsleistung vollzieht, da er als symbolische „expression of emotion" endet.[37] Diese Gefühle beziehen sich auf Klassen von Gegenständen, d.h. korrelieren bestimmten Klassifikationsleistungen. Der mythische Ausdruck mit seinem symbolischen Charakter erfüllt als eine „cultural activity" „the task of objectivation", d.h. er läßt subjektive Momente (Gefühle) eine neue Form annehmen, indem er sie ihren isolierten und individuellen Charakter verlieren macht, sobald sie „under class-concepts" gebracht werden, „which are designated by general ,names'". Das läßt sie einen systematischen und allgemeinen Charakter gewinnen, weshalb sie auch einen „symbolic character" tragen.[38]

Sowohl für Cassirer als auch für Lévi-Strauss erweist sich die Klassifikation als eine entscheidende Leistung des mythisch-magischen Bewußtseins. Unter Klassifikation versteht Lévi-Strauss u.a. die Einteilung aller belebten und unbelebten Wesen in Familien und Untergruppen, wobei dies nach bestimmten Merkmalen wie Geschlecht, Größe, Farbe, Funktion in der Magie etc. geschieht. Dabei kommen bestimmte Reihenbildungen oder bestimmte Kategorien der Gliederung zur Anwendung, das Ganze trägt „systematischen Charakter" und schließt „symbolisierende" Funktionen ein.[39] Er unterscheidet drei Typen

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35 Ebd., p. 76f.

36 Ebd., p. 79.

37 Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State*, p. 43.

38 Ebd., p. 45.

39 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 53f.

mythisch-magischer Klassifikationssysteme: konzipierte Klassifikation (*Mythen*), vollzogene Klassifikation (*Riten*) und gelebte totemistische (*soziale*) Klassifikation.[40]

Dabei gilt ihm der Totemismus als ein „erbliches Klassifikationssystem", das an „konkreten Gruppen oder konkreten Individuen" haftet, auch wenn nicht alle Formen des Totemismus im eigentlichen Sinne erblich sind.[41] Lévi-Strauss sieht in diesen Systemen grundsätzlich einen Konflikt zwischen Geschichte und Klassifikation auftreten, dieser sei aber im mythisch-magischen Denken vermittelbar. Die mythisch-magischen Klassifikationen stimmen zwar nicht bzw. nur selten mit den empirisch-wissenschaftlichen Tatsachen überein, sind aber „oft hinreichend genau und unzweideutig" genug, um „bestimmte Identifikationen zu ermöglichen".[42] Deshalb vermögen sie einen kulturellen und gesellschaftlichen Zweck zu erfüllen: Im totemistischen Denken kommen auch bei „sehr niedrigem ökonomischen und technischen Niveau" überraschend „komplexe und kohärente Klassifikationssysteme" zum Einsatz.[43]

In Bezug auf den Bildcharakter des mythisch-magischen Denkens scheint Lévi-Strauss zunächst einen anderen Ansatz als Cassirer zu bevorzugen: er legt das Augenmerk vielmehr darauf, daß die „Elemente der mythischen Reflexion immer auf halbem Wege zwischen sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Eindrücken und Begriffen liegen", wobei erstere sich nicht aus der konkreten Situation herauslösen lassen.[44] Zwischen Bild und Begriff bestehe mit dem konkreten sinnlichen Zeichen, dem die Funktion begrifflicher Verweisungsfähigkeit innewohnt, aber ein Zwischenglied.[45] Das mythische Bild spielt die Rolle eines Zeichens und erwirbt so die Funktionalität der Austauschbarkeit, die eigentlich dem Begriff vorbehalten ist.[46] Doch wenn wir uns vergegenwärtigen, daß Cassirer die zu mythischen Bildern und Gestalten gewandelten Gefühle als symbolische Ausdrücke bzw. Symbole auffaßt, die eine Repräsentationsfunktion einschließen, dann scheinen beide Erklärungen doch nicht so weit auseinander zu liegen. Indem „mythical symbolism leads to an objectivation of feelings", stellt sich den Menschen früher oder später die Frage, was diese objektivierten Gefühle bedeuten,[47] das zum Bild gewandelte Gefühl steht

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40 Ebd., p. 268.

41 Ebd., p. 268 Anm.

42 Ebd., p. 54.

43 Ebd., p. 55.

44 Ebd., p. 31.

45 Dieses will er mit Hinweis auf Ferdinand de Saussure aufgefaßt wissen als „ein Band zwischen einem Bild und einem Begriff, die in der so hergestellten Vereinigung die Rolle des Signifikanten bzw. des Signifikats spielen." − Ebd., p. 31.

46 Ebd., p. 33.

47 Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State*, p. 45f.

für eine bestimmte Bedeutung (d.h. etwas Allgemeines), indem es sie aber auch immer noch ist.[48]

Ebenso ist für Lévi-Strauss das mythische Denken, „obwohl es in Bildern gefangen ist, bereits verallgemeinernd", arbeitet es doch mit „Analogien und Vergleichen".[49] Als Teile eines bestimmten Systems sind z.B. die Sprachbilder des Mythos bereits „verarbeitete Produkte" und damit „begriffliche Verdichtungen notwendiger Beziehungen".[50] Deshalb haben wir es hier, so Lévi-Strauss, in einem bestimmten Sinne bereits mit „abstraktem Denken" zu tun.[51] Im Grunde vertritt auch Cassirer in seinem Werk *Das mythische Denken* (1925) einen analogen Gedanken, wenn er ihm eigentümliche Kategorien (Quantität, Qualität, Kausalität) und Anschauungsformen (Raum, Zeit, Zahl) zuschreibt bzw. vom „mythischen Vorstadium" der Denk- und Anschauungsformen handelt.[52] In nahezu Cassirerscher Manier spricht Lévi-Strauss von „Invarianz[en] semantischer oder ästhetischer Art", die jeweils eine „Gruppe von Transformationen"[53] charakteri-

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48 Cassirer bleibt bei der allseits bekannten Feststellung, in der mythischen Denkweise stelle „das ‚Bild' ... die ‚Sache' nicht dar - es ist die Sache", eben nicht stehen. (Cassirer, Ernst, *Das mythische Denken* (1925), in: *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen.* Teil II, Darmstadt 4. Aufl. 1964, p. 51) Vielmehr interessiert ihn das partielle Auseinandertreten von ‚Bild' und ‚Sache' im Prozeß der ‚Schematisierung', die das mythische Denken durchläuft und im Einfluß der Raumworte auf die sprachliche Begriffsbildung zum Ausdruck kommt. „Durch die Vermittlung der Raumworte erschienen gewissermaßen die beiden Enden aller Sprachbildung erst wahrhaft aneinander geknüpft − schien im Sinnlichen des Sprachausdruckes ein rein geistiges Moment, wie im Geistigen des Sprachausdruckes ein sinnliches Moment aufgewiesen zu sein." − Ebd., p. 102.

49 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 34.

50 Ebd., p. 49f.

51 Ebd., p. 11. Lévi-Strauss hält es z.B. für erwiesen, „daß der Reichtum an abstrakten Wörtern eine Eigenschaft nicht nur der zivilisierten Sprachen ist." − Ebd., p. 11.

52 Cassirer, Ernst, *Das mythische Denken* (1925), pp. 78, 82f., 84.

53 „Die Frage nach der Objektivität löst sich für die schärfere kritische Analyse in der Frage der ‚Invarianz' auf." − Cassirer, Ernst, *Ziele und Wege der Wirklichkeitserkenntnis.* Hrsg. von Klaus Christian Köhnke und John Michael Krois, in: *Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte.* [ECN] Bd. 2. Hamburg 1999, p. 29. „Die moderne gruppentheoretische Auffassung ... nimmt dieser Wahrheit den Schein der Endgültigkeit. Legen wir die ‚Hauptgruppe' von Transformationen zu Grunde, die für die Euklidische Geometrie gilt, so können wir eine bestimmte Zahl von Eigenschaften heraussondern, die sich gegenüber dieser Hauptgruppe invariant verhalten. Aber schreiten wir jetzt zu einer andern Gruppe fort, indem wir z. B. die affinen oder projektiven Transformationen hinzufügen, so gerät all das, was bisher als festgestellt galt, wieder in Fluss. Denn mit jeder Erweiterung der Hauptgruppe geht uns ein Teil der Eigenschaften, die wir als unabänderlich ansahen, verloren. Es ergeben sich andere und neue ‚Invarianzen', − und zwischen ihnen können wir eine gewisse Stufenfolge, eine ganz bestimmte ‚Schichtung' aufweisen. Was in der einen Schicht als ein unaufheblicher generischer Unterschied erschien, das kann in einer andern als eine unwesentliche Modifikation erscheinen." − Ebd., p. 130.

sieren.[54] Das ‚primitive' Denken vollziehe sich in einem „System von Begriffen …, die in Bildern verdichtet sind",[55] und das die Worte wörtlich nimmt. Auch Cassirer spricht hinsichtlich des mythischen Denkens immer wieder von seinen Kategorien und Begriffen, betont aber grundsätzlich den Unterschied zur Form bzw. zur sie auszeichnenden Modalität, die diese Kategorien und Begriffe im theoretischen Denken haben.[56]

Es fällt auf, daß Lévi-Strauss - zumindest in *La penseé sauvage* - wenig oder selten vom Gefühl als der Grundlage des Mythos spricht. Dennoch finden wir die mit Cassirer[57] konform gehende Aussage, daß das mythisch-magische Wissen konkreten Charakter trage und von „Gefühlswerten" durchdrungen ist.[58] Selbst das theoretische Wissen ist für Lévi-Strauss, wie auch für Cassirer, „nicht unvereinbar … mit dem Gefühl", kann mit „Gefühlsmomenten" belebt werden.[59] Gefühle, Gefühlswerte und Gefühlsmomente gehen also auch bei Lévi-Strauss in die Klassifikationsleistungen des ‚primitiven' Denkens ein. Allerdings erscheint es zweifelhaft, ob Cassirer mit der dies wieder marginalisierenden These mitgehen würde, wonach das ‚wilde' Denken als quantifizierendes Denken grundsätzlich mit den Mitteln der Vernunft arbeite, also mit „Hilfe von Unterscheidung und Gegensätzen", keineswegs dagegen aber mit den Mitteln der Affektivität, d.h., „durch Verschmelzung und Partizipation".[60]

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54 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 50. „… hinter der empirischen Vielfalt der menschlichen Gesellschaften will die ethnologische Analyse Invarianten ermitteln, …" − Ebd., p. 284.

55 Ebd., p. 304.

56 „Die allgemeine Kategorie von ‚Ursache' und ‚Wirkung' fehlt dem mythischen Denken keineswegs … Aber von der Form der kausalen Erklärung, die durch die wissenschaftliche Erkenntnis gefordert und aufgestellt wird, unterscheidet sich die Kausalität des Mythos auch hier in demselben Zug, auf den sich zuletzt der Gegensatz ihrer beiderseitigen Objektbegriffe reduziert." − Cassirer, Ernst, *Das mythische Denken*, p. 57f. Immer wieder ist die Rede vom „spezifische[n] Objektbegriff und … spezifische[n] Kausalbegriff des mythischen Denkens". − Ebd., p. 77.

57 "Myth is an offspring of emotion and its emotional background imbues all its productions with its own specific color." − Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 82.

58 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 52. „The world of myth is a dramatic world − a world of actions, of forces, of conflicting powers. … Mythical perception is always impregnated with these emotional qualities". − Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 76.

59 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 52f. „All the efforts of scientific thought are directed to the aim of obliterating every trace of this first view. In the new light of science mythical perception has to fade away. But that does not mean that the data of our physiognomic experience as such are destroyed and annihilated. … their anthropological value persists. In our human world we cannot deny them and we cannot miss them; they maintain their place and their significance. In social life, in our daily intercourse with men, we cannot efface these data." − Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 77.

60 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 308.

2.3. Mythisches Denken als kulturelle Leistung

Im vorliegenden Beitrag kann kein wohlbegründeter Vergleich der Kulturbegriffe bei Cassirer und Lévi-Strauss vorgestellt werden. Cassirer bezeichnet in *An Essay on Man* (1944) Sprache, Mythos, Religion, Kunst, Wissenschaft, Geschichte als die Bestandteile, die verschiedenen Sektoren der Sphäre des Wirkens, des Tätigseins des Menschen, kurz die „the world of culture" konstituieren.[61] Kultur gilt ihm also als ein Ensemble eigentümlicher symbolischer Formen oder Sinnordnungen, in denen der Mensch lebt, wirkt und schafft. Den Symbolcharakter der Kultur als einer Ganzheit von Ordnungsformen scheint auch Lévi-Strauss klar benannt zu haben: „Toute culture peut être considérée comme un ensemble de systèmes symboliques au premier rang desquels se placent le langage, les règles matrimoniales, les rapports économiques, l'art, la science, la religion. "[62] An dieser Definition von Kultur fällt allerdings auf, daß in der Aufzählung der Mythos nicht als ein eigenes symbolisches System, als eine eigene symbolische Form erwähnt wird. Dies tut Lévi-Strauss aber in *L'homme nu*, wenn er von vier „Struktur-Familien" spricht, die als symbolische Systeme oder Formen aufgefaßt werden: hier nennt er neben den natürlichen Sprachen, Kunst und Mathematik auch den Mythos bzw. die Mythen.[63] Für Cassirer ist der Mythos „one of the oldest and greatest powers in human civilization. It is closely connected with all other human activities – it is inseparable from language, poetry, art and from early historical thought."[64]

Eine ausdrücklich kulturelle Leistung des Symbolcharakter tragenden mythisch-magischen Denkens sieht er in der Tatsache, daß die *symbolischen* Ausdrücke, wie schon die *natürlichen* Gefühlsausdrücke, eine Art Entladung, eine mildernde Wirkung auf die emotionale Anspannung bieten. Gleichzeitig werde durch sie und nur durch sie die Kraft der Gefühle gebunden, zusammengezogen.[65] „But symbolic expression does not mean extenuation; it means intensification", „condensation",

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61   "Man's outstanding characteristic, his distinguishing mark, is … his work. It is this work, it is the system of human activities, which defines and determines the circle of 'humanity'. Language, myth, religion, art, science, history are the constituents, the various sectors of this circle. … Language, art, myth, religion are no isolated, random creations. They are held together by a common bond." – Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 68.

62   Lévi-Strauss, Claude, Introduction à l'œuvre de Marcel Mauss, Paris 1950, p. XIX, zit. nach Van Vliet, Muriel, *Esthétique et anthropologie selon Ernst Cassirer*, p. 345f.

63   „Je poserai d'abord à titre d'hypothèse de travail, que le champ des études structurales inclut quatre familles d'occupant majeurs qui sont les êtres mathématiques, les langues naturelles, les œuvres musicales et les mythes". – Lévi-Strauss, Claude, L'homme nu, in: *Mythologiques*, Tome 4, p. 578, zit. nach Van Vliet, Muriel, *Esthétique et anthropologie selon Ernst Cassirer*, p. 379.

64   Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State*, p. 22.

65   Ebd., p. 46.

Umwandlung der emotionalen Anspannung in kulturelle Werke.[66] In dem Zusammenhang legt Cassirer großen Nachdruck auf die Feststellung: „Myth is an objectification of man's social experience, not of his individual experience."[67] Der Mensch steht unter der Macht des seine soziale Erfahrung objektivierenden Mythos, er faßt die mythischen Bilder nicht als objektivierende Symbole, sondern als Realität auf. Die Macht und Gewalt, die vom Mythos über die Menschen ausgeht, realisiert sich über die Emotionen, das Gefühl.

Als eine speziell kulturelle „Funktion" des Mythos bestimmt Cassirer seine Aufgabe bzw. sein Vermögen, eine einheitsstiftende Leistung zu vollbringen, „a unity in the manifold" herzustellen. Indem der Mythos eine „unity of feeling" erwirkt, vollzieht er auf spezifische Weise eine Leistung, die allen symbolischen Kulturformen eigen ist.[68] Diese Erfahrung der Einheit in der Vielfalt erlaubt eine erste Erfahrung von Ordnung, bei der allem Erlebten und Erfahrenen „a definite shape and structure" geben wird.[69] Cassirer glaubt, mit Blick auf uns Moderne bereits im mythischen Denken „the same desire of human nature" ausgedrückt vorzufinden, „to live in an ordered universe, and to overcome the chaotic state in which things and thoughts have not yet assumed a definite shape and structure".[70] Diese kulturell bedeutsame Klassifikations- und Ordnungsleistung des mythisch-magischen Denkens wird auch bei Lévi-Strauss gewürdigt.

Er formuliert diese Funktion für die Kulturformen Kunst, Wissenschaft und Mythos: „die Forderung nach Organisation [ist] ein der Kunst und der Wissenschaft gemeinsames Bedürfnis",[71] das sie mit dem mythisch-magischen Denken teilen. Lebt doch bereits im ‚primitiven' Denken das Bestreben, durch Klassifikation, d.h. durch "Gruppenbildung von Dingen und Lebewesen", den „Anfang einer Ordnung im Universum zu etablieren",[72] auch wenn es dabei „auf halbem Wege zwischen der Ordnung und der Unordnung" stehenbleibt.[73] Die Feststellung, daß "diese Forderung nach Ordnung … die Grundlage … jedes Denkens [ist]"[74], entspricht der Erkenntnis Cassirers aus dem Vergleich der vielfältigen Modalitäten des Denkens, insbesondere des mythisch-magischen und

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66 Ebd., p. 46.

67 Ebd., p. 47.

68 "Art gives us a unity of intuition; science gives us a unity of thought; religion and myth give us a unity of feeling. Art opens to us the universe of 'living forms'; science shows us a universe of laws and principles; …" − Ebd., p. 37.

69 Ebd., p. 15.

70 Ebd., p. 15.

71 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 24f.

72 Ebd., p. 20f.

73 Ebd., p. 88.

74 Ebd., p. 21.

des empirisch-kausalen. Das Gleiche gilt von der These Lévi-Strauss', wonach „jede Art der Klassifizierung … dem Chaos überlegen ist". Sei doch „selbst eine Klassifizierung auf der Ebene der sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Eigenschaften", wie sie das magische Denken vollbringt, „eine Etappe auf dem Weg zu einer rationalen Ordnung."[75] Hier ist allerdings anzumerken, daß Cassirer stärker die Vielfalt autonomer rationaler Ordnungen betont und unterstreicht, während Lévi-Strauss die Rationalität des Mythos bzw. der totemistischen »Wissenschaft des Konkreten« und die der modernen Wissenschaft näher aneinander hält, sie als ähnlicher und verwandter deutet als Cassirer das tut.

In den Leistungen mythisch-magischen Benennens und Klassifizierens von Erlebnissen hebt Lévi-Strauss mit Nachdruck das Motiv des *theoretischen* Interesses hervor, das nicht durch einen „praktischen Nutzen" für die Menschen gedeckt oder stimuliert ist.[76] Neben der „bloßen Befriedigung von Bedürfnissen", die natürlich auch stattfindet, ließen sich in den Akten des Benennens und Klassifizierens auch bereits rein „intellektuelle Ansprüche" antreffen.[77] Diese Beobachtungen geht durchaus konform mit dem zentralen Cassirerschen Gedanken, daß wir grundsätzlich einen Übergang von lebensnahen, lebenspraktischen Leistungen, die auch im Tierreich anzutreffen sind, zu eigentümlich symbolischen und damit kulturellen Leistungen konstatieren können. Dieser Übergang realisiere eine Abkehr von rein praktischen Bedürfnissen. An Aphasie, Agnosie und Apraxie Erkrankte fallen, so Cassirers These, im Grunde auf die niedere Stufe lebensnaher, lebenspraktischer Leistungen zurück, da ihre symbolisierenden Fähigkeiten der Krankheit zum Opfer gefallen sind.[78] Lévi-Strauss betont das Vorhandensein rein „intellektueller Ansprüche" ohne intendierten praktischen Nutzen u.a. hinsichtlich der systematischen botanischen und biologischen Kenntnisse im totemistischen Denken, die sich auch auf „morphologische Eigenschaften" erstreckten und die nicht „ausschließlich von … organischen und ökonomischen Bedürfnissen beherrscht" seien.[79]

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75 Ebd., p. 27f. Siehe hierzu auch: Möckel, Christian, Kulturelle Existenz und anthropologische Konstanten. Zur philosophischen Anthropologie Ernst Cassirers, in: *Zeitschrift für Kulturphilosophie* (Hamburg) 3. Jg. Heft 2/2009, p. 219f.

76 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 11f.

77 Ebd., p. 20.

78 Siehe hierzu: Möckel, Christian, Das Zusammenspiel von Körper, Gefühl und Symbolleistungen bei Ernst Cassirer. Versuch einer Annäherung, in: Bredekamp, Horst / Lauschke, Marion / Arteaga, Alex (Hg.), *Bodies in Action & Symbolic Forms. Zwei Seiten der Verkörperungstheorie.* (*Actus et Imago.* Bd. IX) Berlin 2012, pp. 15-28.

79 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, pp. 18, 13.

2.5. Mythos, Symbol, Kultur, Gesellschaft

Beide, der Philosoph und der Ethnologe, sehen im Mythos nicht nur eine Kulturform bzw. eine kulturelle Leistung, sondern stellen auch einen engen Bezug des mythischen Denkens zur Sozialform der Gesellschaft her. Lévi-Strauss bringt dies durch die These zum Ausdruck, die soziale Praxis werde als Denken gelebt![80] Auch wenn er davon spricht, daß die totemistischen Klassifikationen „nicht nur entworfen, sonder gelebt werden",[81] ist der Sozialbezug hergestellt. Cassirer wiederum versteht die symbolischen Formen der Kultur als ihre Organisationsformen, weshalb auch die soziale Organisation der die Kultur hervorbringenden Gesellschaften in seinen Blick fällt. Er deutet die symbolische Form des Mythos als eine „form of communal human existence", als eine „form of social organisation", die seine − des Menschen − subjektiven Aktivitäten und Betätigungen ausdrücken, organisieren, ordnen und systematisieren, ihnen einen bestimmten Sinn geben.[82] Verstehen lasse sich die primitive Denkform des Mythos nur unter Berücksichtigung der entsprechenden Sozialform, d.h. „the forms of primitive society".[83] Mit anderen Worten, um „the world of mythical perception and mythical imagination" beschreiben zu können, brauchen wir „an interpretation of mythical life".[84] Im mythischen Denken gelten nämlich nicht „the empirical relations between causes and effects", sondern vielmehr tief und intensiv gefühlte menschliche d.h. soziale Beziehungen.[85] Diese Argumentation impliziert hinsichtlich der Klassifikationen letztlich eine Strukturgleichheit mythischen Denkens sowohl mit der sozialen Organisation der Gemeinschaften, der auch Sitte und Tradition der Gemeinschaften korrelieren, als auch mit der Natur d.h. mit „plants, animals, organic beings and objects of inorganic nature, substances and qualities".[86]

Während Cassirer den entscheidenden Sozialbezug des Mythos in den sozialen Handlungen der Menschen, speziell in ihren rituellen Handlungen, zu ergründen sucht,[87] erfahren die zunächst unbewußt vollzogenen Riten in den mythischen

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80 „Die Art und Weise, wie der Mensch denkt, ist der Ausdruck seiner Beziehungen zur Welt und zu den Menschen." − Ebd., p. 303.

81 Ebd., p. 83, siehe auch ebd., p. 268.

82 Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 63.

83 Ebd., p. 68.

84 Ebd., p. 79.

85 Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State*, p. 38.

86 Ebd., p. 14.

87 „For what we wish to know [of myth - C.M.] is ... its function in man's social and cultural life." − Ebd., p. 34.

Erzählungen doch eine befragende Erklärung,[88] so stellt Lévi-Strauss einen wichtigen Sozialbezug über die totemistischen Klassifikationssysteme her: „um die Mythen und Riten korrekt interpretieren zu können", sei man *erstens* auf „die genaue Identifizierung der Pflanzen und Tiere, soweit sie in den Mythen und Riten erwähnt … werden, angewiesen".[89] *Zweitens* müsse man klären, welche Rolle jede einzelne Kultur den identifizierten, mythisch und rituell relevanten Gegenständen (Tieren, Pflanzen) „innerhalb eines Bedeutungssystems zuschreibt".[90] Immer dann, wenn das mythisch-magische Denken einem klassifizierten Gegenstand eine „signifikante Funktion" zuweist, dann zieht es dafür nur wenige der an ihm beobachteten Einzelheiten heran. Dieselben Einzelheiten hätten „ganz andere Bedeutungen" erhalten können, das jeweilige Bedeutungssystem aber erweist sich als kohärent. Und dies ist u.a. so, weil ein solches Bedeutungssystem auf einem „anthropomorphistischen Symbolismus"[91] beruht, der es ihm auch erlaubt, kombinierbare Klassifikationsmerkmale (d.h. Einzelheiten) zur Bildung komplexer Botschaften zu verwenden. Die jeweilige, niemals immanente Bedeutung der Merkmale und Elemente des Systems ist für Lévi-Strauss „einerseits Funktion der Geschichte und des [empirischen - C.M.] kulturellen Rahmens und andererseits Funktion der Struktur des Systems, in das sie eingesetzt werden sollen".[92]

Die soziale Gebundenheit oder Prägung der Klassifizierungen kommt auch zur Sprache, wenn Lévi-Strauss hervorhebt, daß ihnen jeweils bestimmte Logiken zugrunde liegen, die auf einem sozial relevanten Grundprinzip (z.B. der Dreiteilung des Clans) beruhen bzw. dieses Prinzip realisieren.[93] Dennoch ist auch hierbei ein willkürliches und zufälliges Moment zu konstatieren. Deshalb lasse sich „das Prinzip einer Klassifikation niemals postulieren", sondern allein durch die „ethnographische Forschung, d.h. die Erfahrung, … a posteriori aufdecken."[94] Lévi-Strauss sucht deshalb nicht nach einem allgemeinen Strukturschema totemistischen Denkens, sondern meint, bei jedem empirischen Volk von ‚Primitiven' eine eigene, zufällige Assoziationskette im Denken vorzufinden, die seinen jeweiligen eigentümlichen „Weg des Denkens" − oder „Umweg des

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88 "In his magical rites … man acts under the pressure of deep individual desires and violent social impulses. He performs these actions without knowing their motives; they are entirely unconscious. But if these rites are turned into myths a new element appears. Man … raises the question of what these things 'mean' … " − Ebd., p. 45f.

89 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 61, siehe auch pp. 64, 68f..

90 Ebd., p. 69.

91 Ebd., p. 70.

92 Ebd., p. 70.

93 Ebd., p. 72f.

94 Ebd., p. 74.

Eingeborenen-Denkens" – ausmacht.[95] Um die Stellung z.B. eines bestimmten Tieres im Klassifikationssystem des konkreten Volkes zu verstehen, müsse man folglich *drittens* diese eigentümliche Assoziationskette kennen. Erst dann verstehe man die „symbolische Rolle" des bestimmten Tieres etc. im konkreten Klassifikations- oder Bedeutungssystem, seine „pansymbolische Funktion",[96] dasjenige, wofür es als „Symbol" steht.[97] In jedem System der Bedeutungen besitzen auch bestimmte Begriffsgegensätze bzw. Begriffspaare ihren „symbolischen Sinn".[98]

Diese und ähnliche Aussagen zum Symbolcharakter des mythisch-magischen Denkens bzw. seiner Klassifikationssysteme, in denen die klassifizierten Dinge verschiedene „Funktionen in symbolischen Systemen" zu erfüllen vermögen,[99] machen noch einmal eine beachtliche Nähe zum Symboldenken Cassirers deutlich. Diese Systeme gelten ihm zudem als eine „soziale Klassifizierung", weil in diesen „gelebten" totemistischen Klassifikationen soziale Gruppen benannt, identifiziert werden. Das „System des Totemismus", das gekennzeichnet ist durch die „Homologie zwischen parallelen Reihen der natürlichen Arten und der sozialen Gruppen",[100] gilt Lévi-Strauss lediglich als „ein Sonderfall des allgemeinen Problems der Klassifizierung" und als „ein Beispiel unter anderen für die Rolle, die häufig den spezifischen Ausdrücken zugeschrieben wird, nämlich eine soziale Klassifizierung zu erarbeiten."[101]

Im Grunde kehrt dieser Gedanke bei Cassirer wieder. „The fundamental social character of myth" ist für ihn nämlich auch deshalb unbestritten, weil im totemistischen Weltbild die Natur zu „the image of the social world" wird.[102] Die Gliederung, Einteilung und Klassifikation der physischen Welt, wie sie im mythisch-magischen Denken vorgenommen wird, ist, so Cassirer, „the exact duplicate and counterpart of the social world", d.h. deren Einteilung „into diverse classes, tribes, clans".[103] Insbesondere in den magischen Riten, in denen der Mythos seine erzählende Erklärung findet, da er deren Motive hinterfragt und sinnhaft deutet, „the men … are fused with each other and fused with all things in

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95 Ebd., p. 75.

96 Ebd., p. 75.

97 Ebd., p. 76.

98 Ebd., p. 85.

99 Ebd., p. 80.

100 Ebd., p. 259.

101 Ebd., p. 78.

102 Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 79f. "Not nature but society is the true model of myth." - Ebd., S. 79.

103 Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State*, p. 14.

nature",[104] allerdings nur auf Zeit. Damit befriedigen die Riten „a deep and ardent desire of the individuals to identify themselves with the life of the community and with the life of nature."[105] In „totemistischen Systemen" ist z.B. das empirische Prinzip der Kausalität zwischen den Generationen ersetzt durch ihre im Ritus real erfahrene Identität bzw. unmittelbar gefühlte Verkörperung der Vorfahren in der gegenwärtigen Generation.[106]

In diesem Identitätserlebnis kommt nach Cassirers Verständnis ein philosophisch-anthropologisches „fundamental feeling of mankind" zum Ausdruck, die gefühlte Sehnsucht des Individuums nämlich, wenigstens auf Zeit „to be freed from the fetters of its individuality, to immerse itself in the stream of universal life, to lose its identity, to be absorbed in the whole of nature."[107] Dieses Grund- oder Urgefühl wird in bzw. zu mythischen Erzählungen rationalisiert. Mit den mythischen Fragen an das Rituelle beschreitet der Mensch einen Weg, „which will in the end lead him far from his unconscious and instinctive life", hinein in die Kultur![108] Lévi-Strauss deutet die kulturelle Funktion des Mythos etwas anders, für ihn besteht „der Hauptwert der [erzählend-erklärenden - C.M.] Mythen und [praktischen - C.M.] Riten" darin, „Beobachtungs- und Denkweisen", die die sogenannte totemistische Wissenschaft vom Konkreten ausmachen, „bis heute zu erhalten".[109] Seinen kulturellen Wert bezieht dieses Erhalten und Bewahren der „Restbestände" von mythisch-magischen Beobachtungs- und Denkweisen darin, daß diese „einer bestimmten Art von Entdeckungen angemessen waren (und es ohne Zweifel bleiben werden): jenen Entdeckungen … unter der Voraussetzung der Organisation und spekulativen Ausbeutung der sinnlich wahrnehmbaren Welt in Begriffen des sinnlich Wahrnehmbaren."[110]

Welche Rolle und Bedeutung Cassirer den totemistischen Klassifikations-systemen in Bezug auf den Zusammenhang von Strukturprinzip des Mythos und Strukturprinzip sozialen Lebens beimißt, ist noch im Einzelnen zu erforschen. Auf jeden Fall bilden diese Klassifikations- und Bedeutungssysteme auch einen wichtigen Gegenstand seiner historisch-analytischen Überlegungen und Recherchen zum mythischen Denken und zur Sprachphilosophie. Dies wird deutlich, wenn er, Siegmund Freuds Theorie kritisierend, die Unterscheidung dreier das mythische Denken und Leben kennzeichnende Systeme umreißt, die - wie die

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104 Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 95.
105 Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State*, p. 38.
106 Ebd. p. 39.
107 Ebd., p. 41.
108 Ebd., p. 46.
109 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, S. 29.
110 Lévi-Strauss, Claude, *Das wilde Denken*, p. 29.

symbolischen Formen auch - sich nicht aufeinander zurückführen lassen, die nicht auseinander hervor gehen: „the „Taboo-prescriptions", „the institution of exogamy" und „the totemistic system"![111] Seine Ausführungen im *Essay on Man* lassen aber vermuten, daß seiner Auffassung nach das Tabu-System „was the only system of social restriction and obligation", das dem Menschen in totemistischen Gemeinschaften das Leben und Überleben ermöglicht hat, da es allein dazu in der Lage war, den „cornerstone of the whole social order" zu bilden.[112] Dieses komplexe Verbotssystem wird nach Cassirer Auslegung erst durch die aufkommende Religion als neue sittliche Kulturform gesprengt und überwunden, da sie „turned passive obedience into an active religious feeling."[113]

Zumindest in *La pensée sauvage* scheint Lévi-Strauss dasjenige, was er hier Systeme der Bedeutung oder der Klassifikation nennt, stärker als Welterkenntnis- und Wissenssysteme zu interessieren, weniger als soziale Ordnungsgefüge, obwohl ihnen eine soziale Ordnungsfunktion zukommt und sie den sozialen Kosmos der Menschen mehr oder weniger abbilden. Darauf, daß Cassirer in den hier herangezogenen Schriften *An Essay on Man* und *The Myth of the State* die symbolische Form des Mythos vor allem als eine „form of communal human existence" bzw. eine „form of social organisation" deutet und behandelt, haben wir bereits hingewiesen. Der Mythos wird über die Riten eng an soziales Handeln gebunden. Dieses Herangehen verschließt zwar keineswegs die Augen vor den Erkenntnisleistungen des mythisch-magischen Denkens, stellt sie aber, im Vergleich mit dem Werk *Das mythische Denken*, nicht ins Zentrum des Interesses. Diese unterschiedlichen Intentionen bei beiden Philosophen bilden eine gewisse Schranke für die Frage nach Analogien in der Thematisierung kulturell relevanter, konstitutiver Symbolisierungsleistungen des mythisch-magischen Denkens und seiner Objektivationen, der Klassifikationssysteme und Mythen.

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111 Cassirer, Ernst, *The Myth of the State*, p. 32.
112 Ebd., p. 108.
113 Cassirer, Ernst, *An Essay on Man*, p. 108.

Cultural Representations of Trauma in Postcolonialism and Postcommunism[1]

Ecaterina Patrascu

1. Introduction

The article is intended as a comparative study of the aesthetic and ideological implications in representing trauma in postcolonial and postcommunist literatures. The general objective of the article refers to the modality in which the representability of trauma aligns to the dynamics of representability of the postcolonial and postcommunist vocabularies, under the circumstances of the problematic of trauma having marked ideological and ethic implications. The proposed idea is a very current topic and with a powerful impact on cultural studies: the traumatic events represent a constant of our contemporary society, while their history is a long and controversial one as well. The terms of postcolonialism and postcommunism are already associated with functional theoretical vocabularies, and the traumatic reality belongs, chronologically, to the reality these thoroughly cover.

Equally important is comparing the modalities in which the tension between trauma as an irrepresentable event and trauma as a concrete event that can be confronted and narrated could be reflected at the level of the literatures.

Thirdly, the article intends a comparative and systematic analysis of the formal innovations with regard to representing collective and/or individual trauma in the works that deal with the traumatic experience.

Last but not least, a direction of research addresses the ethical and ideological perspective, namely identifying the resistance of the text to the process of absorbing the dominant discourses, as well as the analysis of the possible relations between narrative innovation and ideology.

2. Theoretical Background: Trauma Studies—an Outline

Trauma studies as a field of research has been, for over a decade now, one of the most salient contemporary "cultural paradigms"[2], a controversial and debatable domain as well. The study of trauma from the perspective of the aesthetic and ideological implications of representation can be inscribed in a multidisciplinary and exhaustive preoccupation, namely the reception of trauma in the humanist sciences—psychology, psychoanalysis, sociology, cultural and literary studies.

The vast field of cultural trauma theory should be understood starting from its origin in Freudian psychoanalysis, this offering one of the first theorizations of the relation between trauma and representation. According to Ruth Leys, "This is its foundation, though researchers in the field of trauma studies now prefer to assume that Freud's work has been completely superseded."[3]

The signification of trauma, according to Freud, lies in the effects of the traumatic events: painful occurrences which were not fully integrated into one's personality are repressed subconsciously until later resurfacing distressingly. Key working concepts in Freud, such as belatedness, transmissibility, melancholia, collective traumatisation, will be part of the common trauma theory vocabulary to develop. However, in the larger context of cultural trauma studies, Freud is reproached and considered outmoded due to his theorization of trauma in terms of an internal, abstract and "unsayable" causation, as opposed to a present concern with external, historically delineated causation.

The official definition of trauma was formulated in *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (3rd edition DSM _III, 1980), by the American Psychiatric Association, under the name of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, as a result of specialists and public opinion focusing more and more on the consequences of some extreme traumatic situations, such as the Holocaust or the War in Vietnam.

The deconstructivism of the '60s/'70s, under the influence of Derridean poststructuralism, focuses, in the analysis of the relation reality-language-representation, on the "implosion of meaning", "the free play of the signifiers", irrepresentability. Trauma studies has its roots in this "maligned", textualist, and epistemology focused paradigm, but, as Stef Craps describes the evolution of the field, it turns ethical in the 1980s due to the prevailing cultural and historicist approaches. Not very late, starting from Paul de Man's deconstructivism, Dori

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2   Visser, Irene, Trauma theory and postcolonial literary studies, in: *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 47 (2011), Nr. 3, pp. 270-282, p. 270.

3   Leys, Ruth, *Trauma: A Genealogy,* Chicago 2000, p. 11.

Laub and Shoshana Felman[4], as well as Cathy Caruth[5] postulate the irrepresentability of trauma: trauma places itself beyond representation due to the impossibility of registering the traumatic moment and of language to reflect reality.

The main characteristics of trauma, according to Cathy Caruth, are the incapacity of registering a traumatic event at the level of knowledge, the belated experimenting of trauma, and incomprehensibility. "Trauma is not experienced as it occurs, [but] is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time."[6] The reality of trauma is idealized, beyond any system of signification, beyond representation, accessible only to the victims and eye-witnesses of the traumatic events.

Trauma as a literally recurrent yet consciously inaccessible experience is labeled by Geoffrey Hartman as a "necessary contradiction" in which "[the knowledge of trauma] is composed of two contradictory elements, … as close to nescience as to knowledge."[7] Thus, the reception of trauma is associated with the collapse of the understanding process, the resistance to the narrative structures and the linear temporality due to the literality of the traumatic moment. Caruth's position to trauma representability—the traumatic event is inaccessible and unspeakable—is labeled as "aporetic"[8], displaying increased indeterminacy and impossibility of representation.

Called the "avantgardist approach"[9] of representing trauma by Kerwin L. Klein, this is opposed to the "therapeutic approach", a reiteration of the Freudian premises. Judith Herman's "therapeutic" approach postulates the integration of the traumatic event at the level of consciousness, therefore enabling the sufferer's healing and recovery. Herman's theory becomes relevant in terms of the recuperative qualities of narration: "narrativization of trauma is necessary and possible, as an organized, detailed, verbal account, oriented in time and historical content."[10] Trauma narrativization is contextualized culturally and historically, as opposed to Caruth's dehistoricizing tendencies.

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4   Felman, Shoshana, and Laub, Dori, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History,* New York 1992.

5   Caruth, Cathy, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History.* Baltimore 1996.

6   Caruth, Cathy, Introduction to Psychoanalysis, Trauma and Culture I, in: *American Imago,* vol. 48 (1991), Nr. 1, pp.1-12, p. 7.

7   Hartman, Geoffrey H., On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies, in: *New Literary History*, vol. 26 (1995), Nr.3, pp. 537-63, p. 537.

8   Luckhurst, Roger, *The Trauma Question,* London 2008, p. 82.

9   Klein, Kerwin L., On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse, in: *Representations*, vol. 69 (2000), pp. 127–50, p. 138.

10 Lewis Herman, Judith, *Trauma and Recovery: From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror,* London 1994, p. 177.

Therefore, in the context of the postcolonial trauma theory, Caruth's approach would stand as rather obstructive, while Herman's would facilitate cultural and historical contextualization. Caruth's position is also criticized by Dominick LaCapra as an "indiscriminate generalization … that would conflate historical specificity with its Freudian originary misleadingly notion of trauma."[11] In the same line with Judith Herman, Linda Belau underlines that "only through language can one postulate what cannot be uttered"[12], the representation of trauma being possible at a symbolic level, therefore not placing itself beyond representability. The complexity of trauma is not negated, yet this approach negates the irrepresentable character of trauma suggested by Caruth, Felman and Laub.

A second thesis defended by Cathy Caruth is that the traumatic experience may establish solidarity and communion links among cultures, beyond the cultural specificities: "trauma itself may provide the very link between cultures."[13] In *Unclaimed Experience*, Caruth manages a new perspective on history, which is perceived no longer as straightforwardly referential, but as "indirectly referential", based on Freud's political and cultural disengagement: "the textualist approach can afford us a unique access to history"[14] so that we can access extreme events that defy common perception and assumption. Luckhurst and Leys are critical of this attitude, claiming that the abolition of historical factuality leads to ahistoricity and the annihilation of temporal specificity. As a consequence, Caruth's "trans-generational, psychohistorical, timeless model of trauma"[15] can hardly have an impact and any sort of relevance in the context of culturally, historically and politically oriented postcolonial trauma studies.

The European reaction to this comes from Stef Craps and Gert Buelens, according to whom the reference framework adopted by Cathy Caruth is an exclusively Western one, while the critical methodologies are applicable to the American and Western European contexts. The risks that run from such an approach are monoperspectivism and ignoring the non-Western histories and theories; moreover, the differences between the West and the Rest may deepen.[16] Western patterns of trauma treatment display, Craps posits, individualizing, psychologizing and depoliticizing tendencies. In addition, Stef Craps supports the

11 LaCapra, Dominick, *Writing History, Writing Trauma,* Baltimore: 2001, pp. xi-xii.

12 Belau, Linda, Trauma and the Material Signifier, in: *Postmodern Culture* Vol.11 (2008), Nr. 2, p.14.

13 Caruth, Cathy, Introduction to Psychoanalysis, Trauma and Culture I, in: *American Imago,* vol. 48 (1991), Nr. 1, pp.1-12, p. 11.

14 Caruth, Cathy, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History,* Baltimore: 1996, p. 10.

15 Visser, Irene, Trauma theory and postcolonial literary studies, in: *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 47 (2011), Nr. 3, pp. 270-282, p. 275.

16 Cf. Craps, Stef, and Buelens, Gert, Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels, in: *Studies in the Novel,* Vol. 40 (2008), Nr. ½, pp. 1–12, p. 9.

necessity of becoming aware of the cultural differences in approaching and treating trauma, the presence of works such as *Trauma and Dissociation in a Cross Cultural Perspective: Not Just a North American Phenomenon* (Rhoades and Sar, ed.) and *Honoring Difference: Cultural Issues in the Treatment of Trauma and Loss* (Nader, Dubrow and Stamm, ed.) being saluted in the field of trauma studies.

Besides the concepts of trauma representability and trauma historicity, the concept of transmissibility plays a significant role in the trauma discourse as related to postcolonial studies. Formulated by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, in 1992, it was further discussed by Kaplan, Kali Tal, and Crosthwhite: "While in Felman and Laub's formulations transmissibility involved the empathic, "other"-directed responses during the face-to-face/pedagogic encounters with trauma narratives, it has later been expanded to denote a very broad category of readers' and viewers' emotional responses."[17]

The use of a therapeutic model in trauma narratives does nothing more than to underline the "disempowering effect of Western psychoanalytically informed approach."[18] Felman and Laub establish the difference between witness/analysand and listener/reader/analyst: the former is always a "passive, inarticulate victim", his testimony lacking any political involvement, while the second's status, founded on an empathic relational background, responds politically neutral as well.[19] The key words associated by Craps and Buelens to the therapeutic approach to trauma studies are pathologization and depoliticization. Allan Young, similarly, in *The Harmony of Illusions*, questions the representation of the psychological trauma as a universal and transhistorical phenomenon, viewing trauma as connected to ideology and the social and political coordinates of the discourse:

> The disorder is not timeless, nor does it possess an intrinsic unity. Rather, it is glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed, studied, treated, and represented and by the various interests, institutions, and moral arguments that mobilized these efforts and resources.[20]

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17 Visser, Irene, Trauma theory and postcolonial literary studies, in: *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 47 (2011), Nr. 3, pp. 270-282, p. 275.

18 Craps, Stef, and Buelens, Gert, Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels, in: *Studies in the Novel,* Vol. 40 (2008), Nr. ½, pp. 1–12, p. 4.

19 Cf. Felman, Shoshana, and Laub, Dori, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History,* New York 1992.

20 Young, Allan, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder,* Princeton 1995, p.5.

In discussing the problematic of trauma in literature, the necessity of considering the specificity of the social and historical contexts is crucial, the Western theoretical and diagnostic models not being able to be exported unproblematically into the particular contexts of the former colonies or of the postcommunist space, each of them representing a peculiar cultural context.

Equally important in approaching the representation of trauma in the above mentioned cultural contexts is the focus on the individual or collective psychology. If the focus on personal trauma may imply ignoring the socio-cultural conditions that made the traumatic abuse possible, with obvious depoliticizing consequences, the focus on collective trauma justifies considering suffering from the perspective of an ideological and political construct.[21]

Both the colonial and the communist trauma represent collective experiences, their specificity being acknowledged only if the research object shifts from the individual to larger social entities: communities or nations. The shift from the individual to the collective is perceived as unproblematic by Dominick LaCapra, Erikson or Linda Hutcheon, while others, such as David Lloyd, Rebecca Saunders and Kamran Aghaie, with a focus on postcolonial studies and the diversity of the cultural spaces, consider that a simple metaphorical extrapolation can be politically responsible and reductivist.

The focus on decontextualized psychologization and the concern with the individual in trauma studies have two important consequences: the trauma recovery will be a matter of personal linguistic management, while material recovery will not be an issue at stake at all. Regarding the latter issue, Stef Craps quotes Franz Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks*, referring to the social nature of colonial traumas, in which "the salvation of the soul" should not be valued against material recuperation: "There will be an authentic disalienation only to the degree to which things, in the most materialistic meaning of the word, will have been restored to their proper places."[22]

The representation of trauma implies a modification of temporality and chronology at the level of narrative construction, manifested by means of repetition, indirect statement, fragmentary, delayed temporality. The challenge of the conventional narrative frame is doubled by a reconsideration of the epistemological frame. Thus, at the level of referentiality, aspects such as the relation between narration and reality are reconsidered, while at the level of subjectivity one discusses the status of the traumatized subject and his credibility, the verisimilitude of the narrative construction.

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21 Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 145.

22 Fanon quoted in Craps, Stef, and Buelens, Gert, Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels, in: *Studies in the Novel,* Vol. 40 (2008), Nr. ½, pp. 1–12, pp. 11-12.

The postmodern epistemic implications of the correlation language—representation (perspectivism, contextualism, the contingency of truths, polisemantism, reality as a language construct, intertextuality, truth as mutual understanding, history as image, the fragmentarity of language), of the link between knowledge and truth (relativism, scepticism, nihilism as opposed to the representational epistemology, the contingency of truths) and of the concepts of unity and order (the end of metanarratives, the rejection of the narrations of progress or the teleological unity, the simultaneous existence of discourses, the theme of discontinuity, the theme of the end of the subject and of the author, partiality, ambiguity), implications that dominate the contemporary cultural discourse, are interrogated in the smaller context of the literatures that focus on the traumatic experience.

3. Trauma Representability in Postcolonial Studies and Literature

The association of cultural trauma theory and postcolonial studies is debatable and has constituted a topic of intense discussions for over a decade now, with its most relevant exemplification in the appearance of the 2008 issue of *Studies in the Novel*, coordinated by Stef Craps and Hans Buelens. "The specificity of colonial traumas and of the act of postcolonial literature trauma representation in relation to the dominant trauma discourse," assert Craps and Buelens, "should lead to alternative conceptions of trauma and of its textual inscription, leading to a revitalization of trauma studies."[23]

The issues at stake, according to Visser, are represented by the core definitions of trauma, by the opposing perspectives on trauma in the field of trauma studies and by their Eurocentric orientation. The topic stands as most relevant in the context of discussing the trauma typology and dynamics in the non-western countries, a space in which Western trauma models are constantly imposed: "Postcolonial trauma theory should seek to employ a model of trauma incorporating non-western templates for understanding culturally specific traumatic psychic disorders."[24] Leela Gandhi pleas for a similar approach to non-western knowledge systems so that one should be able to "learn to speak more adequately

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23 Craps, Stef, and Buelens, Gert, Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels, in: *Studies in the Novel,* Vol. 40 (2008), Nr. ½, pp. 1–12, p.3.

24 Visser, Irene, Trauma theory and postcolonial literary studies, in: *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 47 (2011), Nr. 3, pp. 270-282, p. 272.

to the world which it speaks for."[25] Similarly, Anne Whitehead criticizes the mislaying of the Western construct and discusses its obstructive hegemonic impact on the significances of non-western cultural practices.[26]

Postcommunism and postcolonialism in literature are concerned, among other things, with the role of memory in representing history: the commodification of memory, the fictionalization of representation, dethroning the concept of History, fragmentarity, the politics of identity, the dynamics centre-periphery, all indicating connections between memory and trauma. These directions form the background of the contemporary theories on trauma, with a special applicability in the field of cultural studies. However, trauma theory, when applied to works of literature, will focus only on the preservation, and not at all the healing, of trauma: hence, the common themes underlined and discussed will be victimization, guilt, melancholia—"crippling self-reflexivity"[27]—, while recuperation and psychic resistance will be obscured. Knudsen refers to this victimizing perspective as reducing the "vigour and imaginative impact"[28] of postcolonial literature, while Susan Najita[29], following Judith Herman and Dominick LaCapra, identifies the need for political activism, social change and individual healing of the postcolonial texts as a modality of promoting postcolonial resistance and recovery as opposed to melancholia and unspeakability.

As far as the postcolonial fiction is concerned, it is traumatic due to its concern with the recuperation of memory and the acknowledgment of those negated, suppressed or forgotten. The postcolonial traumatic literature involves the recuperation of the ignored histories and the bringing forth of the marginalized events and characters, the replacement of a collective representation of history with representations of personal memory.

An immediate effect, however, would be that of "hyper-particularism" or "hyper-localism" Michael Rothberg refers to, namely a "tendency to create Bergsonian maps—maps of the social that are so detailed and particularizing that they forfeit all potential to Orient investigation."[30] At the opposite end, there runs the risk of over-homogeneization, postcolonial trauma studies having to "pursue an

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25   Gandhi, Leela, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction,* Edinburgh 1998, p. x.
26   Cf. Whitehead, Anne, Journeying through Hell: Wole Soyinka, Trauma, and Postcolonial Nigeria, in: *Studies in the Novel* Vol. 40 (2008), Nr. ½, pp. 13–30.
27   Sorenson, Park, in Craps, Stef, and Buelens, Gert, Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels, in: *Studies in the Novel,* Vol. 40 (2008), Nr. ½, pp. 1-12, p. 10.
28   Ibidem, p. 11.
29   Ibidem, p. 11.
30   Rothberg, Michael, Decolonizing Trauma Studies: A Response, in: *Studies in the Novel,* Vol. 40 (2008), Nr.1/2, pp. 224–34, p. 229.

approach between homogenizing universalism and nominalist particularism."[31] At this level, the originality of the article consists in the re-evaluation of the concepts of colonialism and postcolonialism as a consequence of the analysis of the modality in which the violence of the historical and cultural experience has been modelled ideologically in the literary discourse. Terms such as: civilization, beneficial colonization, occidentalization are reviewed from the perspective of the dialectics colonized/ decolonized, ideological discourse / historical reality. In the larger context of postmodernism and, more specifically, in that of postcolonialism, one cannot speak about reality, but of realities, each representing a plausible variant of one narrator. Hayden White asserted that a research of the traumatic history may be interested not in the fact that certain events took place, but in what those events may signify for a particular group, society or for the present conception of a culture.

The problem of the postcolonial writers concerned with the recuperation of the past is not the identity of events, but how these must be described so that one explaining modality should be preferred to another. The truth of the traumatic history is represented by the event plus the conceptual matrix by means of which it has been localized in the discourse, imagination being always involved in the representation of truth.

The narrated traumatic events are never ideologically neutral, but always liable to a process of selection by the one who will organize them coherently in a literary text; not the raw facts compose the image of reality, but the facts transformed imaginatively, passed through the ideological and cultural filter of the artist. The represented reality has as a fundament the events themselves, yet what constitute it coherently and significantly are the sets of possible relations and configurations established among them as a consequence of the perception of events by different consciousness—the configuration process of reality is the result of the creator's projecting imagination having as a support the raw events. The postcolonial reality will always be an ideological construct, facts representing the past as a background against which different ideological, political and ethical attitudes confront one another. Thus, the possibility of manipulating events becomes part of the imaginative process of reconstructing the real.

Traumatic events are rendered in postcolonial literatures by means of a specific vocabulary, one that functions on concepts of liminality, ambiguity, hybridity, transgression. These, according to Adrian Otoiu, characterize the "'in-between spaces' of cultural ambiguity where diasporic and migrant identities, hovering in the

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31 Ibidem.

indecision of in-betweenness, are shaped."[32] Otoiu's judgment is founded on Homi Bhabha's position as to the significance of the "limen", which is used to describe the "in-between spaces where strategies of identity are elaborated …, the boundary [that] becomes the place from which something begins its presencing."[33] The use of "doubling tropes"[34] such as irony, allegory, and parody give a different shade to motifs of dislocation, alienation and threatening events. The experience of the traumatic events leads to a classical postmodern worldview of missing teleology and fragmented identities, though, according to Piret Peiker, in spite of this existing condition, there is "a repeated motif in postcolonial literature … just the opposite: the longing for a topos of maturity and order, a mythical realm of centeredness that exists or existed somewhere."[35]

Postcolonial critics and theoreticians such as Kamran Aghaie, Jill Bennett, Victoria Burrows, Sam Durrant, Rosanne Kennedy, David Lloyd and Rebecca Saunders perceive colonization as collective trauma, therefore postcolonialism—a post-traumatic cultural formation. As a consequence, it is necessary that the specificity of colonial traumas should be reconsidered, a necessity reflected in the literary representation of trauma in relation to the dominant Western discourse.

The postcolonial criticism denounces the pathologization and depolitization of the victims of colonial violence and criticizes the western self-sufficiency in approaching the non-western histories or records. The lack of historical particularity is what postcolonial criticism indubitably reproaches to trauma theory, the former focusing on the historical, socio-economic and political factors in the colonization process and its aftermath. Craps and Buelens point to the fact that "the chronic psychic suffering produced by the structural violence of racial, gender, sexual, class and other inequities has yet to be fully accounted for."[36] Trauma theory is perceived as limitative for postcolonial criticism due to the perception of trauma as ahistorical and structural; besides this, the use of formal criteria such as narrative rupture and aporia are considered Eurocentric misfit approaches to different cultural specificities. From this perspective, Luckhurst refers to the "prescriptiveness"[37] of trauma theory's formalist criteria.

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32 Otoiu, Adrian, An Exercise in Fictional Liminality: the Postcolonial, the Postcommunist, and Romania's Threshold Generation, in: *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 23 (2003), Nr. 1-2, pp. 87-105, p. 88.

33 Bhabha, Homi, *The Location of Culture*, London 1994, p. 5.

34 Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin, The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures, London: Routledge, 1989, p. 7.

35 Peiker, Piret, Post-communist literatures: A postcolonial perspective, on: www.eurozine.com

36 Craps, Stef, and Buelens, Gert, Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels, in: *Studies in the Novel,* Vol. 40 (2008), Nr. ½, pp. 1–12, p.3.

37 Luckhurst, Roger, *The Trauma Question,* London 2008, p. 88.

Within this context, it is necessary to conceive alternative modalities of approaching colonial traumas, such as forced migration, diaspora, segregation, political violence. This attitude is reflected in the representing modalities of the postcolonial trauma: self-reflexive and anti-linear techniques are preferred to a direct and linear rendering which would suggest an easy and successful overcoming of the traumatic moment; the promotion of realism and of the indigenous artistic and literary practices are used as a modality of avoiding a particular western discourse that, by asserting the impossibility of representing trauma (Caruth, Laub, Felman), leads to a political, ideological and cultural debilitation. Both representation modes point to the necessity of considering the cultural and political contexts in which the literary works are produces and received. The literary corpus will include novels in which the collective and individual traumas are correlated with the controversial aspects of identity, cultural space, ideological discourse and ethical responsibility.

> The plurality and growing number of responses to trauma theory in post-colonial criticism", observes Visser, prove "the ongoing appeal of trauma theory, despite the limits of interpretation that it also often imposes on postcolonial readings.[38]

All the voices that posit a debatable attitude to the classical trauma theories demonstrate the "necessity of an openness towards non-western, non-Eurocentric models of psychic disorder and of reception and reading processes."[39]

4. Trauma in Postcommunist Studies and Literature—
   Postcolonial Similarities and Divergences

The question whether postcolonial theory is relevant in discussing the postcommunist experience represents a vivid debate in the Eastern-European academic world. New nations having appeared or the Soviet influence having been eliminated - both represented a change of direction for the postcolonial studies as

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38 Visser, Irene, Trauma theory and postcolonial literary studies, in: *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 47 (2011), Nr. 3, pp. 270-282, p. 179.
39 Ibidem, p. 280.

well[40]. Establishing and debating similarities and differences between postcolonial and postcommunist studies should start after the attempt of clarifying the paradigms of postcolonialism and postcommunism themselves.

According to Ion Bogdan Lefter, one of the first to address the issue of postcolonialism as correlated to postcommunism, in "Can Postcommunism Be Considered a Postcolonialism?"[41], 2001, the concept of postcolonialism appeared as a result of international cultural and political movements. Firstly, it should be discussed in the context of a conceptual background of political correctness in the nineties, in North-American and West—European democracies, which distance themselves morally from the previous colonialist attitudes, hand in hand with the political and cultural emancipation of the colonized. A second source would be the evolution of the post-structuralist research in the cultural disciplines, in art criticism, in the humanist field in general, namely in those directions that recuperate all possible socio-cultural contexts. Traditions, historical and political conditionings have been capturing attention and, from this perspective, the situation of the countries formerly colonially occupied appears as an extremely promising thematic field. Thirdly, one should consider the drive of postmodernity towards the recuperation of all diversities and marginalities. The pluralist philosophies, the models of cultural polycentrism, have replaced the previous imperialisms of the old world "centres of power". "Provinces" have now the privilege of being in the limelight, post-colonies among them as well.

Asking why postcolonial scholars do not pay much attention to Soviet Russia and its Central and Eastern European satellites, under the circumstances of a highly potentially profitable field for postcolonial studies, Liviu Andreescu asserts:

> I suspect leftist political sympathies are not the main reason scholars take so little notice of the USSR. Rather, I submit, the Soviet Union has not been thoroughly investigated in this context because in many respects it does not fit the postcolonialist paradigm.[42]

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40 Cf. Moraru, Christian, Postcommunism and the Paradigm Shift in Postcolonial Studies, in: *Euresis*, Nr. 1 (2005), p.87.

41 Bogdan Lefter, Ion, Poate fi considerat postcomunismul un postcolonialism?, in *Caietele Echinox*, Nr. 1 (2001), pp. 117-123.

42 Andreescu, Liviu, Are We All Postcolonialists Now? Postcolonialism and Postcommunism in Central and Eastern Europe, in: Bottez, Monica, Draga Alexandru, Maria-Sabina, Stefanescu, Bogdan, *Postcolonialism / Postcommunism: Intersections and Overlaps*, Bucuresti 2011, pp. 57-74, p. 59.

Another answer to the same question is offered by Mircea Martin in "Communism as/and Colonialism":

> … formal post-colonialism was perfected in the American academia and (less often) in Western European circles, generally by leftist intellectuals. … For these latter authors, the fall of communism has done little to shake the confidence in an 'ideal' Soviet/Marxist model. As for Eastern European researchers, their national and cultural pride (of course, not publicly admitted) has prevented them from accepting the hypothesis of colonization for their own space of origin."[43]

Andreescu refers to the "postcolonialist paradigm" in line with Edward Said—for whom postcolonial studies are concerned with "the impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge associated with domination"[44] —and with Ella Shohat—for whom imperial practices and ideologies are functional in the postcolonial era as well, being a "repetition with [a] difference" and the "regeneration of colonialism through other means"[45]—, contextualizing it in the West and its former colonies.

Extensive perceptions of postcolonialism as ahistorical or transhistorical, an attitude that could apply to and explain any form of oppression and domination, "a set of general epistemological insights"[46], are judged as too generic, the alternative being that Postcolonial Studies "should rather be 'tethered' to such central (Western) concepts as race and nation, to a specific philosophy of democratic politics and of (in)equality, to an economic outlook, as well as to colonial practices predicated upon these 'ideological formations.'[47]

An opposite perspective on postcolonialism as a "globally inflected term" applicable to diversified geographical regions comes from Cristina Sandru (see *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millenium*, editors Sandru, Janet Wilson, Sarah Lawson Welsh, Routledge, 2009), via a larger international

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43 Martin, Mircea, Communism as/and Colonialism, in Bottez, Monica, Draga Alexandru, Maria-Sabina, Stefanescu, Bogdan, *Postcolonialism / Postcommunism: Intersections and Overlaps*, Bucuresti 2011, pp. 77-103, p. 77.

44 Said, Edward, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York 1993, p. 9.

45 Shohat, Ella, Notes on the 'Post-Colonial', in: *Social Text*, Nr. 31-32 (1992), pp. 99-113, p. 107.

46 Andreescu, Liviu, Ibidem, p. 60.

47 Ibidem, pp.60-61.

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conceptual background, which allows an ideological and cultural rapprochement between Postcolonial and Postcommunist Studies. For Sandru,

> Both postcolonialism and postcommunism aim at demystifying the grand narratives of the past, interrogate personal and collective memory and explore the ambivalent nature of cultural and intellectual resistance. Hence, the potential of reciprocal translatability of postcolonialism and postcommunism as critical discourses.[48]

This homogenizing attitude includes the phenomenon of postcommunism under the larger umbrella of postcolonialism: David Chioni-Moore[49], in "Is the Post- in Post-Colonial the Post- in Post-Soviet? Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique", postulates a universal signification of the term postcolonial, a critique of the Western imperial power in general, based on a history of the omnipresence of the colonial-type domination at a global level. Benita Perry[50] brings the two terms, postcolonialism and postcommunism, under the sign of "historical transition" and of a similar discursive attitude. An older argument, yet still functional and representing an alternative to the homogenizing attitude of the two phenomena, is that Eastern Europe has never suffered the exploitation and the colonial racism typical for the colonies in South Asia or Africa.[51] Maria Todorova, in *Balcanii și balcanismul / The Balkans and Balkanism*, is the adept of this position, in line with some Romanian research in the field[52]. The discussion concerning the similarities and differences between the two historical, social and literary phenomena is included in *Caietele Echinox / The Echinox Papers* (1/2001) and *Euresis* (1/2005).

A compromising way between an attitude of (over)homogeneity and the other of (hyper)localism is suggested by Adrian Otoiu[53], for whom it is obvious that, in historical, economic and societal terms, the colonial experience and the communist

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48 Sandru, Cristina, Textual Resistance? "Over-Coding" and Ambiguity in (Post)Colonial and (Post)Communist Texts, in: Bottez, Monica, Draga Alexandru, Maria-Sabina, Stefanescu, Bogdan, *Postcolonialism / Postcommunism: Intersections and Overlaps*, Bucuresti 2011, pp. 39-56, p. 43.

49 Chioni Moore, David, Is the Post in Postcolonial the Post in Post-Soviet? Notes Toward a Global Postcolonial Critique, in: *Baltic Postcolonialism: A Critical Reader*, Ed. V. Kerlertas, Amsterdam 2006, pp. 11-30.

50 Perry, Benita, *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique*, London 2004, p. 124.

51 Todorova, Maria, *Balcanii și balcanismul*, Bucuresti 2000.

52 Surdulescu, Radu, Identity raping Practices: Semicolonialism, Communist Reeducation, and Peer Torture, in: *Euresis*, Nr. 1 (2005), pp. 54-55.

53 Otoiu, Adrian, An Exercise in Fictional Liminality: the Postcolonial, the Postcommunist, and Romania's Threshold Generation, in: *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 23 (2003), Nr. 1-2, pp. 87-105.

experiment have distinct profiles that cannot overlap; similarly, the ideologies that found them. Despite this, however, different historical forces can produce similar effects. Post-communism and post-colonialism could intersect not to produce reductionist assertions by their attempt at adapting terminologies, but to find a common vocabulary, a plausible and mutually advantageous one. The post-communist prose writing in Romania, especially that produced by writers in the 80s, combines two apparently antagonist traits: textual experimentation and forms of raw realism. The simultaneous presence of the two representation modalities stand for a characteristic of "liminality", direct cause of the traumatic suffering. The concept of liminality is a key term in the postcolonial theory[54], and it can be associated with those of ambiguity, hybridity and transgression. Andreescu, however, remains sceptical as to the utility and relevance of the postcolonial vocabulary for the post-communist one:

> Yet his discussion of the numerous borders, borderlines, margins and trespassing, while quite plausible in itself, hardly invokes a colonial relation [as defined above]. The postrealism of G80 was, in Otoiu's reading, a reaction to domestic socialist realism. While there are plural worlds in the fiction of the G80, the world of the colonizing USSR is not a major focus.[55]

The theoretic vocabulary of post-colonialism can offer the essential terms for developing a proper one in the post-communist trauma literature: hegemonic discourse—totalitarian discourse, Apartheid—concentration camp, center—periphery, History—histories, ideological discourse—private discourse.

The representation of trauma in the post-communist literature is associated with the representation of an intermediate spatiality and temporality, associated with the identitary ambiguity. The concept of liminality, discussed by Arnold van Gennep[56], Victor Turner[57], Homi Bhabha[58], Mihai Spăriosu[59] designates ambiguity, applicable to the "contact zones" between two cultures or various moments of the same

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54   Bhabha, Homi, *The Location of Culture*, London 1994.

55   Andreescu, Liviu, Ibidem, p. 67.

56   van Gennep, Arnold, *The Rites of Passage*, Chicago 1960.

57   Turner, Victor, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Chicago 1969.

58   Bhabha, Homi, *The Location of Culture*, London 1994.

59   Spariosu, Mihai, *The Wreath of Wild Olive: Play, Liminality and the Study of Literature*, New York: 1996.

culture, therefore to the Eastern European space and the post-communist trauma literature.

The historical and social context in which this literature of liminality appears is one characterized by transition, ambiguity and mingling. The state of spatial and temporal transition of the Balkanic area is significantly postulated by Maria Todorova, in *Imagining the Balkans*, while in the Romanian cultural space, it is discussed by Lucian Boia[60] (2002), Neagu Djuvara[61], Cornel Ungureanu[62]. The liminal condition of the Romanian space, especially after 1989, is illustrated in a hybrid democracy and economy, a discourse in a double register and an ambiguous positioning.

At the level of the literary reception, typically postcolonial notions such as: dilemmatic, fragmentarity, hybridity—become common terms of the post-communist traumatic discourse. The literature of the writers situated between two social and cultural paradigms abounds in hybrid identities, hybridized intermediary spaces, social ambiguity, double language. Internal or physical limits, real or imaginary ones constitute traumatic instances, the analysis of their modalities of representation involving special attention paid to the historical, social and ideological space. However, Cristina Sandru asserts,

> the overcoded fiction of East-Central Europe differs in that its narrative undecidability is assumed as a protective mask against an oppressive extra-textual reality and not as a law of intratextual composition. This fiction demands a decoder adequately 'equipped' to penetrate behind the Aesopic understatements of the text.[63]

Therefore, the subversive narrative voices are associated more with a magical realism, the world of fantasy, while the modality of expressing disengagement with a traumatic reality is transposed in confessions and exercises of memory—diaries, notebooks, journals, yet all imbued ideologically.

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60 Boia, Lucian, *România, țară de frontieră a Europei*, București 2002.
61 Djuvara, Neagu, *Între Orient și Occident*, București 2001.
62 Ungureanu, Cornel, *Mitteleuropa periferiilor*, Iasi 2002.
63 Sandru, Cristina, Ibidem, p. 54.

5. Conclusion

The article has set to identify the similarities and differences as to the modalities of representing trauma in the postcolonial and post-communist spaces, in the context of perceiving the traumatic phenomenon as a social and ideological construct. Trauma studies, a controversial, yet equally vivid field of contemporary research, should be acknowledged as relevant as correlated with postcolonial and postcommunist studies as long as it is perceived in correlation with a social, political and ideological context. One cannot speak about generic traumatic experiences, but about some deeply rooted in the national or regional specificities. Only from this position can one detect the ideological implications of the traumatic experiences and therefore value them aesthetically in a particularized way. The postcolonial and postcommunist studies and literatures do share a significant common ground as critical discourses; however, the cultural, historical and ideological discrepancies could prevent the balance from weighing more to theoretical, decontextualized similarities. A beneficial position should involve us into discriminating factual differences and on the other hand, cherishing the mutually enriching similarities.

Towards a general theory on the existence of typically national philosophies.

The Portuguese, the Austrian, the Italian, and other cases reviewed

Henrique Jales Ribeiro

Introductory remarks

I suggest we begin for the time being with the following definitions:—"Typically national philosophies" means the philosophies which are produced in the context of a specific country or nation, and may be identified—according to those who believe such philosophies do exist—not only within the geographical and political boundaries of these nations, but also, essentially, with their language and/or culture in broad terms (including social, economic, political factors, among others). (In fact, as we will see, such boundaries are not essential to the definition, since national cultures, in certain cases, cannot/could not be reduced to them.) In principle, this definition contrasts with the definition of the opposite thesis, according to which philosophy is universal. In other words, philosophy is a supranational heritage—as that which was produced in the Western civilisation since ancient Greece until today—, which was to some extent (an "extent" that we will have to explain), culturally indifferent, i.e. independent of the specific culture of each nation. (This feature, i.e. indifference towards national culture(s), is absolutely fundamental for some supporters of the idea of typically national philosophies, particularly in the 20th century. However, as we will see, it hardly characterises the issue we are about to discuss.) The latter thesis alone is not generally disputable, that is, there are no objections to the the fact that philosophy, from the ancient Greece onwards, is/was universal.[1] What is discussed and criticized is the presupposition that philosophy, nowadays, could be entirely reduced to such representation. But, of course, typically national philosophies can only be legitimated as "philosophies", or can only be said to exist as such, if they

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1   I mean Western philosophy, not the Oriental one. This is problematic in some cases, as in the case of Filipino philosophy. See Gripaldo, R. M., Is there a Filipino philosophy?, in: Gripaldo, R. M. (Ed.), *The Philosophical Landscape*, Manila 2004. Retrieved March 2012 from: http://mysite.dlsu.edu.ph/faculty/gripaldor/articles/PDF/is_there_filipino_philo.pdf

have at the same time some relevant or substantial connection with the universality of philosophy. And the problem for those who subscribe to the first thesis is just to explain in what sense their typically national philosophies are connected with the universality of philosophy.

Let us call the first thesis the TNP ("typically national philosophy") thesis; the problem I have just mentioned, the TNP problem; and the second thesis, the UP ("universality of philosophy") thesis.

1. The problem of national identities from the 19th century onwards

There are, of course, many issues that can be raised regarding each of these definitions, which I will try to clarify in my paper. To what extent the UP thesis, documented in the history of Western philosophy until the 19th century particularly (when the TNP thesis started developing), is indifferent to national cultures? Is it not true that in several philosophies produced in that period, since Plato and Aristotle, the cultures of the nations of the relevant authors—and even some common features of Western cultures in general—have been, to some extent, expressed? More decisively and interestingly: is it not true that, in certain cases, philosophers have identified the aims of philosophy with cultural purposes, which can be interpreted as a sort of reconciliation between the Western and the Oriental philosophical traditions?[2] This is hardly clear to some views on the TNP problem already in the 20th century, who, in this sense, call the traditional concept of the UP "rational" and "intellectual".[3]

Regarding this, we must pay attention to the fact that our subject, i.e., the problem of the existence of typically national philosophies, emerges mainly during the 19th century and, in general, in the context of a broader or larger problem: the one of the definition of political national identities and what is known as "nationalism" (a problem that I cannot study here).[4] The best known cases are

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[2] See, for instance, Hartmann, E., Philosophie des Unbewussten, Berlin 1869.

[3] See, more recently, White, R., Herder: On the ethics of nationalism, in: *Humanitas*, Nr. 1-2 (2005), pp. 167-181.

[4] About such a problem there is a prolix bibliography. See, for instance, Baertschi, B., and Mulligan, K. (Eds.), *Les nationalismes,* Paris 2001; and Gentile, E., *The Struggle for Modernity: Nationalism, Futurism and Fascism*, Westport 2003.

Germany and Italy.[5] However, in the 20th century several versions of TNPs arose in the context of the redefinition of national identities and of the ideological struggles connected with it. This explain the fact that, when defending the TNP thesis, his supporters usually confound it with strong ideological and political presuppositions, which are not, for the most part, entirely clear. The existence of a TNP, in such cases, would give legitimacy to the cultural identity at stake. We must carefully analyse these presuppositions, in order to try to understand what the TNP philosophers intended to say from a philosophical point of view. (This is, of course, essential, but is not widely acknowledged, even on the part of the historians.) I could present as an example of this conection between philosophy and ideology (but not necessarily an example of a TNP according to the definition presented above), Fichte and his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807).[6] Meaningfully, some recent defences of the TNP thesis in the 20th century have occurred in countries which are searching for their (new) national identities after the loss of their past ones, as is the case, for example, of Russia, Ukraine and Romania.

2. Culture, philosophy and utopia: ideological connections of the TNPs

This connection between philosophy, culture and ideology is very important for the study of the TNP thesis, broadly considered. Insofar as it can be ascertained that cultural identities are always, to some extent, more or less ideal, that connection suggests that there is a close link between culture and utopia, which is essentially ideologically. My point, here, is that what we mean by "culture" and "philosophy" is not ideological neutral and inoffensive; the interpretations of both concepts have obvious political purposes in social contexts, *which refer to what will or would happen (utopia) only throughout what is supposedly already happening.* (I held this view two years ago in a paper on precisely the concept of utopia.)[7] This means that utopia cannot be reduced to literature and imagination, and does not concern simply what

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5   About the Italian case, see Gentile, E., *Origins and Doctrine of Fascism*, translated, edited and annotaded by A. James Gregor, New Brunswick-New Jersey 2009. Originally published, in Italian, in 1929.

6   See Fichte, J., *Addresses to the German Nation*, translated an edited by G. Moore, Cambridge 2009.

7   See Ribeiro, H. J., Utopia e filosofia: Para uma teoria das utopias filosóficas sobre a ciência, in: Correia, J. D. P. et al., *Razão e liberdade: Homenagem a Manuel José do Carmo Ferreira*, Lisboa 2010, pp. 649-672.

will/would happen, but it is an essential feature of our ties with the world and culture in particular. If we accept the current definition of "national culture" as the set of beliefs, values, mores and traditions more or less incorporated in the language of a given nation, and *if we understand by "ideology" just its interpretation* (not only, of course, by the political agents but by intellectuals, philosophers, and so on), we can see that utopia is at the core of both (culture and ideology). What we mean by "culture" would be not only ideological, but also utopian in some sense. We can describe and analyse it from *a rhetorical point of view*, as has been suggested by some specialized literature on the subject.[8] I think that, in this regard, we must return to what has been said in the thirties and forties by Karl Mannheim in his book *Ideology and Utopia*,[9] and to some readings of it, including mine, like the one of P. Ricouer.[10] I will return to this topic later, in my concluding statements.

Regarding the TNP problem, an obvious example of this connection between philosophy and culture, on the one hand, and utopia and ideology, on the other, is the soviet claim—during most part of the 20th century—that a Russian philosophy existed and could be identified with the soviet political regime.[11] The example shows a close connection between utopia and ideology; in fact, it can be understood not strictly as an example of utopia but, more precisely, of dystopia. But as Mannheim and Ricoeur showed, against some interpretations of the concept of ideology like the Marxist-Leninist one, that concept cannot be understood as something negative, a sort of false conception of reality or a perverse manipulation of its representation with political objectives. Its aims are not only to give legitimacy to what we think (our) society and culture *must be*, but also, and mainly, *to what we think that society and culture really are*. The same could be said, in some sense, about the concept of utopia, if we consider, as I suggested above, that utopia cannot be reduced to what would happen, or to what belongs to imagination and fantasy. On the contrary, *in general utopia concerns what is already happening, as is the case of what we believe the culture (or the philosophy) of a given society is*. The main difference

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8   See Harris, R. A., Introduction: Incommensurability, Rhetoric, in: Harris, R. A. (Ed.), *Rhetoric and Incommensurability*, Indiana 2005, pp. 3-49. And Ribeiro, H. J., Rhétorique et philosophie: Perelman et la philosophie analytique, in: Frydman, B., and Meyer, M. (Eds.), *Perelman (1912-2012): De la nouvelle rhétorique à la logique juridique*, Paris 2012, pp. 161-185.

9   See Mannheim, K., *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, London 1960.

10   See Ricoeur, P., *L'idéologie et l'utopie*, Paris 1997.

11   See Lewis, J., Philosophy in Soviet Russia, in: *The Philosopher*, vol. XXIV (1999). Retrieved March 2012 from: http://www.autodidactproject.org/bib/ussrphil.html And Dumain, R., Salvaging Soviet Philosophy. Retrieved March 2012 from: http://www.autodidactproject.org/bib/ussrphil.html

between the two concepts is just that legitimating scope that characterizes ideology and wich I was referring to.

If we see the TNP problem from this perspective, it is obvious that the example I gave previously, that of Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation*, is also an utopian and ideological example: "utopian" to begin insofar as the "German nation", for Fichte at the time, is a theoretical construction, a problematic ideal to achieve, and "ideological", insofar as it has a legitimating scope regarding the German political situation, the French domination, etc. However, as I will argue in this article, the same can be said of other versions of the TNP thesis where what is involved is not simply what will/would happen, *but what is (supposedly) happening*. Take, for instance, the "British empiricist tradition" (Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Russell) according to A. J. Ayer's theory, presented in the beginning of the thirties of the 20th century.[12] As I have suggested in another paper,[13] following some previous research on the subject, it is doubtful to what extent such tradition has existed or does exist: some of its "members" are not "British", in the proper sense of the word (as is the case of Hume, but Ayer, in the forties, included in such tradition even Wittgenstein's philosophy), and what Ayer takes to be "empiricism" is a theoretical construction that does not truly correspond to the philosophies of some of the members at stake, as is the case of Russell.[14] Nevertheless, that version of the TNP thesis was proposed as *a faithful representation* of British philosophy from the 17th to the 20th century. On the other hand, J. Rée has decisively pointed out to its ideological connections.[15]

3. Strong and weak versions of the TNP thesis (examples)

Before moving forward, we need to separate the *weak* from the *strong version* of this thesis. We can support it—without arguing in its favour systematically—from this or that philosophical perspective, or even independently of any such perspective. For example, it is not sufficient to argue that a philosophy from one country is a TNP on the assumption that its language and culture are original and unique, and even

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12 Ayer, A. J., The analytic movement in contemporary British philosophy, in: *Actes du Congrès International de Philosophie Scientifique* (Sorbonne, 1935), Paris 1936.

13 Ribeiro, H. J., Locke, a tradição do empirismo britânico e a filosofia analítica, in: *Proceedings of the International Colloquium 'Locke's Legacy'*, Lisboa 2005, pp. 39-60.

14 Ribeiro, H. J., *Para compreender a história da filosofia analítica*, Coimbra 2002.

15 See Rée, J., La philosophie anglaise des années cinquante, in: Vienne, J. M. (Ed.), *Philosophie analytique et histoire de la philosophie*, Paris 1997, pp. 17-60.

superior to others. From the 19th century onwards, this has been claimed often by philosophers with quite different nationalities. Since this argument lacks substance, there is the issue of grounds and systematisation, which is the topic itself of the strong version of the TNP. *The grounds and systematisation are particularly relevant when the TNPs are used with ideological and political objectives.*

The following are two examples of this: the idea that there was a Portuguese TNP, takes us to a strong version; it was presented and developed for several decades of the 20th century;[16] the same applies to an Austrian TNP, supported by O. Neurath and R. Haller, in the nineteen-thirties and nineteen-seventies, respectively,[17] and to an "Italian philosophy" and a "Russian" one, developed, respectively, by E. Garin, in the forties,[18] and V. Zenkovski, in the fifties of the 20th century.[19] Yet there are several variants (or sub-versions) that arise in the framework of the strong versions, in general, and even of the strong version of each TNP involved. Consider, for the moment, only the first two TNPs. The Portuguese version is different from the Austrian one, to the extent that the former, unlike the latter, concerns more or less the total identification of philosophy with the typically national culture (and, more precisely, with a corporative concept of it), as this was expressed by the Portuguese language, mores, beliefs and traditions. The main idea is that what was considered during a very large period (and especially in the context of a totalitarian regime) as "culture", was *in itself* (national) philosophy, configured (as some Portuguese ideologues said at the time) by "God, Fatherland and Family" and focused on the (Portuguese) concept of "saudade".[20] From this perspective, we can speak of more or less isolated *Portuguese philosophers* and, essentially, of their ties with the history of Portuguese culture, but *one cannot properly speak of the existence of a "Portuguese philosophical tradition".*[21] While in the Austrian version, on the other hand, the TNP apparently involves, inversely, the identification of national culture with philosophy. The main idea, in this case, is that certain features of the thought of some Austrian philosophers (like Bolzano, Brentano, Wittgenstein and the logical

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16 See, for instance, Ferreira, J., *Existência e fundamentação geral do problema da filosofia portuguesa*, Braga 1965. And Ribeiro, H. J., A 'filosofia portuguesa' e o 'Estado Novo': Das implicações ideológicas, políticas e outras da filosofia em Portugal no século XX, in: *Biblos, Revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra*, series III (2005), pp. 129-154.

17 See Neurath, O., *Le développement du Cercle de Vienne et l'avenir de l'empirisme logique*, Paris 1935. And Haller, R., *Studien zur österreichischen Philosophie*, Amsterdam 1979.

18 See Garin, E., *History of Italian Philosophy*, Amsterdam/New York 2008. 2 vols. Originally published, in Italian, in 1947.

19 See Zenkovsky, V. V., *A History of Russian Philosophy*, London 1953. 2 vols.

20 Piñero, R., *Filosofía da saudade*, Vigo 1984.

21 See Ribeiro, Á., *O problema da filosofia portuguesa*, Lisboa 1943.

positivists) would correspond, in general, to the Austrian culture, and that such TNP would be essentially distinct of other (supposed) TNPs, such as the German one.[22] In both cases, strong *ideological presuppositions and implications* are more or less evident; and, again, in both cases the *utopian nature* of the relevant TNPs is obvious. But, whereas the Portuguese version ultimately denies the UP, the Austrian version seeks to highlight the originality of the Austrian TNP in the broader context of the UP.[23]

As for the variants of each strong version, some followers of the TNP version in Portugal (mainly before the Portuguese totalitarian regime, which goes from 1926 to 1974), supported, albeit separately from the majority of all the others, some aspects of what I have just said about the Austrian version. In fact, such version was criticized from the beginning of its presentation (around 1911-1912), and has been more of a controversial issue, for Portuguese philosophers in general, than an unquestionable and widely accepted paradigm.[24] (In the Austrian version too, some important distinctions would have to be made between Neurath's neo-Hegelian interpretation and that suggested by Haller, almost fifty years later.)

Now, if we compare the Portuguese and the Austrian TNP versions with the Italian and the Russian ones, which I mentioned above, there are some fundamental distinctions to make. The relevant historiographies about the latter are early examples of what we may call today, according to a relativist approach to the TNP problem, "intellectual histories".[25]   These historiographies, of course, are interested in studying the existence of the respective philosophical traditions (because such traditions may exist), but they adopt an intermediate position between the two extreme positions (about the connection of culture with philosophy) which are involved, namely, in the Portuguese and the Austrian TNPs: such traditions are interpreted, in general, in cultural terms, even if they are not completely reduced to them (contrary to what happens in the Portuguese case). From this perspective, national cultures would correspond to national philosophies (as happens in the Austrian case), insofar as the latter are more or less conceptually developed, but if we try to define ultimately the idiosyncrasy of a given national

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22 See Mulligan, K., Exactness, description and variation: How Austrian analytic philosophy was done, in: Nyíri, J. C. (Ed.), *From Bolzano to Wittgenstein: The Tradition of Austrian Philosophy*, Dordrecht 1986, pp. 86-97. And Smith, B., The Neurath-Haller thesis: Austrian and the rise of scientific philosophy, in: Lehrer, K., and Marek, J. C. (Eds.), *Austrian Philosophy: Past and Present*, Dordrecht 1996, pp. 1-20.

23 See Haller, R. *Questions on Wittgenstein*, London 1988, p. 2.

24 See Lourenço, E., *Nós e a Europa: Ou as duas razões*, Lisboa 1994.

25 See Rorty, R., The historiography of philosophy: Four genres, in: Rorty, R., Schneewind, J. B., and Skinner, Q. (Eds.), *Philosophy in History: Essays on the Historiography of Philosophy*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 49-76.

philosophy (such as the Italian or the Russian), culture (not philosophy) would be our essential framework.

4. The ego-nationalist and the pluralist versions of the TNP thesis

Now, although the TNP thesis has been frequently followed in the past and still is in the present, it is obvious, in my view, that when clarified or developed in context its characterisation is much more elaborate and complex than the definition that I began by presenting. From this definition one also draws that each nation that has a cultural identity would have its own TNP, to the extent that it has a cultural identity *sui generis*. The argument gives way to what we could call the *egonationalist and the pluralist versions* of the TNP thesis. For clear ideological reasons, supporters focus essentially on the specific culture of their countries, and not on that of others. They are not interested in what we call today "multiculturalism", nor in modern metaphilosophical questions as those developed nowadays according to the problem of the incommensurability of cultures. Therefore, in principle that argument leads to the first version (the ego-nationalist one) not to the second. This interpretation of the TNP was not widely supported in Europe, although according to some disputable interpretations, some authors of German romanticism, as Herder, seem to have pointed it out at the end of the 18th century.[26] Nevertheless, we must note that in German romanticism it is culture and not necessarily philosophy that is involved, that is, it is culture that would configure national identity. Anyway, if we consider the egonationalist version *in abstracto* (I emphasize "in abstracto"), it seems to have been defended in Portugal when the Portuguese totalitarian regime of O. Salazar was at its peak. Its utopian nature, as well as its ideological presuppositions and implications, are evident. The ego-nationalist version of the TNP thesis entails identifying philosophy entirely with the national culture and, to some extent, even denying the UP, hereby raising serious issues regarding the statute of philosophy itself. This is why, when supported, it was generally endorsed by intellectuals at the service of the political power, and not so much by philosophers. Nevertheless, identifying the version is relevant, given some level of confusion involving the TNP thesis. It seems that it was not this ego-nationalist version that was supported, for example, by German absolute idealism

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26 See Barnard, F. M. (Ed.), *J. G. Herder on Social and Political Culture*, Cambridge 1969.

during the first quarter of the 19th century, in particular, by Fichte and Hegel.[27] With them philosophy offered its own (essential) contribution to the resolution of the TNP problem. No doubt that they were nationalists in some sense, but, as I will suggest further ahead, they seem to have adopted a sort of reconciled thesis of the TNP and the UP theses (this is my claim).

5. The positivist interpretation of the TNP problem; influence and examples

Now, surprisingly, we find already in the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, with A. Comte's positivism in France, precisely the inverse of what I have just mentioned, in other words: *the national culture and, generally speaking, western national cultures as a whole, are reduced entirely to a given paradigm of the universality of philosophy*, in the present case that which is embodied by the "religion of humanity" in light of the so called "law of the three stages". This is the view presented in Comte's books *System of Positive Philosophy* and *System of Positive Polity*.[28] There, what is meant by "culture" (i.e. morality, education, religion, etc.) and "nation-State" is normatively configured by positivist philosophy itself.[29] It results from Comte's theories, in the last book, that modern nation-States shall disappear and give way to "free and stables nationalities", with a cultural, linguistic and territorial basis, more restricted and "natural" (which is, for the most part, the historical one).[30] The political regime that Comte had in mind is a "social republic", conceived as something outside not only the context of the European nation-States, at the time, and of parliamentary democracy, in particular, but also of the relevant "rights" properly called.[31]

However, this way of understanding the UP thesis, which is clearly utopian and ideological, does not set aside national cultures entirely and, to some extent, the

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27 Regarding Fichte, see Abizadeh, A., Was Fichte an ethnic nationalist? On cultural nationalism and its double, in: *History of Political Thought*, Nr. 26 (2005), pp. 334-359. Regarding Hegel, see Avineri, S., Hegel and Nationalism, in: Kaufmann, W. (Ed.), *Debating the Political Philosophy of Hegel*, New Brunswick-New Jersey 2010, pp. 109-136; and Bienenstock, M., Hegel at Jena: Nationalism or Historical Thought ?, in: *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, Nr. 2 (1979), pp. 175-195.

28 See Comte, A., *Système de philosophie positive: Préliminaires généraux et conclusions (1830-1842)*, Paris 1942. And Comte, A., *System of Positive Polity*, London 1875, 2nd vol.

29 See Gouhier, H., *Études sur l'histoire des idées en France depuis le XVIIe siècle*, Paris 1980, p. 72ff.

30 Grange, J., *La philosophie d'Auguste Comte: Science, politique, religion*, Paris 1996, p. 319.

31 See Kremmer-Marietti, A., *L'anthropologie positiviste d'Auguste Comte*, Paris 1980, p. 428ff.

relevant philosophies, if we consider, as some positivists did following Comte himself, that the culture of individual nation-States already particularises (or reveals) somewhat the universal philosophy in question.[32] According to the law of the three stages, the cultural identity of each country would depend on its evolution: some of them would be more or less near the "positive stage", others would be in the "metaphysical one", etc.[33] But, considering that in most of the cases, in Europe mainly, there are sort of "mixed stages" (and not simply "pure" ones), as Comte has suggested, the point is that the positivist historian and philosopher would have to clearly distinguish the positivist features of the cultural situation of his own country, in order to see in them just those particularizations and revelations of the positivist spirit throughout the history of mankind, and to regenerate the others.[34] This was an interpretation that was put forward in Portugal in the late 19th century, even before the Portuguese version of the TNP mentioned above, by the positivist philosopher Teófilo Braga. (Braga said in this regard, quoting Comte's *System of Positive Polity*, that "national differences must follow the universal destiny of Western transformation, according to the needs of regeneration.")[35] This was also the interpretation made by some of those who have proclaimed, in 1889, the republican regime in Brazil.[36] We will see that this way of conceiving the universality *vs.* particularity relation has some analogy with the Hegelian and neo-Hegelian interpretations of it. In fact, in countries like Portugal in the first quarter of the 20th century they have been closely connected.

6. Hegelian and neo-Hegelian interpretations of the TNP problem: the reconciliation thesis (influence and examples)

Contextualising even further the definition of the TNP thesis that we started with, what seems to happen is that, at some point, this definition becomes somewhat senseless. As we have seen, some followers of the thesis do not reject clearly the UP one. On the contrary, they admit that a given national philosophy (as is the case of their own) can be somewhat an expression or revelation of the "universal

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32 See Comte, A., *System of Positive Polity,* London 1875, 2nd vol., p. 116ff.

33 See Comte, A., Discours sur l'esprit positif, suivi de cinq documents annexes par A. Comte (1842). Un document produit en version numérique par J.-M. Tremblay. Retrieved March 2012 from: http://www.biblio.paulvalery.eu/wp-content/uploads/1842_Comte_EspritPositif.pdf

34 See idem, ibidem.

35 My translation of Braga, T., *As modernas ideias da literatura portuguesa*, Porto 1892, p. 281.

36 See Soares, M. P., *O positivismo no Brasil: 200 anos de Augusto Comte*, Porto Alegre 1998.

philosophy", thus turning out to be the self-consciousness of the cultural identity of the relevant nation-State. This is just the point of the positivist interpretation of the ties between the TNP and the UP theses.

However, there are others, like the Hegelian or/and neo-Hegelian ones, which, considering their great historical influence until nowadays, deserve particular attention in this article. If we put aside, for the time being, some controversial readings (to which I will come back further ahead), the main ideas regarding these interpretations are: (a) that *philosophy* is the self-consciousness of the nation-State cultures in general, that is, in Hegel's terms, of the art, religion and philosophy of the "peoples' Spirits" involved; (b) that such self-consciousness is a manifestation of the "world Spirit" or the Absolute (whatever its interpretation, after Hegel) along the history of mankind (or, in Hegel's terms, along the universal world history of the "peoples' Spirits"); and, (c) that process is more or less variable according to the nations-States (or the respective "peoples' Spirits") involved (or according to the participation of their "peoples' Spirits" in the "world Spirit"). Therefore, philosophy—the subject of which, by definition, is the universal—is the (universal) framework of the cultural identity of each nation-State (or of the respective "people's Spirit"), that is, eventually (or according to the process of self-consciousnesss I was referring to), of each national philosophy. Moreover, insofar as each nation-State has a culture of its own, which is, in Hegel's terms, the content of the relevant "peoples' Spirit" that takes the form of a human community life, there is, to each one, a particular philosophical history of its art, religion and philosophy. This seems to be, roughly speaking, Hegel's view in *Philosophy of Right* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, particularly the interpretation suggested by his concept of "Völkergeister", when such a concept is applied to the existence of four essential types of nation-States ("welthistorische Reiche").[37] At least, it is the interpretation offered by the remarkable and always pertinent reading of Rosenzweig.[38]

Note that, according to a reading like this, Hegel's position on the question of the existence of national philosophies and, in general, the cultural foundations of the nation-States, from *Phenomenology of Spirit* until the books I mentioned, *was the universalist one*. Granted, in any case, the universal framework provided by Philosophy, the art, religion and philosophy, were not considered as a historical product of a given human community life, belonging to a given nation-State, but

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[37] See Hegel, G. H. W., *Philosophy of Right*, New York 2008, p. 200ff. And Hegel, G. H. W., *The Philosophy of History*, with Prefaces by C. Hegel and the translator J. Sibree, Kitchener (Ontario, Canada) 2001, p. 16ff.

[38] See Rosenzweig, F., *Hegel et l'État*, translated by G. Bensussan, Paris 1991, p. 372ff. This book was originally published, in German, in 1920.

eternal and *a priori* historical forms which, in fact, could be entirely philosophically deduced.[39] This fundamental shift in Hegel's philosophy, to which Rosenzweig alludes, would explain, eventually, some misinterpretations of Hegel's reconciliation thesis.

Now, regarding the neo-Hegelian interpretations of Hegel, the concept of nation-State involved is not necessarily or precisely Hegel's; for example, contrary to Hegel's view that the aim of the Absolute along the history of mankind is freedom,[40] one can give to the Absolute other aims or goals (including fascism, as happened with G. Gentile). In my view, this is not very important for us here; the solution that is suggested regarding the TNP problem is basically the same in Hegelian and neo-Hegelian interpretations until (I would like to emphasize) nowadays: *philosophy is universal, insofar as it is the process of manifestation of the Absolute (whatever its interpretation); but national philosophies (that is, philosophies of certain nation-States in certain periods of the history of the Absolute or of mankind) can be conceived as particular expressions or revelations of It.* Anyway, two points seems to be clear in Hegel's philosophy of right and Hegel's philosophy of history: (1) contrary to its readings from the second half of the 19th century onwards, *Hegel's views were not nationalist, but they were not entirely (or strictly) universalist either*; (2) also contrary to such readings, for those who take Hegel's philosophy as the most important modern example of the UP thesis (like Garin, in Italy), such a philosophy is not indifferent to culture in general, and to national cultures in particular.

As I suggested above, there is a strong similarity between the Hegelian concept of "Völkergeister" and the positivist concept of the "law of three stages", in spite of all the differences between the philosophies of these authors.[41] That similariry becomes more evident when Hegel's views are projected in the history of philosophy and we have in mind what I called above the "neo-Hegelians interpretations". Like in the positivist interpretation of the "law of three stages", sometimes (but not necessarily) history is represented as a closed process (the "positive stage", in Comte, and the "German empire", in Hegel).[42] Moreover, like in that interpretation some nation-States are closer to the Absolute than others; and, eventually, a normative standard of the cultural identity of the nation-State more "developed" can be ideologically deduced in order to legitimate its supremacy

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39 See idem, ibidem, p. 372.

40 See Neuhouser, F., Hegel's Social Philosophy, in: Beiser, F. (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel and Nineteenth Century Philosophy*, Cambridge 2008, p. 226ff.

41 See Hayek, F. A., Comte y Hegel, in: *Revista Libertas*, vol. VI (1989), p. 11. Retrieved March 2012 from: http://www.eseade.edu.ar/servicios/Libertas/39_9_Hayek.pdf

42 Regarding Hegel, see Rosenzweig, op. cit., p. 368ff.

over other nations. "Can be", I said, because apparently that was not Hegel's intention.

With the neo-Hegelian interpretations of the TNP-UP relationship, we are not strictly in the scope of either the TNP or the UP theses (when considered separately). There is no contradiction, in the end, between the two conceptual positions. *A national philosophy can be itself an expression or revelation of the universal philosophy involved in the UP thesis.* This explains some known confusions regarding the interpretation of the philosophers who have subscribed to those interpretations: some authors arguing that they have been nationalists and even egonationalists, others that they have been just the contrary, i.e., "universalists".[43]

I suggest that what was proposed by some Italian philosophers from the last quarter of the 19th century onwards regarding the TNP-UP relationship was mainly neo-Hegelian interpretations of it. (When I suggest this I am thinking of a reading of Hegel's views like the one I briefly presented above, in paragraphs a), b), c), and in the summary of it I gave immediately thereafter). I would include in such philosophers Bertrando Spaventa and Giovanni Gentile, but according to a perspective different from that of E. Garin.[44] My view is that they have subscribed to what we can call the "reconciliation thesis" (betweeen the TNP and the UP), and that, therefore, they were not, strictly, universalists. Anyway, in general, that is, when considered in the broad context of the history of philosophy, there are important differences among the alluded interpretations, which concern ideological and political matters: depending on the philosophical concept of nation-State that is involved, one can use the neo-Hegelian interpretation to support liberalism and democracy as well as to support fascism (as Gentile did).[45]

I suggest we call this ideologico-political version of the TNP problem the *metaphysical and imperialist* one. I say "imperialist", since—as mentioned before—it can be used to serve the goal of the political and territorial supremacy of one nation over other nations. Actually, this happened in the 20th century in several ways with people who invoked not only Hegel's "nationalism", but also Nietzsche's philosophy (for instance), and, in particular, its conception of the individual. Note once again that with this version we are no longer strictly in the scope of the

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43 See, in this regard, Mariano, R., *La philosophie contemporaine en Italie: Essai de philosophie hégélienne*, Paris 1868, pp. 16-20.

44 See Garin, E., *History of Italian Philosophy*, vol. 1, p. xlixff. See Spaventa, B., *La filosofia di Kant e la relazioni colla filosofia italiana*, Torino 1860; idem, *La filosofia italiana nelle sue relazioni com la filosofia europea*. A cura di G. Gentile, Bari 1908; Gentile, G., *Il pensiero italiano del secolo XIX*, Milano 1928; idem, *La filosofia italiana contemporanea: Due scritti*, Firenze 1941.

45 About Gentile's philosophical and political views on State, see Gentile, G., *Genesis and Structure of Society*, Urbana 1966. About his support to fascism, see Gentile, G., *Che cosa è il fascismo*, Firenze 1925.

definitions of the aforementioned theses (TNP and UP). One may acknowledge the pluralism of the (other) national philosophies, although in reality this pluralism is merely apparent; in the metaphysical and imperialist version, the "national philosophy" in question can be itself the expression or "revelation" of the "universal philosophy" characteristic of the UP thesis.

It is not my aim to discuss in this paper whether Hegel himself endorsed (or not) the metaphysical and imperialist version which I have just mentioned[46]. There seems to be a great confusion in this regard outside specialized literature, motivated mainly by ideological reasons.[47] As I said above, some authors held that Hegel was the most important proponent of the UP thesis and others that he was the most notorious nationalist philosopher in the history of Western philosophy. In fact, as I suggested above, it happens that in the same philosophical school, as the Italian neo-Hegelianism from the second half of the 19th century to the first quarter of the 20th century, some authors held that Hegel was a typical universalist, refusing the possibility of any TNP, and others that he subscribed to what I called the metaphysical and imperialist version of the TNP problem (and what we can call, more precisely, the "reconciliation thesis"). The confusion occurs when we consider not Hegel's views in their historical context, but its reception from the second-half of the 19th century to the 20th century.

7. The TNP version of the national philosophical traditions

I mentioned earlier another version of the TNP thesis, which does not correspond strictly to the classic definition and is apparently a stronger version of the TNP thesis: the version according to which there can be in the framework of a national philosophy a tradition that matches the universality of philosophy, generally speaking. In this version, supporters can put aside metaphysical justifications of the connection between its TNPs and the UP, as happens with the Hegelian and neo-Hegelian ones. When this happens (as in the Italian case, with E. Garin), it means that the concept itself of the TNP involved is somewhat problematic or controversial. A given TNP would be that (TNP) insofar as the (timeless) issues of

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46 See Pelczynski, Z. A., Hegel's political philosophy: Some thoughts on its contemporary relevance, in: Pelczinski, Z. A. (Ed.), *Hegel's Political Philosophy: Problems and Perspectives*, Cambridge 1971, pp. 230-241; and Wood, A., Hegel's Political Philosophy, in: Houlgate, S., and Baur, S. (Eds.), *A Companion to Hegel*, Oxford 2011, pp. 297-311.

47 See Walsh, W. H., Principle and prejudice in Hegel's philosophy of history, in: Pelczynski, Z. A. (Ed.), op. cit., pp. 181-198.

the UP thesis are (more or less) embodied precisely by the historical contexts of the respective national culture. And such embodiment, as we have already suggested, can take several forms. So, the task of the historiography would be precisely to study these contexts, enlightening the originality of the TNP and, eventually, its contribution to the broader framework of the UP.

In this version, it is not so much a question of identifying philosophy with culture, but rather the inverse identity of culture with philosophy. Generally, we shift from the former to the latter, while trying to identify in the latter specific characteristics of the former. We have what we may call a "philosophical tradition", that is to say, a historical and philosophical movement, which, sometimes, is represented as being subordinated, from the beginning, to a real research program; or, at least, we have some philosophical trends whose developments correspond to those of the country culture. In the late 19th century, the so-called "French spiritualism", from F. Ravaisson to E. Boutroux, was, apparently, a version of this kind for the philosophers of that school.[48] I have already mentioned other noteworthy examples of the same kind in the twentieth century, namely, the Neurath-Haller thesis of a (typically) "Austrian philosophy". But others could be added (it is not my intention, here, to be exhaustive), like Chyzhevsky's historiography of Ukrainian philosophy,[49] the "Hungarian philosophy", suggested, since the thirties, by the Hungarian philosopher B. Tankó, etc.[50]

Alternatively, as I said above about the concept of "intellectual history", one can interpret a given philosophical tradition, of one nation, in cultural terms (without reducing entirely philosophy to culture). In this case, the key-concept is "cultural tradition". In my view, the "history of the Italian philosophy", studied by E. Garin, and the "history of the Russian philosophy", conceived by V. Zenkovsky, are examples of this latter version.[51]

From the perspective of those authors who believe that each country, more or less developed, has its own philosophical tradition (a view generally accepted nowadays, given the importance and popularity of what I will call the "relativist approach"), it became current to hold that, in order to know its cultural identity, we

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48 See Bersot, E., *Libre philosophie*, Paris 1868; Ferraz, M*., Spiritualisme et libéralisme*, Paris 1887; and Ravaisson, F., *La philosophie en France au XIXᵉ siècle. Suivi de 'Rapport sur le prix Victor Cousin'*, Paris 1895.

49 See Zakydalsky, T., Chyzhevsky as a historian of Ukrainian philosophy. A paper presented at a conference at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champagne. Retrieved March 2012 from: http://www.ditext.com/zakydalsky/chyzhevsky.html

50 See Tankó, B., Hungarian Philosophy. Retrieved March 2012 from: http://dea.unideb.hu/dea/bitstream/2437/102531/1/Tank%C3%B3_B%C3%A9la_Hungarian_philosophy.pdf, and also Hanák, T., *Geschichte der Philosophie in Ungarn. Ein Grundriss*, München 1990.

51 See notes 18 and 19.

must compare such philosophical tradition with others (for example, we must compare the Austrian "tradition" with the Hungarian one, etc.).[52] This is my point of view too, but from the perspective of what I would call, a "typology of national philosophies".[53] Anyway, in most of the cases, as in the metaphysical version of the TNP thesis, some neo-Hegelian assumptions (more or less obvious in the case of Neurath's interpretation of the Austrian TNP) can be invoked, and some ideological implications can be sustained. Even if it is true, nowadays, that the concept of national philosophy is increasingly interpreted in the relativist sense, and that it gives rise, not to the classic versions of the historiography of the TNP philosophers, but to the modern ones of the "intellectual histories", the main idea, along the history of such a concept in the 20th century, was that the "universality" at stake in the UP thesis can be particularized in this or that way (philosophically and culturally) by a TNP. Strictly speaking, with the TNP version of the national philosophical traditions, we have not yet completely abandoned the traditional framework of the TNPs, nor have we shifted towards the multinational dimension of the philosophical traditions, but, to be precise, we are no longer simply in the context of the former.

8. The TNP version of the multinational philosophical traditions

As I have been suggesting, the TNP thesis is not merely a statement on the nationality of philosophies, i.e., it does not concern merely the geographical and political boundaries of a specific country and culture. As the history of the TNP problem suggests since the 19th century, one can defend the TNP thesis regarding a given national culture independently of its political identification with a given nation-State. On the other hand, one can defend that thesis even when there is more than one nation-State involved. Indeed, in the 20th century this thesis was renewed and it appeared explicitly (particularly, in Anglo-Saxon philosophy) in the form of the multinational philosophical traditions. As in the Austrian and other (national) cases, *these traditions go from culture to philosophy*, but they are also different because, on the one hand, they are not limited by the geographical and political boundaries of a country and, on the other, they are conceived as if each "philosophical tradition" included a real international research programme, which

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52 See Smith, B., Austrian and Hungarian Philosophy: On the logic of Wittgenstein and Pauler. Retrieved March 2012 from: http://www.philosophie.ch/kevin/festschrift/Smith-paper.pdf

53 I have in mind a typology regarding such philosophies analogous to the one proposed by Gellner, E., *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford 2006, chp. 7, p. 85ff.

would be, from the beginning, opposed to others, from other countries, less important (and therefore disqualified). For example, "the analytic tradition in philosophy" would be opposed to the "continental" one. This is a very important issue; it shows some obvious ideological presuppositions and implications of the concept of multinational philosophical traditions. As with the Hegelian and neo-Hegelian interpretations of the TNP problem, these tradition are the self-consciousness of the national cultures of the respective countries. For a philosopher, to be part of a given tradition (as is the case of the Anglo-Saxon ones), means not only to be suitably placed in the history of Western philosophy and to have a unique cultural identity, but also to share values and aims with a multinational community. The utopian nature of this representation of the relation between philosophy and culture, as well as its ideological motivations cannot be ignored. The "tradition of British empiricism in philosophy", developed by A. J. Ayer and others in the thirties of the twentieth century, in England;[54] the "analytic tradition in philosophy", which resumes and develops the terms in which the first was presented from the nineteen-sixties onwards, and was first designed by G. Ryle;[55] the tradition of "pragmatism" (Peirce, Dewey, James, etc.);[56] the thesis of the existence of "American philosophies", defended by Harris, Pratt and Waters,[57] for example, are, in my view, contemporary reformulations of the TNP thesis in the context of the 20th century. In Portugal, in the 20th century and nowadays, the idea that there is something like an "Atlantic thought"[58] or a "Portuguese-Galician-Brazilian thought",[59] falls, at least partially and in spite of all of its ambiguities, under its scope. In all of these cases, there is the same focus on the originality (typical of the TNP thesis) of the idiosyncrasy of a given multinational culture or cultures, interpreted in this or that way. Had I more time, it would have been interesting to have shown and documented case by case that what is in fact at stake is an ideological manipulation of philosophy and culture. I will say something about this in the concluding remarks of my address.

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54 See again Ayer's paper, The analytic movement in contemporary British philosophy (note 12).

55 See Janaway, C., History of philosophy: The analytical ideal, in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. LXII (1988), pp. 169-189; and Glock, H.-J., *What is Analytic Philosophy?* Cambridge 2008, p. 21ff.

56 See Stuhr, J. J., *American Pragmatism: An Introduction*, London 2009.

57 See Harris, L., Pratt, S. L., and Waters, A. (Eds.), *American Philosophies: An Anthology*, Malden-Massachusetts, Oxford (UK) 2002.

58 Borges, P., *Pensamento Atlântico*, Lisboa 2002.

59 do Carmo Silva, C. H., Espírito rebatido ou inteligência exaltada? Filosofia e pneumatologia nos séculos XIX e XX (no pensamento luso-galaico-brasileiro), in: Pinho, Á. (Coord.), *O pensamento Luso-Galaico-Brasileiro: Actas do I Congresso Internacional*, Lisboa 2009, p. 150ff.

9. Problems with the TNP thesis. Redefining the UP thesis

Now, all things considered, it seems clear to me that there is no insurmountable opposition between the versions of the TNP thesis which I studied in this paper, on the one hand, and the UP thesis, on the other. A significant part of these versions is open to some form of mediation with that thesis, represented by some kind of reconciliation with it. On this matter, we are very far from finding the necessary philosophical clairvoyance among the TNP philosophers. This is so because their TNPs were (and are) often used in the ideological sense to support or to criticise a certain corporative and political *status quo*.

In my view, it is not because it would be universal by origin or vocation, in other words because it would be apparently indifferent to national cultures, that the UP thesis is questionable, contrary to what is frequently assumed in light of the TNP thesis. This claim is very disputable, and cannot be really attested by the history of Western philosophy. Surely, modern rationalism, from Descartes and Kant to Hegel, was, in a sense, indifferent to national cultures: at least, insofar as these autors were interested in providing the foundations for knowledge and human action as a whole, and such foundations, by definition, are universal. But that does not mean that they (particularly, Kant and Hegel) have completely ignored culture, i.e., cultural differences. Their essential presupposition was that, in order to explain these differences, we need a universal framework. This is the issue that is at stake and that we must discuss; not the supposed indifference to culture from the part of those who have defended the UP thesis (in general, for the TNP philosophers, the Western philosophical tradition as a whole). It is therefore in this decisive plane that we must focus the discussion on the issue of universality *vs*. particularity of philosophy, as the "relativist thesis" and postmodernism, in general, show.

It is not, however, only in that plan that we must discuss, nowadays, the UP thesis. As I have been defending, the TNP philosophers, from the 19th century until nowadays, seem to be unaware, apparently, of the essentially utopian nature of their TNPs, and of its ideological presuppositions. *They pretend that they are presenting only neutral and inoffensive philosophical views*, at least as neutral and inoffensive as the rationalist and intellectualist philosophies of the Western tradition were. Even the fact that their views have always been controversial when they have presented them to other philosophers, does not suggest to them that such views were largely

ideological.[60] So, finally, it is precisely on this plane of the utopian and ideological origins of our concepts of philosophy and culture that we must approach the issue of the universality vs. particularity of philosophy.

10. The relativist version of our problem (existence of TNPs)

None of the versions of the TNP thesis which I have been discussing leads to the (post-modern) idea of multiculturalism, which is nowadays very popular. The view that different cultures are intrinsically distinct, that no one culture has (intellectual, political, etc.) primacy over others, and that each one should be assessed according to its own standards (to the extent that it is possible, given the issue of incommensurability among them), is relatively recent, as we know. It is also known in academic and cultural circles by the term "postmodernism", orginally introduced by Lyotard.[61] Its philosophical origins, however, date back to the semantic question of holism in philosophy, and, in particular, to the theses of Kuhn, Quine and others in the nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies.[62] The main idea is that the search for philosophical foundations, which characterizes the UP thesis from the ancient Greek philosophy (and particulary, from Descartes and Kant) onwards, cannot be accepted anymore, not so much because that search would ignore national cultures (as the TNP philosophers claim) or because Western philosophy in our globalised world would have been only a limited paradigm, but because that search cannot resist to the assault of the relativist thesis "on what there is" (as Quine says in the beginning of the fifties). Nevertheless, we know that Quine's holism in *Ontological Relativity and other Essays* is applied to cultural contexts through the problem of translation of different linguistic conceptual schemas (as Kuhn recognizes and accepts in the "Postface" to *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*), and leads to the idea that such schemes (or such cultural contexts) do not have a firm ontological basis, and philosophy cannot furnish it, that is, they are not commensurable.[63] From this it was easy to deduce, independently of Quine's presuppositions and aims, that the

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60 See, in this sense, E. Gellner's criticism of English ordinary language philosophy in the sixties: Gellner, E., *Words and Things: A Critical Account of Linguistic Philosophy, and a Study in Ideology*, with an Introduction by Bertrand Russell, Suffolk (UK) 1959.

61 Lyotard, J. F., *La condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir*, Paris 1979, p. 7ff.

62 See Kuhn, T. S., *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago 1970, 3rd edition. And Quine, W. V. O., On What There Is, in: Quine, W. V. O., *From a Logical Point of View: Logico-Philosophical Essays*, Cambridge-Massachusetts 1994, pp. 1-19.

63 See Quine, W. V. O., *Ontological Relativity and other Essays*, New York 1969.

UP thesis and its tradition, according to him and Kuhn, are indifferent to national cultures. This is, in short, the relativist interpretation of the theories of the two great American philosophers. Such interpretation is at the basis of what Lyotard called in the nineteen-seventies of the past century "postmodernism", and Rorty, more recently, "relativism".[64]

The relativist thesis marks the end of the age-old paradigm of the "philosophy universality" and, to some extent, of the UP thesis itself. We find such thesis, nowadays, presented in several ways, from linguistics and sociology to political theory. The key word regarding this subject in my paper is "relativity of cultures". By that we obviously also mean the relativity of national philosophies. Strictly speaking, however, we are not in the scope of the TNP thesis. As was suggested earlier, that thesis (actually, like the RT=Reconciliation Thesis) does not lead to the idea of multiculturalism. Having arisen already in the 19th century, as a form of stating ideologically and politically different nationalisms and cultures, which were seeking their own definition, they inherited from the UP thesis the same apparent indifference towards the issue of cultural relativity (not, as I held in this paper, towards culture *per se*).

Let us call the latter form of approaching the relativity of national philosophies within the scope of multiculturalism the relativist thesis (RLT). It entails (once the UP thesis has been abandoned and, in particular, the idea of foundations of human knowledge and actions) *identifying philosophy with culture, and more precisely reducing philosophy to culture*. The assumption is that philosophy itself, conceptually speaking (as happens with the UP thesis), is a cultural product, socially produced and built, in this or that context. To say that philosophy can be reduced to culture, means, for the classic supporters of the UP thesis, that to speak of Philosophy, properly called, no longer makes any sense at all. In the RLT, one can admit that philosophy is a sort of self-counsciousness of culture (as in the RT), but not that it would allow us to explain and to give foundations for culture in general, given the incommensurability of our conceptual schemes. In the RT, philosophy is the (universal) self-consciousness of national cultures, and culture (the particular), conceived in this or that way, is the unveiling or particularization of the universal or Absolute. As I suggested above about that thesis, from this point of view we have not abandoned the territory of the UP thesis; in fact, if I am right, we are in the heart of it. This is not the case of the RLT. The (modern and metaphysical) idea that philosophy would provide the foundations of culture (or whatever it is) is no longer relevant. There is no essential difference, from this point of view, between the *philosophy* of an American indian tribe and the *philosophy* of American

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64   See Rorty, R., *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth*, Cambridge 1991, vol 1.

pragmatism (with Peirce and others). This is the relativist thesis of a recent book called *American Philosophies*, to which I've already alluded.[65]

With the RLT we have a fourth form of approaching the problem we raised right at the beginning. Now it seems more or less obvious to me that currently in several countries, including mine, there are ties linking the classical thesis of the TNP to its different versions that I mentioned earlier, on the one hand, and the RLT on the other. Considering the relativism of cultures, the legitimacy of any TNP does not raise any issues, apparently. On the contrary, what is questionable is just the UP thesis, that is the thesis that philosophy would be universal and (by nature) indifferent to culture, insofar as culture is, for the supporters of the RLT (as well as, in some sense, for the supporters of the TNP thesis), always contextual. So, each country can have its own national philosophy (or each multinational group of countries its philosophical tradition), and it is not "politically" nor philosophically correct to say that one is superior to the others. And, according to an interpretation such as that of Rorty, each national philosophy can have not only its "intellectual histories" but also other kinds of historiography, including the old "rationalist" and "intellectualist" ones. All of them are equally acceptable and legitimate from a relativist point of view. As I said above regarding the concept of philosophical traditions, it is not only pertinent but also advisable to compare TNPs with each other, in order to develop a more complete knowledge of their relevant cultures. The old supporters of the TNP thesis found in the RLT, from the last quarter of the 20th century until nowadays, a timely and suitable way to continue claiming that typically national philosophies do exist. It was basically for this reason that, without any special debate or discussion in academic and other circles, we shifted from a "Portuguese philosophy" to a "philosophy in Portugal" and a "Portuguese philosophical thought", while preserving the spirit and methodology of the former.[66] (Apparently, the Portuguese democratic revolution of April 25, 1974, had no special influence on that shift.) In effect, if the theses that are at the source of multiculturalism are pertinent when applied to philosophy, as R. Rorty holds in several works, there is nothing that can prevent this relativist tie between different paradigms of philosophy and culture.

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[65] See above note 57.

[66] See Calafate, P., *História do pensamento filosófico português*, vol. V, Lisboa 2004, p. 18ff. For a criticism, see again H. J. Ribeiro, A 'filosofia portuguesa' e o 'Estado Novo', p. 150ff.

Concluding remarks: The TNP problem: towards a compromise between universalism and relativism

In my view, it is too early to accept the postmodern and relativist theory that the UP thesis is no longer an acceptable paradigm for philosophical research and for thinking the relationship between philosophy and culture; that is, the theory that philosophy, in the old and classical sense of the concept, is dead, and that, therefore, we must look, nowadays, for a new concept of philosophy which would be compatible with a new approach to culture. Such a theory has no more than fifty years in the millennial history of Western philosophy. And the presupposition according to which the UP thesis would ignore culture, and particularly culture in context—shared both by the TNP and the RLT philosophers—, cannot be entirely accepted, or, at least, needs further discussion. The history of Western philosophy, from Plato to nowadays, seems to show the contrary. Of course, as I said, it does ignore multiculturalism and the relativity of cultures, insofar as these concepts are interpreted in the civilisational sense. This limitation suggests that we cannot completely escape from relativism, that is to say, we must accept some of its views while trying to reconcile them with the UP thesis. I will come back to this next. Anyway, my point is that insofar as there are things like mathematics and natural sciences, insofar as we can speak of Western societies and of the relevant cultures as a whole (a whole that can be contrasted with the Oriental one, for example), the search for philosophical foundations cannot be abandoned.[67]

Again, it is too early to accept completely and without reservations the postmodern and relativist concepts of philosophy and culture themselves, and its main radical consequence, according to wich cultures (insofar as they belong to different paradigms or conceptual schemas) would be incommensurable (a consequence that, by the way, is not endorsed by most of the contemporary relativist approaches to culture, when cultures are analysed and compared to each other). Therefore, what philosophers (at least in Western civilization) probably meant, in the following decades of the 21st century, by "national philosophies" and "philosophical traditions", be they the classical or the postmodern ones, cannot dismiss or evade what I called the "TNP problem", and even inevitably embrace some sort of neo-Hegelian reconciliation or compromise between the universality and the particularity (nationality/multinationality) of philosophy. In fact, the present state of the art regarding the interpretations of the TNP problem, strongly

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67 See Norris, C., *Against relativism: Philosophy of Science, Deconstruction and Critical Theory*, Oxford, UK/Malden-Massachusetts 1997, chp. 3, p. 66ff.

invites them to clearly analyse and discuss the philosophical premises of their historiographies.

Presumably, too, in the following decades the controversy about the TNP problem, largely understood, will be at the top of the Western philosophical agenda. On the one hand, contemporary relativism—which became almost a dogma in American and European universities after the last quarter of the 20th century—promotes a generalized suspicion against the UP thesis and emphasizes the importance of national/multinational philosophies and cultures (and the relevant historical traditions). This trend is in accordance with the growing association of nations in economic and political blocks without a real cultural identity *in the whole*, which oppose to others with similar interests, and, at the same time, inside each block, with the inevitable affirmation of nationalism. On the other hand, contemporary relativism cannot obviously respond to our need for a universal framework which would allow us to establish and secure a fruitful dialogue between the national/multinational philosophies and the relevant cultures. (Popper said enough about that, in his paper "The Myth of the Framework", almost fifty years ago.)[68] It became, currently, simply a pretext for cynicism and ideological manipulation, be it from the part of each nation in its relations to others, be it from the part of public opinion itself. If we consider this problem from the perspective of the relationship between the West and the East, between what we assume to be the common features of Western cultures when compared with the Oriental ones, no doubt that the UP thesis, historically speaking, is the only universal framework we have. S. Toulmin, whose philosophy cannot be accused of having prejudices against the UP thesis and the RLT, has finally concluded just that, eleven years ago, in his last book, *Return to Reason*. There, he suggests, a sort of compromise ("a middle way") between the two theses.[69] This is also my point of view.

Having said this, I would like to emphasize that contemporary relativism led, beyond the questionable consequences which I mentioned above, to other more fruitful results. We learned from it—even if we cannot accept entirely the reduction of philosophy to culture in relativist terms—to understand philosophy itself as a cultural product of a given society, to contextualize philosophy, and, finally, *to deconstruct it*. In our globalized world, we need to rethink our approach to culture not only in relation to Oriental societies, but also regarding our own Western world. For example, a Kuhnian approach to philosophy, as the one developed by K. Mulligan and others, is always pertinent and welcomed. It sheds a new light on

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68 See Popper, K., *The Myth of the Framework: In Defence of Science and Rationality,* London/New York 1994, chp. 2.

69 Toulmin, S., *Return to Reason*, Harvard 2001, p. 214.

our understanding of the UP thesis and philosophy in general. I proposed a similar work of deconstruction in this paper, when I suggested that we need an approach to philosophy as a utopian thinking, which has, constitutionally (so to speak), ideological presuppositions and implications. More precisely, I suggested how, from this perspective, culture, as philosophy, can be rhetorically understood. The several versions of the TNPs I analyzed lose their apparently inoffensive and naïve character, and can always be interpreted not only from a point of view which is philosophical *per se* (and even systematic, if we manage to conceptualize a typology of such philosophies), but also from a sociological one, as tools for political conquests in the different levels of a given society (or societies). So, it is not a question of making anyone of such theses, and in particular the UP, more or less "acceptable". Things are what they are. It is rather just one of being more conscious of those ideological presuppositions which I criticized and to promote, finally, critical thinking on the subject-matter of this paper.

Is Culture an Improbable Product or the Essence of a Rich Man?

Olivier Feron

1. Culture as an improbable topic of culture itself

The topic of culture is an apparent paradox when it comes to be questioned from the standpoint of philosophy. Culture is not a traditional problem of philosophical questioning. In fact, culture appears to be a very recent topic, and, actually, not a central one. We could even say that culture is not essential to authentic philosophical rigour: a philosophy of culture is one of those recent or postmodern variations, an application of the concept to a peripheral field. Furthermore culture does not seem to peak the interest of contemporary philosophy, which is driven by the project of rethinking the very foundations of a radical ontology or any other kind of *protè philosophia.*

So, if culture is a theme of secondary importance for philosophy, why does it have to be questioned? This direct frontal question could be modified, and the interrogation rephrased: the subject of culture has recently arisen in philosophy, but why now? Does this sudden actuality and relevance of culture mean anything? Or, which is the same question, why, after 26 centuries of Occidental thought, has culture finally come to be studied? Part of the answer could lie in the apparent synchronicity of the emergence of culture as a theme with the emergence of anthropology as a worthy domain of philosophical task, at least until philosophical anthropology be also denounced as a nonessential theme of reflection, as a simple *metaphysica specialis.* Regardless, there has been recognition of the link between culture and the being seen as the bearer of culture, that is to say Man. Nonetheless, neither anthropology nor culture have yet been acknowledged as central philosophical topics.

The parallel between culture and man continues with the method they use to define themselves. Indeed, both rely on establishing their contrast with something they are not, nature, to define what they are. This way of defining man is in agreement with what is to be found in Blumenberg's colossal Description of Man, in which he writes that

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> a definition is above all a determination of differences. It must guarantee
> that one thing cannot be confused with another. … [this is the] reason
> why most of the philosophical efforts that could be qualified afterwards as
> anthropology were applied to the inventory of the differences between
> man and the animal[1].

And yet, the question "Why culture?" is as impertinent for philosophy as the
question "Was ist Mensch?", since the demand of universality that philosophy
pursues makes culture a purely empirical product subject to temporal, historical and
geographical diversity: what philosophy names an empirical condition. At the same
time that contemporary philosophy found its fulfillment in the ideal of a pure
scientificity, as a guarantee of its universality. Philosophy refuses to be rooted in
any discipline threatening its pretension to universality with but a hint of
empiricism. For instance, when Husserl founded phenomenology as a strict
science, he radically distinguished it from any empiricist temptation, he called
anthropologism or *psychologism[2]*. Following the same kind of reasoning, philosophy
should withstand any temptation to understand quest of truth as a possible cultural
phenomenon, amongst others. This risk could be named "culturalism"
(*Kuturalismus*).

   This leads us to ask the question of the legitimate form of universality our
modernity acknowledges to itself. Science appears the spontaneous answer, as it
appears to fulfill the requirements of being both beyond the contingent
constitution of the empirical man, and beyond the variety of cultures and their
incidental expressions.

   However, in his Copernican revolution, Kant established that the demand of
universality could only be met within the conditions of possibility of an experience
for a reason whose expressions define the field of a possible experience "for us,
men"[3]. It is, thus, from this standpoint that he defines any possibility that the
question of thought and therefore the question about the instance that thinks,

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1   Blumenberg, H.; *Die Beschreibung des Menschen*, Frankfurt am Main, 2006, p. 504.

2   Cf. Husserl, E., *Die Idee der Phänomenologie*, The Hague, Netherlands, 1973, p. 48, where Husserl
     opposed explicitly the transcendental philosophy to any kind of "Psychologismus und
     Anthropologismus", considered like merely empirical methods.

3   Cf. Kant, I., *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Hamburg, 1993, B 33, p. 63 where Kant introduces in the
     second edition of the KrV the famous expression "uns Menschen wenigstens", assuming thus
     for his thought a position of a radical finitude, based on a transcendental anthropology. On
     Kant's transcendental philosophy as anthropology, see Capeillères, F., La fondation kantienne
     des anthropologies philosophiques dans une anthropologie transcendantale, in: Berner, Ch., &
     Capeillères, F., *Kant et les kantismes dans la philosophie contemporaine 1804-2004*, Villeneuve d'Ascq
     2007, pp. 83-108.

should be considered. In this sense, the question about the nature of man, Kant's fourth question, and the questioning of what forms what is its own - to be a being of "over"-nature - cannot be considered a minor one, as it constitutes the domain of the first philosophy, the *protè philosophia*.

It is not surprising then that we will encounter here two of the only philosophers who radicalized the Kantian revolution, by making the fourth question the center of their thought. In so doing, they came to refer the nature of man to the product of his activity, his demiurgic ability: the protean field of culture. For neither Ernst Cassirer, nor Hans Blumenberg is it possible to separate the nature of man from the essence of its activity as a product: culture. The very definition of man as a symbolic animal for Cassirer means that the essence of man manifests itself in his tireless capacity to produce meaning through the process he terms "formgiving" (*Formgebung, Gestaltung*)[4]. Although this nature is not conceived by Cassirer as an essence in a metaphysical sense, Blumenberg nonetheless consideres the cultural nature of man a problem to be dealt with. In the speech dedicated to Cassirer he pronounced when he received the Kuno Fischer prize, Blumenberg insisted once more on the fact that the cultural nature of man should not be considered evident (*selbstverständlich*), just as it is not evident that there could be culture—and anthropology—instead of nothing. We will see in what ways it is possible to confront these two approaches to the phenomenon of culture.

2. The sumptuousness of Cassirer's symbolic animal

The radicalism of Cassirer's thought comes probably from the fact that he took Kant seriously when the latter defined the task of philosophy as the necessity to renounce the *proud name of ontology*, to reduce its aim to an analytic of reason itself[5]. Assuming that reason cannot be reached directly, but only through its own production, and its universal form—note this is the very definition of *transcendental*—Cassirer developed his work around trying to measure all of the implications of this revolution: the realm of the human production and its laws is the realm of the experience. The transcendental conditions of possibility of symbolic production correspond to the conditions of the experience of any possible world. With the same radicalism, Cassirer limits this "analytic" to the very extension of the capacity of the symbolic animal to extend and use his unique and

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4 Cf. Cassirer, E.; *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen*, Hamburg, 1995.
5 Kant, I., *Kritik der reinen Vernunft, op. cit.*, A 247/B 308, p. 296.

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infinite ability to produce, feed and be fed by the movement of symbolic renewal, which means the infinite dynamic of culture to be developed. In this case, the very question of the nature of culture cannot be answered although the reflection takes the nature of *Mensch*, human beings into consideration. This anthropological turn is not an arbitrary decision, but is commanded by the very nature of the possibility of reflection itself, on itself: how is thought—in all its expressions, variety and modalities—possible? Consequently, in a very Kantian fashion, Cassirer responds that the question of the nature of culture—which we have seen to be the same question as that of the nature of man—cannot be answered by the questioning of the origin of the phenomenon. The reason for this is that this kind of preoccupation is still totally metaphysical, that, in a sense, it presupposes that it would be possible for the reflection to "jump" out of its very conditions of possibility, which are purely symbolical. The fact is nobody, during the search for an answer about the nature of cultural being, can spare what enables his very research, which is the symbolic nature of its questioning. The question of the "nature" of the symbolic, its "essence" can never be answered through a merely genetical method, which presupposes a way of regressing before the moment we became "symbolical Beings", that is, human. It would be the same question as "what was the world before we became human?" We know that this question can only be answered by poetry, imagination, whose production represents the very first product of symbolic realm which is ours, is always ours. For Cassirer, life can only be conceived within culture, wrapped in symbolic diversity. We are *immer schon*, always already in side the symbols. No regressive quest, no boundary experiences can lead us "out" of the world, because there is no world outside the symbols, no exteriority to it, and neither anteriority.

> By virtue of these "forms" mankind attains proximity to the world and a distance from it which no other creature possesses. If we are to identify this process of delimitation, to draw a line of demarcation between mankind and the totality of the world of living things, this can occur only by taking the concept and structure of this configuration as a starting point, and by trying to grasp not so much its development as its content. No metaphysics and no empirical fact will ever be in a position to illuminate the "origin" of this configuration in the sense that it puts us back at the temporal starting point that it permits us immediately to eavesdrop on its beginning. We can never penetrate back to the point at which the first ray of intellectual consciousness broke out of the world of life … A strictly naturalistic anthropology must undertake this attempt

again and again, for its "possibility" depends upon the success of this attempt. But this attempt always turns out in the end to be circular: in the end one can "develop" out of elements nothing other than what had been already implicitly attributed to them, no matter how concealed this tacit assumption has been[6].

The life in the symbolic realm, the participation in the dual activity of cultural dynamic, as synchronical *forma formans* and *forma formata*, is what Cassirer names an *Urphänomen*, an originary phenomenon, impassable and founding at the same time. This is what was so clear to Heidegger in the Davoser debate, as he declared that the *terminus a quo* of Cassirer's philosophy was not very clear[7].

3. Blumenberg and the improbable nature of culture

It is precisely this *a priori* condition of any possible experience that causes doubt in Hans Blumenberg. Joining also the anthropological problem to the nature of culture, the attempt of Blumenberg's philosophy to answer the fourth Kantian question leads him to reappraise the existence of the human as a matter of course (*Selbstverständlichkeit*). On the contrary, the first move of founding his own anthropology goes through a new kind of reflexive requirement:

> As philosophy is a deconstruction of self-evidences (*Aber sofern Philosophie Abbau von Selbstverständlichkeiten ist*), a philosophical anthropology should deal with the topic of whether the physical existence is not already the result of those abilities granted to Man as "essentials" (*wesentlich*). Thus, the first statement of a philosophical anthropology should be this one: it is not so obvious that human being should exist[8].

Which means in other words: it is not obvious that culture should be. Contingency is thus the primary condition to think both anthropology and culture. But this new and radical position should not be understood as a regression to the precritical position of the problem of man and culture. Blumenberg does not pretend that the

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6   Cassirer, E., *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen, op. cit.*, pp. 36-7.
7   Davoser Disputation zwischen Ernst Cassirer und Martin Heidegger, in: Heidegger, M., *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik*, Frankfurt am Main 1991, pp. 288-9.
8   Blumenberg, H., *Wirklichkeiten in denen wir leben,* Stuttgart 1999, p. 114.

alleged contingent nature of culture should authorize us to return to the state "before" it, to determine the reasons that caused man, this "animal born young", to have recourse to all kind of strategies of roundabout, of detour, what Cassirer defined as *Kunst des Umwegs*. Nevertheless, Blumenberg cannot avoid considering that the *terminus a quo* of the symbolic animal is too easily taken for granted, because,

> this theory of Cassirer gives up on explaining why man have recourse to "symbolic forms", the fact that they appear in the world of culture allows to derive from an *animal symbolicum* who exteriorizes his "essence" into his creations. For an anthropology of the "rich" man, based on a guaranteed biological existence, or at least not questioned, the cultural shell of the symbolic forms goes on growing, layer after layer. The enrichment of the naked existence does not keep any functional relation with its possibility of existence[9].

In a time of genuine modern functionalism, neither man nor culture has an assured essence to rely on. But the lack of essence of the human being cannot be explained only by a simple *flaw* of the human constitution. The definition of man as a *Mangelwesen*, a flawed being, cannot be understood in a simple biological sense, since there is no possible empirical anthropology for Blumenberg[10]. The topic of the default has not been a central component of reflection neither on man, nor on culture. The possibility of considering it as a subject coincides with the human interrogation on his cultural nature.

But this question is not one of those so-called *everlasting questions*, whose identity and eternity Blumenberg questioned critically, since their possibility rests on the concept of substance (paradoxically, the basis of Blumenberg's critique to the argument of the everlasting questions that haunt the modern ages is definitely grounded in the fundamental and seminal distinction of Cassirer between the concept of substance and the concept of function)[11]. The form and aim of our interrogations are also a product of the historical process of self determination of man. In this sense, the fact that we question the nature of culture—and its human

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9   Blumenberg, H., *Wirklichkeiten in denen wir leben, op. cit.,* p. 114.

10   Cf. Müller, O., *Sorge um die Vernunft*, Paderborn 2005, p. 142.

11   Cf. Blumenberg, H. *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt 1996, Part I, chap. 6 where we can find the systematical application of the cassirerian distinction between the concept of *substance* and the concept of *function* as representing the revolution of paradigm that defines modern thought; see Cassirer, E., *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff. Untersuchungen über die Grundfragen der Erkenntnis-kritik*, Berlin 1910.

producer—is an immanent result of the continuous process of *autopoiesis* of culture. The way in which Blumenberg questions the layering process of cultural coats as a so-called "given evidence" is to replace it with its temporal development, which means that there is not any kind of pre-determined pattern to this evolution. This is why Blumenberg claims that it is not obvious that man—and of course its cultural products—should ever exists: because, as a topic, there is no metaphysical reason or guarantees that neither man nor culture should be or become a matter of reflection and, as such, come to exist within the realm of representation. In this sense, any kind of fundamental reflection on culture must be integrated in a history of the Spirit, a *Geistesgeschichte*. The historical nature of culture constitutes its "essence", but a dynamic, functional essence. In Oliver Muller's words,

> Historicity belongs fundamentally to Blumenberg's version of an *animal symbolicum*. The Historicity is a symbolic form, that corresponds to the «unity» of Man (*Mensch*). … The historical Reason is also a cultural Reason[12].

It means that the consequence of the idea of culture as a product of an activity leads to the impossibility to found it in any kind of metaphysical fundament. This applies to man also, as a possible matter of culture itself. Man could appear, and, as Foucault once prophesied, man could disappear. There are no guaranties that culture—or man—could be an actual subject of the very own development of culture. It has not been the case during centuries, which indicates that what we just recognized as the "essence" of man could once more be forgotten or avoided.

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12 Müller, O., *Sorge um die Vernunft, op. cit.*, p. 258.

Incommensurability in the comparative study of cultures.

From Kuhn to Benedict, back & forth.

Liza Cortois

Introduction

In this paper, I would like to present two interconnected trains of thought: one showing the relevance of the notion of incommensurability for a philosophy of culture, another one bringing together the fields of philosophy of science and cultural anthropology with respect to that notion. The concept of incommensurability was first used in mathematical contexts, referring to pairs of magnitudes that possess no common measure. For example, there exists no common measure between the length of the hypotenuse and a leg of an isosceles right triangle.[1] Thomas Kuhn, and independently from him, and at about the same time, Paul Feyerabend, applied this concept metaphorically to the history of science. He claimed that successive scientific paradigms are incommensurable, that they always fail to a certain degree to make complete contact with each other's view. This was a very controversial claim in the sixties and seventies because to many theoreticians and scientists it seemed to question the rationality of science. Is objective knowledge of reality possible if science isn't a cumulative project that unravels, or, at least, gradually approximates, the truth, but rather a bunch of theories that fail to communicate with each other? This way of stating the position of the opponent is of course a parody, but it does give a hint at some confusions and associations that are attached to incommensurability. One of the objectives of this paper is to give a more subtle understanding of this complex concept.

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1   Oberheim, Eric; Hoyningen-Huene, Paul, Incommensurability of Scientific theories, in: *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* [25.02.2009]. The importance of the concept for the history of mathematics and thus also for ancient philosophy is not to be underestimated, since the discovery of the incommensurable magnitudes (the numerical concept of which was later to be identified with the concept of irrational numbers) introduced the so-called first foundational crisis of mathematics and of demonstrative thought.

Yet, I don't want to study incommensurability purely form the angle of philosophy of science, but I want to take the discussion a step further and apply it to the comparative study of cultures. I'm not a pioneer in this anthropological application of incommensurability. But I would like to clarify the rather loose anthropologists' usage of this complex concept by going back to the original use Kuhn made of it. Anthropological incommensurability occurs in a way that is analogous to its meaning in the philosophy of science, as a kind of double *mimèsis* from its mathematical context of origin. It's becoming part of the unquestioned common sense of anthropologists, while on the other hand it is often confused with blatant relativism by its opponents. We find an example of such a confusion in the cultural philosopher and advocate of comparative philosophy Zhang Longxi when he contests Peter Winch's view on 'Understanding a Primitive Society'[2]: "[T]his type of thinking would lead inevitably to a sweeping cultural relativism that sees various cultures as totally incommensurable, intelligible only to those already living within limits of a specific cultural system."[3] The main focus of this paper is to clarify the concept of incommensurability by making a series of distinctions based on Kuhn between incommensurability, incomparability, untranslatability and incomprehensibility.

Since this concept has concerned Kuhn in a number of other papers in which he nuanced his key concept a number of times, I will not limit my discussion to the study of his bestseller *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* In 1990, Kuhn has said the following about incommensurability:

> No other concept of *Structure* has concerned me so deeply in the thirty years since the book was written, and I emerged from those years feeling more strongly than ever that incommensurability has to be an essential component of any historical, developmental, or evolutionary view of scientific knowledge.[4]

Whether Kuhn's concept has undergone major changes in those thirty years or has merely been clarified is a question that may remain open. In any case, it's interesting to study later papers too because they add important elements. Here I

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2   Winch, Peter, Understanding a Primitive Society, in: *Ethics and Action,* London 1972, p. 12.

3   Longxi, Zhang, Translating Cultures: China and the West, in: Pohl, Karl-Heinz (ed.), *Chinese Thought in a Global Context. A Dialog between Chinese and Western Philosophical Approaches.* Leiden 1999, p. 34.

4   Kuhn, Thomas, The Road since Structure, in: Conant, James; Haugeland, John (ed.), *The Road Since Structure*, Chicago 1990, p. 91.

will discuss two texts next to *Structure* that are key in understanding the concept of incommensurability. The first is "Commensurability, Comparability, Communicability" (1982). In this paper, Kuhn's thought is already more developed and he addresses some interesting objections against the incommensurability thesis. Next, in "The Road since Structure" (1990) we see Kuhn's final model of the thesis now being specified and interpreted as taxonomic incommensurability. In the papers mentioned, Kuhn has a lot of references to the incommensurability of utterances in natural languages. Nevertheless, his focus remains on the uses of the concept in the philosophy of science. At this point, I will make the transition to cultural incommensurability. I will apply the insights reached in the study of Kuhn's writings to the analysis of Japanese culture as described by anthropologist Ruth Benedict in her famous book *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1947). To conclude I will point out some similarities and differences between cultural and scientific incommensurability.

Incommensurability is a controversial subject the mentioning of which is often accompanied by an emotional undertone. Opponents associate it with cultural relativism and the inability for cross-cultural communication. Especially in our globalized world, where other nationalities are part of our daily "life world" and there are constant communication flows from one part of the world to another, incommensurability as it is often understood seems very burdensome. I want to suggest a more moderate understanding that accentuates the particularity and inner complexity of a given culture. A discourse that focuses on incommensurability can be a corrective to the growing emphasis on the homogenization of culture in theories of globalization. Such a moderate reading remains open for further discussion, of course, since other views plea for a universal understanding between human beings based for example on common conceptual schemes.[5] But before we can say anything on such derived, yet very relevant, themes it is necessary to understand what it could mean for two cultures to be incommensurable.

1. Incommensurability in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

In *Structure*, Kuhn describes three characteristics of incommensurability. The first he introduces as follows:

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5   Davidson, Donald, On the very idea of a conceptual scheme, in: *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, Vol. 47, (1973 -1974), pp. 5-20.

> The historians of science may be tempted to exclaim that when paradigms change, the world itself changes with them. Led by a new paradigm, scientists adopt new instruments and look in new places. Even more important, during revolutions, scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before. It is rather as if the professional community had been suddenly transported to another planet where familiar objects are seen in a different light and are joined by unfamiliar ones as well.[6]

After a paradigm shift it seems as if scientists are working in a different world. Kuhn compares this change of views with a change of "Gestalt".[7] From the moment one looks at the world with a new Gestalt, that world will be incommensurable with the pre-revolutionary world.

For example, the Aristotelian theory of motion is incommensurable with the Galilean.[8] An Aristotelian would describe a heavy object that is swinging back and forth on a string as an object that tends towards its natural place, i.e. the centre of the earth where heavy things belong and come to rest, but the object is hindered by the string. Galileo, to the contrary, saw a pendulum, that is repeating the same movement, almost ad infinitum. The scientists aren't merely giving a reinterpretation of the same fixed facts. A reinterpretation isn't enough to describe what is at stake in a paradigm shift. A paradigm shift can only come about through lots of anomalies and a crisis. A crisis isn't solved by a mere reinterpretation, but through a sudden "discovery" that works as a Gestalt switch. In our example from Galilean and Aristotelian theory of motion: Galileo's description isn't a reinterpretation of the Aristotelian one. Aristotelians measured totally different data, like the weight of the object, the height from which it falls and the time it takes to come to rest. But these data are meaningless for Galileo, he wouldn't be able to describe his laws of motion if he had stuck to them.

A second central characteristic of incommensurability, is that scientists under different paradigms define different questions as scientific problems. The standards for what counts as scientific differ.[9] The Aristotelian theory of motion saw the

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6   Kuhn, Thomas, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Second edition, Chicago 1970, p. 111.

7   With the difference that we can switch back and forth between Gestalts. A scientific revolution to the contrary is irreversible. We are also conscious of the fact that we can see several figures when we look at a Gestaltfigure. In scientific observation, we can not take an external point of view, outside of science, that is conscience of the frame in which the scientific observation happens.

8   Ibid*.,* pp. 118-120.

9   Ibid., p. 148.

question: "*Why* is there attraction between particles?" as a scientific question, but under the Newtonian paradigm, this was no longer viewed as a scientific question.

Finally, concepts have a different meaning after a change of paradigm. New concepts come to the front, and old concepts are related to each other in a different manner. According to Kuhn, the meaning of scientific terms is determined by the relationship these terms have to other terms in a theory. It is precisely these relationships between terms that change after a paradigm shift. For example, in Ptolemy's theory, the term "planet" referred to the sun as well as to Venus, and not to the earth, but in the Copernican theory it was the other way around. The meaning of the terms "earth", "planet", "movement" were redefined and they came to stand in a different semantic relationship to each other.

Incommensurability as it was defined in *Structure*, has been severely criticised, among others by Hilary Putnam and Donald Davidson. There were mainly two lines of criticism. First, if two theories are incommensurable, then the theories are stated in languages that are mutually untranslatable. If that is so, the two theories cannot be compared, and no arguments can be given for the choice between them. This however, would lead to an inacceptable and implausible form of relativism. Second, Kuhn claims that we can't translate old scientific theories into our modern language. But in practice, that is precisely what he is doing, by analysing Newton's, Aristotle's or Lavoisier's theories. His practice contradicts his theory.

According to Kuhn, these two arguments are the result of misunderstandings of the concept of incommensurability and of its confusion with other concepts such as untranslatability and non-communicability. In reaction to these lines of criticism, Kuhn developed a more nuanced view of incommensurability in his paper "Commensurability, Comparability, Communicability".

2. Commensurability, comparability, communicability

Here, Kuhn gives the following clarifying definition of incommensurability:

> The claim that two theories are incommensurable is then the claim that there is no language, neutral or otherwise, into which both theories, conceived as sets of sentences, can be translated without residue or loss.[10]

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10 Kuhn, Thomas, Commensurability, Comparability, Communicability, in: Conant; James, Haugeland, John (ed.), *The Road Since Structure*, Chicago 1982, p. 36.

As this definition makes clear, incommensurability doesn't necessarily imply incomparability, because there are a lot of intersecting terms in two theories that function in the same way. They give enough of a basis for comparison. The claim that two theories are incommensurable is more modest than criticisms have assumed. Nevertheless, there is a subgroup of central concepts for which there are problems of translation. The incommensurability thesis is restricted to a local region of a theory.[11]

But even though Kuhn nuances incommensurability to local incommensurability, the question remains how Kuhn himself can *translate* older theories. Kuhn's answer is that there is a confusion between two processes at work, i.e. interpretation and translation. Critics assume that *interpretation* is the same as *translation*. According to Kuhn, this is wrong. Instead, Kuhn defines translation as "systematically substitut[ing] words or strings of words in the other language for words or strings of words in the text in such a way as to produce an equivalent text in the other language."[12] Notes or prefaces of translators aren't part of the translation defined this way. Both language systems pre-existed to the act of translation. The act of translation doesn't alter the meaning of words. Conversely, when Kuhn explains older scientific theories, he isn't translating them into our modern language, he is interpreting them. The same counts for an anthropologist who is studying a foreign culture/language. Unlike the translator, the interpreter may initially master only one language, or perhaps his own as well as part of the other language. Quine's radical translator is actually a radical interpreter in Kuhn's terminology. The term *gavagai* is incommensurable with our terms if we can't determine how to translate it in our language by an equivalent expression. Is it: "look, a rabbit", or is it "rabbit"? But if we manage to point to the referent of the word *gavagai* by using an equivalent expression without any loss of meaning, it's still merely a translation. It's when the native speakers structure the world differently, that the term *gavagai* is incommensurable, and we require an interpretation. In that case, it's only by getting acquainted with how the natives structure the world of animals, that the anthropologist can interpret the word *gavagai*. This interpretive process goes deeper into the core of the foreign language than a mere translation. In a literal translation we rather impose our standards for structuring reality upon the other language. Instead, by interpretation we discover the use of the word in the other language and its relation to other words and contexts.

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11   Ibid*.,* p. 36.
12   Ibid*.,* p. 38.

The natives structure the animal world differently from the way English speakers do, using different discriminations in doing so. Under those circumstances *gavagai* remains an irreducibly native term, not translatable into English. Though English speakers may learn to use the term, they speak the native language when they do so. Those are the circumstances for which I would reserve the term "incommensurability".[13]

Kuhn's argument for the interpretation of incommensurable terms in this paper is interesting for the theme of cultural incommensurability, because here Kuhn also focuses on natural language and the incommensurability between fragments of them rather than restricting the analysis to scientific languages. In my review of cultural incommensurability I also mainly want to focus on the language-aspect. I don't want to argue that a culture is reducible to its language. Language, however, is an accessible parameter that represents something of the specificity of a culture. I assume that language and culture are considerably intertwined so that it's difficult to separate one from an other. So, in defending the thesis that cultures may be incommensurable I mainly argue, with Kuhn, for the incommensurability of languages that partially represent these cultures.

Even for western languages like French and English, there is a local incommensurability that can only be bridged by language learning or interpretation. Kuhn gives the example of the French word "doux/douce".[14] Depending on the context, this is translated in English by "sweet", "soft", "bland", "tender" or "gentle". All these translations elucidate merely one aspect of the meaning of "doux". By choosing for one English translation, the translator chooses one aspect of the meaning of "doux" and excludes the other connotations the word has in French. Kuhn explains that in French this set of concepts is structured differently from the ways of English.

It also becomes clear that Kuhn isn't arguing for a far reaching cultural relativism. Interpretation of another language is perfectly possible. If I, a Belgian, for example, talk to a Portuguese in English, it is possible that we can make ourselves understandable without any translation problems. It may be only for a set of concepts that problems of translation occur, meaning that we can not substitute the words in question by equivalent words. But for this set of words we can fall back on the process on interpretation. In order to interpret, the interpreter has to learn a bit of the other language. He has to learn the specific untranslatable concept, and other concepts that stand in a specific lexical relation to it. In

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13   Ibid., p. 40.
14   Ibid, pp. 48-49.

Summary, Kuhn ascribes to languages a local holism according to which they structure the world differently. To be able to understand another language, we have to expose that lexical structure. In the next paper to be discussed, Kuhn refines his notion of this lexical structure by referring to taxonomies.[15]

3. Taxonomic incommensurability

A lexicon is mainly composed of what Kuhn calls kind terms. These kind terms constitute a widespread category which contains terms for natural kinds, social kinds, artificial kinds and other kind of kinds which Kuhn doesn't specify. Kind terms have two essential characteristics. The first one is that kind terms have some lexical characteristics such as taking the indefinite article. I think this condition is rather vague and that it's a contingent fact that in the English language kind terms take an indefinite article. Secondly, in order for a lexicon to constitute a taxonomy, referents of kind terms shouldn't overlap, unless they stand in the relationship of species to genus. For example, there are no rats that are at the same time mice. This principle is also called the no-overlap principle.[16]

We find a more rigorous definition of a taxonomy in Ian Hacking's seminal paper on the subject.[17] For Hacking, the kinds that are of Kuhn's concern—Hacking calls them *scientific kinds*—are threefold. First, there are kinds which are composed of individuals in a broad sense, like the species cat that is composed of individual cats. The other two kinds are *kinds of stuff*, for example phosphor, and *miscellaneous kinds*, like colours. The latter two kinds differ from the former in that they are hard to describe in terms of sets of individuals.[18]

When Quine defines kinds as sets, he doesn't take *kinds of stuff* and *miscellaneous kinds* into consideration. But we can learn from Quine that the definition of kinds in terms of sets is advantageous, because we can speak in set theory when the relation between kinds is concerned. Especially the relation 'is a subset of' is interesting. For example, the kind *Clydesdales horse* is a subset of the set of horses, which is a subset of the set of mammals. We have to extend this understanding of the "kind-of" relation to *kinds of stuff* and *miscellaneous kinds*. Just as the relation "is a

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15 Kuhn, Thomas, The Road since Structure, in: Conant; James, Haugeland, John (ed.), *The Road Since Structure*, Chicago 1990, pp. 90-104.

16 Ibid*.,* p. 92.

17 Hacking, Ian, Working in a New World: The Taxonomic Solution, in: Horwich, Paul (ed.), *World Changes. Thomas Kuhn and the Nature of Science,* Massachusetts 1993, pp. 275-311.

18 Ibid*.,* pp. 284-287.

subset of", the "kind-of" relation is transitive and asymmetrical. It is also not merely contingent that certain members are part of a kind, it is logically, conceptually or lexically determined.[19]

Starting from these criteria for the determination of the kind of relation, Hacking formulates his exact definition of a taxonomy:

> A taxonomy is determined by a class of entities C and a transitive asymmetric relation K. {C,K} is a taxonomy if and only if (1) it has a head, a member of C that does not stand in the relation K to any member of C but such that every other member of C stands in the relation K to it; (2) every member of C except the head stands in the relation K to some member of C.[20]

This definition is quite complex and abstract, but its use may be sufficiently clarified by a number of visual schemata of taxonomies. I made up a simple example of a taxonomy that makes use of Hacking's visualisation of taxonomies:
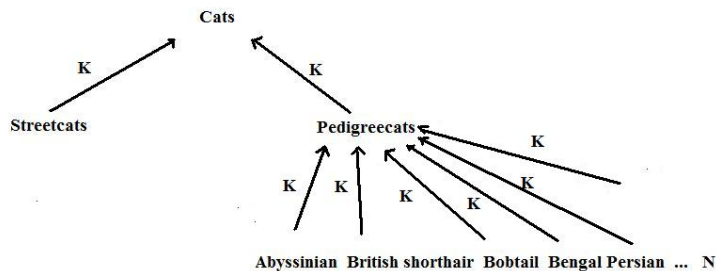

Figure 1: Taxonomy of cats

"Cats" is the head of the taxonomy. The abbreviation K stands for "kind of". Street cats and pedigree cats are kinds of cats. Further, we made a subdivision of the kinds of pedigree cats. The example is purely illustrative, I don't mean to claim that this is a scientific taxonomy. If there would be an overlap between the street cats and the pedigree cats, this would be a violation of the no-overlap principle and by consequence, this would be, in Hacking's terminology, an anti-taxonomy.

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19 Ibid., p. 287.
20 Ibid., p. 286.

Shared taxonomies are the prerequisite for unproblematic communication. If the taxonomies of two communities differ for a certain discussion area, the latter can't communicate if they refuse to apply or understand the other community's taxonomy. We can only fully understand the other if we do make use of the other's taxonomy and become bilingual. At this point in Kuhn's thought, incommensurability is defined as the point where two lexical taxonomies differ from one another because of the presence of differently structured "kind-of"-relations resulting in a violation of the no-overlap principle in attempts at translation.

4. Language and incommensurability: Lexical field theory

In his last writings, Kuhn focuses on incommensurability between natural languages, although he uses them mostly as a metaphor for scientific systems. In his taxonomic approach, he is influenced by the semantic field theory of linguists like Lyons.[21] Lyons, on his turn, bases himself on one of the founders of lexical field theory, Trier. Let us take a closer look at this theory. Beforehand we have to remark that Trier and others focus on the diachronic aspect of languages, where as Lyons and most anthropologists have reviewed the synchronous approach of culture, as I will also do. But we could also consider a culture as a developing sequence of subsequent cultures that resemble each other, in which case we can apply Trier's insights to cultures juxtaposed to each other. Secondly, cultures at a given point in time also form more of a continuum instead of a set of separate entities. They have a history that connects some of them and separates others. To really be able to see the complete picture of how a comparative study of cultures is possible, we also have to take the diachronic aspect in consideration. I will not do this here in full detail, but the lexical field theory offers a first initial impetus to a diachronic view.

An important insight of Trier's is that he doesn't see the development of meaning atomistically, but as an interrelated system of meanings. Take the following citation: "The value of a word can only be determined by defining it in relation to the value of neighbouring and contrasting words. It is only as a part of the whole that it has sense; for it is only in the field that there is meaning."[22]

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21 Kuhn, Thomas, The Road since Structure, in: Conant; James, Haugeland, John (ed.), *The Road Since Structure*, Chicago 1990, p. 93.

22 Lyons, John, Semantic fields, in: *Semantic I,* Cambridge 1977, pp. 250-261, p. 251.

"Field" refers to the linguistic reality that intermediates between separate words and the whole of a vocabulary. Like words, lexical fields are parts of a larger whole, and, like the whole, lexical fields can be divided into smaller units. An example that describes the diachronic development of a lexical field in German will clarify Trier's theory.

The example concerns the evolution of Middle high German from the beginning to the end of the thirteenth century.[23] He discusses the lexical field of knowledge ("der Sinnbezirk des Verstandes"). In the beginning of the thirteenth century, this lexical field consisted of three words: *wîsheit, kunst* and *list.* A century later it consisted of: *wîsheit, kunst* and *wissen.* However, it is not the case that *wissen* took the place of *list* in the field. The position of the other words has also been re-established. At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the words had the following meaning: *Kunst* was a higher, more courteous kind of knowledge that also included knowledge of social appropriate behaviour. *List* was associated with a lower, more practical sort of knowledge and *wîsheit* was a kind of synthesis between the two that looked at man in all its dimensions, his moral, intellectual, esthetic and religious knowledge. At the end, all of the terms occupied a different place in the field. *Wîsheit* was now a synonym for the deepest kind of knowledge and was also associated with religious and mystical understanding. *Wissen* was a more ordinary kind of knowledge and *Kunst* was in between the two sorts. *List,* in turn, had been replaced to another conceptual field than that of knowledge.

This example gives a first approach of how we can apply incommensurability to cultures. Different cultures structure a lexical field differently, with different words that stand in other relations to each other.

5. The Taxonomy of the "on"

Next, I will apply the idea of incommensurability that we've explored so far to the analysis of traditional Japanese culture as described by anthropologist Ruth Benedict in her famous study *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946). One could say, Benedict implicitly adopts the assumption of incommensurability avant−la−lettre. I will elaborate this viewpoint explicitly and add to it the theoretical frame we found in Kuhn's work. Benedict got the assignment during the Second World War in order for the Americans to be able to understand the

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23 Ibid*., pp. 256-257.

behaviour of the Japanese.[24] Some of her results might be outdated in more than one sense, the culture is not what it used to be; and moreover, the description of traditional culture might turn out to have been inadequate or incomplete.

Benedict started from the premise that although to Americans it might appear that Japanese culture is full of contradictions, the culture is in fact coherent.

> As a cultural anthropologist also I started from the premise that the most isolated bits of behaviour have some systematic relation to each other. I took seriously the way hundreds of details fall into over-all patterns. A human society must make for itself some design for living. It approves certain ways of meeting situations, certain ways of sizing them up. People in that society regard these solutions as foundations of the universe.[25]

It is key for the study of other cultures that we do not dictate to them our standards for structuring reality. Each culture is a coherent system that relies on its own "metaphysical" assumptions. To study the Japanese culture we have to look to reality through their eyes.

We will focus on one example in particular, namely on the taxonomy of concepts relative to what the Japanese call "on". This word is often translated as obligation, indebtedness, loyalty, kindness or love.[26] None of these words truly captures the essence of "on". It also seems strange for us to use the same word for love and obligation. "On" is incommensurable with and untranslatable into English. We can only understand this concept if we uncover the logic of this taxonomic field or in other words, learn and interpret this word.

The Japanese use the word 'on' to express a complex focus of a person's indebtedness. In ideal circumstances, a person receives an "on" from a superior or at least one's equal, and not from someone who is inferior. Receiving an "on" gives one an uncomfortable feeling. The receiver says: "I wear an *on* to him", which implies that he carries obligations to that person.[27] If someone receives an "on" from his "*on*-man", there is an asymmetry in their social relationship. The receiver wants to restore this imbalance. It is nevertheless honoured when one carries an "on" without (visible) offense or resentment to one's *on*-man. The Japanese try to avoid the far reaching consequences of carrying an "on", especially with respect to

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24 Benedict, Ruth, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword. Patterns of Japanese Culture*. Boston 1946, p. 10.
25 Ibid*.,* pp. 11-12.
26 Ibid., p. 99.
27 Ibid*.,* pp. 99-100.

strangers.[28] Suppose a person had lost his hat on a windy street. If a stranger would chase the hat and return it to the owner, the latter would feel discomfort. He can not restore the imbalance to this stranger because he will probably never see him again. This discomfort is not a sign of ingratitude, it's rather the opposite. It's an infinite gratitude or "guilt" that is almost unbearable, because of which they feel discomfort and even shame towards their benefactor. Being the carrier of an "on" is a serious matter. As one of their sayings has it: "One never returns one ten-thousandth of an *on*."[29]

The reactions of the Japanese in circumstances where we say "Thank you" are also pretty significant. *Kino doku*, is literally translated as: "Oh, this poisonous feeling" or "I'm sorry", i.e. for the indebtedness. One of the etymological meanings of *Arigato* is "Oh, this difficult thing".[30]

There are different kinds of "on", each with their own nuances. The first and greatest, principally unlimited "on", is the "on" to the emperor.[31] One wears this "on" during his whole life. The second kind of "on" is the one a person receives from his parents. This is also a limitless "on", which can only be partially repaid. This is also logical because it is to our parents that we owe our existence and our education. It is this "on" that places Japanese parents in a strategic position of authority. Further, there is the "on" we have to our teachers and masters or lord. Finally, there is the "on" toward people we are in touch with during our whole life. We could make up a simplified taxonomy of the lexical field of the "on", for example like this:
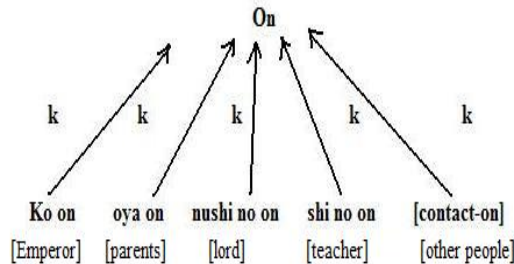
K= kind of-relation

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[28] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[29] *Ibid.,* p. 103.
[30] *Ibid.,* p. 105.
[31] *Ibid.,* p. 101.

We could extend our taxonomy by contrasting the passive receiving of "on" with its active opponent, namely returning what one is indebted, what is called *gimu* and *giri*. But this would lead us too far.

It's clear that we are dealing here with a taxonomy where the meaning of words is determined by their relation to other words as well as by the division in kinds. This taxonomy of "the virtues of receiving" is structured totally differently from our way of dealing with donations. If we would try to translate their taxonomy into ours, we would violate the no-overlap principle. In other words, in Kuhn's most recent terminology, we can also speak of incommensurability here.

6. Science and Culture: some issues

Until now, I have argued for an obvious similarity between scientific incommensurability and cultural incommensurability. But there are also some points where the comparison becomes less obvious, and would invite further discussion. I'll briefly name four of them.

First, there is a continuum in the scale of cultural incommensurability. Between the Japanese and the American culture there is a great discrepancy, the way in which they structure the world differs radically on several points. Nevertheless we have to remark that the Japanese culture isn't an entirely closed system, without any resemblance whatsoever to our culture. Otherwise Japanese culture wouldn't only be incommensurable, but also incomparable and incomprehensible. If we compare two Western languages, as we did for French and English with the word "doux", the incommensurability is less radical, most of the taxonomies overlap. The different stages in the development of Middle High German differ structurally from each other, but they still resemble each other very much, here we have the smallest degree of incommensurability. For cultural incommensurability we can speak of degrees of incommensurability. We could question to what extent that is the case for science. Didn't Kuhn at first argue that after a scientific revolution, our whole view of reality changes, it's like a gestaltswitch? But we have also seen that there is comparability and lexical likeness in the scientific case in the later view. So whether there is a discontinuity between subsequent scientific paradigms or there is more of a continuity such as in the case of cultures, remains open for debate.

A subsequent point of debate is that cultural incommensurability isn't obviously applied diachronically like the historical approach of scientific paradigm switches. Most frequently, Kuhn describes a development at different instances in time, while I compare different cultures that exist at one instant next to each other.

Nevertheless, I think that if you want a more accurate theoretical frame of cultural incommensurability, you can also bring the development of cultures (or even one culture) into the picture. Cultures aren't essences, but are developed over time through a certain history. Cultures have also influenced each other over time. The diachronous aspect is connected to the synchronous, and adding this dimension would add more complexity to the whole story. But here I've limited my research to the incommensurability of different cultures at one instance in time. Moreover, Kuhn does also argue for synchronous incommensurability among contemporaneous theories in science.

Third, the no-overlap principle isn't such a compelling principle when applied to cultures. For scientific theories it could be essential that the concepts are very exact and do not overlap. If there is such an overlap, this may disrupt the whole theory's map of the domain and this can cause a scientific crisis. The same strictness doesn't apply for natural languages. There remains a certain vagueness in the meaning of their words. Some overlap is inevitable. According to me, to the extent that this is true, this might be caused by the different purposes of science and natural language. Science aims at a maximally accurate and coherent representation of the world. A natural language, however, wants to describe reality in a more fluent manner. On the other hand, the no-overlap principle has been challenged with respect to science as well.[32]

In any case, it is this fluency, according to me, that makes the gradual development of a language possible. The limits of the meaning of words slowly change over time. Natural languages change gradually, while in scientific languages there may be more outspoken discontinuities.

To the extent that the no-overlap principle would be applied less rigidly in connection with natural languages, this wouldn't mean that it's useless to make taxonomies to describe aspects of cultures. To the contrary. What people of the same language share is homology of taxonomies, and this is the criterion to measure the degree of commensurability. If we can describe the taxonomic categories through which a community represents reality, we can acquire an important parameter to describe their culture. Paradoxical as it may sound, if we assume that a foreign culture is incommensurable with ours, we might be able to see the culture in all its complexity, while if we assume from beforehand that we can translate it into ours, the internal logic and richness of the culture stay hidden. I

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32 "The tragedy of the final contributions of Thomas Kuhn is that he thought that a theory of tree-like kinds, arranged as genus and species, would explain incommensurability and much else." – Hacking, Ian, Natural Kinds: Rosy Dawn, Scholastic Twilight, in: *Philosophy of Science*, 61, 2007, pp. 203-239, p. 214; McDonough, Jeffrey, A Rosa Multiflora by any other Name: Taxonomic Incommensurability and Scientific Kinds, in: *Synthese,* 136, 2003, pp. 337-358.

think it's of vital importance, especially in a volume that is concerned with the meaning of "Culture" and "Cultural Analysis", to emphasize the particularity of different cultures that is suggested by a concept like incommensurability. We don't have to presume too quickly that culture is a one-dimensional, universal concept. We can ask ourselves to what degree cultures are incommensurable, and what it would mean for two cultures to be incommensurable.

Philosophie als Kulturphilosophie

Joaquim Braga

1. Einführung

Wenn wir sagen, daß die Kulturphilosophie keine im buchstäblichen Sinne akademische Disziplin ist, die man der bestehenden Liste philosophischer Bereiche hinzufügen kann, sondern vielmehr eine neue Art und Weise ist Philosophie zu verstehen und zu erzeugen, dann müssen wir auch sagen, daß sie eine Reflexionsmöglichkeit innerhalb – und nicht außerhalb – des philosophischen Universums bietet. Wir können eine ähnliche Interpretation Ralf Konersmanns heranziehen, in der er formuliert: „Die Kulturphilosophie *ist* nicht eine Anthropologie, sie *hat* eine Anthropologie".[1] Aber dank dieser Äußerung, gibt es dann die grundlegende Frage, wie ein autonomes Theoriegebiet die Grundlage für einen neuen Einblick auf philosophische Denkoperationen legen könnte.

Um diese Frage zu beantworten – und als programmatischer Grund mit der Absicht den Faden unserer Denkrichtung zu artikulieren –, fangen wir mit der Berücksichtigung einer strukturellen Evidenz an, die den symbolischen Kern der Philosophie von Anfang an unterstützt. Es ist charakteristisch für die philosophischen Operationen, daß sie weit davon entfernt sind bloße Formulierungen über ein spezifisches und thematisches Denkobjekt zu sein, in denen sie selbst, an bestimmten Momenten, dem Denken als Reflexionsobjekt unterliegen. In diesem Sinne können wir die philosophischen Objekte als *exzentrische Denkobjekte* definieren, da sie in Bezug auf die philosophischen Operationen gleichzeitig sowohl ein Beobachtungsfeld, als auch ein Selbst-beobachtungsfeld erfordern. Allerdings würde man in einem reinen dogmatischen Formalismus münden, wenn wir dieses Sondermerkmal als völlig unabhängig von der Art der thematischen Objekte betrachten, die in den philosophischen Operationen beteiligt sind. Nun, wenn wir diese erste Annahme als Grundprinzip der Beziehung zwischen „Philosophie" und „Kultur" denken, wären wir gut damit bestellt auch zu hinterfragen, welche Auswirkungen deren Beziehung untereinander auf das philosophische Denken selbst haben kann.

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1   Konersmann, Ralf, *Kulturphilosophie zur Einführung*, Hamburg 2003, p. 36.

2. Der philosophische Status einer Kulturphilosophie

2.1 Der *Zeitgeist* und die *Diagnostik-Philosophie*

Das Nachzeichnen einer Genealogie der Kulturphilosophie ist eindeutig keine leichte Aufgabe, obwohl man im Voraus weiß, daß schon früh wichtige Formulierungen über die kulturelle Welt in den Werken Giambatistta Vicos oder Johann Gottfried Herders erkannt werden können. Wenn beide die allmähliche Emanzipation des menschlichen Geistes als theoretisches Ziel verfolgt haben – der Begriff der „Kultur" wird hier im selben Maß aufgefaßt, wie die Idee einer ursprünglichen Vollkommenheit der Natur –, finden wir parallel dazu andere Sichtweisen, wenn wir das Aufkommen der Kulturphilosophie als emergentes philosophisches Feld, in den ersten Jahrzehnten des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts betrachten. Aus einer psychosozialen Sicht, kann man solch ein Aufkommen als einen echten Versuch deuten, eine Antwort auf die *conditio humana* des Zeitalters zu geben. Wenn es nämlich wahr ist, daß historische Ereignisse – wie zum Beispiel das große Erdbeben von Lissabon im achtzehnten Jahrhundert – das westliche Denken einer linearen Weltsicht der menschlichen Existenz erschüttert haben kann, dann ist es auch wahr, daß sich aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg eine Grenzerfahrung der menschlichen Endlichkeit ergeben haben kann. Allerdings neigt die Erfahrung der Endlichkeit dazu, sich fast immer in zwei entgegengesetzte philosophische Pole zu entwickeln: die Idee des Fatalismus, die den Geist unter einer supra-historischen Kausalität stellt; und im entgegengesetzten Pol, tritt die Idee der Handlung innerhalb der Zeitgrenzen zu Tage, die der Mensch als Verantwortungswesen für seine eigenen selbstgemachten und selbstwahrgenommenen Bewegungen bezeichnet.

Diese beiden Pole werden zum Bestandteil der kulturphilosophischen Rede, erscheinen aber unter den Gebiet einer „Diagnostik-Philosophie", welche die Atmosphären und die Veränderungen der Zeitalter zu legitimieren versucht, im Wesentlichen zu beantworten versucht – oder besser ausgedrückt: zu *reagieren* versucht – auf die pessimistischen und dekadenten Gefühle, die die Ideen von „Krise" und „Zusammenbruch" der Modernität zum Ausdruck gebracht haben. Es ist offensichtlich, daß der Kulturbegriff der sich aus dieser Diagnostik-Philosophie ergibt, zahlreiche Hindernisse für die philosophischen Denkoperationen verursacht hat, nämlich für die grundlegende Prämisse des Verständnisses von Kultur als eine theoretische Beobachtungsform der menschlichen Handlungen und Symbol-prozesse. Die substantialistischen Diskurse über das kulturelle Universum resultieren, in den meisten Fällen, nur aus einem Beobachtungsfeld, das die

Identitätsbeziehungen – das heißt, der Verkörperungsprozeß der kollektiven Lebensformen – als echte und spezifische Kulturphänomene betrachtet.

Es ist noch immer wahr, daß einmal eingebaute Lebensformen die Erzählungen und Rituale der Selbst-Identifikation erzeugen, reproduzieren und dazu neigen, daß sich dabei oft eine totale Konkreszenz zwischen „Teilnahme an Kulturbildung" und „Beobachtung der Kultur" manifestiert. Würde sich aber in Anbetracht dieser Tatsache eine Weiterführung der philosophischen Reflexion beider nicht selbst beschränken?

Wir wissen schon, daß die Beobachtungsformen die nicht in der Lage sind einen theoretischen Bruch mit den Operationen der Selbst-Identifikation zu erstellen, sich in der Regel in Reifikationsformen wandeln, denn sie neigen zu einer Substantialisierung – und Naturalisierung – ihres eigenen thematischen Objekts.[2] Allerdings verfolgt die Denkrichtung der ersten Autoren der Kulturphilosophie, dieser Prämisse zum Teil nicht. Der philosophische Diskurs, so wie es an den Toren des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts Ludwig Stein vorausgesagt hat – einer der ersten Autoren die den Terminus „Kulturphilosophie" verwendet hat –, muß nur die Beschreibung des *Zeitgeistes* einer bestimmten sozialen Realität verfolgen. So verstanden braucht die Kulturphilosophie ihr eigenes philosophisches Programm nicht zu erstellen, da für Stein der größte Verdienst des „guten Philosophen der Kultur" vor allem darin liegt, daß er die Fähigkeit besitzt, die geistige Physiognomie der Gesellschaft zu diagnostizieren, und als Prognostik-Aufgabe, deren zukünftige vielfache Erweiterungen begründet.[3] Eine ähnliche Ausrichtung wird von Albert Schweitzer verteidigt, insbesondere wenn er, vor der inhaltlichen Natur der Werke über Kultur, die im Übergang von neunzehnten zum zwanzigsten Jahrhundert ans Licht kamen, die Tatsache kritisiert, daß solche Werke als Inhalt bloß eine Beschreibung der wichtigsten historischen Ereignisse des sozialen Universums besitzen; sie bieten daher, wie Schweitzer weiter formuliert, keine Grundanalyse des „*Stands unseres Geisteslebens*".[4]

Die diagnostische Linie die sich mit dem Kulturbegriff kreuzt, ist sowohl für Schweitzer als auch für Stein eine gezeichnete Linie über exemplarische Ereignisse, die die Identitätsinteraktion zwischen Individuum und Gesellschaft bezeichnen – kurz gesagt, eine Linie, die eine zeitliche Sichtbarkeit der Vereinbarungspunkte

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2 Damit meine ich nicht, daß dem Betrachter eine völlig neutrale Stellung in Bezug auf sein Beobachtungsfeld auferlegt wird, oder ganz allgemein ausgedrückt, daß *Beobachtung der Kultur* und *Teilnahme an Kulturbildung* antagonistische Modalitäten sind. Andererseits, wäre es jedoch ein großer Irrtum zu glauben, daß das Verhältnis von beiden Modalitäten immer linear, beziehungsweise mit einer immanenten Kontinuität verknüpft sei.

3 Stein, Ludwig, *An der Wende des Jahrhunderts. Versuch einer Kulturphilosophie*, Freiburg i/B 1899, p. 4.

4 Schweitzer, Albert, *Kulturphilosophie. Verfall und Wiederaufbau der Kultur*, Neuausgabe, München 2007, p. 15.

zwischen den beiden zu geben versucht. Doch bald haben sich die Diagnostik-Reden – wie auch heutzutage – in „tragische" und „fatalistische" Reden verwandelt, die zum Ergebnis eine Logik der Negation von Individualität und Freiheit des Menschen geführt haben. Daraus ergibt sich eine philosophische Reflexion, die auf die Prämisse der Negation des Subjekts durch das Objekt basierend, das Verhältnis von Individuum und Kultur unter mehrfachen pathologischen Kategorisierungen stellt (das Werk von Oswald Spengler ist in dieser Hinsicht eines der besten Beispiele). Eine solche Tendenz ist jedoch nicht ein bloßer archäologischer Befund. Es gibt in dieser Hinsicht noch immer eine große Diskrepanz zwischen der aktuellen Verwendung des Kulturbegriffs und der von einigen wissenschaftlichen und außerwissenschaftlichen Wissensbereichen verbreitete Idee der Kultur. Im Letzteren scheint noch stets eine Vision des Kulturellen zu gelten, die auf soziale Unterscheidungen und technologischem Kapital der Gesellschaft fußt; eine Vision, die letztlich den vom traditionellen ethnologischen Kulturbegriff eingeführten Vergleichungsoperationen entspricht. Eines der am weitesten verbreiteten Beispiele, das diese Tendenz illustriert, ist nach wie vor die messianische Vorahnung Samuel Huntingtons über einen angeblichen *clash of civilizations* zwischen der „westlichen" und der „islamischen Kultur".[5]

2.2 Kulturphilosophie als *kritische Philosophie*

Auf der einen Seite haben wir den substantialistischen Essentialismus von Kulturanschauungen als schicksalhafte Qualifikation des sozialen Zustands des Menschen. Auf der anderen Seite fehlt eine philosophische Sinnrichtung, die nicht nur zur Reflexion als essayistische Form die Symptome des Zeitgeists thematisiert, sondern die Kulturphilosophie zu einem Feld der philosophischen Erkenntnis macht, das zahlreichen theoretischen Vermutungen unterliegt. Schon bereits vor dem zweiten Weltkrieg sehen wir diese ständige Sorge in den Werken Alois Dempfs und Ernst Cassirers reflektiert. Erstgenannter beschreibt, daß die Tatsache, daß bisher keine Kulturphilosophie entstehe, resultiere teilweise aus der Existenz mehrerer „Philosophien der Kultur" die nur „Kulturanschauungen" zu bieten haben.[6] Und für Cassirer ist die Kulturphilosophie ein recht instabiler philosophischer Bereich, da nicht mit einer linearen Genealogie zu rechnen ist, ihm somit ein tiefes Verständnis ihrer zentralen Fragen noch fehlt.[7] Allerdings hat

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5   Huntington, Samuel, The Clash of Civilizations?, in: *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, nº 3, 1993, pp. 22-49.

6   Dempf, Alois, *Kulturphilosophie*, München und Berlin 1932, p. 3.

7   Cassirer, Ernst, Naturalistische und humanistische Begründung der Kulturphilosophie, in: ders., *Erkenntnis, Begriff, Kultur*, Hamburg 1993, pp. 231-261, p. 231.

Cassirers Bemerkung keine negative Auswirkung auf die theoretische Entwicklung seines Werks. Ganz im Gegenteil. Sein Werk widmet sich dieser Aufgabe. Er distanziert sich klar von der Diagnostik-Philosophie. Seine Absicht ist es die theoretische Grundlage einer „kritischen Kulturphilosophie" zu finden.[8] Zwei Dimensionen die diesen kritischen Horizont bilden, können wie folgt bezeichnet werden: Um die Substantialisierung seiner Funktionen zu überwinden, muss eine Kulturphilosophie, durch die Anerkennung des dynamischen Status von Kulturobjekten begonnen werden; und als zweites Imperativ, soll sie die Beobachtungsformen des kulturellen Universums auf die Idee einer geschaffenen Beobachtung beziehen, das heißt, eine Beobachtung, die Sinn auf Schaffung von Wissensstrukturen zu geben versucht.

Tatsächlich ist Cassirers Kulturphilosophie aus einem neuen Blick des erkenntnistheoretischen Status des Kulturbegriffs entwickelt worden. Das philosophische Denken, noch Erbe der kantianischen Idee des „kultivierten" Menschen – und damit des kulturellen Universums als ein höheres Stadium der menschlichen Moral –, hat den Kulturbegriff vor allem innerhalb eines theoretischen Rahmens unabhängig von sozialer Faktizität und Kontingenz verstanden. Was eigentlich nicht unerwartet war, da die Interpretation der Kultur fast immer auf angeblich gegensätzliche Begriffe wie „Zivilisation" und „Natur" geknüpft wurde. Cassirer ließ sich nicht von dieser philosophischen Tradition verführen. Die Kulturphilosophie wird nur ihre Legitimität finden wenn sie in der Lage ist, den Kulturbegriff bezüglich der vielfältigen Ausdrucksformen des Menschen, mit genau jener wichtigen Überwindungsaufgabe, sowohl die Idee der sozialen Unterscheidung – präsent in der Kultur als *Hochkultur* –, als auch der romantischen Vorstellung von Kultur als *Volksgeist,* aufzubauen. Nach Cassirers Meinung haben zwar die Romantiker – Schelling zum Beispiel – die philosophische Reflexion auf die verschiedenen kulturellen Formen gebracht, etwa in Zusammenhang mit dem Mythos, der Religion, der Sprache, der Poesie und dem Recht. Doch wegen der Einführung des Begriffs des Volksgeistes, werden sie am Ende eine Naturalisierung des kulturellen Universums legitimieren. Frei von jeglicher Autonomie, weil nicht von der menschlichen Handlungsfreiheit stammend, wurden infolgedessen die kulturellen Formen als organische Formen interpretiert, als Formen des „Schicksals".[9]

Auf diese Weise (und noch immer nach der vorgeschlagen Argumentation Cassirers) erfordert die Transformation der Kantischen Vernunftkritik in eine

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8   Cassirer, Ernst, *Probleme der Kulturphilosophie*, in: ders., *Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, (ECN) Bd. 5: *Kulturphilosophie: Vorlesungen und Vorträge (1929-1941)*, Hrsg. von Rüdiger Kramme unter Mitarbeit von Jörg Fingerhut, Hamburg 2004, pp. 29-104, p. 96.

9   Cassirer, Ernst, *Naturalistische und humanistische Begründung der Kulturphilosophie*, op. cit., p. 235.

Kritik der Kultur, parallel dazu die Transformation des kategorischen Imperativs in ein *Imperativ des Werks*. Die Philosophie soll sich mit den menschlichen Aktivitäten auseinandersetzen, die in den Kulturobjekten objektiviert werden, da es durch diese möglich wird, ein Einblick auf die menschlich symbolgesteuerten Sinnhorizonte zu gewinnen und gleichzeitig zu verstehen, wie Sinnhorizonte als Individuations-horizonte zum Ausdruck kommen. Diese Idee wurde von Cassirer erkenntnistheoretisch übersetzt anhand folgender Formel:

> Jedes Gebilde der Kultur besteht und ist nur in einer bestimmten Richtung des Erzeugens – wir verstehen seinen Sinn nur, indem wir es auf eine bestimmte Art des Produzierens, auf eine charakteristische Weise des schöpferischen Kulturprozesses zurückführen.[10]

3. Die Interpretation der poietischen Prozesse

3.1 Der Primat der Artikulation

Durch die Fokussierung auf Prozeßualität von Kulturobjekten, anstatt einer ontologischen und substantialistischen Auffassung, beinhaltet Cassirers Formel in sich die Möglichkeit, den aus der Aufklärung vererbten Kulturbegriff wieder herzustellen. Eine Idee die sich aber, wenn auch durch Cassirer systematisiert, aus verschiedenen Wegen des philosophischen Denkens ergibt. Um genau zu sein, findet man im philosophischen Denken insbesondere seit Wilhelm Dilthey, eine starke Steigerung des Primats der Erlebnisformen über die allgemeinen wissenschaftlichen Abstraktionsformen. Eine Reflexion über Kulturobjekte kann nicht innerhalb der Grenzen der deduktiven Logik der Naturwissenschaften eingeführt werden, sondern muß die individuelle Formschaffung des Werks und ihrer Wirkung auf die menschliche Erfahrung suchen. So bietet in diesem Sinne, der Erlebnisbegriff eine Art Bewußtsein der Bildung des Aktuellen und gleichzeitig der Kommunikationswelt der Gesellschaft.

Sicherlich ist diese Idee bereits in der Diagnostik-Philosophie enthalten, trotz ihrer Wirkung auf die symptomatischen Interpretationen – und das heißt *a posteriori* – der Gegenwart. Aber die Kulturphilosophie, wie ich sie von Cassirer verstehe,

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10 Cassirer, Ernst, *Grundprobleme der Kulturphilosophie*, in: *Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, Bd. 5, op. cit., pp. 3-28, p. 22.

beabsichtigt dem Bewußtsein des Subjekts die poietischen Prozesse näher zu bringen, die ihn zum partizipativen Subjekt erheben. Die *conditio humana* hat hier ihren Status verändert: die Philosophie kann nicht nur interpretieren, vor dem Hintergrund des historiographischen Denkens, der Objektivationen des Geistes, sondern muß besonders auf diejenige Prozesse achten, die die Kommunikation zwischen Individuum und Gesellschaft ermöglichen und regenerieren. Die Aktualität erfordert hier das Primat der *schaffenden* Handlung über die *bewirkte* Handlung. Deshalb benötigt die Nicht-Substantialisierung des Kulturbegriffs und daher die Nicht-Dogmatisierung der philosophischen Operationen eine interpretative Methodik, die offen bleibt für den prozeßhaften und dynamischen Charakter des Kulturobjekte. Nach der „tragischen" Formulierung Georg Simmels über das kulturelle Universum, denn sie ist in der Idee der Subtraktion des Subjekts vor der Vermittlung des Werks verankert, so ist festzustellen, daß Letzteres – das Werk – als verdinglichte und totalisierende Objektivierung der Kultur zu vermeiden ist. Der theoretischen Annahme Simmels zu folgen, würde in diesem Fall bedeuten, den Kulturbegriff gemäß einer reinen Logik des Schicksals ins Visier zu nehmen.

Eine offene Auslegung von Kulturobjekten wird dann nur möglich – und das ist nach Cassirers Meinung die *magna quaestio* einer Kulturphilosophie –, wenn man als theoretischen Ausgangspunkt den Zusammenhang zwischen der sinnlichen Sphäre und der sinnhaften Sphäre der Formbildung annimmt. Es handelt sich daher nicht darum, wie beim radikalen strukturalistischen Diskurs der Fall, in der Materialität des Objektes eine bloße Aktualisierung der Struktur zu sehen, vielmehr geht es darum, in der Austauschbarkeit beider Sphären eine Individuationsmöglichkeit der Form selbst zu finden.

Es ist auch in diesem Zusammenhang, daß wir zwei grundlegende Fragen zum Ausdruck bringen können. Die Kulturphilosophie, wie Ralf Konersmann betont hat, besitzt eine eigene Räumlichkeit und Zeitlichkeit,[11] das heißt, sie ist ein *temporalisiertes* philosophisches Denken, weil sie die dynamische Erstellung und Rezeption von Kulturobjekten zum Ausdruck bringt. Die Beobachtung solcher Prozeßualität setzt in seiner philosophischen Angemessenheit, eine entsprechende prozessuale Interpretation voraus, aufgrund der ständigen Artikulation zwischen Sinnlichkeit und Bedeutung durch das Werk. Und es ist auch wegen dieser beiden grundlegenden Fragen, daß die Kulturphilosophie eine echte epistemologische Veränderung in Bezug auf das cartesianische und kantianische Erbe betreibt, da sie nicht die Welt des Kulturobjekts ohne eine körpergesteuerte Wahrnehmung erfaßt, wie es Kant dagegen in seiner *Kritik der Urteilskraft* suggeriert, wenn er das

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11 Konermann, Ralf, Zur Theorie des fait culturel, in: *Romanistische Kulturwissenschaft?* Hrsg. von Jünke, Claudia, Zaiser, Rainer, Geyer, Paul, Würzburg 2004, pp. 31-44, p. 35.

Geschmacksurteil einer Form des reinen Verstandes unterwirft, weg von allen sensorischen und somatischen Auswirkungen.

In der Tat kann Kulturphilosophie als derjenige Versuch verstanden werden, der die philosophischen Denkoperationen auf die Dynamik des Sinnaufbaus erhebt, die dank austauschbarer Transformationen zwischen Individuum und Gesellschaft erzeugt werden. Genauer und nach einer methodischen Sichtweise formuliert, wird die Auslegung von Kulturobjekten gemäß ihrer expressiven Aktualität konzipiert. Deshalb heißt in dieser Hinsicht die Sinnstrukturen des Kulturobjekts zu deuten, die Veränderbarkeit der raumzeitlichen Kategorien zu betonen; aber immer innerhalb eines Beobachtungsfelds, der die *relationale Kontingenz* des Objekts selbst umfaßt. Daß diese relationale Kontingenz vom Begriff des „Symbols" vertreten wird ist kein reiner Zufall. Wenn Kulturphilosophie über das Symbol als Schlüsselbegriff für die Beobachtung der vom Menschen geschaffenen und wahrgenommenen Phänomene spricht, greift sie diesen dann mit zwei Grundprinzipien auf:

1. Die Symbolisierungsprozesse besitzen einen Vorrang über die Bedeutung; das heißt, der Sinn erlaubt dem Artikulationsrahmen das Bedeuten; und dieser Vorrang – der vom theoretischen Standpunkt aus als Gegensatz zu bestimmten Paradigmen der Semiotik gilt, insbesondere denjenigen, die die Transparenz zwischen Dargestelltem und Darstellenden als Kern des Prozesses der *Semiosis* etablieren – tritt ein, aufgrund der fundamentalen Rolle, die die Materialität von Kulturobjekten auf die Bedeutungsstrukturen ausüben. Die expressive Aktualität des Objekts kann daher nicht ohne die Einbeziehung der Sinnlichkeit festgestellt werden.

2. In seinem klassischen Sinne verstanden, erscheint so der Begriff des „Symbols" mit einem *unreinen Verhältnis* vom Signifikant und Signifikat verbunden. Aber es ist genau diese unreine Beziehung die ihm die dynamischen Prozesse der Kulturobjekte, sowie die Möglichkeit die „Stimme des Anderes" in diese Prozesse ein zu beziehen, zu repräsentieren erlaubt.[12] Somit erfüllt also die Logik der Ambivalenz, die der Symbolbegriff durchläuft, die eingeführte Annahme der relationalen Kontingenz und der expressiven Aktualität von Kulturobjekten.

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12 Es ist wegen dieser wesenhaften *Offenheit* des Symbols, daß Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz – und später G. W. F. Hegel – die symbolische Vermittlung als unadäquate (oder: *dunkle*) Wissensform gekennzeichnet hat, da die Inhalte, die durch sie zum Ausdruck gebracht werden, niemals vollständig definiert und intuiert werden können. Diese Tatsache, wie Hegel richtig bemerkt hat, resultiert aus der dynamischen Natur der Symbolisierungsprozesse selbst. Hegel, G. W. F., *Vorlesungen Über Die Philosophie der Kunst*, Hrsg. von Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert, Hamburg 2003, p. 128.

Der Kulturbegriff der Kulturphilosophie hat in diesem Sinne keine vergleichbare Funktion wie der klassische Begriff der „Vernunft", weil er sich nicht als eine geschlossene Einheit konzipieren läßt, beziehungsweise nur in bestimmte Verhaltens- und Denkprozesse von Individuen greifbar ist. Der Begriff der „Kultur" besitzt hier die Funktion, das geschaffene Objekt auf die Interpretationsaufgabe hin zu öffnen, mit der Absicht die Individuationslinien zwischen Subjekt und Gesellschaft, Bewußtsein und Kommunikation zu zeichnen, weil solche Linien, wie es im Werk Cassirers zur Reflexion kommt, von Anfang an durch die kulturelle Artikulationsformen aufgedeckt werden müssen. In diesem Sinne erscheinen die ethischen Grundlagen einer Kulturphilosophie innerhalb des Reichs der Symbolisierungsprozesse – und ergeben sich dann, nicht nur und ausschließlich wie es durch die „Ethiken der Vernunft" herkömmlicherweise gesagt wird, aus einer bewertenden Beobachtung von den Wirkungen, die aus ihnen (den Symbolisierungsprozessen) abgeleitet werden können.

3.2. Die Frage nach den Interpretationsmodalitäten

Der Vorrang des Artikulationsbegriffs in der Beobachtung des kulturellen Universums bringt uns, auf der anderen Seite, zu der Frage nach den Interpretationsmodalitäten die der philosophischen Reflexion über kulturelle Phänomene dienen kann. In diesem Fall sieht sich die Kulturphilosophie nicht nur mit verschiedenen Denkobjekten konfrontiert, sondern auch mit verschiedenen Sprachen (Artikulationsmodi) derselben Objekte. Und das ist eine ihrer größten Herausforderung: die philosophische Grundlage zu schaffen, um die verschiedenen Artikulationsmodi zu analysieren und verstehen zu können.

Es stimmt, daß die Kulturanthropologie, insbesondere durch die Hand Clifford Geertz', manche linguistische und semiotische Modelle aus der philosophischen Analyse importiert hat, die den kulturellen Phänomenen eine rein theoretische, textualistische Interpretation aufgedrängt haben.[13] Aber was würde von den Beziehungen und Unterschieden kultureller Phänomene übrig bleiben, wenn sie nur nach der Idee von „Transparenz" gelten, wie in vielen semiotischen Paradigmen dargelegt, die als solche nichts weiter als eine aktualisierte Version der traditionellen Adäquatheit zwischen Vernunft und Sprache sind? In der Tat können wir ein bestimmtes Untersuchungsobjekt auf einem vorgegebenen Interpretationsmodell einreichen und damit zahlreiche Informationen für ihr Verständnis gewinnen. Aber dies bedeutet nicht immer, daß die Informationen, die wir aus dem

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13 Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation Of Cultures*, New York 1973.

Objekt ableiten, eine entsprechende Repräsentation desselben sind. Die Interpretationsarbeit kann in dieser Hinsicht zu einer Übertragung medialer Eigenschaften eines Kulturobjekts auf ein anderes mit deutlich differenzierten Eigenschaften führen – so kann man zum Beispiel die Interpretation einer Bildform auf eine bloße Ansammlung von Zeichenbeziehungen reduzieren, und ihre chromatische Textur, wie eine Art Digitalisierung, zu einem sprachlichen Äquivalent konvertieren.

Das Problem bei der Beobachtung von *Kultur als Text* kommt unweigerlich wegen der theoretischen Marginalisierung, die gegen andere kulturelle Vermittlungsformen gerichtet wird. Die Dominanz einer einzigen analytischen Vermittlungsform – in diesem Fall die diskursive Formen – als Medium der Interpretationsprozesse kultureller Phänomene, tendiert zu einer Negation ihrer grundverschiedenen Symbolisierungsprozesse, wie diejenigen zum Beispiel, die durch performative, bildliche und musikalische Formen vermittelt werden. Wenn Symbolisierungsprozesse immer auch wechselseitige Artikulationsoperationen zwischen dem Gebiet des Sinnlichen und dem Gebiet der Bedeutung des Mediums voraussetzen, dann sind die strukturellen Unterschiede, die aus der Artikulation selbst entstehen, keineswegs auf ein einziges und neutrales theoretisches Beobachtungsmedium der Interpretation reduzierbar. Auf der anderen Seite führt die Reduktion kultureller Phänomene auf eine sprachgesteuerte Beobachtung sowohl zu einer Substantialisierung der Interpretationsmethoden als auch zu einer Substantialisierung des Beobachtungsmediums, da, wenn sich Letzteres auf die gesamten Auslegungshorizonte bezieht, es auch nicht mehr in der Lage wäre, sich von den Beobachtungsphänomenen selbst zu differenzieren.

4. Kommunikationsfähigkeit zwischen Wissenssysteme

Was die Auslegungsfrage von kulturellen Phänomenen betrifft, folgt ein weiterer wichtiger Aspekt, der nicht durch eine Kulturphilosophie vernachlässigt werden soll, deren Ursprünge teilweise bereits in Cassirers Werk gefunden werden können. Die Transformation der Kritik der Vernunft in eine Kritik der Kultur – gestützt auf die Grundidee der symbolischen Vermittlung – soll auch als eine Neuformulierung der Interpretationsmethoden des philosophischen Denkens verstanden werden. Aus der Dezentralisierung des Kulturbegriffs bezüglich der Grenzen des idealistischen Rationalismus ergibt sich die Möglichkeit einer Überwindung der Umwandlungsmethodik der *Grenzen von Vernunft in die Grenzen der Sprache*, wie es in einem großen Teil des philosophischen Diskurses des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts

zum Ausdruck kam. Im selben Jahrhundert aber finden wir jedoch entscheidende Beiträge zur Entdeckung und Vertiefung der Kommunikationsfähigkeit zwischen Wissenssysteme. Und dies geschieht nicht nur in den Wissenschaften. Es ist beispielsweise in den Schöpfungen der Kunst, in denen eine deutlich ausgeprägte Austauschbarkeit von Ausdrucksformen sichtbar wird, vor allem durch eine Offenheit für neue ästhetische Erfahrungsformen, der Kreuzung zwischen Bild und Wort in Filmkunst, oder sogar in materieller Hinsicht aufgrund der weitverbreiteten Verwendung bestimmter Materialien, die traditionell unter der Kontrolle von einigen anderen ästhetischen Kunstformen waren. Damit erwarb die Kunst ein objektiviertes Reflexionsspektrum, sichtbar in vielen Kunstwerken, die ganz explizit solche Selbstbezogenheit in ihren ästhetischen Thematiken eingearbeitet haben.

Aber während die Kunst solche Kommunizierbarkeit zwischen Ausdrucksformen veranschaulicht, tendieren die Wissenschaften mehr und mehr zu ihrer Spezialisierung. In dieser Hinsicht sagt uns Cassirer, daß die Spezialisierung des Wissens, von der akademischen Emanzipation bestimmter Wissenschaftsbereiche und der Entstehung neuer Forschungsfelder abgeleitet, zu einer unvermeidlichen Fragmentierung des menschlichen Wissens und der menschlichen Selbsterkenntnis führt. Trotzdem würde man in einem reinen Kulturalismus enden, wenn die Kulturphilosophie, unter dem Zeichen einer epistemologischen Autonomie, kein Blick für die Untersuchungen anderer Disziplinen hätte – darunter natürlich auch die Naturwissenschaften. Um die Verewigung der traditionellen Polarität zwischen Natur und Kultur und ihre entsprechende philosophische Übersetzung in der diltheyschen Trennung zwischen Geisteswissenschaften und Naturwissenschaften zu vermeiden, soll die Kulturphilosophie als ein Versuch gelten die Berührungspunkte zwischen den vielfältigen wissenschaftlichen Wissensformen aufzubauen, immer mit dem Ziel – so können wir in diesem Sinne mit Jean Gebser formulieren – die Zersplitterung des Wissens zu überwinden, die, nach Gebser, sich aus der theoretischen und methodischen Lücke zwischen Naturwissenschaften und Geisteswissenschaften ergibt.[14]

Dieses Problem wurde nicht von Cassirer vergessen. Laut dem deutschen Philosophen findet sich die Philosophie heute selbst mit den „Tatsachen" der verschiedenen Wissenschaften konfrontiert. Die *Faktualisierung des Wissens* scheint zu einer Fragmentierung des Wissens zu führen. Denn „Tatsachenreichtum erzeugt nicht notwendig Ideenreichtum."[15] Die Kulturphilosophie muss daher davon

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14 Gebser, Jean, Kulturphilosophie als Methode und Wagnis, in: *Zeitwende/Die neue Furche*, vol. 2, n° 12, Hamburg 1956, pp. 813-820.

15 Cassirer, Ernst, *Versuch über den Menschen. Einführung in eine Philosophie der Kultur*, Aus dem Englischen übers. von Reinhard Kaiser, Hamburg 1996, p. 45.

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ausgehen, daß Kultur keine bloße Ansammlung von isolierten Tatsachen ist. Ganz
im Gegenteil, sie muß vielmehr solche „Tatsachen als System, als ein organisches
Ganzes" interpretieren.[16] In diesem Sinne, so formuliert er in seinem *Essay on Man*:

> Wenn es uns nicht gelingt, einen Ariadnefaden zu finden, der uns durch
> dieses Labyrinth leitet, können wir zu wirklichen Erkenntnissen über den
> Charakter der Kultur nicht gelangen; wir werden uns in einer Masse
> unverbundener, zusammenhangloser Daten verlieren, der jede konzeptuelle
> Einheit zu fehlen scheint.[17]

5. Von der Kritik der Kultur zur Kritik der Philosophie

Wenn wir von der Idee der Reflexivität, die das philosophische Denken im
Allgemeinen charakterisiert ausgehen – und wie bereits erwähnt, meine ich die
exzentrischen Objekte der philosophischen Operationen –, dann müssen wir zugeben,
daß die thematischen Phänomene einer Kulturphilosophie ein gewisses Bewußtsein
ihrer Teilnahme am kulturellen Universum darstellen.[18] In diesem Sinne wird der
Einfluß Georg Simmels für die eigenen Interessen der philosophischen
Operationen am kulturellen Universum sehr bestimmend sein. Es ist genau mit
dieser Absicht, daß Simmel die Kulturphilosophie als eine echte „philosophische

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16 Ibidem, p. 336.

17 Ibidem, p. 45-46. Cassirers Formulierung läßt sich begründen mit dem Aufbau eines
Kulturbegriffs, der keinen bloßen formalistischen Imperativ verfolgt. Ganz im Gegenteil. In
ihrem theoretischen Kern finden wir eine implizite ethische Voraussetzung: die Formschaffung
ist nicht trennbar von der Freiheitsbegründung. Wie er auch ausdrücklich feststellt: "The
philosophy of culture may be called a study of forms; but all these forms cannot be understood
without relating them to a common goal." – Cassirer, Ernst, Critical idealism as a Philosophy of
Culture, in: ders., *Symbol, Myth, and Culture. Essays and Lectures of Ernst Cassirer 1935-1945*, Ed. by
Donald Phillip Verene, New Haven and London 1979, pp. 64-91, p. 81. Wenn die Kultur die
ethische Frage beinhaltet, soll diese jedoch in der Handlungsfreiheit zu finden sein: „The ethical
problem of culture leads to the problem of freedom and necessity". – Ibidem, p. 82. Aber er fügt
sogleich hinzu: "culture cannot be defined and explained in terms of necessity, it must be defined
in terms of freedom". – Ibidem, p. 83.

18 Laut Albert Schweitzer führte die Tatsache, daß Philosophie keine selbständige Reflexion über
Kultur gehabt hat, immer mehr zu der Tendenz einer „kulturlosen" Philosophie. Siehe
Schweitzer, Albert, op. cit., p. 22. Ich stimme zwar dieser Behauptung Schweitzers zu, bin aber
nicht einverstanden mit der These, daß die Philosophie zum „Niedergang der Kultur" (Ibidem,
p. 17) beigetragen habe.

Kultur" begreifen will, das heißt, die Reflexion über die verschiedenen Manifestationen des Geistes – von der Kunst zur Mode, von der Moral zum Geld, etc. – sollte eine philosophische Tätigkeit einbeziehen, die als Bestandteil der Sphäre des Lebens erkannt wird.[19]

Dank der Beobachtung menschlicher Ausdrucksformen durch kulturelle Prozesse, wie der Philosophie – auch sie eine Ausdrucksform –, sieht sie sich zusätzlich mit ihrer Selbstbeobachtung konfrontiert. Genau hier kann der Kulturbegriff die kritische Aufgabe einer Sichtbarmachung der impliziten Reflexivität der philosophischen Denkoperationen erfüllen, und nicht nur als ein analytisches Werkzeug dienen. Die Kulturphilosophie bringt also eine doppelte theoretische Begründung ins Spiel: Zum Einen wird sie aufgefordert einen Kulturbegriff aufzubauen, der die Zeitlichkeit der poietische Prozesse begleitet; zum Anderen neigt sie zu einer Neuformulierung der philosophischen Tätigkeit, nicht nur in Bezug auf ihr Diskurs, sondern auch in Bezug auf ihre Methoden. Weil sie sich auf vielfältige symbolische Artikulationen der kulturellen Phänomene bezieht, können wir der Kulturphilosophie eine transphilosophische Aufgabe zuschreiben; eine Aufgabe, die auch einer kritischen Einbeziehung der Wissenschaften im Aufbau der Beobachtung kultureller Phänomene dienen soll. Aber solch eine Aufgabe ist nicht nur als eine *Bewegung nach außen* zu verstehen. Sie ist gleichzeitig eine *Bewegung nach innen*, also in einem Wort: sie bringt die kritische Sicht über die menschliche Wirklichkeit, die die Philosophie verfolgt, sowie seine begrifflichen und methodischen Grundlagen ins Spiel.

Um diese Aufgabe zu übernehmen, soll die Kulturphilosophie nicht unter dem Spezialisierungsdogma geschlossen bleiben – hierbei würde sie eher zu einer philosophischen Fachrichtung unter vielen anderen werden –, sondern vielmehr ihr philosophisches Projekt als ein in ständiger Neuformulierung stehendes Projekt verstehen. Es geht daher nicht darum, das Streben nach *totaler Erkenntnis* zu etablieren, wie Hans Freyer vorgeschlagen hat.[20] Ihre Rolle als Vermittler zwischen den verschiedenen Wissensformen zu sehen, ist in diesem Zusammenhang bereits eine mögliche Antwort auf die programmatische Kohärenz, die die inter-disziplinären wissenschaftlichen Operationen heutzutage, wie nie zuvor erfordern. Die reflexive Dimension der Kulturphilosophie wird nur dann theoretisch möglich, wenn dieselbe aus der Kommunikation zwischen Wissenssystemen betrachtet wird. Damit, und durch die Erweiterung Cassirers ursprünglicher Absicht, kann man die Kulturphilosophie nicht nur als eine *Kritik der Kultur*, sondern auf die gleiche Weise als eine *Kritik der Philosophie* selbst begreifen.

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19 Simmel, Georg, *Philosophische Kultur. Gesammelte Essais*, Potsdam 1923, p. 11.
20 Freyer, Hans, *Theorie des objektiven Geistes. Eine Einleitung in die Kulturphilosophie*, Berlin 1923.

6. Schluß

Die Kulturphilosophie, in ihrer Reflexion über die kulturellen Artikulationsformen, hilft uns die Veränderungsmöglichkeiten der kulturellen Phänomene zu verstehen, das heißt, sie erlaubt uns die Kultur als menschliche Schöpfung zu betrachten, als ein Spektrum, das sich nicht auf die Substantialisierung einer privilegierten Beobachtung begrenzt. Dann, als grundlegende theoretische Richtung, kann eine Kulturphilosophie die Kultur nicht als unmittelbare Übersetzung eines geistigen Programms interpretieren. Es ist vielmehr das Denken über die Erstellungsdynamik der Form, die uns gleichzeitig die aufstrebenden, dynamischen, interkulturellen Beziehungen aufzeigen kann. Und diese letzteren Beziehungen haben schon etwas gemeinsam: sie entstehen dank dem menschlichen Symbolisierungsvermögen, der als solches auch die erste Brücke zwischen den Kulturen aufzeigt. Das Ziel eines interkulturellen Bewußtseins ist deshalb mit einem Symbolbewußtsein eng verbunden – und dieses kann immer als Aufgabe der Kulturphilosophie gelten.

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The texts in this collection are revised versions of presentations given at the Coimbra International Conference on the Semantics of Culture *Why "Culture"?*, held on November 24-25, 2011. If one wishes to identify a common thread among them and to succinctly describe this central theme, then it can only be expressed as the idea that the phenomenon of culture cannot be reduced to a substantialist vision of the diversity of manifestations of society and human being. However, if one were to accept the concept of culture as a starting point for observing these manifestations, then it should also be adopted as a starting point for critical questioning, that is, for *problematizing*, not just as a theoretical *solution*. The texts in this volume contribute to this philosophical problematization by pointing out-each with its own perspective of analysis, of course-articulations of the phenomenon of culture as a theoretical object and as a thematic object.

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