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ARTICLES

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Searle's Collective Intentionality: A Defence

Pooja Choudhury

Abstract: This paper concerns social ontology. At the heart of the discussion of social ontology are *institutional facts*. These are indispensable to sustain harmoniously in a society. The focal point of this paper is *collective intentionality* or *we-intentionality* that is used to create institutional facts. It is one of the building blocks in the creation of institutional facts. There is a debate within the social ontological arena whether the collective intentionality can or cannot be reduced to individual intentionality. Primarily, I will deal with this debate. John Searle has opposed such a reduction but thinkers like Raimo Tuomela and Kaarlo Miller have painted an opposed picture. This paper is restricted to these thinkers the core discussion being collective intentionality. I have put forward arguments defending John R. Searle's irreducibility account. Searle has put forward his account of collective intentionality as biologically primitive which is not merely a culmination of individual intentionality.

Keywords: Social Ontology, Institutional Facts, Collective Intentionality, Status-Function.

Study of social ontology focuses on the idea of "the group". Ontology is the study of existence. An inquiry into what really exists as opposed to phantom[1]. But despite focusing on the existent, there are innumerable intricacies involved to this study. Most of the social ontology thinkers would agree to the point that the bone of contention to discuss social ontology would be the idea of the *group*. And indeed, many have tried to provide a perspicuous account for this fundamental element. One among these thinkers is American philosopher John R. Searle. His inquiry starts with the query- "How can there be an epistemically objective set of statements about a reality which is ontologically subjective?" (Searle, 2009, p.18). The term *epistemic objectivity* may raise eyebrows here since whilst talking about institutional facts objectivity cannot be comprehended. This is because the social reality I am dealing with is a constructed reality and objectivity can gravitate towards itself with serious criticism. The first of which being the possibility of such objectivity. This paper is an attempt to answer all such queries taking help from Searle. It is also an attempt to defend Searle's theory of group intention as a better theory of social reality for a stable institutional reality.

Every activity human beings perform is an intentioned activity. Intentionality has captured attention in the philosophical domain (especially philosophy of mind) for a long time. In this paper the concern is of social intentionality or as John Rogers Searle would term collective intentionality. But first the basics of intentionality need to be understood.

Intentionality

Very simply defined, intentionality will be the directed mental states towards something. "...Intentionality is that property of many mental states and events by which they are directed at or about or of objects and states of affairs in the world." (Searle, 1983, p.1). He considered intentionality to be biological which functions in the same way as other biological activities like digestion. Intentionality is always about the mental states in human beings. However, Searle's theory of intentionality has some unique features which he elaborated in his work. The most important one is that he doesn't consider any and every mental state to be intentional. According to him there are certain mental states which could be undirected. And aboutness or directedness toward something is primordial to intentionality (Searle, 1983). Since like his theory of speech acts, the notion of *direction of fit* is also applied to intentionality[2]. The direction of fit is important to intentionality since only via this the conditions of satisfaction can be fulfilled. These conditions of satisfaction can be defined as those conditions in the world which need to be fulfilled for the satisfaction of the intentional state (Searle, 2009). Another important feature of intentionality is that intentionality is not the same as consciousness. This is because there are many conscious states which are not intentional. Like the undirected intentionality mentioned above. Another difference between them would be that consciousness and the experience of consciousness is the same. For instance, consciousness of elation and elation is equivalent. But the intentionality of fear of fire cannot be equal to fire (Searle, 1983).

In continuation to this analysis, Searle has also proceeded to scrutinize the structure of intentionality. He asserts that intentionality can be bifurcated into two distinct logical categories namely- *prior intention (PI)* and *intention-in-action (IA)*. As the name suggests, the former deals with intention before the action is performed. It can be said that PI is the formation of an intentional action that will be carried out in some time. For instance, I intend to drink water after twenty seconds. So, PI occurs before the intentional action is performed. On the contrary, IA happens along with the performance of the intended action. For instance, if I am drinking water now that will be considered to be IA (Searle, 2009). Action therefore will be that event of IA causing Bodily Movement. (Searle, 2009). These are the basic elements needed for understanding individual intentionality. For the present

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discussion focus needs to be put on *collective intentionality* without which a discussion of social reality will not be possible.

Collective Intentionality

Collective Intentionality is one of the building blocks of social ontology. Like certain other thinkers of social ontology, even Searle has acknowledged the fact that there cannot exist the "social"[3] without the "collective"[4]. However, Searle is responsible for a very unique take on this collective intentionality which will be the central topic of discussion in this paper. The form of individual intentionality was "I intend" in the first-person singular form. However, as it might seem that an aggregate of individual intentionality would lead to collective, it is not the case in Searle's social ontology. An aggregate of individual intentionality resulting in a collective will be of the form:

I intend + I intend + I intend...along with mutual beliefs[5]

According to Searle, the form of collective intentionality is in the first-person plural form, that is it starts with *we-intend* in the individual minds rather than an aggregate of I-intends. Collective intentionality in Searle's terminology is *biologically primitive*. The term, primitivity is considered to be something basic. Here since primitivity is biological, it needs to be present in all human beings. Thus, "we-intend" form is present in all individuals. But here a query may arise- Then why is there so much chaos in the society? The answer to this can be found in his analysis itself. He has never propagated a harmonious collectively intentioned society where there would be no chaos. There is freedom of choice in case of individuals to do or not to do an institutional activity. However, if the institutional activity is a matter of requirement (that is something involving violation of laws), not doing it will have its own consequences. By considering collective intentionality as biologically primitive, what Searle meant was that human beings have the *capacity* for collective intentionality. Being capacitated to possess the "we-intentionality" in individual heads does not entail loss of freedom or commitment. And just as there are individual prior intentions and intentions-in-actions, so also there are collective prior intentions and collective intentions-in-actions. While collectively indulging into an act requiring "the collective", it may give the impression of the structure of an aggregate. The aggregate of intentionality would then be a reduction of the proposed "we-intend" by Searle. But Searle is against this reduction. To understand this reduction, it is important to refer to Raimo Tuomela and Kaarlo Miller's paper *We-intentions* which I would be briefly stating.

Reducing We-Intentions to I-intentions

Importance of we-intention is circumambient in the idea of collective intentions on account of the fact that there is something called *internalizing* the group intention. To instantiate, I may as part of an orchestra play the cello. But this playing as part will not suffice if I play according to my own mood and desires without taking into consideration the importance of playing in the group. Of course, I may play according to my moods or desires but the result will not be a mellifluous group activity. Naturally working as per your own preference, the idea of the group would disrupt and there will not be the collective. To understand this internalization, Tuomela and Miller put forward their theory of collective intentionality. They focused on actions which are social in the sense that there is a conceptual presupposition of the existence of other agents along with various social institutions (Tuomela and Miller, 1988). The central claim they put forward in "We-intentions" is that "...all intentional joint actions will involve some relevant *we-attitudes, viz.* we-intentions and mutual beliefs plus the proattitudes underlying them." (Tuomela and Miller, 1988, p. 370) Herein, the sociality is involved in the relevant we-attitudes. To illustrate- If I am playing the cello and someone else (say "X") sitting next to me in the music room is playing the piano, it may so happen that a third person (say "Y") can hear the "Beethoven Symphony No. 5". "Y" may approach us and appreciate the Symphony. In this case we would be rather surprised about Y's appreciation. X may even ardently reciprocate that we weren't playing the aforementioned Symphony. Analysis of the above illustration reveals that I intended to play the cello part of the Symphony and accordingly "X" intended to perform the piano part but there was no mutual belief among both and thus this cannot be considered to be a collectively intentioned action. It can be deduced from the above analysis that intention expression of the form "We will do X" can be justified with individual intentions and mutual beliefs among the individually intentioned people. This seems to solve the problem of defining collective intentionality. However, Searle in his work *Making the Social World: The Structure of Human Civilization* critiqued this analysis suggesting that mere mutual beliefs are not enough.

For two people, say X and Y, to possess *mutual beliefs* it needs to be the case that both are intended towards the same activity, say playing the same symphony, and each one involved knows that the other intends, and each knows that each knows that the other knows that, and so on (Searle, 2009). What Searle here has offered is that instead of this proposed reduction to I intention, it can be the case that each individual has "we-intend" in their heads without the need of mutual belief. Furthermore, by providing a counterexample he suggests that the proposed reduction fails. In the example Searle put forward the *invisible hand* theory put forward by Adam Smith. In it a group of Harvard Business school graduates believing the invisible hand theory goes out by acting as selfish as they can in order to benefit humanity. Now here each one knows that the other has intended the same thing and so there is mutual belief but this according to Searle is not collective intentionality. This is because there is no *pact* or *promise* involved. Thus, without a pact there would be no implied obligation among the members to continue working along the same line (Searle, 2009). This is an important factor due to which I favour Searle's theory more than the reductionist theory of collective intentionality. Searle's theory emerges at the very root of institutional facts which recognizes assigning function to objects as

one of the basic building blocks. These come with a myriad of other factors, applying *status functions* being one of the most pivotal. In the next sections I have analysed the strands of few such factors of social reality in order to defend primitive collective intentionality as a better thesis.

The Evolution

The need for institutional fact arose based on human requirement. To come out of a society that was chaotic and proceed to something which depended on certain principles. However, institutions are not always visible to us as apparent. Even institutions like money which is in constant use have the tendency to lose its focus from daily life. This is because money as an institution has chameleoned into what Searle calls *the background*[6]. It is evident that the money which we use now has undergone a lot of changes over the years. Earlier the usage of money which was transaction of goods and services happened in a different mode; say the barter system. The barter system helped exchange things with the use of any other thing having the same value. Even gold coins were used immensely at one point. However, soon the value of the same amount has been put into papers due to convenience purposes. This shows how institutions come into being then gets evolved with human development. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the *germ of intention* to submit to such created institutions is within every human being. Now when it comes to institutions, the focus is on the group. And it can be seen that the group indeed contributes for the creation and development of institutions with the passing of time. This is the reason why intentionality is considered to be biological and collective intentionality is defined as *irreducibly biologically primitive*. Thus, the non-reductionist theory of Searle.

The collective intentionality helps forming institutional facts by applying collectively acknowledged rules to objects around us. These rules are termed as constitutive rules as opposed to regulative rules. Regulative rules merely regulate the antecedent existing activities. For instance, the rule of walking on the left-hand side of the road. Even if I do not walk on the left-hand side, walking would still exist. But constitutive rules equate the activity itself. That is without constitutive rules the activity say of the game of chess will cease to exist (Searle, 1995). The structure of such rules is expressed in the form:

"X counts as Y" or "X counts as Y in context C" (Searle, 1995, p. 28).

The X term in the above formula will analyse further the assignment of function criteria of social reality. The assignment of function Searle considers is another capacity of human beings. As we grow up, we are surrounded by a lot of things, some created by us and some objective already existing entities. These objects are created and named with the purpose of serving our needs and desires. Having a function imposed on an object is called "agentive functions". (Searle, 2009) Functions are imposed for it to be useful for our own purposes. However, these impositions are not restricted to humans as animals too use objects for specific purposes like building a nest out of twigs. Herein the distinction between *intrinsic* and *observer-relative* features of the world can be seen as put out by Searle. This differentiation is vivid when we realise the purpose of an object (for instance- a chair is used to sit on) as opposed to what is the material composition of the object (like molecules packed together, mass of wood etc). The former is observer or intentionality relative whereas the latter features are intrinsic (Searle, 1995). Searle's main concern is however a special class of function known as the *status function* which can be arrived at by collective intentionality. These are special sets of functions which contribute to the creation and maintenance of institutional facts. In the above formula, the term Y denotes these functions. The object X is being imposed on a certain special status function Y in a specific context. To instantiate, the status function of money is being imposed on certain types of papers in the context of transaction of goods. Now there are specific criteria for the status function imposed on objects, the most pivotal being that only collective intentionality can help achieve the desired goal of status functions. Mere one person imposing a status cannot lead to an institutional fact. There need to be collective acknowledgement and recognition to attain that status. But queries may come as to why institutions were at all necessary? Is it not curbing individual freedom? For I cannot walk around lifting things from shops and staying wherever I wish to with no property ownership ideas. Why did institutions come into existence in the first place? It cannot be denied that institutions exist, and we are surrounded by it. We just stop noticing already prevailing institutions because we have become used to the fact that these exist (because of the background). That chair is used to sit on, that money is used to buy things with, that my purpose of university education is to attain a specific degree and so on and so forth.

Institutions no doubt create a harmonious system to be lived within. Due to the human tendency to be biologically intentioned, one cannot deny that we are social beings. Although there is a whole another debate going on as to what is more important the individual or the social, I in no way think that the individual importance is lost with putting immense importance to the formation of a society. However, I would not get into this debate as it is not required for the current paper. I do want to put it outright that there is individual freedom even in an institutionalised society since there is always a possibility of choice whether to perform an institutionalised practice. But these choices come with their own negative consequence. For instance, I may choose to not submit my PhD thesis in the registered university within the timeframe given, but as a result I will not be provided the degree and might have to return the scholarships I have got so far. Now going back to the original question, institutions are necessary to harmoniously sustain in the society as there are others belonging to the human kind. Formation of these institutions help sustain a power to survive through and with the others. Without this power requirement, living with other people is impossible owing to the chaos there would be. Institutional powers give structure to the society and this runs through every institution there is. Power restricts the others' choice and also my choice. If it is someone's in-

tention to shoplift items from a store, the legal power restricts the individual's intention to do so. Similarly, if it is my intention to use the university's resources and not do my work, the university has the power over me to restrict my time in the campus. Searle has mentioned two forms of uncodified power, which runs through every sane person's mind and helps maintain societal power. They are known as the Background Power and the Network Power.

"...the Background consists of the set of capacities, dispositions, tendencies, practices, and so on that enable the intentionality to function, and the Network of intentionality consists of the set of beliefs, attitudes, desires, and so on that enable specific intentional states to function." (Searle, 2009, p. 155).

It cannot be denied that the societal institutions and people residing within it have power over us. The Background Power exhibits this kind of power. This shows how society controls individual actions with regard to the clothes worn, how one behaves towards another or how one uses institutions like money without question. It is not an apparent power of having control. But it is an unconscious power that has its root in every individual residing in society. On account of this every individual is entitled to demand certain acts in their favour and curb their own freedom in retrospect. Such a case can also be seen in Margaret Gilbert's paper *Walking Together: A Paradigmatic Social Phenomena.* In this paper, Gilbert has taken the example of something as simple as walking. Now walking is an uncodified activity but surely a social activity[7]. If walking is done together, there are certain unconscious principles that go on through the activity. Even though uncodified, there is a certain expectation of each member walking together within a group from the other members. The most obvious being that each one is expected to walk together. And if one walks faster than the others there is the possibility of rebuke by the ones left behind. That is there is entitlement going on in such a simple case of collectively intentioned activity. Gilbert calls this phenomenon *plural subjecthood*, wherein "...each of the number of persons (two or more) has, in effect, offered his will to be part of a pool of wills which is dedicated, as one, to that goal" (Gilbert, 1990, p.7). Now the question is, at what point of the activity did this right of one person over the other enter? Here it can be seen that there is a general understanding that entails the fact wherein if two people enter into the activity of walking together, they have certain entitlement or obligation within the activity. Now, this particular notion can be extended to Searle when he talks about obligation or a pact (mentioned earlier in Adam Smith's invisible hand theory) when there is collective intentionality. Also, the specific type of collective intentionality of Searle can be justified here taking help from Gilbert's idea of entitlement.

Conclusion

Primitive collective intentionality has been a moot point among social ontologists. Despite the opposed picture painted by Tuomela and Miller, I choose to defend the primitive collective intentionality due to certain specific traits of institutional fact mentioned above. Institutional

facts can be seen to be of two categories. The first category is such that which requires an officiation by means of language. Language comes at the apex in the formation of any kind of institutional fact. Be it a certain specific language of alphabets we use or certain signs used especially during games say score maintenance. The main point here is that in order for an institution to be social it definitely needs to be communicative within the social arena. Now there are also certain institutional facts which do not require any type of officiation.[8] But is just carried out with an understanding among the members. Examples of such would be friendship, parties or the case of walking together as mentioned above. For sustenance of any such facts one thing which is indeed necessary is that the people involved have a sense of responsibility towards it. Not the type of responsibility where the fact is carried forward without hesitation but there at least need to be the idea or awareness of consequences that will follow if the institutions aren't followed. Thus, if it is the case that the "we-intentionality" is easily reduced to "I-intentionality", mere mutual belief among the agents will not be enough to carry forward the institution since there is the possibility of some agents backing off. Here the power that is being succinctly discussed can be referred to. The structure of power apart from some providing a harmonious and non-chaotic image of a society, also gives rise to obligation and in turn responsibilities. A pact created or an entitlement provided to rebuke the other or use certain power against the other will set specific patterns upon the other to follow the we-intentionality. This I think is not only important but necessary for maintaining an institution. Now it cannot be denied that the capacity to collectively engage in an activity is within each one of us since we live in an "I-we" society. Without this capacity the understanding of collective intentionality as primitive will not arise. Searle has provided a rather distinctive take analysing the collective intentionality of the individuals. The understanding of "we-intentionality" in such a way helps build a coherent system of institutional facts. The reality of institutional facts is a constructed reality. This construction is in every individual mind and therefore ontologically subjective. However, despite being ontologically subjective, there is an epistemic objectivity of these facts. This is because such facts run through society. It may differ in different communities but it indeed is carried forward by a group of individuals mostly unquestionably. This fact can be carried forward only pertaining to the primitive collective intentionality in every individual mind. The *we-intentionality* helps maintain the epistemic objectivity of such constructed intentional facts.

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Notes

[1] I used the term phantom here to suggest something that does not contribute to the constitution of ontology. There are thinkers like Markus Gabriel who belongs to the trend of New Realism. His theory of ontology included everything that could be possibly thought about subjectively along with the objective entities.

[2] The notion of *direction of fit* is followed by the conditions of satisfaction either in the propositional content or the intentionality. For instance, assertives have word to the world direction of fit because they match the independently existing world. Similarly, belief statements have a mind to the world direction of fit because the belief is about something in the world and accordingly the belief is either true or false.

[3] By "the social" I only refer to a fully-fledged society wherein institutional facts are run and maintained by groups.

[4] Collective can be referred to be more than one. In terms of institutional facts, the idea of the collective varies. In the sense that the type of action I am committed to will determine the quantity of people involved in the collective. To instantiate, carrying a piano upstairs will require two or three people. However, for the institution of money innumerable human beings are involved throughout the globe.

[5] The mutual belief theory along with aggregate individual intentionalities was put forward by Raimo Tuomela and Kaarlo Miller. (See their paper "We-intentions).

[6] Background capacities for Searle are pre-intentional. There need to be certain Background capacities for intentional states to function. These capacities enable intentional states. It may be walking, talking and other neuro-physiological activities.

[7] Searle considers any kind of activity involving collective intentionality a social fact. Institutional facts are a special subclass of social facts involving human institutions.

[8] I am using the term "officiation" here as a legal matter. Say if I create counterfeit money legally the state has the right to run a case against me.

First Person Authority and the Problem of Other Minds

Kailashkanta Naik

Abstract: In recent times Donald Davidson has extensively discussed the concept of 'special authority' regarding one's mental states. He takes up different topics of the philosophy of mind and interprets them from a new standpoint. This paper is the outcome how the understanding of first person authority enables us to understand the problem related to other minds. In this regard I have explained how first person authority is guaranteed by explaining how a belief statement expressed by two individual will have the same truth value. If this is proven to be true then the first individual expressing his belief statement will be said to have authority. Though proving the belief statement of the first individual by taking up of the same statement by another individual and proving it to be true is not as simple as that. However, the paper gives a detail account as to how it is possible and then explains the problem related to other minds. The paper sums up by taking up the Principle of Charity where the speaker's belief is considered to be true and the interpreter believes that the speaker is a rational being who knows what he speaks and if he knows what he speaks, he knows what belief he holds to be true.

Keywords: Davidson, first person authority, other minds, belief, statement.

First Person Authority and the Other Self

Every human being thinks that he has special authority regarding his mental states. He occasionally doubts or questions his concepts and beliefs, but unless he is asked to, he hardly thinks of whether he has misunderstood something. And even if one has a misunderstanding of something one is presumed to have authority over them. But these conceptions of authority don't hold good when we extend it to other persons. As Davidson observes; "When a speaker avers that he has a belief, hope, desire or intention, there is a presumption that he is not mistaken, a presumption that does not attach to his ascriptions of similar mental states to others. Why should there be this asymmetry between attributions of attitudes to our present selves and attributions of the same attitudes to other selves? What accounts for the authority accorded the first person present tense claims of this sort, and denied second or third person claims?"[1]

Two important things are found here. First, whatever an individual asserts he seems to have authority over them which can't be extended to second or third person. Secondly, most of the assertions that the individual makes about himself are usually not based on evidences while on others, it is their behavior mostly which becomes the individual's evidence based on which the other individual seems to have authoritative knowledge. Thus, from the epistemological point of view, the claim that an individual has the special authority of one's thoughts, beliefs, desires and intentions (which are often not based on evidences) and the claim to know the beliefs, desires, intentions, and thoughts of others invite the problem of other minds. The third person cases are asymmetrical with the first person case because of this difference.

The problem with first person authority is that just because someone expresses something that doesn't mean that what he attributes is true. It doesn't entitle us to say that whatever the individual states is true. Even if someone says something sincerely there is no certainty that what he states is true, though we may presume it to be true. There is a possibility of errors as well as doubts about first person mental states. Our mental states are therefore not incorrigible, and sometimes some other's statement about us may be more authentic and justifiable than our statements about us. The possibility of infallibility of our attitude is questionable. However, even if the knowledge of our mental states can be challenged, the idea of first person authority still holds good.

The problem about first person authority arises because of its non-evidential character. We assume that self-attributer has authority because that is the way we understand ourselves and our minds. In the case of others, we have to depend on their external behaviour. If this happens then, the sceptic is surely justified to raise a question like: "How will our intentional attribution be univocal and unireferential in both first and third person's case? Or in other words, how can the two ascriptions be meant to the same subject matter?"[2] In other words how can our knowledge have the same kind of authority both in the first and third person case?

The first step towards the solution of the problem of self-knowledge for Davidson is therefore to give a proper definition of 'self-attribution.' Davidson agrees with William Alston on the definition of self-attribution. Alston writes; "Each person is so related to propositions ascribing current mental states to himself that it is logically impossible for him to believe that such a proposition is true without knowing it to be true: while no one else is so related to such propositions."[3]

Self-attribution therefore is a belief where you express your current mental states but it becomes logically impossible for the individual to deny the truth of the belief after having expressed it. The second condition that needs to be fulfilled is that, we need to assume that a proposition has to have the same truth value when expressed by two per-

sons. For example, when Jones expresses the proposition like 'I believe Wagner died happy,'[4] it should have the same truth value as the proposition 'Jones believes Wagner died happy' as expressed by Mr. so and so. Now, by doing this we are trying to prove that if both have the same truth value, then we may say that Jones has the authority over his claim. This supposition will, of course, invite many questions, because what is the guarantee that both of these sentences will have the same truth value? It is thus possible for the two propositions to contradict each other.

If someone were to ask, how are you so sure that you believe that 'Wagner died happy?' then we can answer it in many different ways; like when I respond to others, I may say that I don't know whether he believes 'Wagner died happy.' But if it is for me, then I can't say like this. Secondly, in the case of others, I can say that I don't know whether he believes 'Wagner died happy,' but since he is careless, I think he doesn't believe. But in my case, I can't say that I don't know that I believe 'Wagner died happy'. Similarly, I can also say that I can find out whether he believes, or I think he believes but I am not quite sure, are few examples which are not applicable in my case. In the same way, I can also say that I know that I believe but I am not going to tell you. The above analysis makes explicit the asymmetrical relation between self-knowledge and the knowledge of others. Thus, the self-assumption of mental states is distinct from the assumption of mental states of others.

There are cases where first person claim seems to lose its authority, like in the case of insincerity/pretension or a slip of the tongue. But even if one is insincere or one is mistaken on account of a slip of the tongue, one doesn't lose first person authority because he is aware of it. Even if an individual's belief fails to match his actions or speech one doesn't lose first person authority because his failures are not the result of the mistake of his second order belief rather he may simply be paying only lip service without making any real commitment to it. In the case of self-deceiver, on the other hand, the individual attributes a false belief contrary to his real belief. There is a motive to disregard his own genuine belief which may be because he is not able to face reality or fact. Hence, here too one doesn't lose his first person authority.

But let us think just the opposite, in the sense, that the individual is attributing a genuine self belief which of course is false and of which he is not aware. In this sense can we say that he has made a mistake about his own belief? Now, after examining his genuine belief, the individual comes to the conclusion that it was only a false belief which he was claiming as true belief. Now, can we say that all our beliefs that we claim in our day to day life fall into the category just mentioned? Hence, it is not always the case that all our beliefs which we claim to be true are true. We go wrong in some cases, but that does not prove that all our belief-claims are false. These are two different ways either in first person authority or in case of second and third person authority we may find difficulty when assigning truth values of the sentences like 'I believe Wagner died happy' and 'Jones believes Wagner died happy'.

Hence, if we proceed in this line of argument, we will not make progress in understanding of first person authority. Davidson thus tries to interpret the asymmetry in such a manner so as to avoid skepticism about assignment of truth values to both the propositions. He achieves this by showing how the same property, i.e., observable behavior, can be evidence for both the individuals such that the sentences uttered by each of them will have the same truth value even though this evidence is not used in first person attribution and only used in third person attribution.

Davidson makes a distinction between two related but different asymmetries. This is possible when I attribute something about a person, and you attribute to the same what I have attributed to him. That means, when I say that 'I believe Wagner died happy' you would say that 'you believe that Mr so and so believes that Wagner died happy.' But how can we both have the same content? We may check, verify and then contrast with what I said i.e. 'I believe Wagner died happy' which I have said as something true and your utterance and belief that I have said something true. Davidson says: "These two asymmetries are closely related to one another because your warrant for thinking that I have said something true i.e. I believe Wagner died happy, will be closely related to your warrant of thinking if you were to tell the truth that 'Davidson believes Wagner died happy.'"[5]

Two important things can be drawn from here; the first is that we have to admit that 'I believe Wagner died happy' is true when I am at present stating this and I am aware of the meaning of my statement at present; I know what belief statement I express. And secondly, we also need to believe that the other individual who assures my belief statement that Mr so and so believes that 'Wagner died happy' is a rational being. According to Andrew Woodfield: "Because the external relation is not determined subjectively, the subject is not authoritative about that, a third person might well be in a better position than the subject to know which subject the subject is thinking about, hence be better placed to know which thought it was."[6] Since both the individuals making a belief statement regarding a third person it is possible that anyone can be wrong about it and the other person's position of knowing the thought that Mr so and so believes that Wagner died happy may be more truthful than the individual himself.

Philosophers who hold the view that part of our mental content is determined by factors that are unknown to the individual have not been able to give a satisfactory response. What they have realized is something that needs to be further reflected. Since, it will be a puzzle about knowing what one believes when part of our mental states is determined by factors outside. And on the other hand, it is possible that internal factors may also play a role in determining one's mental states. We are thus in difficulty if we don't have first person authority to account for internal factors. Two important points can be noted here; if we think that whatever we think are partly determined by factors outside, then we can say that our meanings are not wholly in the head. And secondly, if our meanings are not completely in the head then our minds have no ability to grasp all that is required for the first person authority.

Thus, when I hold a sentence true, we may mean two things, first, through this I express a belief which is true and secondly, the expression of my belief coincides with the content of the meaning of the sentence. So, when I state, 'I believe Wagner died happy' my belief is true and sincere, and the content of my belief is similar to the content of meaning of my sentence. Hence, if you were to know the meaning of my sentence, you would know what belief I express, but not whether it is true or not. Thus, as Jacobsen pointed out: "Presumably Davidson's idea is this: my distinctive way of knowing that I am sincere involves my knowing (in a distinctive way) what mental states I currently have. But since my distinctive way of knowing what mental states I currently have is just what we want to explain, it would be circular to invoke it in the explanation."[7]

We are, therefore, obliged to assume that we both know that when I say 'I believe Wagner died happy,' I am making a true statement of which I am aware of the meaning of that statement. That means I know whether I believe my statement while you may not know this. It is therefore presumed that a speaker doesn't go wrong about his statements; this, of course, can't be same for the interpreter. The reason is obvious because a speaker will not always doubt whether he makes a correct statement and mean what he says. And even if he commits a mistake, he will in no way be able to improve his statement saying; my statement that 'Wagner died happy' will be true only and if only 'Wagner died happy'. The interpreter, on the other hand, will not be able to know whether the speaker is making a correct statement exactly. We, therefore, need to assume that, whenever a speaker makes a statement we need to believe that he is making a true statement even if we are not able to verify his statement.

So, there is no guarantee that an interpreter can interpret a speaker in a right way, for there is always a possibility of misinterpretation. For, the interpreter depends on the utterances of the speaker which is his evidence. So, if a speaker wants to be interpreted, then he has to mean his words in the manner he intends them to mean. But the interpreter also can be ambiguous. If the speaker wants to be interpreted in a particular manner as he intends them to be interpreted, he has to give certain clues to his audience or the interpreter. Davidson thus says that: "Unless there is a presumption that the speaker knows what he means, i.e., is getting his language right 'there would be nothing for the interpreter to interpret. So, there is a presumption that if the speaker knows that he holds a sentence true, he knows what he believes."[8]

In this regard, P.M.S. Hacker says that: "In effect, Davidson's explanation is a transcendental deduction of first person authority. We know that we communicate with one another. It is a requirement of communication that there be a presumption that the speaker knows what he means by his utterances. But if he knows that he holds true the sentence he utters and knows what he means, then he knows what he believes. So, there is a presumption, essential for the possibility of interpretation, and hence of communication, that a speaker knows what he believes when he avers that he believes something."[9]

Thus, Davidson is trying to establish a kind of relationship between whatever an interpreter understands from the speaker and the speaker's utterances which he claims to have knowledge. He thus asks us to imagine two strangers who are trying to communicate with one another and neither of them is interested in teaching his native language to another. What will finally happen is that the speaker will try to express those words and sentences consistently concerning the particular objects and situations in a conducive environment. In the course of time, one will understand the meaning of a speaker.

The following points emerge from the above discussion. First of all, we need to assume that a speaker is aware of the meaning of those words he uses. Secondly, we need to believe that the speaker is communicating to an interpreter. Third, the interpreter has to assume that speaker is giving some clues to understand the meaning of those words he is using and then, we have to understand that this whole episode is taking place in a commonly shared environment. The interpreter also has to think that the speaker is a rational being having true beliefs about their shared environment. That's why Davidson says that: "It makes no sense in this situation to wonder whether the speaker is generally getting things wrong. His behavior may simply not be interpretable. But if it is, then what his words mean is (generally) what he intends them to mean. Since, the language he is speaking has no other hearers, the idea of the speaker misusing his language has no application. There is a presumption that the speaker usually knows what he means. So, there is a presumption that if he knows that he holds a sentence true, he knows what he believes."[10]

In this context Davidson calls this as the 'Principle of Charity.'[11] According to this principle, the interpreter will have to think that speaker has true beliefs just like any other rational human being. And so the interpreter, therefore, has to believe that besides the speaker's holding true attitudes he too has many other true beliefs regarding various events and facts in his environment. So, if the speaker in addition to his holding true attitudes also has true assertions about his events and conditions of his environment then from this the interpreter may draw the conclusion that the speaker's holding true attitudes is the result of his holding true beliefs. In this manner, an interpreter will know that the speaker knows the meaning of his words. We can thus draw the following points from the above.

Every speaker is interpretable if and only if he consistently makes use of his words to its related objects and events in a given situation, which would mean he means what his words refer to. So, if he wants to be interpretable, then he means what he says. And secondly, if the speaker is interpretable and he means what he utters then no other further assumptions are to be made, in the sense whether the speaker is getting things wrong.

From the above, it follows that if a speaker is to be interpretable, then he has to use his words such that they refer to the relevant objects correctly and consistently in a given environment, so that he states his true belief. But if one fails to fulfill these conditions in the sense one fails to check its external connections i.e. to its relevant object in a linguistic community then meaningfulness of his words would result in his consistent use of words. Hence, if the speaker is to be interpretable, we have to admit the fact

that the speaker knows the meaning of his words and the interpreter too has to admit that the speaker knows the meaning of his words if at all he wants his project to be successful.

But that is not sufficient as it looks like a speaker is interpretable if only he knew the meaning of his words. However, it doesn't provide any assurance that the speaker knows the meaning of his words nor has any special authority about his words. Of course, Davidson wouldn't agree to this type of analysis as he defends first person authority. And this analysis thus would lead us to (a) every speaker speaks his language only when his language is interpretable. (b) His language is interpretable only when he uses the meaning of his words correctly, and finally (c) therefore one speaks a language only when he uses the meaning of his words correctly. We would then draw two important things from this. Firstly, an individual knows the meaning of his words because he is interpretable, it is not right that he is interpretable because he knows the meaning of his words. And secondly, the individual knows the meaning of his words because he speaks a language.

We find a few lacunas in Davidson's first person authority because a) he restricts his explanations into propositional attitudes; b) he takes consideration into linguistic beings only. In spite of the fact that Davidson offers a critical analysis of firstperson authority still we encounter few setbacks that fail to make his project successful. In this regard, we find that Davidson has either deliberately or non-deliberately failed to take consciousness into consideration. We find that consciousness has an important role in shaping our concepts and belief system which is also the result of the epistemic authority regarding our mental states which we claim to have. Hence, I hope an understanding of consciousness would have given a new shape in Davidson's project regarding first person authority. A successful explanation, therefore, should show that the asymmetry between first and other person ascription entails that the person is a conscious individual. This has been missed by Davidson's explanation and this would have given us a better explanation related to other selves.

Another important thing is that Davidson has only taken into consideration propositional attitudes like belief, intention, desire and so on but has neglected other aspects of pain, sensation, anger and so on, which are also important to have a unified understanding of the mental states which would have helped to have a better understanding related to other minds. Hence, it was essential that for a comprehensive understanding these aspects of mental states also should have been considered.

Conclusion

According to Davidson in the case of the first person authority, the individual's present mental states are to be presumed true as it is to cover all propositional attitudes. There can be no presumption that we can assume about past tense or other attributions of beliefs as true. Therefore first person authority holds which entails an asymmetric relation between first person and second or third person authority. To presume something as true doesn't

mean that it gives us a guarantee of truth. So having special authority about one's mental states does not mean it is infallible, rather sufficiency of explanations should give us confidence that our claim regarding first person authority can't always be wrong. Hence, first person authority has to be presumed as true in spite of not being quite sure. That is the reason that Davidson admitted the fact that first person authority is not often based on evidences. Hence, to explain this, he took the help of speaker and his interpreter. Using this, he tried to show that speakers are not wrong about their mental states. We also found that speakers hold true attitudes without the need of any pieces of evidence. This enables us understand that the speaker is a rational being and his communication towards the interpreter also proves that the speaker believes that he is communicating to a rational being who unlike him also has true beliefs and intentions.

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[1]Davidson, Donald. *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Clarendon Press Oxford, New York, 2002, p. 3.

[2] Nguyen. A. Minh, "Davidson on First Person Authority," *Inquiry,* Vol-38, 2004, p. 458.

[3] Alston, William. "Verities of Privileged Access," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol-8 No-3, 1971, p. 235.

[4] Davidson, Donald. *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Clarendon Press Oxford, New York, 2002, p. 11.

[5] Ibid

[6]Woodfield, Andrew, *Thought and Object; Essays on Intentionality,* Clarendon Press, New York, 1982, p. viii.

[7] Jacobsen, Rockney, "Davidson & First-Person Authority: Parataxis & Self-Expression," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol-90, 2009, p. 253.

[8] Davidson, Donald, *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Clarendon Press Oxford, New York, 2002, p. 38.

[9] Hacker, P.M.S. "Davidson on First Person Authority," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No-188.1997, p. 290.

[10]Davidson, Donald. *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Clarendon Press Oxford, New York, 2002, p.14.

[11]Ibid., p. 148.

Considerazioni sulla negazione logica e l'opposizione reale di F. A. Trendelenburg

Marco Bonutto

Abstract: In the third chapter of the Logische Untersuchungen, trough the distinction between logische Verneinung and reale Opposition, Trendelenburg articulates his own criticism of the Hegelian dialectic: the logic negation of the pure Thought would no longer find the way to proceed in his movement, if not by being continuously mistaken for a real opposition; that is, by illicitly drawing from the realm of empirical intuitions. Although this has been – and still is – one of the most resumed reprovals against Hegel's method, it has to be noticed that the aforementioned distinction, especially in the way Trendelenburg characterizes it, shows some serious weaknesses. The following inquiry concerns the problem of his interpretation of Aristotle's Metaphysics and Kant's pre-critical writings, from which the distinction originally depends.

Keywords: Trendelenburg, Kant, Hegel, Aristotle, Negation.

1. Introduzione

Maestro di alcuni tra i filosofi più importanti del secondo Ottocento, quali Dilthey, Brentano, il neokantiano Cohen e il pragmatico Morris, Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg[1] fu probabilmente colui che, tra gli studiosi tedeschi del tempo, maggiormente s'impegnò, con considerevole successo, a criticare l'idealismo hegeliano. La sua lettura d'impianto aristotelico e kantiano si costituì ben presto come un termine di confronto indifferibile per chiunque intendesse impegnarsi nello studio del pensiero di Hegel. In essa si trovavano per la prima volta esposte, in lucida sintesi, le varie critiche che già dalla fine degli anni Venti erano state mosse al sistema del filosofo di Stoccarda, quali quelle dei teisti speculativi C.H. Weisse e I. H. Fichte, nonché di K. P. Fischer, C. J. Brannis e K. F. Bachmann[2]; critiche che, sì, circolavano nel dibattito accademico d'allora, ma timidamente, e senza la solida sistematizzazione di cui solamente Trendelenburg, erudito aristotelico, parve capace. Il terzo capitolo delle *Logische Untersuchungen*, scritto con l'intento di demolire il sistema hegeliano per far spazio alla propria personale proposta metafisica, risultò, nei fatti, la *pars destruens* di cui anche molti altri si servirono al medesimo fine: il caso più noto è indubbiamente quello di Kierkegaard, che nel *Diario* confessava come nessun filosofo moderno avesse tanto influito su di lui quanto Trendelenburg[3], ma al novero dei debitori s'aggiungono i nomi, ugualmente importanti, di coloro i quali tentarono di riformare la dialettica in conse-guenza delle sue obiezioni: degli idealisti italiani Spaventa, Croce e Gentile[4]; o ancora, volendo forse osare, dello stesso Marx, il cui materialismo ben si accordava con le accuse trendelenburghiane, rivolte a Hegel, di arbitraria assunzione dell'empirico nello spirituale[5].

La prima edizione delle *Logische Untersuchungen*, pubblicata nel 1840, ridimensionò progressivamente l'importanza dell'altra, decisa, critica a Hegel che al tempo aveva trovato fortuna: quella che nella prefazione alla traduzione tedesca di *Über franzosische und deutsche philosophie*[6] e nelle proprie lezioni berlinesi, Schelling andava formulando nei termini dell'impossibilità per il puramente razionale di pervenire a una determinatezza empirica o fenomenologica[7]. Forse anche in ragione degli evidenti punti in comune con questa, la tesi dell'aristotelico finì per sussumerne il contenuto e sostituirvisi nella considerazione della comunità accademica: quella di logica e realtà, concetto e oggetto, costituì la dicotomia che permise al Trendelenburg di divenir presto il crocevia della speculazione idealistica: lacerato dalla discrasia di pensiero e sensibilità, lo spirito hegeliano risultò incapace di restituire una *Weltanschauung* organica[8], e le nuove filosofie posthegeliane, a prescindere che fosse per difendere o condannare Hegel, dovettero confrontarsi con i giudizi di colui «che aveva fama di esserne stato il demolitore»[9].

1.1. Negazione logica e opposizione reale

«La negazione può avere una duplice natura: o è concepita in modo puramente logico, cosicché semplicemente nega ciò che il primo concetto afferma, senza porre al suo posto alcunché di nuovo, oppure è intesa in modo reale, e allora il concetto affermativo viene negato da un nuovo concetto affermativo, in quanto entrambi devono essere riferiti l'uno all'altro. Chiamiamo negazione logica la prima, opposizione reale la seconda»[10].

La distinzione concettuale di cui Trendelenburg si avvalse per tentare la decostruzione del pensiero hegeliano non trova riscontro tra le categorie della logica formale. La differenza fra i tipi di opposizione, logica e reale, era divenuta significativa solo a partire dal *Tentativo per introdurre nella filosofia il concetto delle quantità negative*[11], scritto precritico kantiano in cui venivano posti i prodromi di alcune distinzioni fondamentali della *Critica della ragion pura*, quale quella dell'*Analitica dei principi* fra giudizi analitici e sintetici, o quella della *Dialettica trascendentale* fra opposizione analitica e dialettica[12]. Nelle parole di Kant, tale differenza stava in ciò: che la prima sia una opposizione per contraddizione (*durch den Wider-*

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spruch), mentre la seconda una opposizione senza contraddizione (*ohne Widerspruch*); se, da una parte, l'opposizione *durch den Widerspruch* è la contraddizione per com'è intesa dalla logica formale – per cui il risultato dell'opposizione è il *nihil privativum irrepraesentabile*, la negazione del concetto dell'oggetto –, dall'altra, l'opposizione *ohne Widerspruch* è non solo *repraesentabile* ma, proprio in ragione di ciò, *reale*: all'annullamento reciproco dei termini in opposizione logica corrisponde l'equilibrio e la compresenza delle istanze in opposizione reale. Come la negazione di *a* può avvenire negando il suo concetto, *a* può anche essere *realmente* opposto a un positivo *b* – come il bianco è opposto al nero[13] – senza che questi annulli il concetto di quello, e ne si neghi, così, ogni consistenza ontologica.[14]

Ebbene, se la distinzione parve utile al Trendelenburg fu perché di essa gli sembrò possibile una rifunzionalizzazione nell'ottica della negazione: se «il concetto affermativo viene negato da un nuovo concetto affermativo», in una relazione che diremo «simmetrica» per il fatto che entrambi i termini sono determinati, si tratterà di negazione reale, ovvero di una negazione del tipo [*a*, *b*]; se, al contrario, il concetto affermativo viene negato senza che gli si sostituisca «alcunché di nuovo», in una relazione «asimmetrica» per l'indeterminatezza dell'opposto, si tratterà di negazione logica, vale a dire di una negazione del tipo [*a*, *non a*]. Nel primo caso, la determinatezza delle variabili opposte *precede* il loro giustapporsi – ossia, *a* e *b* sono *prima* del loro reciproco rapportarsi –; nel secondo, assunta l'impossibilità di una comprensione fenomenica degli elementi, la definizione dell'oggetto *a* è possibile solo richiamando il suo opporsi alla totalità della classe del *nomen infinitum non a*, e dunque la sua determinazione *consegue* all'istituzione della relazione per negazione con la totalità dei contraddittori. Si potrà anche dire, secondo il medesimo ordine: da una parte la negazione intuizionistica (anche leibniziana, modale o discreta), dall'altra la negazione esclusiva o booleana[15].

1.2. Trendelenburg *contra* Hegel

La ragione per la quale Trendelenburg si appellò alla distinzione kantiana come a una distinzione fra negazioni dev'essere ricondotta al ruolo che la negazione riveste nell'economia della dialettica. Trendelenburg descrive il processo dialettico nei termini di una reiterazione della negazione del concetto positivo e del suo opposto negativo[16]. Per questo ha ragione di asserire che la negazione è «il pungolo dell'intero movimento» o «il concetto che, come un impulso innato, fa procedere la dialettica di grado in grado»[17]. Alla luce dei differenti tipi di negazione di cui si ha appurato l'esistenza, diviene necessario chiedersi quale di essi sia impiegato da Hegel. Ma è scandagliando le possibili risposte a questo interrogativo che la critica trendelenburghiana prende finalmente forma, dal momento che il sistema hegeliano pare ricadere in una doppia *impasse*: data la reciproca negazione delle negazioni, ovvero l'eterogeneità delle opposizioni, la dialettica deve procedere o logicamente o realmente, ma entrambe le vie risultano, in verità, impercorribili.

«Può la negazione logica […] determinare uno svolgimento del pensiero tale da far sorgere un nuovo concetto che unisca in sé positivamente le autoescludentesi affermazione e negazione? Ciò non è pensabile: né tra, né sopra i due termini della contraddizione si dà un terzo. La mera affermazione e negazione di una stessa proposizione in nessun modo possono trovare un accordo, poiché non contengono in sé la possibilità di un'intesa.»[18]

Che il metodo dialettico sia incompatibile con un movimento operante per mera negazione logica, Trendelenburg lo sostenne constatando che nessuna delle due negazioni operanti nello schema triadico – la negazione del momento astratto intellettuale, così come la negazione del momento dialettico negativo – fosse capace di dar ragione della determinatezza dell'oggetto posto: non la prima, poiché, come visto, il carattere logico della negazione impedisce di opporre a un certo *a* la determinatezza di uno specifico *b*; non la seconda, poiché, similmente, valendo il principio del terzo escluso, all'istituirsi di un universo logico booleano [*a*, *non a*], asimmetrico per definizione, l'ipotesi di un medio non troverebbe ragione, e allora non sarebbe possibile chiarire come una «sintesi» possa darsi. Il problema è all'essenza il medesimo: se «il concetto affermativo rivendica la sua realtà […], quello semplicemente negativo giace solo nell'opponentesi potere del pensiero che rifiuta di riconoscerlo»[19], ma così la dialettica paga il prezzo della sua vaghezza, risultando incapace di giustificare il proprio processo. L'inconsistenza della filosofia hegeliana conseguirebbe, in altri termini, alla constatazione dell'impossibilità, per un pensiero esclusivamente logico, di sostanziare le proprie istanze[20]: tanto il momento dialettico negativo, quanto quello speculativo, in quanto operarsi di una negazione esclusiva, ricadrebbero in una indeterminata astrazione; ciò perché, da una parte, l'intelletto mancherebbe di un fondamento empirico da cui cogliere la specificità delle sue determinazioni, e dall'altra, anche la ragione, quale organo demandato all'attuazione della doppia negazione, apparirebbe, in verità, inibita, esaurendosi l'insieme del reale nella precedente opposizione fra la specificità dell'oggetto negato (momento astratto-intellettuale – *a*), e la genericità di quello negante (momento dialettico-negativo – *non a*).

Si obietterà che la dialettica possa allora procedere per opposizione reale, attingendo dal sostrato empirico le qualità specifiche dei suoi enti; ma in questo caso, tentando la fuga dall'aporia dell'indeterminatezza, non si potrebbe evitare di ricadere in una altrettanto problematica petizione di principio. Infatti, il motivo kantiano fatto valere dal Trendelenburg attraverso la ripresa delle due negazioni, sottendendo la distinzione fra sensibilità e pensiero, intuizioni e concetti, impone che la dialettica, pensata come movimento privo di presupposti del «puro pensiero», non possa avvalersi del residuo aconcettuale delle determinazioni dell'esperienza per giustificare il proprio procedere[21]. Per pervenire all'opposto negativo, il metodo dialettico non può affidarsi alla funzione dell'in-tuizione sensibile, ché ciò equivarrebbe all'assunzione indebita di informazioni non ammesse dalla regola della purezza concettuale. L'opposizione reale «sottende sempre l'intuizione che pone»[22], ma proprio per questo appare inconciliabile con una logica che pretende di non presupporre nulla, per rivelarsi capace di portare «il pensiero dal

meramente vuoto alla pienezza del concetto che contiene in sé il mondo intero»[23].

2.

In verità, sono molteplici le ragioni per ritenere che la distinzione operata da Trendelenburg fra negazione logica e opposizione reale, per quanto apparentemente solida, sia fallace. E se già il McTaggart lamentava la superficialità con cui si tende a concepire il «pensiero puro» di Hegel[24], se, in aggiunta, numerose voci si sono sollevate a ricordare la propedeuticità della *Fenomenologia* rispetto alla *Logica*[25] – di modo che di un autentico inizio imperniato sulla sola negazione logica non sia così facile parlare, se non con una certa imprudenza –, e se, infine, lo stesso Hegel si pronunciò sulla natura del *giudizio negativo*, evidenziandone la necessità (dialettica) di una latente determinatezza[26], sarà forse sufficiente, in questa sede, limitarsi alla denuncia di quanto, nella disamina trendelenburghiana, presentandosi sotto le mentite spoglie di un equivoco ermeneutico, risulta, invece, in un più grave errore concettuale.

La ragione a cui ci si attende riguarda dunque la natura filologica dell'argomento, il quale viene fatto risalire al magistero aristotelico, quando invece è di chiara paternità kantiana[27]. Trendelenburg ravvisa una continuità fra la distinzione, presente nella *Metafisica,* nelle *Categorie* e nel *De interpretatione*, tra contraddizione e contrarietà, e quella, ritrovabile nei vari scritti precritici di Kant, fra, appunto, *logische Negation* e *reale Opposition*. Ma un tale *trait d'union* non sussiste affatto, non dal punto di vista logico, tantomeno da quello storico-filosofico. E se apparentemente un errore di questa natura potrebbe apparire innocuo, dato che non sembrerebbe inficiare in alcun modo la solidità della distinzione stessa, sarà opportuno dimostrare che non è così, poiché soggiace, qui, una confusione categoriale tale che ne consegue proprio l'impossibilità, per la distinzione, di sostenersi.

2.1. Discontinuità fra Aristotele e Trendelenburg

Che Trendelenburg faccia derivare l'opposizione kantiana dalla filosofia aristotelica è reso evidente tanto da alcuni riferimenti espliciti localizzabili nelle *Logische Untersuchungen*[28], quanto dai suoi commenti ai testi della Stagirita presenti nella *Geschichte der Kategorienlehre*[29] e nel successivo *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seienden nach Aristoteles*[30]. Analizzando il libro X della *Metafisica*, l'esegeta marca la distinzione fra contraddizione e contrarietà. Asserisce così che la differenza che intercorre fra la prima e la seconda dev'essere notata nel fatto che nella *contraddizione*[31] (ἀντίφασιζ) si assiste a una divisione dicotomica dell'intero, per cui a un termine si oppone la totalità degli altri, del tipo [*a, non a*], mentre nella *contrarietà* (ἐναντιότηζ) si dà una forma di *privazione* (στέρησιζ) «perfetta», tale che «all'interno di un universale appaiono i termini estremi di una differenza – come accade per le specie di un genere – e […] l'un membro di questa differenza è posto per negare l'altro»[32]; ovverosia un'opposizione del tipo [*a, b*]. Se nella con-

traddizione lo spazio del reale è esaurito nella contrapposizione di un certo ente e la totalità delle determinazioni che non gli appartengono, nella contrarietà, a un termine specifico si oppone un termine altrettanto specifico, il quale, pur appartenendo allo stesso insieme (o genere), si caratterizza per attributi simmetricamente e specularmente opposti a quelli del primo – appunto, contrari. In tal modo, la differenza fra contraddittori e contrari sarebbe riconducibile a un unico aspetto: che fra quest'ultimi si diano termini «terzi» che non ricadono nell'opposizione, e che ciò non accada per i primi, poiché, in una tale opposizione, un attributo o appartiene o non appartiene al termine considerato.[33]

Da questa differenza Trendelenburg desume tuttavia qualcos'altro: egli ritiene che la contraddittorietà, proprio in virtù della piena esclusione (di un termine, dal resto, o di tutto ciò che non inerisce al termine, dal termine stesso) che esercita nella negazione, si confaccia al piano del puro pensiero, dell'astrazione dall'empirico, del non ente[34]. L'aristotelico, constatando l'indeterminatezza di *non a* di contro ad *a* – cioè il suo essere la totalità dell'essere meno *a* –, sentenzia che l'esclusione reciproca dei due, e cioè la contraddittorietà, non è che la *negazione logica*, ovvero la negazione che prescinde dal contributo dell'esperienza empirica. Dall'altra parte, in ragione della determinatezza di *a* e di *b*, ovverosia dei contrari, conclude che essi debbano attingere la propria specificità dall'intuizione sensibile, e che pertanto non possano esser altro che una *opposizione reale*, fenomenicamente determinata.

Curiosa questa deduzione, di cui non si ha traccia in Aristotele[35], il quale mai sostiene che la differenza fra la contraddittorietà e la contrarietà sia da ultimo riconducibile a quella fra logica e realtà, pensiero e cosa. Trendelenburg afferma che il contraddittorio sta al puramente logico come i contrari all'empirico esperibile, o ancora, negativamente, che il pensiero sta alla realtà come la contraddittorietà ai contrari; ma il passaggio è indebito, e per due, principali motivi: a) innanzitutto, forse con maggiore cautela si dovrebbe giudicare che la contraddittorietà dello Stagirita possa essere ricondotta a un'opposizione esclusiva tra un *nomen finitum* e un *nomen infinitum*: se infatti è certamente dirimente riconoscere che i contraddittori, a differenza dei contrari, non presentano terzo medio, risulta ugualmente importante coglierne la ragione; ovvero che, se da una parte le variabili della contrarietà debbono appartenere allo stesso genere o classe, dall'altra, i termini in opposizione di contraddittorietà non possono, invece, per definizione, presentare alcun sostrato comune[36]. Quanto da ciò consegue è che, sì, non si individuino elementi medi fra contraddittori, ma per di più, e proprio a causa di ciò, che al novero dell'*infinitum* contraddittorio, *non a*, non possa essere ascritto *b*, come anche gli altri elementi dell'insieme (o genere) al quale *a* appartiene. Altra dall'opposizione esclusiva di un determinato affermativo e di un indeterminato negativo, la contraddittorietà aristotelica oppone un determinato affermativo a una negatività determinata non solo come esclusione di *a*, ma di *a* e di tutto ciò con cui *a* condivide il sostrato – ché altrimenti, di alcuni termini del contraddittorio (inteso al modo di *non a*) si potrebbe invero dire che un medio s'interpone fra essi e, ancora, *a*[37]. Sebbene ciò non costituisca un motivo sufficiente a determinare i contraddittori empi-

ricamente, ciononostante mostra che una determinatezza empirica è presupposta nell'opposizione aristotelica: proprio quella del contrario *b* facente parte dell'insieme *A*, e dunque che non di una pura negazione booleana si possa, a rigore, parlare.

b) In secondo luogo, se anche si assecondasse l'intenzione di Trendelenburg di sussumere la contraddittorietà aristotelica nella propria *logische Verneinung*, formalizzando coattamente il discorso dello Stagirita, si dovrebbe comunque notare che la relazione fra contraddittori e pensiero, così come quella fra contrari e realtà, non è affatto biunivoca: se, infatti, pare corretto asserire che ogni esclusione esercitata sul piano della logica pura sia una negazione, appunto, logica, non lo è concludere che ogni contraddittorietà si dia necessariamente entro la dimensione del pensiero scevro di attinenze empiriche. E di conseguenza, se è giusto constatare che ogni contrarietà si predica nella dimensione dell'esperienza – giacché la determinatezza empirica è, invero, presupposta nella stessa caratterizzazione dei contrari – non lo è affermare che i rapporti oppositivi del reale non possano essere di contraddittorietà. Nella prospettiva aristotelica, il contraddittorio di un certo *a* non è infatti il mero *non a* indeterminato e astratto della pura negazione intellettuale, ma l'insieme delle determinatezze del reale: il contraddittorio del rosso, il non-rosso, in quanto insieme del reale meno il (genere del) rosso, è anche l'uomo, la lampada, la trireme, e pertanto non risulta motivo per cui la negazione per contraddittori non possa sostanziarsi delle qualità addotte dall'orizzonte dell'esperienza. L'identificazione trendelenburghiana fra contraddittorietà e negazione logica, contrarietà e opposizione reale, implica che tutti i contraddittori siano logici e che tutti i contrari siano reali. Ma ciò è in larga misura falso, poiché l'esclusione di un termine dall'insieme dell'intero non comporta che il dominio di quest'ultimo si limiti nello spazio del vuoto astratto indeterminato, privo di valenza fenomenica. Del resto, una tale limitazione si contraddirebbe da sé, dacché il *nomen infinitum non a*, separato surrettiziamente dalla dimensione del reale empirico, risulterebbe non tanto il contraddittorio di *a*, quanto il contraddittorio di se stesso, in quanto *infinitum limitato* entro il mero spazio del pensiero. Il sollevamento della contraddittorietà dal terreno della realtà sensibile comporta la perdita delle caratteristiche specificamente empiriche del contraddittorio, il quale tuttavia *deve* contenerle ancora, pena la contraddizione in termini: che il contraddittorio sia, nella misura in cui permane unicamente nel suo carattere di pura inferenza logica, se stesso solo in un certo grado, o il tutto e la parte assieme, ovvero l'insieme dei contraddittori e, per contro, unicamente l'astratto indeterminato di quell'insieme.[38]

2.1.1. Sulla separazione dei termini in opposizione

A corollario di questa separazione inammissibile fra logica e realtà, si accompagna un secondo argomento, il quale non concerne direttamente la distinzione fra opposizione logica e reale, ma che nuovamente ha a che vedere con il valore, o il disvalore, di dicotomie critiche.

Nell'esporre il nucleo del proprio argomento, Trendelenburg sostiene che, al delinearsi di una negazione logi-

ca, per cui a un determinato affermativo si oppone un indeterminato negativo, è impossibile che si incorra in una contraddizione dialettica, tale cioè che si assista a una violazione del principio fondamentale della filosofia aristotelica: quello, per l'appunto, di non contraddizione. Se la contraddittorietà, intesa al modo del berlinese, corrisponde a una divisione dicotomica dell'intero astratto, suddiviso asimmetricamente fra l'affermatività reale di *a* e la negatività logica di *non a*, allora, fatto valere il principio del terzo escluso, non è dato comprendere come una commistione identificativa – e perciò stesso contraddittoria – dei due termini, si possa dare; né, di conseguenza, come possa risultare, da quelli, una nuova unità sintetica. Trendelenburg non accusa mai Hegel di essere andato contro il *principium firmissimum*[39], salvo poi che proprio in questa apparente mancanza di critica si cela l'imputazione filosoficamente più grave, quella di non aver tenuto fede alle proprie intenzioni, non potendosi *a priori* dar prova dell'esistenza di *reali* contraddizioni dialettiche. E tuttavia, si deve profilare qui il dubbio che egli non vedesse le contraddizioni annunciate da Hegel non perché queste non vi fossero, bensì perché, nell'ottica assunta per osservarle, gli fosse, in principio, impedito di coglierle.

La ragione di questa cecità va individuata nella differenza che intercorre fra *termini*, da una parte, e *proposizioni*, dall'altra. V'è da notare infatti che, considerati separatamente, due termini – siano fra loro contrari o contraddittori – né si escludono, né si negano, e tantomeno annullano il concetto dell'altro, il quale riposa nella propria semplice permanenza. Isolati l'uno dall'altro, tutti gli elementi di un insieme assumono «il medesimo diritto di sussistere, senza gradualità di sorta, tanto realmente quanto logicamente, proprio perché essi sono isolati […] e dunque non hanno il diritto di escludersi»[40]. Intesi separatamente, i termini appartenenti a un dato genere non implicano nulla che non sia la propria positiva affermazione. Affinché un'esclusione di qualche natura – e, eventualmente, una contraddizione – si possa registrare, è necessario che i suddetti vengano posti in relazione per mezzo di un'inferenza proposizionale: se, infatti, a titolo esemplificativo, la coppia concettuale [*il bianco*, *il nero*] non corrisponde ad alcuna contraddizione, né relazione di sorta, l'asserzione della congiunzione dei termini, espressa nella frase *Il bianco è il nero*, rappresenta, per l'appunto, una contraddizione, quale forma logica derivata dalla loro messa in relazione, come identici, per mezzo della copula.

Ora, Trendelenburg, al contrario di Aristotele[41], sembra ignorare tutto ciò, a partire dal valore propedeutico della proposizione nei confronti della relazione (e, quindi, della contraddizione). E se ciò è di detrimento per la sua lettura dello Stagirita, lo è a maggior ragione per la sua esegesi dei testi hegeliani, i quali, affermando la realtà della contraddizione, impongono necessariamente il dovere di interrogarsi su quale sia lo statuto delle variabili contraddittorie: se quello di termini, oppure di proposizioni. Allorché la contraddizione viene ammessa in un sistema filosofico, e oltretutto assume un ruolo centrale per la sua articolazione, l'importanza di distinguere fra opposizioni di soli termini e relazioni proposizionali diviene altrettanto centrale, nella misura in cui la verifica della presenza di

una connessione fra le variabili costituisce la condizione indifferibile perché la stessa contraddizione possa darsi.

Ebbene, in tal merito, il fallo di Trendelenburg è doppio: non solo egli non sembra accorgersi in alcun modo del valore che la suddetta distinzione assume nell'economia della dialettica, ma si limita in principio a una considerazione dei termini come semplicemente opposti gli uni agli altri, senza dunque che una inferenza identificativa e contraddittoria si dia. Da una parte, il filosofo tedesco elude la differenza fra termini e proposizioni senza interrogarsi sulla natura dell'opposizione hegeliana; dall'altra, imbocca preventivamente la via che, fra i due, conduce alla constatazione dell'impossibilità della contraddizione, poiché una connessione contraddittoria fra elementi separati non può costituirsi, mancando di costituirsi una connessione *tout court*. Allora, la conclusione è inavvertitamente anteposta alle premesse: non può darsi contraddizione dialettica in quanto i termini dell'intero non si possono identificare l'uno con l'altro, ma tale impossibile unità contraddittoria è in verità desunta dal fatto che i termini, anziché esser concepiti come distinti e relati, vengono pensati come separati e irrelati. Benché ciò non provi che la realtà della contraddizione in Hegel possa darsi, dimostra d'altra parte com'essa non possa darsi *per Trendelenburg*, il cui sguardo risulta, da ultimo, limitato all'origine.

2.2. Discontinuità fra Trendelenburg e Kant

Si è dimostrato che la correlazione biunivoca di relazione-pensiero, separazione-estensione, e ancora contraddittorietà-logica, contrarietà-realtà, è erronea non solo perché ingiustamente ricondotta all'autorità di Aristotele, ma in quanto, di contro alla validità della distinzione aristotelica, risulta di per se stessa insussistente. Certamente, nella misura in cui Trendelenburg attribuisce al filosofo greco la propria dicotomia, emerge uno sbaglio interpretativo, il quale tuttavia non può esser propriamente ritenuto un «errore filosofico», almeno fintantoché non se ne registri l'eventuale inconsistenza logica. Ora, che proprio questo secondo aspetto emerga, congiuntamente all'inesattezza esegetica, per la distinzione trendelenburghiana, è quanto qui deve destare interesse, giacché ciò potrebbe indurre a concludere che l'errore constatato non sia unicamente del Trendelenburg quale interprete di Aristotele, ma di Kant quale artefice della separazione di pensiero e realtà. Poiché infatti, come si è già evidenziato, la distinzione fra negazione logica e opposizione reale è innanzitutto kantiana (benché dal berlinese venga fatta risalire direttamente allo Stagirita), sembra che se ne debba trarre che primariamente sulle spalle del pensatore di Königsberg pesi la responsabilità del fallo. Eppure, una sì tratta conclusione non sarebbe corretta, poiché va notato che l'errore compiuto da Trendelenburg nei confronti di Aristotele si ripete, secondo il medesimo schema, anche nei confronti di Kant[42]: così come le opposizioni trendelenburghiane non corrispondono alla contrarietà e alla contraddittorietà aristoteliche, allo stesso modo le suddette opposizioni non concordano pienamente con le repugnanze logiche e reali kantiane, se correttamente intese. E ancora, così come la separazione di realtà e pensiero non è cosa che si possa

addossare ad Aristotele, quella di contrarietà e contraddittorietà non è una distinzione attribuibile, in tal contesto, a Kant.

Ci si avverte di tal fatto non appena si considerano i contributi precritici. Nel suo scritto sulle quantità negative, il pensatore tedesco si dimostra ben consapevole della necessità di dover connettere i termini in opposizione logica per ricavarne una contraddizione, tanto che sottolinea come ciò possa avvenire nella forma della predicazione di attributi appartenenti a uno stesso genere a una stessa sostanza, allo stesso tempo e sotto il medesimo rispetto. L'opposizione logica «consiste nell'affermare e negare contemporaneamente un predicato di una cosa»[43], e non semplicemente nell'opporre, a un che di determinato, l'insieme indeterminato di ciò che lo nega.

Ora, questo è rilevante per due, distinti motivi: a) *in primis*, che il filosofo si riveli sensibile alla necessità di una considerazione linguistica e prima ancora relazionale dei termini, è indice di com'egli si curi, mediante questo accorgimento, di garantire una coerenza e un'omogeneità metodologiche paragonabili a quelle del Trendelenburg, e tuttavia simmetricamente opposte. Infatti, la necessità di connessione proposizionale nell'espressione d'appartenenza di un attributo a un soggetto viene fatta corrispondere alla forza che una certa *vis* esercita su un corpo nell'opposizione reale, cosicché, pur secondo meriti distinti, tanto nel dominio dell'astratto logico, quanto in quello del reale empirico, si dà una qualche forma di relazione.

«Nella repugnanza logica si tiene conto soltanto di quella relazione per cui i predicati di una cosa si annullano a vicenda, e così le loro conseguenze, per contraddizione […]. Anche la repugnanza reale si fonda sulla relazione reciproca di due predicati di una stessa cosa, ma questa relazione è di specie del tutto diversa. L'uno non nega ciò che è affermato dall'altro, il che è impossibile, ma sono affermativi ambedue i predicati.»[44]

Tale fatto, come si è già detto, era del tutto assente nella disamina dell'aristotelico, il quale non faceva interagire né le entità fisiche dell'opposizione reale, né le variabili astratte dell'opposizione logica. Ciò è significativo poiché consente di difendere Kant dalla medesima accusa che prima s'era rivolta a Hegel: di dedurre contraddizioni là dove, data la separazione dei termini, queste non potevano emergere. Se la negazione logica è *durch den Widerspruch* (e l'opposizione reale *ohne Widerspruch*) è, quindi, in quanto il pensatore si predispone entro un piano d'inferenze predicative alle quali non è impedito, in principio, di poter generare contraddizioni.

b) In secondo luogo, è determinante che nel riconoscimento della contraddizione quale esito di una siffatta predicazione – per cui a un termine vengono attribuiti valori fra loro escludentisi – non ne consegua affatto che della logica sia propria la contraddittorietà per com'è intesa da Trendelenburg, ovvero come indistinto *nomen infinitum*, totalmente privo di determinatezza. Lo testimoniano, del resto, i due esempi addotti da Kant a introduzione del suo saggio: *moto* e *non moto*, *buio* e *non buio*[45]. Questi, pur non essendo contrari – poiché non ammettono un terzo medio – non sono neanche contraddittori (secondo la definizione aristotelica), in quanto il predicato *logicamente negativo*, «non moto» o «non buio» che sia, vie-

ne chiaramente inteso da Kant come limitato entro il genere a cui appartiene il termine *logicamente affermativo*, sia questi «il moto» o «il buio»[46]. Si era infatti notato come il contraddittorio, secondo Aristotele, sconfinasse i limiti di genere e di specie per comprendere da ultimo la totalità dell'essere meno la determinazione affermativa. È evidente che per Kant non sia così, poiché se per «non moto» o «non buio» si potessero intendere anche «il rosso», «la lampada» o «la trireme», ovverosia l'insieme indiscriminato di tutto ciò che nel dominio del reale non è «moto» e non è «buio», non sarebbe necessariamente assicurato l'emergere della contraddizione come forma logica derivante dalla contemporanea attribuzione di questi predicati al soggetto considerato[47]. Per l'impostazione kantiana delle dicotomie, l'ammissione della contraddizione nella sfera della negazione logica si accompagna alla necessità di garantirla, e al dovere di ridurre, quindi, la dimensione dell'insieme dei contraddittori entro il quale l'opposizione può costituirsi. È chiaro, dunque, che se Trendelenburg non coglie quest'aspetto – e identifica, quindi, la negazione logica con la più generale negazione esclusiva – è a causa della sua considerazione astratta dei termini: infatti, se la contraddizione non può essere implicata, non v'è ragione perché si limiti il regime della contraddittorietà, come invece è necessario che faccia Kant, il quale, ancora, deve assicurare l'esatto opposto: ovvero, che la contraddizione si dia sempre, in quanto essenza della repugnanza logica. In breve, l'impossibilità, per il Trendelenburg, di vedere la contraddizione, già invalidante per l'interpretazione della filosofia di Hegel, lo è anche per la comprensione di quella di Kant, poiché gli impedisce di cogliere i limiti della classe della negazione logica nel suo significato proprio.

L'incomprensione trendelenburghiana dell'autentica natura della negazione per contraddizione si acuisce ulteriormente considerando, questo, in aggiunta: che gli esempi addotti da Kant non costituiscano delle relazioni di contrarietà non implica che esse siano escluse dal novero dei casi riconducibili, secondo definizione, all'opposizione logica. Difatti, la contraddizione per negazione logica, in quanto esito della contemporanea predicazione di attributi escludentisi, non nega affatto che tra i termini dell'opposizione ci possano essere elementi intermedi, che siano parte dello stesso insieme. La contemporanea attribuzione di due contrari, si ponga del «bianco» e del «nero», nel medesimo rispetto, a un dato oggetto *x*, non è infatti meno contraddittoria dell'attribuzione allo stesso ente delle opposizioni per privazione addotte come esempi da Kant, le quali si distinguono dai primi unicamente per il tipo di relazione, e non certo per la natura della contraddizione generata.

Ora, se i contrari possono essere ammessi al novero degli elementi suscettibili di essere opposti logicamente nel sistema kantiano, il quale deve poterne garantire l'incompatibilità reciproca, non pare comprensibile perché il Trendelenburg, la cui opposizione, non ammettendo contraddizione, si estende alla totalità dell'essere, li estrometta dal dominio della negazione logica[48]. Considerate le premesse, siccome la dicotomia trendelenburghiana non fa che estendere illecitamente quella di Kant, ciò che vale per il filosofo di Königsberg, deve valere anche per quello di Berlino. Che accada il contrario è spia del

compiersi di un ulteriore atto arbitrario, logicamente inammissibile.

Quanto ne risulta sembra, quindi, esser questo: da una parte, che lo statuto ontologico della negazione logica, il quale è la contraddizione aristotelica o, il che è lo stesso, il *nihil negativum irrepraesentabile*, non determini di per sé la forma della relazione dalla quale emerge la contraddizione – che, dunque, può essere indiscriminatamente una contraddittorietà (ma limitata entro il genere), una contrarietà, o la particolare forma di privazione esposta nelle esemplificazioni kantiane –; e dall'altra, cosa ancora più importante, che l'implicazione dell'opposizione astratta di *nomen finitum* e *nomen infinitum*, assunta da Trendelenburg per l'opposizione logica, sia tutt'altro che necessitata e, anzi, in ultima istanza, nella prospettiva kantiana, impossibile: la contraddittorietà non può sempre, imprescindibilmente, implicare la contraddizione nella predicazione di due contraddittori a un medesimo ente, in quanto il suo essere *sui generis* non garantisce che i termini così attribuiti si contraddicano fra loro. Piuttosto, la contraddittorietà della predicazione è assicurata nella limitazione dell'insieme dei contraddittori. Kant, di ciò, pare forse consapevole; al contrario di Trendelenburg, il quale, dunque, s'imbatte in un curioso paradosso: la contraddizione come conseguenza dell'impossibilità di garantirla. «Contraddizione» che è tale nella misura in cui si rivela un'insanabile discrasia fra l'orizzonte kantiano e quello trendelenburghiano, la quale è tendenzialmente riducibile a un unico, decisivo aspetto: l'ammissione della possibilità della contraddizione nel primo, di contro all'imposizione della sua inammissibilità nel secondo.

Tanto la deduzione interpretativa che muove da Aristotele, quanto la formalizzazione delle negazioni operata a partire da Kant, rappresentano, dunque, dei passaggi illeciti, non giustificati. Che Kant venga fatto corrispondere coattamente ad Aristotele, e Aristotele a Kant, in un singolare *qui pro quo*, significa davvero il sorgere di una contraddizione: quella per cui le determinazioni specifiche delle filosofie kantiana e aristotelica, in quanto incompatibili, si annullano vicendevolmente. È questa, ironicamente, un'autentica opposizione logica: l'identificazione contraddittoria di termini distinti, determinati, fra loro inconciliabili. Come la negazione esclusiva non ha ragione di sussistere esclusivamente nel dominio dell'astrazione intellettuale, l'opposizione discreta può comunque dar luogo a una negazione logica, almeno fintantoché i termini vengono posti fra loro in relazione. La prospettiva aristotelica non consente una distinzione fra logica e realtà; quella kantiana, implicando la contraddizione del logico, non può inquadrarsi nel binomio di contrarietà e contraddittorietà. Trendelenburg, intrecciandole assieme in un unico schema, trasgredisce non solo il pensiero di entrambi gli autori, ma le rispettive ragioni, sicché, infine, ne rimane privo, e la sua proposta filosofica si rivela nella propria fragilità.

Note

[1] Per un ritratto biografico dell'autore vd. E. BRATUSCHEK, *Adolf Trendelenburg*, Henschel, Berlin 1873; di recente pubblicazione R. VILKKO, *A Hundred Years of Logical Investigations. Reform Efforts of Logic in Germany 1781-1879*, Mentis, Paderborn 2002, pp. 56-81, Bratuschek 1872; come anche l'ultimo V. RASPA, *Categorie e linguaggio. Trendelenburg interprete di Aristotele*; Paradigmi XXXVIII, 2/2020, pp. 294ss.

Per una contestualizzazione storica cfr. M. Rossi, *Da Hegel a Marx. III. La scuola hegeliana, Il giovane Marx*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1974, pp. 3-145; P. Petersen, *Die Philosophie F. A. Trendelenburgs. Ein Beitrag des Aristoteles im 19. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg 1913.

[2] Cfr. M. Morselli, *Introduzione a F.A. Trendelenburg*, in F. A. Trendelenburg, *Il metodo dialettico,* Il mulino, Bologna 1990, p. XIV. Ma non bisogna tralasciare le critiche mosse dai realisti Fries ed Herbart, per i cui testi in traduzione italiana si rimanda all'antologia a cura di E. Colombo, *Antidialettica, polemiche sul sistema hegeliano*, Unicopli, Milano 1998, pp. 59-150.

[3] Sul tema cfr. C. Fabro, *Kierkegaard critico di Hegel*, in *Incidenza di Hegel. Studi raccolti in occasione del secondo centenario della nascita del filosofo*, a cura di F. Tessitore, Napoli 1970, p. 542; G. Magrì, *Il salto della libertà: la critica di Trendelenburg alla dialettica hegeliana nella ricezione di Kierkegaard*, Rivista di filosofia Neo-Scolastica, Vita e Pensiero, 2004, Vol. 96, no. 1, p. 108; M. Farina, *La critica a Hegel nelle pagine del 'Diario' di Kierkegaard*, Humanitas: Rivista bimestrale di cultura, 62(4), 2007, pp. 642-652; e A.B. Come, A. McKinnon, *Trendelenburg's Influence on Kirekegaard's Modal Categories*, Inter Editions, Montreal 1991.

[4] Cfr. ad es. B. Spaventa, *Le prime categorie della logica di Hegel*, in *Opere*, I, Sansoni, Firenze 1972, p. 436. Sul tema D. Spanio, *Contraddizione, divenire ed esperienza: un'introduzione alla riforma gentiliana della dialettica di Hegel*, Il Mulino, Annali dell'IISS, XXIII, Bologna 2008, pp. 460-469.

[5] Cfr. M. Morselli, *Introduzione a F.A. Trendelenburg, Il metodo dialettico*, cit., pp. XXV – XXVI.

[6] Vd. V. Cousin, *Über französische un deutsche Philosophie*, Stuttgart und Tübingen 1834.

[7] Sulla critica di Schelling a Hegel cfr. G. Semenari, *La critica di Schelling a Hegel*, in *Incidenza di Hegel*, cit., pp. 490ss.

[8] Cfr. a tal proposito B.G. Kreiter, *Philosophy as Weltanschauung in Trendelenburg, Dilthey and Windelband*, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Amsterdam 2007, pp. 11-62.

[9] K. Rosenkranz, *Trendelenburg und Hegel*, «Die Gegenwart», XXVIII, 1982, p. 74.

[10] F. A. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Leipzig 1870), Georg olms Hildensheim, Erster band, Reinheim 1964, p. 44, tr. it. a cura di M. Morselli, *Il metodo dialettico*, p. 14.

[11] Vd. I. Kant, *Versuch den Begriff der negativen Grössen in die Weltweisheit einzuführen*, in *Akademie-Ausgabe*, II, *Vorkritische Schriften 1757-1777*, Berlin 1912, spec. pp. 171 s.; tr it. *Tentativo di introdurre nella filosofia il concetto di quantità negativa*, in *Scritti precritici*, a cura di P. Carabellese, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1953, pp. 264 s. La menzione della distinzione fra opposizione logica e reale è in realtà ancora precedente, e risale a *L'unico argomento possibile per una dimostrazione dell'esistenza di Dio*. Tuttavia, lo scritto sulle quantità negative assume maggior rilevanza, tanto per la più compiuta esposizione della differenza, che ne *L'unico argomento* è solamente accennata, quanto per la considerazione che assunse agli occhi di Hegel, che ne trattò implicitamente nella *Nota* sulle quantità opposte dell'aritmetica contenuta nella *Scienza della logica*. Cfr. G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik. Die objektive Logik* (1812/13), a cura di F. Hogemann e W. Jaeschke, Felix Meiner Vlg., Hamburg 1978, pp. 275-278; tr. it. *Scienza della Logica*, a cura di A. Moni e C. Cesa, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2004, pp. 477-481. Sul tema della disamina delle forme d'opposizione fra Kant e Hegel cfr. L. Lugarini, *Identità, opposizione, contraddizione in Kant e nel ripensamento hegeliano*, in *Identità, coerenza, contraddizione*, a cura di G. Severino, Il Nuovo Melangolo, Genova 1966, pp. 61-79 e id., *Identità, contraddizione, fondamento. Gli albori della logica hegeliana*, «Il pensiero», 1987, pp. 3-37.

[12] Cfr. I. Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Hamburg 1962, pp. 318-319, tr. it. *Critica della ragion pura*, a cura di G. Gentile e G. Lombardo-Radice, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1996, pp. 220-221.

[13] Cfr. F. A. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, cit., p. 44 nt., tr. it., p. 14 nt.

[14] Scrive Kant: «[l'opposizione reale] ha sempre luogo quando qualcosa, in questo principio, annulla la conseguenza di qualcos'altro con una contrapposizione reale. La forza di un movimento di un corpo in una direzione e la tendenza con egual grado nella direzione opposta non sono in contraddizione. Esse sono anche realmente possibili, nello stesso tempo, nello stesso corpo. […] Si vede così che la ripugnanza reale è tutt'altra cosa da quella logica o contraddizione, poiché ciò che consegue da questa è assolutamente impossibile» (I. Kant, *L'unico argomento possibile per dimostrare l'esistenza di Dio*, in *Scritti precritici*, a cura di P. Carabellese, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1982, p. 128). Cfr. similmente id., *Tentativo di introdurre nella filosofia il concetto di quantità negative*, cit., p. 255.

[15] Cfr. F. D'Agostini, *Logica del nichilismo. Dialettica, differenza, ricorsività*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2000, p. 200.

[16] «In quanto il concetto appena acquisito si trasforma per sua propria natura nella sua negazione, in quanto dunque sorge il compito necessario di pensare insieme il positivo e la sua negazione, la contraddizione che si è venuta a porre deve essere risolta attraverso un terzo concetto, prodotto dalla dialettica. Ad una più profonda indagine, questo concetto positivo si trasforma di nuovo nel suo opposto negativo e si ripete così il processo appena descritto di una nuova nascita». F. A. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, cit., p. 43, tr. it., p. 13.

[17] *Ibidem*.

[18] *Ivi*, p. 44; tr. it., p. 14.

[19] *Ibidem*.

[20] Per lo stesso principio, nel suo *Über Leibnizens Entwurf einer allgemeinen Charakteristik* (Philosophische Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Berlin 1856, pp. 36-69), Trendelenburg manifestò un certo scetticismo nei confronti del calcolo logico leibniziano. Per il rifiuto trendelenburghiano della *characteristica universalis* cfr. P. Volker, *Leibniz's Influence on 19th Century Logic*, The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2018; V. Peckhaus, *Logik, Mathesis universalis und allgemeine Wissenschaft. Leibniz und die Wiederentdeckung der formalin Logik im 19. Jahrhundert*, Akademie-Verlag, Berlin 1997, pp. 130-163.

[21] Cfr. V. Vitiello, *Hegel e la possibilità dell'inizio*, «Pensiero», XXXVI, 1/2, 1997, p. 43. Cfr. anche M. Mangiagalli, *Logica e metafisica nel pensiero di F. A. Trendelenburg*, Milano 1983, pp. 65-101; J. Schmidt, *Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik und ihre kritik durch Adolf Trendelenburg*, Munchen 1977.

[22] F. A. Trendelenburg, *Logische Untersuchungen*, p. 45, tr. it. p. 15.

[23] *Ivi*, p. 43, tr. it. p. 13. In tal senso, sulla scia di Trendelenburg, scrive De Ruggiero che bisogna dare «fondamento all'accusa che le categorie sbuchino fuori dalle sue [di Hegel] deduzioni quasi per un tocco di bacchetta magica.» (G. De Ruggiero, *Storia della filosofia*, p. IV, vol. V, *Hegel*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1947, p. 119). Sull'arbitrarietà della successione dei momenti dilettici anche P. Martinetti, *Hegel*, Bocca, Milano 1943, p. 139; E. Severino, *La struttura originaria* (1958), Adelphi, Milano 2007, p. 388 e D. Marconi, *Contradiction and the Language of Hegel's Dialectic: a Study of the Science of Logic*, University Microfilm International, Pittsburgh 1980., pp. 55-57.

[24] Cfr. J. McTaggart, *Studies in the Hegelian Dialectic* (1896), Cambride University Press, Cambridge 1922, pp. 42-43.

[25] Cfr. ad es. W. Maker, *Philosophy without foundation: Rethinking Hegel*, SUNY university press, New York 1994, pp. 94-98, in cui l'autore risponde alle critiche, per certi versi filo-trendelenburghiane, di Henrich; e ancora A. Kojeve, *La dialettica e l'idea della morte in Hegel*, Einaudi, Torino 1991, pp. 38-39, dove vien resa chiara l'immanenza del contenuto sul metodo al compiersi del Sapere Assoluto della *Fenomenologia*.

[26] «Se il negativo vien tenuto fermo nella determinazione affatto astratta dell'immediato non essere, il predicato non è che l'affatto indeterminato non-universale. Di questa determinazione si tratta d'altra parte nella logica a proposito dei concetti contraddittorii, inculcandosi come cosa importante che nel negativo di un concetto ci si deve attenere solo al negativo, e che questo dev'essere preso come la semplice estensione indeterminata dell'altro del concetto positivo. […] Il non bianco, il non rosso etc. non sono un positivo, come anche il non triangolare è un che di affatto indeterminato, poiché la determinazione basata in generale sul numero e sul quanto è la determinazione essenzialmente *indifferente, vuota di concetto*. Ma come il *non essere* stesso, così anche cotesto contenuto sensibile dev'esser *concepito*, e deve perdere quella indifferenza e quell'astratta immediatezza che ha nella cieca e immobile rappresentazione.» (G. W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik. Die subjektive Logik* (1816), a cura di F. Hogemann e W. Jaeschke, Felix Meiner Vlg., Hamburg 1978, p. 66ss.; tr. it. *Scienza della logica*, pp. 723ss.). Hegel comprende dalla natura della negazione esclusiva che oppone a un elemento intuito l'intero indeterminato che gli differisce. Chiama *non-universale* l'insieme contraddittorio della variabile positiva, tanto perché gli si accompagna il *Non* della copula, quanto perché esso si oppone all'universalità astratta del giudizio affermativo, ovvero come istanza della totalità dell'essere meno quella stessa determinazione. Il non-universale è dunque la classe del reale determinata esclusivamente come negativa della variabile intuita e positivamente affermata: il *non a* di *a*. E tuttavia, proprio a considerare l'essenza di questa indistinzione, Hegel giunge a concludere che tale assoluta negatività, la cui cifra è l'indeterminatezza, per essere concepita come termine negativo del determinato affermativo, deve potersi a sua volta determinare come ciò che nega quella stessa determinazione, ciò che *è* il suo negativo, e, essendo,

presenta una propria affermatività implicita, una propria positività e, quindi, una determinatezza. Come il non essere si oppone all'essere, il non-universale è la negazione del singolare positivo, e allora, in guisa di quest'affinità, occorre che quella negatività sia pensata, concepita, dunque, e a sua volta affermata. «Il *Non* è immediatamente un positivo […]. Il non-universale è quindi subito il *particolare*» (ivi, p. 67; tr. it. p. 724). La negazione esclusiva diviene dunque immediatamente negazione discreta: la distinzione utile alla formulazione dell'accusa di Trendelenburg si annulla, e con essa l'accusa stessa.

[27] Cfr. E. BERTI, *La dottrina aristotelica delle categorie in Trendelenburg, Brentano e Heidegger*, in *Actas del Primer Congreso Internacional de Ontología. Categorías e inteligibilidad global. El proyecto ontológico a través de la reflexión contemporánea*, V. Gómez coordinator, Publicacions de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Bellaterra 1994, p. 77.

[28] Cfr. F. A. TRENDELENBURG, *Logische Untersuchungen*, cit., p. 68; tr. it., p. 46.

[29] Cfr. id. *Geschichte der Kategorienlehre* (Berlin 1846), Hildesheim, 1963, pp. 104-106.

[30] Vd. id. *Von der mannigfachen Bedeutung des Seinden nach Aristoteles* (Berlin, 1862), tr. it. a cura di G. Reale, *La dottrina delle categorie in Aristotele*, Vita&Pensiero, Milano 1995 (riedizione Milano 2012). Questi testi, nonché il recentemente tradotto *De Aristotelis categoriis* (cfr. F. A. TRENDELENBURG, *Le categorie di Aristotele*, tr. it. di Valentina Basili, Paradigmi XXXVIII, 2/2020, pp. 313-335) sono al centro degli ultimi studi sull'aristotelico, dei quali è data una panoramica in M. MANGIAGALLI, *Recenti studi su Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg*, Rivista di filosofia neo-scolastica, vol. 98, 3/2006, pp. 575-583; e a cui si aggiunge V. RASPA, *Origine e significato delle categorie di Aristotele. Il dibattito nell'Ottocento*, Quodlibet, Macerata 2020, pp. 61-122.

[31] D'ora in poi «contraddittorietà», al fine di non confonderla con la contraddizione formale e dialettica.

[32] *Ivi*, tr. it. p. 195.

[33] Cfr. ARISTOTELE, *Metaph*, X 4, 1055 a 27-32. Scrive Berti: «ciò che distingue dunque i contrari dai contraddittori è il fatto che i contrari ammettono un'unità comprensiva di entrambi (il genere, o il sostrato, o la facoltà) e di conseguenza ammettono anche un termine intermedio, mentre i contraddittori non ammettono né l'uno né l'altro». Va sottolineato infatti l'esaurirsi dell'universo nell'opposizione dei contraddittori *a* e *non a* non corrisponde all'esaurirsi, nella suddetta opposizione, di una sola classe (o genere), poiché si presupporrebbe così un sostrato comune, ma di tutte le classi (ovvero della totalità dei generi), «l'intero essere […] il quale essere, come è noto, per Aristotele, in quanto si predica delle differenze, non è un genere». E. BERTI, *Trendelenburg e la concezione hegeliana del finito*, in *Studi aristotelici*, «Methodos», 7, Japadre ed., L'Aquila 1975, pp. 356-357.

[34] Cfr. F. A. TRENDELENBURG, *La dottrina delle categorie in Aristotele*, pp. 104-106.

[35] Cfr. C. ROSSITTO, *Negazione logica e negazione reale in F. A. Trendelenburg*, Verifiche, 10 (1981), 3, pp. 307-310.

[36] Si tratterebbe infatti di un particolare tipo di privazione, detta *assoluta* anziché *perfetta* poiché «privazione considerata insieme col sostrato che la riceve» (ARISTOTELE, *Metaph*, X 4, 1055 b 8), ovvero privazione *del* sostrato stesso.

[37] L'esclusione per contraddittori aristotelici, a meno che non ci si riferisca a coppie di generi, non è, secondo la logica classica, *esaustiva*: assunto il simbolo di contrarietà ·, e A come genere d'appartenenza di a, ∃!b ∈ A | b · a; sicché il sottoinsieme dei valori assumibili da *b* esclude *a* come anche la totalità dell'essere meno A.

[38] Gennaro Sasso evidenzia un aspetto utile a quanto qui si vuol sostenere: ovverosia che una tale distinzione sia tutt'altro che ovvia, per via del fatto che anche la negazione logica, in quanto intenzionata dal pensiero come un'opposizione di un ente determinato con un ente indeterminato, è reale, ovvero non un che di disgiungibile dal dominio dell'essere. Scrive in *Essere e negazione*: «Si dice che un *ente di ragione* non è un *ente reale*. Ma dei pensieri logici, che certo sono per eccellenza *enti di ragione* e non […] *enti reali*, si dice tuttavia che sono *enti*; *enti* e non niente: reali, dunque, anch'essi, nel loro non esser niente […]. Se, in altri termini, è fra *realtà* e *realtà* che occorre distinguere, come si ottiene, posto che la si ottenga, la distinzione che stiamo cercando?» (G. SASSO, *Essere e negazione*, Morano, Napoli 1987, pp. 108-109). L'osservazione, di per sé orientata all'identificazione di astrazione logica e realtà empirica, asseconda qui l'idea che non sia legittimo, nel merito della contraddittorietà, limitare arbitrariamente la sua estensione al solo dominio del puro pensiero, giacché, se anche quello è reale, rappresenta unicamente *una parte* dell'insieme dei contraddittori, e non lo esaurisce. Se, cioè, la totalità dei contraddittori è l'insieme degli elementi che si oppongono a un dato *a*, una distinzione fra piano logico e piano reale, congiuntamente all'intenzione di limitare entro il primo l'estensione di quell'insieme, non può che indurre la contraddizione, poiché, in quanto ente fra gli altri enti, l'ente «logico» non può essere una parte del suddetto insieme, dunque, non l'insieme stesso. Assunto che nella parificazione ontologica operata da Sasso un ente di ragione sia un ente qualsiasi, in nulla diverso rispetto a un ente reale, si perde il motivo per il quale limitare nell'astrazione del pensiero l'insieme dei contraddittori.

[39] Lo nota anche Berti (cfr. E. BERTI, *Conclusione*, Verifiche, 10 (1981), 3, pp. 402-403) giustamente evidenziando il cambiamento di giudizio nei critici filo-trendelenburghiani, a partire da Colletti (cfr. ad es. L. COLLETTI, *Il marxismo e Hegel*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 1969, p. 18), la cui interpretazione della dialettica risulta non coerentista. Sulla critica di Berti a Trendelenburg cfr. poi E. BERTI, *La fondazione dialettica del divenire in Hegel e nella filosofia odierna*, Therorein, 6/1969-72, pp. 6ss.

[40] C. ROSSITTO, *Negazione logica e negazione reale in F. A. Trendelenburg*, cit., p. 310. Lo studio dell'autrice approfondisce ulteriormente questo specifico aspetto, qui solo brevemente richiamato al fine di muovere verso ulteriori considerazioni.

[41] Cfr. *Ivi*, p. 313.

[42] Al confronto di Trendelenburg con Kant è dedicato lo studio di E. FUGALI, *Anima e movimento. Teoria della conoscenza e psicologia in Trendelenburg*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2002. Si segnalano inoltre E. KANTERIAN, *The Ideality of Space and Time: Trendelenburg versus Kant, Fischer and Bird*, Kantian Review, XVIII, 2/2013, pp. 263-288; A. SPECHT, *F. A. Trendelenburg and the Neglected Alternative*, British Journal for the History of Philosophy, XXII, 3/2014, pp. 514-534.

[43] «La prima opposizione, quella logica, […] consiste nell'affermare e negare contemporaneamente un predicato di una cosa. La conseguenza di un tale nesso logico è nulla (*nihil negativum irrepraesentabile*), come è detto nel principio di [non] contraddizione. Un corpo in moto è *qualcosa*; un corpo che non è in moto è anche *qualcosa* (*cogitabile*); ma un corpo che sia in moto, e contemporaneamente non sia in moto, non è nulla.» I. KANT, *Tentativo per introdurre nella filosofia il concetto delle quantità negative*, cit. p. 255.

[44] *Ivi*, p. 256.

[45] *Ibidem*.

[46] Si tratterebbe dunque, aristotelicamente, di un particolare tipo di privazione (cfr. *Metaph* X 4, 1055 b 8-11), ovvero di una opposizione non assoluta, bensì limitata entro il genere di un soggetto (cfr. S. THOMAE AQUIN. *In Metaph.*, p. 483 b, §§ 2044-2047); ma si consideri anche che negli esempi kantiani il «genere» è peculiarmente composto da due soli opposti determinati e in esclusione reciproca. Come si osserverà fra poco, ciò comporta che il *non a* kantiano, al contrario del *non a* aristotelico, non escluda da sé il contrario *b*.

[47] Che, ad esempio, qualcosa sia al contempo e sotto il medesimo rispetto in moto e rosso, non è affatto contraddittorio (cfr. ARISTOTELE, *Metaph*, V 9, 1018 a 7-9 e X 3, 1054 b 18-20). L'identità può esser detta di cose fra loro diverse, come avviene nelle proposizioni che descrivono un ente caratterizzandolo con le sue qualità: «*a* è *b*» non significa in questi casi la contraddizione, ma la sola espressione di una differenza, al contro all'identità eleatico-parmenidea. Cfr. E. BERTI, C*ontraddizione e dialettica negli antichi e nei moderni*, Epos, Palermo 1987, pp. 180-181.

[48] Come precedentemente notato, l'unica ragione valida a cui Trendelenburg si sarebbe potuto appellare per escludere il contrario *b* dall'insieme di *non a*, avrebbe potuto essere che, aristotelicamente, i contrari condividono il sostrato, mentre i contraddittori no. Ma il fatto che egli si decida per una negazione esclusiva non giustifica, di conseguenza, la separazione delle due opposizioni: per Trendelenburg, a causa dell'errore interpretativo di cui sopra, il contrario deve essere un particolare tipo di contraddittorio (nel senso spurio di *non a*), com'è, di fatto, per la negazione logica kantiana.

Epistemic semblance in Metaphysics

Sanjit Chakraborty

 Abstract: Simon Blackburn, in *Truth A Guide for the Perplexed* (Blackburn 2006), deploys the relation of thought with the facts and says, 'We met the argument that theorizing involves an impossible activity of stepping outside our own skins and pretending to a 'transcendental' point of view, a standpoint from which we can survey the relationship between our thoughts and facts, without using the very forms of thought whose relation to the facts we are hoping to describe.' (Blackburn, 2006, 109). My philosophical reflections on this claim appreciate the view and turn towards the epistemic semblance in the metaphysical purview. A few challenges of the theory take up a side-effect of the 'knowing procedures' and its subsequent notion of the rigid concomitance of realism without a human face. My endeavor would be to slightly bypassing the account of objective realism and debut into the sphere of the old-fashioned query, 'what do we know about the conceptualized world where concepts steadily *contaminate* objects?' We may appreciative beliefs and concepts, which are human creations, as these impart to the human-experienced world where concepts are the objective features of the subject's conceptual scheme.

Keywords: Epistemic, Realism, Anti-realism, conceptual schemata, Concept, intensional, supervenience, Ontology.

On what there is

The world is the totality of the physical and non-physical (mind, time, universal, causality, etc.) objects. The epistemic venture of the world is indubitably a subjective pursuit of knowing the world and being engaged in the world. The query circulates, 'does the objective world depend on the conceptual schemata, or the sense of reality seems mind-independent?' The whole discourse is an attempt to see the external world in general (realism1) and the external world seeing through conceptual schemata (anti-realism2). The question about the paradigm of reality or how do we know 'on what there is' set off a qualm between the knowledge of *de re* and *de dicto*. One of the most prominent relativist accounts is *global relativism*, an approach to sorting out the different objects by their uses. It looks closer to anti-realism since the prospect of *global relativism* upholds the global conceptual schemata as a model of categorizing the objects or carving them up through conceptualizing the world in different ways. We may favor a global relativist approach to indulge the representational mode of multifaceted mind-independent realities. All these outlooks are monitored through the patterns in language (*language is the mirror of the world*), I

mean, whether language represents the world or we conceptualize the world by the medium of language to know what is there outside the physical boundary of the subject. In particular, for realists, the reality in principle extends beyond the subject's conceptualization. The key novelty of this argument, apart from the objective world, is the contention that the external properties of the objects are not limited in the access to our knowing. Besides, anti-realism, an opponent, proclaims that reality relies on the human-face or is constructed by conceptual operators. Internal realism is also a formidable account of anti-realism that depends on the 'verifiability semantic'; here, the conception of 'truth' blends with the process of verification under certain 'epistemic ideal conditions'. Later in his *Gifford lectures* at St. Andrews (1990), Hilary Putnam digs up his 'epistemic ideal situation' that is allied to the 'Cartesian Predicament'. Chakraborty says,

> For Putnam 'internal realism' just is not a mere interface between us and world but an interface that is related to 'conceptual schemes' controlled by 'operational constraints' which can be reduced in sense data. One can be pointed out that the world that we know and can refer to, the internalist holds: is language relative and so relative to our conceptual scheme. So many interpreters of Putnam make a mistake to think that Putnam is an internal realist as he adopted the idea of "conceptual scheme" as the feature of his works. But Putnam himself claims that he already gave up the theory of internal realism which he also called 'scientific realism' as "the realism internal to science" because he later (*Reading Putnam*, edited by Bob Hale,1990) rejected the "verificationist semantics" which was the fundamental idea of so-called "internal realism". (Chakraborty, 2016, 180).

It is well known that the theory of concept is the content of our thought. The pattern of 'concept' has two dimensions that trigger the philosophical sequences in epistemology and metaphysics simultaneously. The classical view lays out an *intensional* part of the concept that stands for semantics or meanings, while the *extensional* part of the concept denotes its referent. So the conceptual part of a concept holds a *background enabling proviso* that has lineage to an intrinsic property of the mind. It is well feasible that in the case of using language, some concepts occurred in the brain, i.e., it has some 'internal organ' system. As we know, mental states are in nature representational, and the occurrences of the minds are intrinsically characterizable (narrow content); there, it seems independent of its representational properties. We catch some feelings, images, and sensations in these situations. Hence, it follows that introspective shreds of evidence set up the contents of the mind. Whenever we have anything recognizable as mental representation, we have something recognizable as mental contents, and meaning

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will be relevant (as one might think of meanings as a part of what determines contents), we can think of meanings without language by thinking of non-linguistic mental representations as mental metaphors or images come into consideration. It sounds bizarre to proclaim that thinking is only mental manipulation of representation that hardly bears any referential directness to reality! The extensional part of the concept hinges on the content of the thought that hooks up reality or external objects. Hence cognitive capacities inflict the causal relation in perception, but the agent's conceptual capacity escorts towards the referential world. So, one's conceptual capacity has some 'background statuses' that preserve its liaison with objectivity. Let us, therefore, turn attention to numbers, abstract entities, or empty terms, but it is not that the understanding of the terms can only be possible when we attempt to know how people know the terms. However, we have to see that 'what the term is', a sort of description that somehow intermingles to the external world. Can we value conceptual capacity (knowing that) as an indispensable part of linguistic capacity (knowing how)? One major shift of this discussion is to think about the concept from the periphery of 'knowing that' where the 'background statuses' of conceptual capacity rely on its innate hypothesis, similarly the 'background statuses' of linguistic capacity depend on its socio-linguistic inputs or *knowing how* process.

We still need further analysis, and Chomsky did it by refuting the Rylean understanding of putting the knowledge of the language into the domains of *knowing how* and *knowing that*. Language competence for Chomsky does not fit with any process that may be doable in the sense of generative grammar or experience since there is something similar found in every cognitive realm, even not as a competency (knowing-how) but as a biological nature. Chakraborty writes,

"Linguistic competence is combined with the processing competence and the conceptual competence of thought. The conceptual development is also required for language development. Conceptual development is ontologically prior to language development. Second, this ontological priority escorts to an innate hypothesis that talks about the capability to acquire a competence in our natural language as developed by Chomsky." (Chakraborty, 2020, 67).

A requirement for that can scaffold a satisfactory predicative existence of the concepts in their actual (concrete entities like table, book, etc.) and potential (abstract entities like time, truth etc.) forms. Russell urges the same and finds the meaningful existence of the predicative in its articulated mentioned properties. The connotation part of the verbal format of 'to exist' considers the predicative form only if it has propositional functions. A description imposes on a symbolic form where the expression of the particular symbolic form has to cater to the value of a variable as Quine argued in his celebrated paper 'On What There Is' (Quine, 1961, 1-20). With this weapon, we can wrap out a meaningless metaphysical corollary of non-existence concepts. A traditional probabilistic view of the concept emphasizes two different versions –the *prototype version* (Rosch, 1975) and the *exemplar view* (Smith & Medin, 1981). And that is why the considerable account of the prototype version synchronizes first an abridgment

mental representation of an example, and secondly, it upholds the fundamental characteristics of the concept. Moreover, the exemplar view rejects the account of the summary representation of concepts by putting the jargon of representing examples where we cannot identify concepts as a mental representation of the prototype, but it assists us to remember similar examples that we interacted with earlier. Despite this lucrative presentation, the prototype view or the exemplar view is not beyond any criticism. Jerry Fodor articulates a seminal compositional argument (conceptual combination) against the prototype theory, while Chomsky runs a referential doctrine problem of the exemplar view. I would not like to bring these accounts here. However, an approach of directing the objective exposition of linguistic expressions underlines the observers' conceptual scheme. Here we may curve the reality that seems conserved in concepts through which we conceptualize about categorizing objects.

Connecting knowledge

Experience casts a considerable foundation on our beliefs and knowing procedures. In our practical purports, we try to overlook many possibilities, but in the speculative venture, these possibilities look promising. Blackburn writes, 'Once an epistemology has given us some sense of our footing in experience, it would be nice if there were a unique, authoritative, truth-delivery system enabling us to erect more ambitious generalizations and theories, explanations, and predictions on its basis.' (Blackburn, 2009, 49) A plausible distinction could draw between objects of belief and objects of knowledge, but this sophisticated analysis tends to an interface where knowledge precedes beliefs. To be more précised, if we claim that we know 'X is true' in a particular statement, we have to admit the existence of the particular 'X is true'. Here the objective evidence of the term X presupposes your object of belief as true or false. From Plato onwards, many philosophers advocate that without being attached to the logical indubitability of the truth of a statement, one could not claim for its objective knowledge (an object should cause the subject's belief). It sounds a controversial opinion that later highly criticized by Cartesian, who thinks that facts are reflected in the objects to the subject's conceptual schemata instead of affecting these only through the logical indubitability of sentential truth. The method of causal efficacy is not always applicable for future knowledge and conceptual apparatus.

If we view causal efficacy in a restricted manner, the concept experience and the causal scientific conjecture in Karl Popper's (Popper, 1972) word can lead up more justification in our propositions and beliefs. However, the interesting point is that the method of testing itself is a theory-laden process that needs a reliable instrument to get rid of the conception of falsifiability. The epistemic resemblance to metaphysics pivots an objective exposition of the linguistic expression where the margin of existence cannot go beyond the efficacy of observer's knowledge. I am not provoked to believe in the Rortyan enterprise of analytical past of metaphysical controversies against *realism anti-realism* since I would not like to fall

into the entrap of philosophical revisionist. Here my thoughts are closer to Putnam, who says,

'I hope that philosophical reflection may be of some real cultural value, but I do not think our reaction to the failure of a philosophical project – even a project as central as "metaphysics" – should be abandon ways of talking and thinking which have practical and spiritual weight. I am not, in that sense, a philosophical revisionist. And I think that what is important in philosophy is not just to say, "I reject the realist anti-realist controversy," but to show that (and how) both sides *misrepresent* the lives we live with our concepts.' (Putnam 1998, 389-390).

In these contexts, Wittgenstein depicts thought as a proposition with a sense and a proposition to him is a picture of reality, subsequently, Wittgenstein therapy delves thought in the scopes of sense and reference as prescribed by Frege. But he brings the idea of logical scaffolding to describe the state of affairs in a realistic sense. The abyss of empirical discoverable versus nonsensical metaphysical proposition defies the pattern of epistemic knowledge and metaphysical zenith together. It looks decisive to trace an *ad hoc* criticism of promoting subjective adherence in metaphysics or epistemic indulgences. To revive the path of metaphysics that was almost buried in Kant's philosophy, philosophers in our age want to extend beyond the scopes of metaphysics collaborating with epistemology; an enterprise that advances the periphery of existence relied on the observer's knowledge. Chomsky argues,

The slit experiment shows that at some level, the objective world depends on our actions as observers. At a very different level, Heraclitus shows that whether some configuration is a river depends on our conceptual schemes – in ways far more intricate than he considered. And Nelson Goodman pressed the matter far further in his *Starmaking,* including an interesting colloquy with Israel Scheffler. There's good evidence that we have an innately determined conception of how the world works, probably much like the mechanical philosophy that guided early modern science, undermined by Newton.[3]

This outline may predate Hume and collide with a persisting opinion of objective science to renew an innate infusion for knowing ontological epicycles of conceptual schemata. One could be a good anti-realist about the physical world but serves as a realist about conceptual schemata or in general, the mental states. Whatever may be the straining position, curving the reality of the world or the mind, resulting in the ontological prudence is indeed correlated with language and its essential repercussions. In the latter half of twentieth century, analytical philosophy takes a semantic turn in metaphysics, like entailing the state of mind as the *mental content* or replacing objects as the *state of affairs*, etc. This appeal to semantics underlies anti-realism and its modest stance on realism with a human face by narrowing the spinning mode of objectivity. The tranquility of mind, world, and its juxtaposition foster the startling outset of supervenience in the twentieth-century philosophy, and Martin and Heil remarkably inscribe:

The appeal to supervenience is a game for the ontologically uncurious and uncandid. The most basic domain over which su-

pervenience floats is that of the supposed supervenience of wholes on their parts. The world, considered as a whole, owes its character to the nature and arrangement of elementary items that make it up. This is sometimes put in terms of supervenience: all the facts supervene on the elementary physical facts. (Martin & Heil 1999, 37)

A pleasing account of deflecting ontology in linguistics jots down dispositionality and qualitativity, a diverse mode of description of the properties. The notion of an intrinsic or innate hypothesis is an amalgam of dispositional and qualitative manifestation. It is problematic to turn aside the nature of innate properties and its qualitative manifestation, like in grammar, here to resolve the dispositional and qualitative quality may covary and balancing.

Truly Understood

The question of certainty in the procedure of knowledge is nothing but the primordial part of logic that advocates the truth of the tautological proposition as certain. The thesis holds two diversified constituents:

a) The statements of our beliefs or thoughts are either false or true. This seems a representational account where the truth value of a statement or assertion relies on the true representation of the world against the beliefs or assertions. Here, the reality is comprehensively related to the tripartite structural part of the world, mind, and language.
b) The mind-independent existence of the objective truth is a realistic doctrine of what exists. The fixed totality of objects consists of the configurations of matters that imply something, everything, and nothing.

My point is that presupposing a metaphysical harmony between the mind and the world, Austin, in his notable writing 'Truth' (Austin, 1964), exposes a correspondence relation between the truth values of a sentence with its corresponding referent. It promotes the idea of 'immanent truth', where truth is a part of the total corpus that a subject accepts. An anti-descriptive perspective rules out the theory of reference and its manifest relation to reality that undermined the conceptual schemata of mind and world entanglement. The way to fixing reference through language is nothing but a causal collaboration with the world that secures a causal efficacy between the word and the object.

In *The Bound of Sense* (Strawson, 1966, 15), Peter Strawson tempts to explore a probable non-actual world by reallocating truth-value over the sentences in different semantical molds, while Davidson ceases the prospect of global relativism by charging that a conceptual linkage interplays between the truth and translatability where the principle of translation in our language system surges the truth-value of an intelligible sentence. For Donald Davidson, an uninterpreted reality does not make any sense. Davidson argues, 'In giving up dependence on the concept of an uninterpreted reality, something outside all schemes and science, we do not relinquish the notion of objective truth – quite the contrary...Of course truth of sentences remains relative to language, but that is as ob-

jective as can be.' (Davidson, 1973, 20). A realistic presumption spins when Nagel's denial of anti-realism tends to account for spreading out the world beyond the subjective conceptualization. Many things are there in the world that we are yet to conceive of or structure in our minds. Treating a conceptual scheme as an edge of objectivity seems pretty idealistic. Nagel anticipates Davidson's thought on conceptual relativism as a weaker version of realism. Hence, in the event analysis, a default version of realism adheres to a non-representational world of objectivity where epistemology does not conceptualize the metaphysical reality in a weird sense. A problem arises when we prop up a Berkeleian way out of being conceivable in our mental state as an inseparable criterion to befall in the objective category. Nagel says, 'In other words, I want to resist the natural tendency to identify the idea of the world as it really is with the idea of what can be revealed, at the limit, by an indefinite increase in objectivity of standpoint…That is one way in which objectivity does not correspond to reality: it is not always the best mode of understanding. But human objectivity may fail to exhaust reality for another reason: there may be aspects of reality beyond its reach because they are altogether beyond our capacity to form conceptions of the world.' (Nagel, 1989, 91).

The significance of this thought is hard to overestimate. Let us imagine a logical priority of concept, where to become a concept sounds a theoretical mental representation that is parasitic on the concept's individuation and having the possession of the concept simultaneously. Fodor urges, '…philosophers take a strong line on methodological issue there's almost sure to be a metaphysical subtext.' (Fodor, 1998, 2-3). My understanding articulates this thought in a different direction. What looks interesting here is thinking about a mental particular (a la concept) by having to do with an epistemic ability (*knowing how*). We barely doubt its pragmatic stand and epistemic semblance because it renders the concepts as a mental particular; its methodological possession copes with knowing the particular concept that manifested a logical preference on the ontological disposition. Here, this generalization categorizes an empiricist version of reductionism, which takes a significant role as an ontological entity, for instance, a tiger, and being a concept of tiger plausibly contain an epistemic semblance in metaphysics. The reductionism of concept turns towards the semantic import of epistemic nuance to understand a particulate entity in our language. Empiricists endow causal efficacy on the mental particulars and conjoin it to propositional attitudes by bringing the notion of content I discussed earlier. A journey from ontology towards semantic oscillating on epistemology sets up the metaphysical possibility of knowing a particular concept to integrate semantics with the representation of one's thought. An object or the concept that represents the object to us is epistemically accessible; in short, our experiences are epistemically accessible to the agents. Let's continue to assume, therefore, experience and epistemic accessibility are naturally allies, as John Perry claims,

Having an experience, that is, merely being in a state that has a subjective character, makes the experience epistemically accessible to us. But this is not because it is causally upstream from our sensations or causally downstream from our intentions. (Perry, 2001, 48).

What is the direction in which the activity could be explained? As philosophers consider, experience explicates different types of properties, which help us classify a particular concept and categorize the same with other similar concepts. It is a venture to understand a subjective way of representing concepts, i.e. recognizing the properties of the concept, memorizing the properties of the concept, causal property of the object, effect of the object, etc. A subjective milieu pins down mental representations that articulate their contents from the source of their constituents of thought. The way to confirm an epistemic entry (relies on the psychological aptitude) could shun the antecedent of a physical entity or its phenomenal parts.

Bypassing objective realism and the purview of precursor physicalism incline the knowledge of a particular object in relation to the subjective matter. The subjective matter abides the objects that they are words for. The aspect of type/token relation of a particular concept could publicly share the same concept *type* with several *tokens* in literally. To see this point, we may consider the level of our mental capacities as virtually analogous. But it seems true that some individual differences (conceptual presentation and language use) may delineate in several cases, but there are no known collective differences accessible in our long biological evolution. An external input affects our conceptual system, and the differentiation of our conceptual structures and languages has originated because of the different external inputs accessible in our community and the objective world.

We can generate new concepts like new visual systems (cameras, satellites), calculus systems and computational language, and so on. Wittgensteinian adhere that there is a new part of language compared to a new city. If some people in a group or society intend to construct some new concepts like 'bug', 'android' etc, one point is articulated here that the meaning of their new concepts, which they have promised to use are in no way located in their heads. The meaning of the word that fixes the reference links to the external world and the shared understanding. The meaning of words for the community is interconnected because of the public shareability and its referential directness to reality. Of course, this causal directness is not the last word for the reference fixation of a concept. A normative theory of interpretation sets a conceptual dimension beyond the picture of an innate algorithm. My understanding of this jargon looks closer to Hilary Putnam, who valued entanglement of facts about the reference of our terms with norms of interpretation as an example of the irreducibility and ubiquity of the normative. Remembering the architecture of Wittgenstein, we could turn out positing objects (e.g., 'concepts') that interpret the terms for agents, but conserving that the concepts did not entail further interpretation is nothing but a mistake. To predict whether a concept brings normativity, one needs to know whether it expresses a subjective point of view (qualia of the agent) and the pertinent fact about its subjective points of view in the plural (qualia of other people). A way towards the *subjective principle of belief* stresses the sufficient reasons attained by the believers

in favor of their constructed beliefs. The process of attributing the *subjective principle* to others relies on good reasons for the belief hypothesis. In fact, an assertion is a sort of expression analog based on good reasons. The truth of a particular belief reveals the justified beliefs that correspond to adequate reasoning. Here the reason that one should ponder gives a status on the rationalizing epistemic reason, not misled by any general beliefs whose causes or motives are quite vague to the subject. A critic can argue that there are many unconscious beliefs (depending on lack of reason and truth) in our day-to-day life, and these are not justified purely by any epistemic reasons. A gap that constantly haunted the agent's outlook towards the world and what the world is (ontological existence) can be fulfilled by adequate evidence and conclusive reasons.

In conclusion, the objects-as-interpreted are not abrupt materialization from nowhere. A constructivist rejoinder accounts for a considerable resilience lineage, a type of materialization that cannot set aside imputation scope where objects are represented through the conceptual schemata. Roughly, what we find out is not an intensification of monotonous interpretation-independent objectivity that relies on the interpretative framework of the conceptual schemata. In the process of believing or interpreting a particular concept or the object's properties, no realistic explanation diminishes this process considering it as merely a projection of the subjective mind (knower's projection). Any ontological properties that a subject or knower conceives or interprets engrossed a justifiable epistemic temperament - an immediate retort of this semblance between metaphysics and epistemology which drifts contaminated conceptual objectivity.

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Notes

[1] The world is the fixed totality of objects given independently of the human mind. Here the truth only deploys a correspondence relation between the sentence and objects of the world.

[2] The realist world is a conception of a ready-made world that sounds like a realist myth. The reality of the world is relative to our conceptual scheme, where the concepts are the particular way objects are represented in the human mind. The world is considered a conceptualized world, and objects are nothing but *contaminated* by concepts. For internal-realist like Putnam, the concepts are human creations, so it captives human experience, and internal realism ponders that concepts become objectively true in the world and so should be taken as the objective facet of the subject's conceptual schemata. (Putnam, 2015, 83)

[3] I am highly grateful to Noam Chomsky for bringing this thought-provoking idea to my mind.

Of agents and patients: mapping human agency via philosophical ontology

Pablo Garcés-Velástegui

Abstract: Human action seems to be an essentially contested issue. Questions regarding what it is and how to account for it lie at the heart of it. A great number of definitions in a wide array of disciplines attest to the complexity of a fundamental notion for the social sciences. In order to contribute to bring some order to this scenario, this article presents an analysis of human agency from a philosophical ontology, which is logically and necessarily prior to the conventional concept of ontology, best described as scientific. By so doing it, challenges the primacy of ontology over epistemology. Philosophical ontology refers to ways to connect to the world and two are identified and associated to the well-known *erklären* or explaining and *verstehen* or understanding. Agency, seen from these perspectives, takes shape in two extremes: on the one hand, one too robust, and, on the other, one that becomes virtually non-existent, respectively. This analysis not only further supports the but also points to important empirical implications for the study of the human action.

Keywords: agency; ontology; philosophy of science; explaining; understanding.

Introduction

Human agency is an essentially contested notion. Depending on what is considered by agency, the scope and limits of human action are established. There are several approaches to this topic, with important implications for its empirical study from a wide range of disciplines (see e.g. in sociology Blumer 2004, 1969; Archer 2003; Joas 1996; Parsons 1978; in psychology Karwowski and Kaufman 2017; Toumela 1977; in philosophy Brand and Walton 1976; Mead 1972; Langford 1971; in economics Alkire 2009; 2007; Sen 1985; in law Carle 2005). Therefore, instead of trying to provide an additional definition, it seems fruitful to explore the foundations of the debate so as to give order to this state of the question. For this undertaking, a philosophical approach seems useful, to account for the doctrines on which the main ideas of human agency are built. This has intrinsic and instrumental importance.

The intrinsic importance of this analysis lies in the fact that providing greater clarity to the bases on which approaches to the study of human action are built has value in itself. Certainly, the investigation of human being usually assumes (often tacitly) a position with respect to the philosophical foundations of his action. However, when talking about humanity and its agency, it is virtually inevitable that questions such as: what is human action and how do we recognize it when we see it? Or do we even need to see it to know it? How do we account for it, either way? What is the relationship between individuals, and between the individual and society? These questions and many others are the subject of much debate and therefore cannot be taken for granted. Hence, scrutinizing the ideas undergirding different treatments given to agency can elucidate some answers.

Additionally, this discussion is relevant for instrumental reasons as they affect the generation of knowledge. Different notions of human agency, the self, and society subscribe to different philosophical assumptions. The latter become instrumentally relevant to empirical research because they indicate, at least to some degree, what is in the world (questions about being and what exists), how that which exists can be known (questions about how to account for what exists) or even, and presumably more fundamental than the previous ones, how the human being connects to the world. Therefore, clarity on this aspect and an awareness of its implications can contribute to greater coherence in the development of empirical research and the selection of strategies and methods that can contribute to these objectives (Humphreys 2013; Jackson 2011).

In this sense, analyzing human agency suggests a discussion from the philosophy of social sciences. Conventionally, the starting point (assumed as such since there is no prior or prior position) would be ontology, that is, studying what human action is. The traditional structure establishes this as the most basic level and proposes the order to be followed, namely: ontology – epistemology – methods (Sumner and Tribe 2008). However, this would be the starting point only if the approach is *scientific* ontology, which deals with 'what exists' (Bhaskar 1975). However, there is an alternative that is logically prior and therefore also necessarily prior and refers to 'the connection that human beings have with the world'. That is, it is a *philosophical* ontology (Bhaskar 1975) and is the perspective adopted here.

To elaborate that argument, this article is structured in four sections. The first makes a case for a philosophical ontology. The second builds on the previous one and proposes, as a heuristic tool, *erkären* and *verstehen*, explain and understand, respectively, as approaches that include the main ways of 'engaging' with the world in the social sciences. The third section studies human agency from

each of these approaches. The penultimate section suggests some implications of this analysis both in the abstract as well as for empirical research. The last section concludes.

The strategy: philosophical ontology

This article deals with the human beings and their action. Therefore, the argument to be elaborated favors an ontological approach. However, it is necessary to make a precision with respect to which ontology is used. This article proposes the use of a *philosophical* ontology instead of a *scientific* one. The difference is relevant. Scientific ontology refers to the traditional study of what is or exists in the world (Bhaskar 1975). That is to say, it refers to what can be considered as an inventory of things, objects, processes, facts or factors of whose existence a particular study already has evidence or at least has the expectation that they exist. For its part, philosophical ontology denotes "[…] the conceptual and philosophical basis on which claims about the world are formulated in the first place: ontology as our "hook-up" to the world, so to speak, concerned with how we as researchers are able to produce knowledge in the first place" (Jackson, 2011: 28). In other words, it refers to the connection we have with the world.

This strategy implies questioning the dominant approach, in relation to the structure of scientific research. The convention makes a strict separation between (scientific) ontology, epistemology and methodology, establishing not only a list or structure of a descriptive nature but also an order or ranking of a normative nature. This structure is probably the best known and most popular in research design discussions (see Sumner and Tribe, 2008; Moses and Knutsen, 2012). However, this proposition does not discuss the normativity implicit in it, namely, the primacy of (scientific) ontology over the other two components. In this way, ontological questions (about what is and what exists) are prioritized over epistemological questions (about knowing and how statements about the world can be made) and above aspects related to methods (the techniques used to generate that knowledge about the world and the things that exist in it) (Jackson 2011). Consequently, the conventional approach makes research and its design dependent on the world, which is tantamount to asserting that "[…] it is the nature of objects that determines their cognitive possibilities for us" (Bhaskar, 1998: 25).

This position, perhaps due to its popularity, seems to make sense initially. However, at a second glance, it can be recognized that putting ontology first suffers from the serious problem of assuming what exists, i.e. assuming what constitutes the world. This is problematic because if this is the starting point, then questions regarding ontological claims are implausible (Jackson, 2011). Examples in this sense can be the epistemological question about the validity of the claim or the method question about the technique that should be used to analyze and evaluate that claim (Chernoff in Jackson, 2011). For this reason, scientific ontology is logically and necessarily subordinate to philosophical ontology, which is concerned with our connection with the world. After all statements about what

exists acquire greater meaning once the bases on which they are made have been established (Patomäki and Wight, 2000). The corollary of this discussion, perhaps already evident, is that the primacy of ontology derives from the notion of ontology used, that is, a scientific ontology. By questioning this type of ontology and its place in research, the normative ontology-epistemology-methodology structure and order is also questioned.

Consequently, an alternative approach, which favors the discussion from the philosophical ontology, is required. For the purposes of this article, a well-known differentiation on how it is possible to generate knowledge of the world is adopted, namely *erklären* and *verstehen*. That is, explaining and understanding, respectively. However, even in this respect, this article also distances itself from the convention. Presumably, this approach is known because the literature, addressing the production of knowledge in terms of the philosophy of science, uses this distinction to support the division between quantitative and qualitative research and methods. Although the influence of the philosophical foundations in guiding the conduct of empirical research is accepted here, it is also recognized that it does not determine them since they are the product of these foundations but also of conventions (Humphreys, 2013). Consequently, for the elaboration of this argument, a critical position is accepted with respect to a methodological determinism, extending it to the ways in which the knower connects to the world. That is, the present discussion has implications regarding the form that knowledge produced within each perspective takes, however, this does not extend deterministically to the methods and strategies employed in that production.

Two philosophical ontologies: explaining and understanding

Such an undertaking requires criteria that allows comparison with some degree of exhaustiveness as well as parsimony. Comparability is necessary because it is only way in which different approaches, schools and paradigms can be assessed against each other and their scope identified. Some degree of exhaustiveness is advised because, for the insights gained to be useful, at least the major traditions ought to be covered and accommodated in the study. Given the growing diversity of alternatives, full exhaustiveness seems neither required nor plausible. Parsimony is also warranted to facilitate the comparison and bring a modicum of order to the scrutiny. There is, nonetheless, no consensus regarding a framework that can enable that analysis (Jackson 2011).

Hollis' (1994) *The Philosophy of Social Science* is most informative as a starting point. The use of his work is, nonetheless, partial and restricted to the intuitions that are initially established in this important contribution to the literature because they suggest a close approach to a philosophical ontology. Certainly, within the discussion of the philosophy of science there are variants that fit within these two broad approaches, that are addressed below, and many differ in some aspects from the description provided. This is a sign of ongoing debate on this issue and evidence that there is no consensus. Depending on the

discipline, the approaches that can be placed within *erklären* have been called positivism, post-positivism, or naturalism (see e.g. Moses and Knutsen, 2012; della Porta and Keating, 2008), each with its own nuances but all with more common denominators than differentiators. Likewise, those that can be located within *verstehen* have been called constructivism, interpretivism, humanism (see Moses and Knutsen, 2012; della Porta and Keating, 2008). Therefore, the proposal advanced here is best understood as one of 'ideal types' in the Weberian sense. That is, the elements put forward do not strictly exist in reality nor do they reflect the content of history (Käsler, 1998). Consequently, they constitute an instrument to provide an order to the treatments of the agency on clear philosophical foundations and point to some important implications.

At the same time, this text does not attempt to establish a typology. Therefore, it is convenient to consider them as hypothetical constructions and heuristic tools that facilitate the analysis of perspectives that are verified in reality and are found, albeit loosely and partially, within them. That is, despite the differences that some variants may exhibit with respect to the description provided by *erklären* and *verstehen*, presumably what they share or have in common with each of them tips the balance more than what differentiates them. In this sense, the proposal established in these pages does not pretend to be exhaustive of all the ways of studying human agency. However, being a heuristic tool, it does not need to. For the purposes of the argument presented here, it is sufficient to develop an analysis that covers the main approaches and collects their main characteristics in such a way that a comparison can be established systematically and logically. Addressing the treatment given to human beings in the social sciences from the philosophical ontology, in terms of *erklären* and *verstehen*, fulfills this objective.

Erklären or explaining

This position can be considered as the heir to the Enlightenment, modern philosophy and the natural and exact sciences. *Erklären* means 'to explain' with the notion of making sense of a phenomenon in terms of causes and consequences (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). This makes intuitive sense. When a person explains something, they are usually trying to relate a series of events in a causal way. And this is precisely what is meant by the term. The interest in explaining, making sense of the phenomena that the human being perceives in the world, seems to be part of human nature. Indeed, Aristotle famously posited that knowing is inherent to human beings. From the generation of myths in ancestral cultures to some ideas defended by fairly well-established religions throughout history, there is no short supply of examples illustrating this.

However, the defining moment of explaining, which ascribed it its scientific character, can be located in the contributions from Galileo to Newton. It is at this time that the (natural) sciences gained currency over religion and myth when it came to accounting for natural phenomena, by explaining them. The aim of these sciences was to find the truth, in the form of the 'laws that govern the universe' (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). These were understood as absolute, universal, immutable patterns that can be dis-

covered exactly (Garcés, 2016a). Therefore, causality was the main focus of attention. Identifying these causal relationships would make it possible to explain what was perceived but, being laws, it would also make it easier to predict and eventually control natural phenomena (Hollis and Smith, 1992). Reaching this goal was equivalent to discovering the truth, lifting the veil from nature and perceiving it as it is.

That project was supported philosophically by Descartes and Hume. Therefore, this position maintains the Cartesian notion of the separation between mind and matter, seeing them as two different substances (Descartes, 1953). Thus, for Cartesian rationalism, the mind is fundamentally different from the material world. So, it also preserves the idea that knowledge is the result of the search, from the mind, for absolute certainty about the world. This persecution led to the process of absolute doubt and eventually concluded in the Cartesian dictum *cogito ergo sum*.

Additionally, Hume's contribution is significant. The recognition that the senses collect important and necessary information from the world characterizes his empiricism (Garcés, 2016a). By combining with the natural and exact sciences, this project acquired important resources and tools that privilege observation and accuracy. The observation was necessary because phenomena must be perceived in some way and the explanations about them had to be demonstrated in a way that is evident. Accuracy is linked to the first, since the adequate study of a phenomenon and its causes was based on precise measurement and the complex calculations that it facilitates. In this way, the study of the sequential and conjunctural relationship between events was influenced by Hume (Garcés, 2016a; Dicker, 1998; Rosenberg, 1993), who preferred such a description instead of 'causality', which he considered unobservable and therefore outside the purview of science.

In this sense, the separation of mind and matter leads to the position that there is an external world, one that is independent of the mind. Additionally, it posits that the world can be known as it is. Thus, this entails the recovery of the relevance of human experience to know the world (Moses and Knutsen, 2012; Jackson, 2011).

The implications of this are evident nowadays. A clear illustration is the search for objectivity as a characteristic of scientific rigor (della Porta and Keating, 2008). It is only possible to achieve objectivity if it is possible to know the external world as it is, since objectivity is a characteristic of the world. Put differently, objectivity can be a goal only if it is assumed that it is independent of the subjects or of those who observe it and that they have direct access to it.

As a consequence of the above, only those statements that reflected (quite literally, like a mirror) that mind-independent world could be considered as (scientific) knowledge, since only they constituted 'the truth'. Evidence of this is the suggestion, mainly dominant at the beginning of the 20th century within the positivist project of the Vienna Circle (Ayer, 1959), that scientific statements must observe the form of general laws or covering laws (Uebel, 2014; Gorksy, 2013). Imitating the natural sciences, this implied that in the social sciences the goal is also to discover the universal laws that govern the social

world, which maintains the primacy of causality (Comte, 2009), i.e. explaining the social world. In this sense, when studying society in general and the human being in particular, the project of pursuing the truth and certainty as external absolutes and independent of the human mind is preserved.

That being so, the generation of knowledge favors, but is not exclusively restricted to, procedures related to positivism. Examples of this are: hypothesis testing, and falsification. Hypothesizing implies the formulation of affirmations whose validity is uncertain. This is why conventionally these are formulated as conditionals. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the validity of these claims. The test that hypotheses must pass is that of empirical evidence. Furthermore, to verify the scope of the validity of proposals that pass the test, the established strategy is their falsification (Garcés, 2016a). This means subjecting them to increasingly stringent tests and, in particular, generating the conditions under which precisely those claims would not be verified (Popper, 2002a). Those that pass more tests are considered to have greater empirical content (Popper, 2002b). From the positivist perspective, this is how knowledge grows. It is a process of marginal increments. Again, the standard of these tests is the evidence, that is, that which is observable. After all, "testing is what matters" (Hollis and Smith, 1992: 53). Thus, hypothesis testing only makes sense under the premise that there is an external world, which is real and objective, independent of the human mind, because only if this is assumed is there a parameter against which an assertion can be confirmed (Jackson 2011) and verified if it reflects (like a mirror) that world.

Probably the best illustration of this position is provided by Milton Friedman (1953) in his *The Methodology of Positive Economics*. In this text, a defense of positivism and its dominance in the discipline of economics is established. He asserts that the focus must be on objectivity, in his words: "[p]ositive economics is in principle independent of any particular ethical position or normative judgements" (Friedman, 1953: 4). He argues that the main objective of a positivistic science is the generation of theories or hypotheses that provide exact predictions about phenomena not yet observed. In this sense, these must be judged in terms of their predictive power with respect to the things they try to explain. The final test is dictated by human experience, that is, observation. If those theories and hypotheses are not contradicted by empirical evidence, they are considered valid. This validity increases to the extent that they overcome successive challenges or occasions of contradiction and the more demanding those occasions have been. If, in this process, they are contradicted by the evidence, then they are rejected.

This approach has proven to be very influential, so much so that it is considered orthodoxy in the social sciences (Gorsky, 2013). Particularly, some branches of economics fully subscribe to the principles of positivism and, therefore, also to its methods and procedures. Caldwell (1994: 4) put it best stating: "[f]ew economists keep up with developments in the philosophy of science, and as such it is understandable that many may still labor under the illusion that economics is, or can be, a positivist discipline". In practice, and derived from the discussion carried out so far, this tradition can be summarized in the following terms: i) the belief in the unity of science, that is, that there is no fundamental difference between natural and social sciences; ii) a strict adherence to the differentiation and separation of facts and values, which implies that the objective world (devoid of value judgments) can be known as it is; iii) the belief that in the social world, as in the natural world, there are quasi-laws or regularities that justify the use of the designs, strategies and methods of the natural sciences in the social sciences; and, iv) adequate research is only that based on empirical validation and falsification (Smith, 1996).

Verstehen or understanding

Diametrically opposed to *erklären* or explaining is *verstehen* or understanding. Contrary to the premises established by the former, the latter rejects the difference and separation between substances as they are not believed to be fundamentally different. In fact, from this perspective, the mind and the material are interrelated. Because the mind is part of the world, the latter contains it and cannot be separated from it. That is, the mind is a constitutive part of the world (della Porta and Keating, 2008). Thus, the knower and the known are interrelated to such an extent that the observer is part of the observed. In other words, the knower constitutes the world in the act of knowing it. Therefore, the mind is not an entity separate from the world, as something that can hypothetically be isolated from its environment. On the contrary, the mind exists in the world and therefore is part of it. This being the case, this position rejects the idea that the world exists independently of the mind and that it is possible to generate objective, certain or true (absolute, universal, immutable) knowledge. Such an assumption, from this perspective, makes no sense because the activities carried out to study the world turn out to make up the world themselves, since they are part of it and, when carried out, they become a constitutive element and produce it. The conclusion of this proposal is that the pursuit of absolute certainty or 'the truth' is useless, it is an unrealistic undertaking that causes the so-called 'Cartesian anxiety' (Bernstein, 1983), as it is a futile endeavor. There is no such thing as a neutral position or a 'point from nowhere' from which the world can be known as it is, because whenever the world is known this is done by the human mind, and this necessarily implies a biased or prejudiced position. That is, the mind is the product of human experience and is made up of everything that allows us to make the world intelligible (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). Therefore, what the world is, or rather what it means, depends on the mind knowing it.

In this sense, explaining and understanding have different notions of 'the world'. While *erklären* assumes that it is an inventory of things, *verstehen* regars the world as made up of a series of facts, that is, interpretations of what is perceived by human experience. Thus, the object of scientific study also changes. That which is researched ceases to be only a meaningless entity that the researcher perceives with his senses (and other instruments used to enhance them) and that can be accurately observed and

measured. Instead, it is viewed as always permeated and filled with both intentional and conceptual content (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). While the intentional content refers to the interests and preferences of the researcher, the conceptual denotes his theories and even his creativity. Thus, the 'world' is a component of people's practical experience and, therefore, this experience (scientific or not) constantly constructs the world. Consequently, trying to match mental representations and statements with the world is meaningless (Jackson, 2008), since statements can only reflect those representations, not the world as it is, for there is no direct (mindless) access to it.

This change in the conception of the objects of study is also attested in how they are approached. If the idea of an external world full of things that can be known in themselves, i.e. as they are, is given up, how knowledge is produced also changes. If the world and the knower are one and if the latter and its activities are constitutive of the former, then knowledge is only produced through those activities. Because knowledge can only be the product of the practical activity of people in the world, the objects of study are those activities themselves (Jackson, 2008). That is, by recognizing the unity of the world and the person, the only thing that can be studied are the perceptions that people generate of the world. This study also implies giving up the exclusive study of what is considered, from the *erklären* perspective, as objective and observable. Investigating people's interpretations and their practices implies studying their subjectivities (Moses and Knutsen, 2012). These, in turn, are not necessarily amenable to exact measurement. In this way, valid knowledge of facts that are, in principle, unobservable, undetectable or imperceptible can be generated.

Hence, knowledge produced from this perspective requires the researcher's awareness of, at least, the following aspects: his research practices, the broader organizational and social context in which his scientific activity is located and the effects that the former can have on the latter (Jackson 2011). This implies recognizing that knowledge is inseparable from the social location and practices of the researcher. However, and at the same time, knowledge cannot be reduced to them. Since there is no external world that imposes limits on knowledge, it does not seek to represent or reflect (like a mirror) 'reality'. Instead, statements are value-laden since they inevitably contain the researcher's social position (della Porta and Keating, 2008). The latter, in turn, is composed of various logics of social differentiation, for example, ethnicity, age, gender, class, among others. In this sense, knowledge is always 'prejudiced'. Accordingly, the product of research must show awareness of these biases and prejudices, not the least because knowledge can contribute to strengthening or weakening them (Jackson 2011). In other words, knowledge is reflexive.

This position posits that knowledge about organizations and social structures does not begin with the world, but with the person himself (Jackson, 2011). Thus, the systematic analysis of their role as producers of knowledge and the location of their work in relation to the broader social context will produce valid knowledge about: i) the things that are part of the human experience; and, ii) the social structures and contexts that produce

these experiences. In light of this, the rigorous and explicit, although also always partial and limited, self-awareness and reflection distinguished this perspective.

If *erklären* is the orthodoxy in the social sciences, *verstehen* is the main heterodoxy (Gorsky, 2013). As in the previous case, there are many traditions and variants that can fit under this label, but what they all have in common is the rejection of the idea of the unity of science, which suggests that the social sciences have to follow the model proposed by the natural sciences. Instead, they are seen as radically different. While the natural world can be known in terms of the laws that govern it, the social world is studied in terms of meanings and interpretations, which are what rules society (Moses and Knutsen, 2012; della Porta and Keating, 2008). Thus, while the natural sciences are interested in explaining causes and consequences, favoring the study of causality, the social sciences are concerned with making the social world understandable through hermeneutical means (Gorsky, 2013). In other words, the search for truth is abandoned and replaced by the reconstruction of meanings, intentions, and motivations. As such, language is the focus of analysis since all perceptions and meanings depend on it. Simply put, the world is what language determines it to be.

By way of illustration, it should be noted that there are versions within this approach that take the argument even further. They not only affirm that social reality is linguistically constituted but, and this is essential, they locate the natural sciences within social life as well. In this way, both the natural and the social sciences are governed by 'discourses' and 'powers' (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). According to these variants, we are all so deeply involved in our own 'histories' and 'language games' that there is no neutral, objective or real position from which they can be judged. For this reason, these variants subscribe to an epistemic relativism (Gorsky, 2013). According to them, language is the axis around which everything turns. The analysis focuses on meanings, intentions, and motivations. Furthermore, regarding the search for certainty and truth, for these perspectives, representational theories are not only wrong but dangerous (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). These are wrong because the human being lacks direct access to a world independent of the mind. The relationship between the mind and the world is mediated by language and, therefore, the play and handling of language creates what is adopted as truth. Likewise, these theories are dangerous because they reflect the point of view of an observer who is necessarily prejudiced and, if adopted as true, being loaded with values (specific to that observer's position) reflect his interests and preferences, probably in detriment of others.

Human agency: explained and understood

On the basis of the previous discussion, which has outlined the main characteristics of explaining and understanding, as distinguishable approaches from a philosophical ontology, this section develops the implications of each one for the study of human agency. In this discussion, in addition to addressing the treatment that the human being receives in each scheme, what this means for

its relationship with society is also elaborated. Finally, in both cases, an attempt is made to suggest some of the main implications for the empirical investigation of human agency.

Explaining agency

Erklären has a robust proposition regarding human agency. In it, human beings are the center of everything. Following the separation of substances elaborated in the previous section, the mind makes the human being fundamentally different from the world, from everything that surrounds him and, therefore, has a privileged place (Archer, 2003). Human beings are not only separate from nature but are above of it. From this perspective, there is a coexistence of entities. On one side is the world, which is external to the mind and therefore objective, and on the other side is the human being, with consciousness. Reality is presented to the human being through consciousness, which reflects that reality or world. The implications are important. Human beings are not only outside the world, but being outside of reality, he is also outside of history. As such, the context (social or environmental) and even relationships with other human beings do not affect the self. Thus, the self follows the tradition of modernity and "[…] is not contingently made but is universally given" (Archer, 2003: 23).

Additionally, according to this position, human beings have a common characteristic that defines and distinguishes them, and that is treated as something given, namely, reason. This is the contribution of the Enlightenment and its idea of (European) reason as a common property of human beings, and its emancipator (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). Being a given trait, according to the tradition of modern philosophy, this quality is immutable and universal. There is only one 'reason' (or rationality) in the world and it is the same regardless of place, time or any other factor. That being so, it cannot be influenced in any way by the context in which people live, the social structure in which they find themselves or even the physical conditions of the environment that surrounds them. In other words, that external and mind-independent world cannot exert any influence on human beings.

This is the well-known image of the rational human being or *homo economicus*. Therefore, human beings are one and characterized by their logocentrism. That is to say, their very being has got rid of everything that is contingent. This common characteristic differentiates human beings from their environment and justifies treating and studying them as fundamentally homogeneous, independent of the world, whether the latter refers to geographical, historical or social aspects.

This position has important implications for the relationship between the individual and society. According to it, the individual is prior to society. Society it is made up of individuals and, thus, is nothing more than an aggregate of individuals (Bhargava, 1992). The individual is the primary unit and society is just an epiphenomenon of it. That is, society shares and reflects the characteristics of the individual, mainly their rationality. Consequently, this position is illustrated by methodological individualism, which suggests that society can be fully explained through the sum of the individuals that compose it (Robeyns, 2005; 2008). As a result, individuals are the highest constituents of social reality and, therefore, society can be reduced to its individuals.

Agency is robust and it can be explained objectively. Human beings, due to their rationality, have the privilege of enjoying considerable freedom. Not only that, but they also have extensive control over themselves and their environment to carry out their decisions, pursuing their interests and preferences, usually related to maximizing their utility. Although there are different views regarding what is considered complete rationality, the literature has seemingly found some agreement on at least three characteristics, namely, that i) preferences are well defined and decisions or choices are made based on to maximize them; ii) preferences accurately reflect the costs and benefits of all available options; and, iii) in case of uncertainty, people have well-constructed beliefs about how that uncertainty will be resolved (Camerer et al., 2003). Consequently, from this perspective, it makes sense to study agents based solely on choices. This entails the use of theories related to the idea of 'revealed preferences' since, based on the aforementioned assumptions, choice provides all the necessary and relevant information to know the agent. These properties, in light of the anthropocentrism (in the most literal sense) mentioned above, suggest that there is an instrumental relationship between the human being and the world or nature. Put succinctly, the world is at the service of the human being (Archer, 2003). Therefore, the human being is an agent in every sense of the word[2].

Understanding agency

Verstehen, as is to be expected in light of the previous discussion, has a notion of agency that is antipodal to the previous position. Since post-modern and post-structuralist traditions fall under this umbrella, this position rejects the inheritance of European modernity, which seems to reduce human beings to reason and rationality. Consequently, *verstehen* emphasizes that both are human creations and constructions, not a given. Additionally, from this position, knowledge is influenced by the characteristics and context of human beings. Therefore, the ideas of reason and rationality are influenced by the particular circumstances surrounding those who created them. Derrida (1971: 213) exemplifies it forcefully when he states that "the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own logos, that is, the mythos of his idiom, for the universal form of that he must still wish to call Reason". In other words, the idea of a single universal reason as the common denominator of humanity is given up. As such, the very idea that there is a single characteristic capable of completely defining the human being, independent of other circumstances, is abandoned.

Furthermore, some traditions reject reason as the source of emancipation. On the contrary, reason is seen as a form of social control. It is argued that there is a relationship between power and notions of truth and knowledge (Peet and Hartwick, 2009). In this threefold dynamic, reason and science exercise control over virtually every aspect of life, thereby saturating all of human ex-

perience. Due to this, human beings increasingly question their behavior, feelings, choices and even preferences, when they do not fit with the established logic. This is attested both in the public sphere and in the private space, also reaching the intimacy of the self. Therefore, reason does not liberate humanity but discipline and structure it according to the established format of rationality. Thus, this position seeks to highlight the subjugated and oppressed aspects of human beings that, by privileging reason and rationality, have been sacrificed. Among these aspects can be found emotion and pleasure. Thus, the idea of a unified rational individual is abandoned and, in its place, emerges a "socially and linguistically decentered and fragmented subject with multiple identities" (Peet and Hartwick, 2009: 201).

Consequently, language acquires prominence. This position turns the previous anthropocentrism on its head and instead of establishing that meanings are generated by human beings, it posits that the former create the latter. The human being becomes a linguistic vehicle. This highlights the importance of language. Linguistic systems determine the subject, what they perceive or not (and what exists for them or not). Hence, they make the world intelligible to the individual. As such, they dictate the world of possibilities for people, what they can be and what they can do, that is, their agency. According to this position, "nothing in the mind that was not first in the conversation" (Harré, 1983: 116).

The implications for the individual's relationship with society are far-reaching. Since human beings are a creation of meanings, the human being is what the society in which they live, dictates through language. Consequently, human beings has limited agency, determined by language, and becomes a patient rather than an agent. The centrality of language hides the individual in society (Archer, 2003). Indeed, the perception of individuality or of the self, that the individual may have, is related to the linguistic management of the first person (of the 'I'). In the extreme, this position is exemplified by methodological holism, which proposes that this patient is fully explained by society. This is the highest constituent of social reality, because it constructs language, and therefore individuals can be reduced to society.

Implications for the conduct of inquiry

The proposal put forward here facilitates a critique of one of the best-established notions in social research, what can be called the *trias academica*: ontology, epistemology, and methods. An analysis from the traditional perspective, as argued above, by proposing a structure that subordinates epistemology to (scientific) ontology, presents limitations that prevent an adequate inference of the scope of the distinction between modern and postmodern thought and, eventually, also of its implications for empirical studies. Perhaps the most relevant result, and probably the least conspicuous, is to perpetuate the idea of the need for that structure. By assuming this structure as the basis of the investigation of the social world, a critique of that structure itself is prevented. However, as can perhaps be inferred from the argument presented in this article, this challenge is useful.

Indeed, if for *verstehen*, which finds great coincidence with the postmodern tradition[3], there is no separation between the mind and the world or there is no such dualism, then epistemology, at least conceived in modern terms, it is unnecessary. By the same token, it can be associated with poststructuralism[4]. Epistemology, for *erklären*, is in charge of studying how what exists can be known (once what exists is established, which is the field of scientific ontology). Within that proposal, what exists is separated from the mind. Therefore, the task entrusted to epistemology is to establish the bridge between the mind and the world (Taylor, 1995). However, if one abandons the assumption that the mind and the world are two distinct substances, and instead assumes that the mind is a constitutive part of the world, as understanding or *verstehen* does, then the project of epistemology, conventionally conceived, loses meaning. The result of this is that it also makes no sense to uncritically assume the ontology-epistemology-methods structure as the design in terms of the philosophy of science on which all social research must be built. In this sense, taking a step further back and approaching the study of the social from ontological philosophy, as has been done in this case when analyzing human agency, seems more promising.

Furthermore, but related to the above, the empirical study of society makes assumptions about the nature of human beings, about their agency. Different designs, strategies, instruments and techniques are more or less suitable for this study depending on the assumptions made. Although a discussion of methods is beyond the scope of this article, perhaps it is enough to mention that different methods facilitate the investigation of the social world within the positions generated by different philosophical ontologies. This implies that a method or technique can potentially be useful both to explain and to understand, depending on its application (Humphreys 2013). This certainly goes beyond the questionable division of quantitative and qualitative methods and their strict and exclusive link with each one (explaining and understanding, respectively, and by inference from what was discussed above, also with modernity and postmodernity). Different methods, to different extents and even in different combinations, can be used in relation to each position, according to the assumptions made. Interesting efforts in this regard are certainly mix-methods but beyond them there are also multi-method approaches such as qualitative comparative analysis, which poses a challenge to the quantitative-qualitative divide (Ragin 2008; 2000), and by so doing it also seems to challenge the *verstehen-erklären* framework (see e.g. Garcés 2016b, and for implications in policy analysis see e.g. Garcés 2019; Garcés-Velástegui 2022c). This stresses the fact that the positions elaborated above are ideal types and that rather than seeing them as black-and-white, it seems useful to recognize the gray area between them (see Figure 1). This entails a promising avenue for future research.

Hence, it should be emphasized that explaining and understanding, as proposed here, constitute a heuristic of ideal types that describe diametrically opposed positions, not necessarily existing in reality. That is to say, they are not unique positions or positions of 'all or nothing', where if an investigation is not fully within one, it is necessarily

fully in the other. Rather, this implies that there are other positions along a continuous spectrum where the approaches described above are just the extremes. Therefore, the form that empirical studies take and the methods that are used to do so will vary according to where the assumptions they make about human agency place them on that spectrum.

Conclusion

To discuss human agency entails a description of human beings. At first, this seems to suggest a fundamental discussion of an ontological nature, that is, of what is, of what exists. Although this article agrees with that intuition, it also distances itself from the convention and proposes to go one step further back than what is usually considered as the initial step in the philosophy of science. Traditionally, the research design scheme establishes as the chronological and logical structure: ontology-epistemology-methodology, where ontology, understood as *scientific* ontology, has primacy over the other elements. Against this scheme, this article has argued that it is more fruitful to start with a *philosophical* ontology. While scientific ontology deals with what is and what exists, philosophical ontology focuses on the connection or 'hook up' human beings have with the world. Therefore, this is logically and necessarily prior to establishing what exists. Consequently, it constitutes a more useful starting point for a philosophical discussion of the study of human beings and their action.

For an analysis in this sense, two broad schemes have been considered that account for that connection with the world, namely, *erklären* or explaining and *verstehen* or understanding. Explaining represents the heritage of the tradition of modernity and the success of the natural sciences. Therefore, at the extreme, his project entails the pursuit of knowledge as absolute certainty and truth as universal and immutable. More mainstream versions have settled for the search of regularities, building over the same foundations. They all seem to assume the separation of the mind and the world, considering the latter as external and independent of the former. Thus, the world is objective and since it can be studied as it is, objectivity is possible. The product of this project is to lift the veil of the world and identify the universal laws that govern it. For this, the center of the study is the relationships of causes and consequences. Understanding, on the other hand, implies a diametrically opposed position. According to this perspective, the world and the mind are one. So, human activity is constitutive of the world. Because there is no world independent of the mind, the object of study is that activity itself. Therefore, the focus is on studying people's meanings and interpretations, placing the focus language for that undertaking. To achieve this goal, the perceptions of human beings are analyzed, that is, their subjectivity.

The application of explaining and understanding to the study of human agency has generated important findings. When seeking to explain the human being, the intention is to study causal relationships associated with it. The result is an anthropocentric scheme in the most literal sense.

Here, human beings are the center of the analysis and are capable of effectively pursuing (causing) their goals. This is achieved thanks to a universal quality that homogenizes all humanity: reason and rationality. The human being, then, is an agent in the full sense of the word. Understanding human beings, on the other hand, implies recognizing the complexity and heterogeneity of individuals. This requires studying the facts through the meanings they have for them. Therefore, here language is at the center of the analysis. Since language is a social construction, it is society that makes the individual and the latter is restricted to what the former dictates. Therefore, human beings are rather a patient, since they have a limited agency.

While the jury is still out regarding an adequate philosophical ontology scheme to be applied (see e.g. Moses and Knutsen 2012; Jackson 2011; Hollis 1994), there are growing efforts to engage with this type of discussion and even expand the possible philosophies beyond explaining and understanding, to the inclusion of critical realism (see e.g. Smith and Seward 2009) and pragmatism (see e.g. Garcés 2020b) applied to different fields. These positions (and traditions) have implications for empirical research of the social world. Students in the social sciences will do well to ensure that their research design, strategies, and even the instruments employed are consistent with the assumptions about agency that they make. In this sense, it is advisable to know the extremes addressed in this article and properly place each specific study on that spectrum.

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Notes

1 This point denotes the milestone from which returning to previous states is virtually impossible.

2 Of late, there have been relevant development in multiple fields that challenge this tradition and seem to move towards more moderate positions. Even within the quintessentially positivist discipline of economics, there are increasing critiques about the validity of the *homo economicus*. An early challenge was posed by Amartya Sen and his capability approach (see e.g. Sen, 2002; 1977; Garcés-Velástegui, 2022a; 2020; Garcés 2020a). Perhaps the most noteworthy and influential work in this regard has been carried by behavioral economics (see e.g. Thaler and Sunstein, 2021; Thaler, 2015; Kahnemann, 2011; and for a combination of the capability approach and behavioral economics see Garcés Velástegui forthcoming; 2022b)

3 "Postmodernism […] can be understood as a refusal to accept the notions of "objective knowledge" and "universal truth" and as an attempt to challenge the optimistic belief that there are, even in principle, solutions to all our problems" (Chernoff 2007: 154).

4 "Poststructuralism is a […] family of theories that are radically opposed to rationalism, naturalism, and the scientific approach to the social sciences" (Chernoff 2007: 153).

Reviews

Giuseppe Barzaghi, *La Somma Teologica di San Tommaso d'Aquino in un soffio* **(2ª ed., Bologna: Edizioni Studio Domenicano, 2020).**

È un bene che con quest'opera Giuseppe Barzaghi abbia voluto rispettare alla lettera la definizione di libro tascabile. Ed è sicuramente un valore aggiunto, il fatto che abbia voluto farlo ripercorrendo proprio le tappe dello scritto più famoso del Doctor Angelicus. Il risultato, come si legge nella quarta di copertina, è un breve scritto in grado di combinare i vantaggi della sintesi, che "dura poco e non pesa. Come il soffio", all'essenziale che è "il bene più grande dell'intelligenza". Emerge così un libro che con un gioco di rime, "ti consente di portare nel taschino la *Somma Teologica* di Tommaso d'Aquino".

Il libro di Giuseppe Barzaghi non è ripartito in capitoli, bensì si compone di un'introduzione e di ventitré tappe (o categorie) fondamentali dell'itinerario tomistico. L'introduzione e le tappe hanno prevalentemente una natura espositiva e didattica. La successione delle categorie ripercorre lo stesso "ordine della disciplina" utilizzato da Tommaso nella *Summa*.

Nell'introduzione l'autore scrive che lo scopo della *Somma Teologica*, che inevitabilmente corrisponderà con l'obiettivo di questo stesso libro, consiste nell'"esporre la sacra dottrina con chiarezza e brevità: rispetto a Dio, l'uomo e l'uomo-Dio" (p.7). Solo dopo aver indicato le coordinate, l'autore può procedere con la successione degli snodi teorici del pensiero di Tommaso.

Si comincia con "La sacra dottrina" che è l'insieme dei precetti rivelati. Essa getta le basi per il resto del libro, perché "argomenta intorno a Dio a partire da ciò che Dio dice di sé e delle cose" (p.7). Le fanno eco i seguenti tre cardini teologici: "Dio nella sua essenza", "Dio nel suo agire" e "La Trinità". Il primo afferma l'esistenza di Dio e ne elenca le qualità, il secondo tratta dell'onnipotenza divina, mentre il terzo risolve questioni complesse relative alle tre Persone trinitarie, anche in difesa del Dogma stesso. Padre, Figlio e Spirito Santo "non sono tre sussistenti in relazione (politeismo), ma tre relazioni sussistenti, di un'unica sussistenza (monoteismo)" (p.11).

Segue a questo punto il blocco delle tappe relative alla derivazione delle creature da Dio. "La creazione" che verte sull'unicità del mondo creato e sulla molteplicità ordinata delle creature. "Gli angeli", cioè "creature assolutamente immateriali" e "volute da Dio per la perfezione dell'universo e per il suo servizio" (p.12). E infine, "Il mondo corporeo" e "L'uomo". Quest'ultimo snodo teorico in particolare, non esamina solamente l'uomo come "creato a immagine di Dio" (p.13), ma si concentra molto anche sulla sua anima intellettiva. Essa "è principio di tutte le capacità e operazioni dell'uomo" (p.14) e vuole la beatitudine. Grazie all'analisi della volontà, che fa da anello di congiunzione, l'itinerario tomistico si avvia facilmente verso la disamina

del fine ultimo per l'uomo (cioè la beatitudine), dei mezzi (ossia gli atti umani) per raggiungerlo e degli ostacoli che vi si oppongono. Gli atti umani si distingueranno in generali e particolari.

Per quanto riguarda lo scopo finale, ne "il fine ultimo e la beatitudine" si affronta il tema della felicità come aspirazione massima per l'uomo, e si introduce il tema della grazia divina. Le tappe relative ai mezzi e agli ostacoli sono varie e seguono la divisione in generali e particolari. La prima "La volontarietà", parla della volontà come "mossa dall'intelletto" e afferma che "la violenza non costringe la volontarietà, ma solo l'atto comandato" (p.16). Seguono: "Bontà e malizia"; "Le passioni", che sono "moti dell'appetito sensitivo che implicano un'alterazione fisica" (p.17); "Le virtù", che sono "qualità buone della mente" consistenti "nel giusto mezzo tra l'eccesso e il difetto" (p.18), e che si distinguono in teologali e cardinali (la cui esposizione è rimandata più avanti); "Vizi e peccati", che sono il contrario delle virtù; "La legge", che è il "comando della ragione ordinato al bene comune" (p.19), e che può essere eterna, naturale o umana, e "La Grazia", che è l'ultima categoria delle azioni umane generali. La grazia, in realtà, non è un atto dell'uomo bensì un aiuto da parte della divinità. La grazia di Dio infatti è necessaria, "per conoscere il vero soprannaturale e compiere il bene soprannaturale" (p. 21), e per meritare la vita eterna. La grazia a sua volta si divide in santificante e carismatica. A questo punto, inizia la discussione intorno ai mezzi particolari. Le prime due tappe, delle quattro totali di questo nuovo blocco, riguardano gli stati comuni a tutti gli uomini. Esse sono "Le virtù teologali" e "Le virtù cardinali". Le virtù se vengono "legate a fini particolari sono virtù in modo imperfetto", non lo sono se "vengono ulteriormente ordinate al fine ultimo" (p.23). Terminano il quadro delle azioni particolari "Vita contemplativa e vita attiva" e gli "Stati di perfezione". Si tratta di categorie che riguardano gli stati di alcuni uomini in base, rispettivamente, alla diversità di occupazione e di progresso spirituale.

L'ultimo raggruppamento teorico del libro verte sulla figura di Cristo come via per andare a Dio. Si inizia con la tappa del "Cristo Salvatore" che è un esame del mistero dell'incarnazione, della vita e della passione di Gesù. Le fa eco la successiva categoria de "I sacramenti", in quanto questi sono stati istituiti proprio da Cristo stesso. I sette sacramenti "sono necessari per la salvezza umana" (p.29) e di questi, "l'Eucarestia è il più grande" (p.30). La tappa conclusiva di questo itinerario tomistico - "Le realtà ultime" – è invece dedicata alla resurrezione dei morti, a ciò che la precede e a ciò che la segue.

Il percorso tracciato dall'autore rimane dunque fedele al proposito di essere una "scorciatoia" per il monumentale "viaggio" teologico e filosofico di Tommaso. Giuseppe Barzaghi aveva già prima di questo testo dedicato diversi studi e scritti a Tommaso, di conseguenza è consapevole

del fatto che compendiare il pensiero di questo filosofo non è un'operazione semplice. Se per un verso è necessario entrare nel cuore del ragionamento, per altro verso non si può prescindere da una visione d'insieme della *Summa* di Tommaso. Sotto questo riguardo, è opportuno segnalare che questa seconda edizione ha il pregio di contenere in allegato uno schema che riassume la struttura del reale secondo i principi tomistici. Barzaghi è capace di andare aldilà della semplice descrizione, dimostrando di sapersi orientare con sicurezza nel ricco pensiero di Tommaso oltre a metterne in risalto gli aspetti essenziali. Per apprezzare al meglio il libro e le potenzialità ad esso connesse è raccomandabile una lettura paziente e consapevole dei temi trattati. La brevità del volume può condurre ad un'errata valutazione del suo contenuto e, conseguentemente, ad una lettura superficiale. Il consiglio è quello di non lasciarsi trarre in inganno. Il volume si segnala anche per il prezzo conveniente.

Luca Magro

Giorgio Agamben, *L'irrealizzabile. Per una politica dell'ontologia,* (Torino, Giulio Einaudi Editore, 2022).

Il termine "realtà", come insegna la tradizione fenomenologica, rappresenta l'insieme dell'irrealizzabile: il suo essere in quanto tale è infatti sempre realizzato e prende forma nella sua stessa non-possibilità. L'intento di Giorgio Agamben è scoprire come l'idea di realtà interagisca con il possibile nel corso della storia della filosofia. Il suo è uno scopo politico: così facendo, l'autore trova retroattivamente le fondamenta su cui edificare i concetti necessari per le tesi delle sue opere precedenti come *La potenza del pensiero, Che cos'è la filosofia?* e soprattutto *Homo Sacer,* come l'idea di potere destituente, temporalità e possibilità. All'interno dei limiti dell'irrealizzabile, infatti, trova posto quel potere destituente principale oggetto della sua produzione filosofico-politica.

L'opera è un necessario aggiornamento dei testi precedenti dell'autore alla situazione odierna e si inserisce come un possibile completamento di testi come *Homo Sacer*, prevedendone la lettura per la piena comprensione di alcuni passaggi dati per assunti, vedasi ad esempio la differenza interpretativa dei termini *dynamis* ed *energeia* da parte dell'autore rispetto alla tradizione scolastica, il significato di potere destituente o alcune scelte terminologiche come "macchina" o "politica dell'ontologia". Allo stesso tempo il testo, dal punto di vista puramente filologico, risulta comunque comprensibile previa conoscenza generale della storia della filosofia occidentale. Considerate le ricerche precedenti dell'autore, questa opera è inserita quindi in un processo decostruttivo che sicuramente non è concluso, al contrario risulta come un nuovo inizio per dare luce ad alcuni passaggi oscuri della connessione tra filosofia e politica nel suo pensiero. Il lavoro di ricerca compiuto nel testo è una ripresa del metodo archeologico di *Homo Sacer*; allo stesso modo deve chiaramente molto alla letteratura filosofica di Derrida, Deleuze e Foucalt ed al pensiero fenomenologico di Heidegger.

La tesi fondamentale su cui poggia il testo prende la forma di un atto volontario di ricerca che, attraverso l'ar-cheologia concettuale e la decostruzione, mira a scoprire i meccanismi fondamentali della macchina ontologica occidentale; questa viene così definita dall'autore perché, ai suoi occhi, si presenta come un insieme artificiale di singoli dispositivi logici e incomprensioni che interagiscono tra loro per dare la comprensione del reale prima al filosofo e poi all'uomo occidentale. Questo sistema filosofico, infatti, come ricostruito dall'autore, si porta dietro una serie di errori che rendono di difficile interpretazione la realtà che si pone davanti, anche attualmente, agli occhi dell'umanità. Partendo infatti dall'analisi del termine *res*, le basi dell'ontologia occidentale vengono decostruite per poter così creare lo spazio del pensiero filosofico-politico di *Homo Sacer* attraverso il concetto di politica dell'on-tologia, ovvero lo strumento con cui l'autore vuole ridare una forma alla realtà stessa. La struttura del testo corrisponde a quella di un'indagine, nel senso che, una volta varcata la soglia, in cui l'autore introduce il suo metodo e il suo scopo, il lettore scopre insieme al filosofo la storia del concetto di realtà all'interno della storia dell'on-tologia. L'autore cerca una risposta ad una serie di domande che, seppure mai esplicitate come tali, servono a delineare i confini entro cui ritrovare l'irrealizzabile. Le due parti di cui è composto, "L'irrealizzabile" (p. 3) e "L'antica selva. Chora Spazio Materia" (p. 87), sono tra loro complementari, come anticipato nell'introduzione al-la prima sezione, "Soglia" (p. 5). Se la prima parte si occupa di ricercare le interazioni tra possibile e reale, la seconda amplia l'argomento d'indagine nella direzione dei testi platonici ed aristotelici. L'appendice del testo (p. 149), in cui Agamben riporta una sua lezione del 1987 dove furono già trattati i temi essenziali del libro, assolve alla funzione di dimostrare come questa tesi, che sembra una novità per la sua filosofia, sia presente nel suo pensiero già da alcuni decenni.

La questione principale de *L'irrealizzabile* ha origine nei testi di Avicenna e trova il suo terreno nel campo del linguaggio, dove nell'autore persiano il termine "cosa" può essere scritto nel suo linguaggio nativo come *shay* in latino questo trova due forme tra loro profondamente diverse *ens* e *res*, generando così un divario che l'ontologia occidentale tenterà di colmare per tutta la storia della filosofia fino alla filosofia contemporanea. Questa differenza è una differenza d'intenzione e trova un suo fantasma in ogni paradigma filosofico, dalla divisione tra quidditas e quodditas alle divisioni fortemente dualistiche del pensiero moderno, che queste siano le divisioni cartesiane tra *res cogitans* e *res extensa* o le divisioni kantiane tra sensibilità ed intelletto. La più grande questione che, quindi, nasce all'interno della tradizione ontologica è quella riguardante l'esistenza di Dio che, con Kant, troverà i presupposti per poi portare al cambio paradigmatico dei secoli seguenti. In particolare, le teorie kantiane sulla temporalità e sulla possibilità sono necessarie all'analisi che Agamben vuole proporre. Riprendendo l'analisi di *Homo Sacer,* in particolare all'interno de *Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita*, concernenti la differenza tra *energeia* e *dynamis*, l'autore ricorda come l'ontologia è il terreno di scontro dove le scelte più importanti dell'uomo occidentale sono state fatte, così recuperando l'obiettivo originale dell'analisi. La differenza fondamentale tra atto e possibilità è ciò che, secondo l'autore, ha mosso la scienza e la tecnologia fino alle scoperte del

ventesimo secolo. A detta dell'autore questo divario è, infatti, l'*archè* della storia occidentale, un continuo tentativo di realizzare la potenza per raggiungere la completezza dell'essere. L'atto è, per sua stessa definizione, irrealizzabile: la sua essenza è tale solo nell'esistenza "respinta nel passato e – solo in questo modo – afferrata" (p. 67) trova la sua possibilità solo nel suo essere-stato. Questa temporalità è distintiva dell'in-divisibilità di possibilità e realtà e, così come Dante scriveva nel *De Monarchia*, la prima è *finis totius humanae civilitatis* (p. 70); la possibilità, e quindi il passato, è il fine stesso della civiltà umana. Guardando a una delle frasi conclusive de *L'irrealizzabile* il passaggio da Heidegger a Spinoza sembra quasi adattare il *conatus spinoziano* in una tensione che, invertita nella macchina ontologica occidentale, trova una resistenza tale da arrestare presso di sé la realtà che tenta di realizzare. Agamben, per chiarire e concludere il tutto, riprende un'altra delle questioni fondamentali riguardanti la materia della realtà, questa volta partendo dall'analisi di Platone sulla base della traduzione di Calcidio. L'autore utilizza l'ambigua traduzione di *chora* in *silva* nel *Timeo* per definire il luogo della materia, non tanto come luogo in cui la materia è situata, ma in cui la materia si svolge come "essere-in". La scelta di Calcidio, come riconosce Agamben, genera un'eco che, nel corso dei secoli successivi, segnerà alcuni pensatori in modo indelebile, ad esempio i platonici di Chartres e lo stesso Dante, che, in particolare, ripercorre i passi di quella materia platonica, tanto oscura e imperscrutabile, ma in definitiva sommamente generatrice, nella selva del Paradiso terrestre in cima al purgatorio. Il termine *chora,* in Platone, si rivela però tanto più oscuro quanto questo viene interpretato: infatti, già nella lettura aristotelica, secondo cui la parola corrisponde al termine *hyle,* ovvero alla materia, ed allo stesso tempo al luogo, *topos*, il pensiero platonico viene radicalmente mutato. La prima differenza tra *chora* e *topos* che Agamben riconosce è individuabile attraverso un'analisi di Jean-François Pradeau, secondo cui *chora* indica "lo spazio che una cosa occupa e che essa libera muovendosi" (p. 104) ed "il territorio di una comunità politica, la regione che circonda una città e le cui terre sono abitate e coltivate" (p. 104), mentre *topos* "designa sempre il luogo in cui un corpo si trova o è situato. E il luogo è indissociabile dalla costituzione del corpo, cioè anche dal suo movimento." (p. 105). Questa differenziazione apparentemente sottile, in realtà, implica un ampio spettro di significati. In particolare, Agamben sottolinea come la territorialità della *chora* sia spesso associata ad un atto di dominazione e di possedimento, aspetto il quale rende il termine nella sua piena diversità rispetto alla mera locazione. La territorialità è, così, propriamente ontologica, è fondativa dell'essere. Così facendo l'essere trova la sua soglia nella *chora*. Il riferimento alla dominazione del territorio è necessario per comprendere un altro passaggio su cui Agamben spesso ritorna: la divisione tra *energeia* e *dynamis* sarebbe dunque simbolica di questa resistenza territoriale entro cui le cose trovano il loro *solum* e che viene ridiscussa durante tutta l'opera. L'auto-ricettività ne definisce così da un lato la differenza rispetto alla materia, *chora* è una condizione, necessaria alla sua stessa posizione: non è un luogo fisico, ma è una territorialità intensiva. Entro queste coordinate è chiara la lettura che Platone propone dei due generi intelligibile e sensibile, "una sola cosa e due" (p. 111), come un partecipare della propria

esistenza in un territorio neutrale, non come un non-senso ma come un'anestesia, *met'an-aisthesias.* Nella filosofia platonica *chora* è una non-cosa tanto quanto l'idea di bene: entrambe non si trovano *nell*'essere, ma si pongono come sua condizione. Il paragone tra i due concetti è inevitabile una volta analizzata la funzione mediatrice del terzo genere. La necessarietà di partecipazione a questo è, infatti, simbolica di un'attività continua entro cui si risolve quello che Agamben riconosce come quarto genere, ciò entro cui tutto si risolve come unità, *hen panta estai* (p. 122). Questa risoluzione, che si presenta come tale anche nel *Timeo*, porta alla concezione di un Dio sensibile in cui l'intel-legibile è sensibile ed il sensibile è intellegibile: la dottrina della *chora,* come mediana tra i due termini, di per sé tra loro inconoscibili, è per Agamben la vera filosofia e la vera politica. L'analisi della dottrina platonica è seguita dalla sua contrapposizione alla dottrina aristotelica della *hyle,* ed in particolare alla ricerca della differenza nella *steresis* aristotelica. L'importante salto temporale che l'autore compie successivamente è rappresentativo di una volontà di evidenziare come una differenza nella definizione di un principio ontologico possa portare con sé una eco importante nel corso della storia: ad esempio, le similitudini tra la dottrina platonica della *chora* e l'analisi delle proprietà dello spazio compiuta da Newton sono singolari. Il passaggio intermedio che Agamben riconosce è poi Spinoza: la connessione passa tra il concetto di *chora* come luogo della cosa e il concetto di *affectio,* l'affezione dell'ente in quanto ente (tutto è affetto e situato in una modalità di Dio). Lo spazio, così come la *chora,* è inevitabile, un'esten-sione infinita che non possiamo non pensare o immaginare: dobbiamo situare ogni singola cosa o in cielo o in terra. Se lo spazio è, così, autoaffezione di Dio, come per la sostanza spinoziana, la conservazione della sua identità e è un atto di continua creazione che, per sua stessa natura, non può non-essere. Per Newton e More, lo spazio e Dio, resi coestensivi, si differenziano per modalità e non ricadono, di conseguenza, in una divisione cartesiana dell'u-niverso. La "relazione fenomenologica" con cui Agamben conclude, una relazione volta a spiegare il come e non il *quid*, è lo scopo della dottrina della *chora* che, come l'autore riconosce, solo con Heidegger ha trovato la sua tematizzazione come essere ed ente.

La connessione che l'autore porta tra macchina ontologica occidentale e politica è certamente interessante e dimostra come alcuni dei passaggi più discussi del pensiero platonico ed aristotelico abbiano influenzato accidentalmente l'affermazione della cultura e della scienza in Occidente. Le tracce lasciate da questo percorso non sono direttamente sottolineate da Agamben in quest'opera, in cui, al contrario, lascia intendere più volte la loro importanza al di fuori del cammino dell'ontologia. La scrittura fortemente esoterica, simile allo stile heideggeriano, che l'autore utilizza in questo testo è necessaria per approfondire una serie di considerazioni svolte nelle sue opere precedenti; definendo ancora meglio l'origine del potere destituente, che trova origine nella dottrina platonica della *chora*, come mediana di due momenti tra loro apparentemente non mediabili, mira alla costruzione di quel "quarto genere" coincidente con il bene.

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