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SECTION I:
PHILOSOPHY

THE BEGINNING OF POSTMODERN
AS THE END OF LEGITIMATING DISCOURSE:
JEAN-FRANÇOIS LYOTARD

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Abstract

Lyotard has anticipated that the multiplication of informational machines will change the circulation of knowledge in the same way as the development of transports changes the circulation of images and sounds. Only the information that can be translated in order to be transmitted through machine accessible formats can be operational. The rest of the information will finally be abandoned. Lyotard analyzes the pragmatics of narrative knowledge in postmodern societies. Knowledge cannot be reduced to science or information. Science is only a subclass of knowledge. Knowledge is much more than that; it has practical information, it also means to know how to live and to listen.

Keywords: grand meta-narratives, simulacra, Lyotard, postmodern

In *Notes on the Meaning of Post*, Lyotard identifies three basic meanings of this prefix. First, it indicates a sort of conversion. Second, it is

about the failure of modern discourse about progress. Third, it is a problem of expression, a problem of style.

François Lyotard (2003:11) analyses the failure of the “grand meta-narratives”. These meta-narratives are grand, large-scale theories and philosophies of the world, such as the progress of history, the knowledge of everything by science, and the possibility of absolute freedom. Lyotard argues that we have ceased to believe that narratives of this kind are adequate to represent our values. He points out that no one seemed to agree on what, if anything was real and everyone had their own perspective and story. In our times the confidence in an Enlightenment project of rationality has been demolished. Lyotard also analyses Wittgenstein's notion of *language-games* (a pragmatic theory of language around the concept of *language-games*). The signification of a word depends of the context in which that particular word is used. The language games are effects of a certain type of discourse, which explains the difference of meaning occurring between different situations in which the same word is used. Lyotard (2003:24) observes that the rules of these language games does not actually find the legitimacy in themselves, but are the object of an explicit contract between the players. Every category of enounces must be determined by a set of rules that define the language game. Another observation is that there is no game in absence of the players. And the third observation is that language acts define the player's actions in the game. The social bound between individuals represents this elaborate game.

In this rigid perspective of actions determined by rules of certain games, literature finds a place of its own. Lyotard says that although “to speak means to fight” (2003:24) we don't play to win every time. Literature is “a work of harassing the language” (Lyotard 2003:25). Pushing the language to the limit we invent new linguistic constructions, new meanings from old words and we are ultimately forcing the language to develop.

Lyotard analyses the relation between contemporary (postmodern) knowledge and the grand meta-narratives. Lyotard (2003:11) emphasizes that from the start science was in conflict with meta-narratives. Meta-narratives form the proper medium in order to create modern literature and modern arts because meta-narratives are always about progress and innovations. Philosophy represents the discourse that legitimates science as the search of something like *truth*. Science tries to legitimate its own status through philosophy. This kind of discourse is always linked of some grand meta-narratives like the dialectic of spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning or the emancipation of the rational self. Legitimizing knowledge with the help of a grand meta-narrative implies something like *a philosophy of history*. The truth is related to the grand meta-narrative which legitimates it. We are facing thus a vicious cycle. We are only defining *truth* in relation to a grand meta-narrative and a grand meta-narrative in relation to the definition of truth, which has its prime coordinates linked and derived through it. The definiendum is the same with the definiens. The postmodern philosophers

share the same distrust concerning grand meta-narratives. This distrust is an effect of the progress of science, but the progress of science also implies this distrust, as Lyotard points out (2003:11). He identifies as effects of the crisis of meta-narratives the fail of traditional metaphysics and the failure of universities as institutions which legitimated this metaphysics. He underlines that in literature the narrative function loses its grand heroes and also its grand purpose. This function is dispersed in linguistic narrative elements, pragmatic issues and denotative elements. Determinism can no longer exist on a big scale; it remains only local, marginal and partial. There is more than one language game, if we want to express this situation using Wittgenstein's notions. There is no longer homogeneity of elements, but a total heterogeneity. The scientific truth is of a pragmatic type. The truth itself is an instrument of power. What is not operative will eventually disappear, Lyotard concludes. The criterion of operability is a technological criterion. In this dynamics of power Lyotard distrusts Habermas' consensus through discussion.

According to Lyotard, the scientific knowledge is a species of discourse. It has two main functions, *the research* and *the transmission of knowledge*. Lyotard (2003:14) has anticipated that the multiplication of informational machines will change the circulation of knowledge in the same way as the development of transports changes the circulation of images and sounds. Only the information that can be *translated* in order to be transmitted through *machine accessible formats* can be operational. The rest of the information will finally be abandoned. The old principle of associating the acquisition of knowledge with the formation of the spirit will no longer be taken into consideration. The knowledge will be produced in order to be consumed. This will be the new value of knowledge as information; Lyotard (2003:15) appreciates. Information became in information based societies a valuable commodity that nourishes the struggle for power. This is an ideology of the transparence of communication. The problem of knowledge is above all the problem of legitimating an authority, Lyotard warns us asking rhetorically: "Who is able to decide what we should know?". His question opens the preoccupations for the legitimizing of power in a knowledge based society. Even if he does not explicitly points out that his theory is based on a *theory of truth as coherence*, we can easily notice it. This theory appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century as a result of the development of those sciences which have their main concepts at a very high level of abstraction. Until then, scientists based their research on a *theory of truth as correspondence*. This theory sustains that if our enunciations were in a relation of correspondence to some observed phenomena or states of fact, then they were to be considered true. Aristotle (1997:458) invented the theory of truth as correspondence. This theory lost its power to explain truth in science because most sciences use concepts that cannot be verified by direct observation. The new theory of truth as coherence sustains that some enounces may be true if they may be corroborated with a set of accepted

enounces. These enounces are most of them theories. If the enounces do not resist the verification test and cannot be integrated, they are rejected. This is, basically, the verificationist version of the theory. Lyotard sustains that this theory represents the basis of a knowledge based societies. But, according to him, this theory has a serious problem. We may call it an ethical or democratic problem, because it is a problem of legitimating an authority. There must be an influential person or an influential group of individuals that has the power to decide which theories are the valid ones. The legitimating of truth becomes the problem of legitimating a legislator. There must be a legislator that can prescribe the condition of truth. This legislator makes a discourse that prescribes the conditions for scientific truth and this scientific discourse is about power. Lyotard does not accept any notion that can represent a sort of meta-language, meta-notion or meta-theory. The language games can exist only if any sort of meta-theory is denied. That is the reason why Lyotard characterizes the postmodern as the refusal to believe any kind of meta-narration.

Within Wittgenstein's theory of language games, Lyotard observes that "the observable social bond is constructed from language moves" (Lyotard 2003:25). Lyotard analyses the modern society in opposition to the postmodern society, aiming at observing the social changes within the discourse in these societies. The modern society is built on the idea of a *unique and total truth* (Lyotard 2003:29). The critical theory is rejected from this *Weltanschauung* because it is built on dualism and distrust in these syntheses. The postmodern society is characterized by distrust in common ideals. Lyotard observes that nobody chooses anymore a national ideal as a purpose; these ideals of common good are not able to raise enthusiasm in our days. As a result, everybody is sent back to *selfhood*, but we all know that this selfhood is so less. This suspicious return to selfhood means the decomposition of social connections in the postmodern society and the fall of grand meta-narratives. The lack of communication has been observed by some modern writers as well, for example *the string of consciousness* represents the irrevocable break of the social bond. The characters of a novel talk to themselves because there is no one to listen to them. They are not solipsistic characters and there is not only a single character in novels that uses an inner voice. For example in Virginia Wolf's novels the string of consciousness is manifested at the level of every character. For Lyotard the selfhood is less, but it is not *isolated*. The self is always caught in "a texture of social relations" (2003:32). According to Lyotard, the individual is always caught in a system of social relations and the system is designed to improve permanently its performances. The language games represent the minimum condition for these kinds of relations to exist. The issue of a social bond is an issue of *language games*. It is impossible to escape the role of history referent. History is written by those who are near you. Language has a great importance because communication is vital in contemporary society. Messages do not just transmit information. In order to understand

contemporary society we do not only need a communication theory, but also, much more important, we need a *game theory* (Lyotard 2003:35). Lyotard calls this phenomenon *the atomization of social in language games* (2003:34). He analyses in *La Condition postmoderne. Rapport sur le savoir* (2003) the contemporary knowledge institution in order to analyze the legitimating discourses used in these societies. If we, as individuals, are not isolated, the societies in which we live are isolated one from the other in the same manner in which a language game cannot be reduce to the other. At least, this is the interpretation given by Rorty (2000a:370), who sustains that this impossibility to reduce a culture to another one because there are temporal or other kind of important differences, which means that a culture cannot convert another culture through persuasion but through force, through terror. The cultures that are significantly different from others cannot be translated into ours. Rorty considers Lyotard's opinion about Wittgenstein's notion of language games too radical because it leans to the consideration that there are languages that cannot be learned because we are radically different from the ones that use them. This means that there will always be something that we won't be able to understand if we read literature belonging to another culture. Rorty sustains that Wittgenstein's theory about language games, and also Kuhn's theory about scientific paradigms only suggest that there is no such thing as a unique language, known before (a priori) that can be able to give us an idiom and be used to translate any new theory, poetic expression or foreign culture.

In philosophy the juxtaposition between ontological levels can also take place. The readers are shocked by the blend between what is considered reality and fiction in postmodern literary and philosophical texts. This mix is made by the insertion of someone from "reality" into the fictional world of texts. For example, in Lyotard's *The Postmodern Explained* (1997) the explanations are addressed to the children of his colleagues from different universities.

Lyotard (2003:39) underlines as a decisive advantage of narrative form the possibility of using a great variety of *language games*. He analyzes the pragmatics of narrative knowledge in postmodern societies (2003:37). Knowledge cannot be reduced to science or information. Science is only a subclass of knowledge. Knowledge is much more than that; it has practical information, it also means to know how to live and to listen. Information is not only composed of *denotative statements*, but also from *connotative* and *prescriptive* ones. Tradition was the first way of legitimizing these narrative structures. Plato (1986), for example uses the example of an ideal state in order to discover equity at the individual level. He invents myths within his narration in order to build a totalitarian ideology. He uses a narration to explain his philosophical vision. He explains in *The Republic* that myths and stories are the best ways to explain scientific knowledge and political theories. That is exactly what he does, presenting in his dialogues, through characters and narrative models of integration, his philosophical theories. He

even gives some indications about the conventional character of these narrations when Socrates says that maybe the children of those who invented the myth of metallic races will not believe this myth, but their grandchildren may do it. Lyotard (2003:39) observes the preeminence of narratives in the formulation of traditional knowledge. He underlines that the narrative form allows more language games in their formulations than the scientific discourse.

The thinking of Lyotard (2003) seems to imply that the modifications within modernism were caused by technique and by the social conditions of communication. That is the main cause that determined the change of cultural paradigms leading to the development of postmodern culture. In the postmodern culture, the individual is more preoccupied by the production of signs and images (images in an enlarged meaning, as constructed realities, for example the image as fiction) than by the production of things. Images become the object of interest and knowledge. Our interest for them becomes first an epistemic one and then an ontological one. In economy, for example, the image establishes an identity that is relevant for the selling value of an object. But through this *image established identity*, the real becomes impossible to be dissociated from simulacra.

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THE ETHICS OF RESPONSIBILITY
IN JEAN-PAUL SARTRE'S PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy is very complex and it approaches subjects from fields like ontology, phenomenology and also ethics. But is it possible to outline a Sartrean morality? Although at first sight the constitution of an ethics in Sartre's vision seems difficult, there are elements that sustain its possibility. The concepts of responsibility and engagement, Being-for-Others, the conversion, - all of these aspects prove that beyond the anguish that follows the man almost always, that beyond the alienation, there is a possibility of salvation : there is a possibility of an ethics of responsibility in Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy.

Keywords: Ethics, Freedom, Responsibility, Engagement, Conversion, The Other

Jean-Paul Sartre is one of the most remarkable personalities of the contemporary period. For a student, a philosophy such as the one Sartre develops, cannot be overlooked. His speech has a special force, a passion that fascinates you; when Sartre shouts "the man is condemned to be free",

you shudder, because you feel it and you feel like he addresses you personally – what he's saying it's about you.

His philosophy is broad, his writings approach different subjects and themes, but I have taken interest in his ethics. My research follows to discover the possibility of an ethic system in Sartre's philosophy and the determination of this ethics' nature. Starting with *Being and Nothingness* and continuing with *Existentialism is a Humanism* and *Notebooks for an Ethics*, I observed that the philosopher granted a rather big importance and a special attention to ethics. What it seems questionable though is the possibility of an ethics in a world like the one Sartre shapes and describes: everything is contingency, there are no transcendent powers, the values are established by man, there is no unique moral system and no universal norms. In addition, the man lives almost permanently in a conflicted relationship with his fellow-creature, with *the other*, who will always try to transform him – through his *look* – into an object. Starting from this premises, how is an ethic system possible? My research focused to discover if there are any positive elements that can help build a morality, but without disregarding the flaws, the obstacles and the paradoxes that appear along the way.

Sartre has a number of key concepts in his philosophy: the *being-for-itself* – is the equivalent of human existence, the consciousness, which has a privileged status. Through the *for-itself* the *nothingness* comes into the world; the *being-in-itself* – is represented by the objects, the phenomena. With fixed characteristics - opacity, masiveness - the *in-itself* "is what it is"¹, in opposition with the *for-itself* which *is not what it is and it is what is not*, meaning that the human existence is project, a being that always makes itself, a being that becomes; the *being-for-others* – is simultaneous to the *being-for-itself*, "our human reality requires us to be simultaneous for-itself and for-other"². Even though Sartre says that "the essence between the consciousnesses is not *Mitsein*, is the conflict"³, he admits that the relationships of love and the experience of *us-subject* can save us from the Medusa⁴ that *the other* can be. Due to the fact that *the other* can transform us into objects through his look, by not thinking at us as freedoms, but as instruments, we are always in a fight of whom the subject is and who is the object. The philosopher does not make it clear about how you become the subject; all he says is that one of us is looking and the other one is being looked at, therefor, he becomes an *it-self* to the first. In this obscure picture that Sartre paints, we can still find a ray of light – the love. Sartre thinks that in such a relationship, we are seen as freedom, as equals, we receive a meaning and we are saved from the fall into facticity and alienation: "This is the background of the joy of love, when it exists: to feel justified to be. (...) My existence is *called*. This existence, in case I assume it, it becomes pure

¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Paralela 45, Pitești, 2004, p. 34

² Ibidem, p. 394

³ Ibidem, p. 583

⁴ Idem

generosity. I am because I give myself.”⁵ After these claims, Sartre’s speech reveals a contradiction because he says that the one that loves can always wake up and look at the loved one as an object among objects. Finally, the philosopher thinks that love, as a fundamental way of the *being-for-others* contains its destruction, in three methods : it is an infinite regress, because to love means wanting to be loved, thus wanting the other one to want to be loved and so on ; there is always the possibility that the other awakes, looks at me and constitutes me as an *it-self*, making me live in a permanent uncertainty; love is constantly relativized by the others – for a third person, love becomes a love-object that alienates towards him.

Sartre’s conception is founded within the limits of his thought: if we assume that the primary manner of relating is the objectifying one, through the look, if we go on assuming that every relationship has as essence the conflict, then we cannot reject the conclusions that he reaches. We do consider though that this way of thinking is too cynical and that people have revealed that they are capable of real relationships without the conflicting element (in case of calamities people show how much they are willing to help one another). We also believe that it is arbitrary to start with the principle of conflict, especially by taking it as axiomatic and at the same time redundant to take it as a premise only to prove it as a conclusion.

The experience of *us-subject* constitutes a positive element in Sartre’s dark world of human connections. According to him, *us-subject* is a psychological and subjective experience in which one feels included into a collective rhythm, engaged in a crowd with the same purposes. It’s about the participation to a conjoint project, where one loses his individuality on one hand – although one doesn’t cease to be different than the others because of his true self and the more distant goals that he has – and on the other hand, one has the experience of a collective transcendency. For a moment, Sartre describes a better universe, by claiming that this kind of experience could be analyzed as a metaphysical and absolute unity of all transcendencies, which would mean the elimination of their conflict. However, he returns to his pessimistic speech and claims that such an unity is only an illusion because this project is unachievable, being only a symbol of a desired unity due to the fact that the subjectivities remain separate: “my experience of us-subject does not involve a similar experience to the others. (...) But the experience of this undifferentiated transcendency is a contingent and intimate event that doesn’t concern anyone but me”⁶. Thus, because the intersubjective consciousness cannot be achieved so as to recognize itself as a unified subjectivity and we only have the intangible consciousnesses and the singular experiences, the idea of unification and of a human *us* remains only an untouchable ideal. The reviewer Dumitru Ghișe draws attention to the fact that Sartre’s vision about *the other* suffers a change in the writings that come after *Being and Nothingness*, such as the play *The Devil and Good Lord*,

⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Paralela 45, Pitești, 2004, p. 508

⁶ Ibidem, p. 578

where “by his decision of human solidarity – the man in the middle of men – Goetz incarnates an implicit answer to the theory about the other from *L’Etre et le Neant*, where it is claimed that the relationship between the consciousnesses is not *Mitsein*, but the conflict”⁷. Also, the same critic shows that “in Sartre’s more recent works we can feel a new tendency, one to “open the doors” of interiority so as to feel the breath of the objective, outside world; in other words, it is distinguishable an accent movement from the *existence-for-itself* to the *existence-for-other*, from singular to general, from the individual to the society and its history”⁸.

Despite the negative aspects that we find in his writings (“Man is a useless passion”), Sartre himself confesses in *Being and Nothingness*: “These considerations do not exclude the possibility of an ethics of deliverance and salvation. But this can be achieved only after a radical conversion which we cannot discuss here”⁹. In this book, he doesn’t develop explicitly an ethics, but its central concepts - freedom and responsibility – have an ethical element and under the appearance of facts, are actually hidden norms, as Ernest Stere notices: “The transition from a descriptive to a normative register takes place in an almost imperceptible manner; the rules are portrayed as facts, as “data”. (...) Under the garment of ontology those that act are actually the tendencies of a moral philosophy that Sartre wishes to present as *the true humanism*.”¹⁰ As an example: “Man is project” reveals the duty of the man to overcome himself, to create himself in every moment, through his choices.

The most important elements of an ethics are the answers to some significant questions: What is Good and Bad? What are the values, in general? How are the relationships between humans supposed to be? What do I have to do? (Kant). Sartre answers us in *Being and Nothingness* and *Existentialism is a Humanism* but, because everything is founded on contingency, we need to analyze the legitimacy of his solutions.

In *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Sartre claims that there is no general morality and the ethics is about creation and invention and the man chooses his own moral system. The philosopher believes that universal principles that are too abstract, as those from the kantian morality, are not suitable because they cannot define the actual, the real action. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre explains that ontology cannot be held accountable for an ethics and it cannot make moral prescriptions, but it lets “to be seen something that will be an ethics that receives its responsibilities in relation with a *human existence in situation*”¹¹.

A possible ethics in the sartrian system could be sustained by the concept of *responsibility*. The values are invented by man, the Good and the Bad don’t exist anymore, but each one of us creates them, our actions are

⁷ Dumitru Ghișe, *French Existentialism and the Problems of Ethics*, Științifică, București, 1967, p. 95

⁸ Idem

⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Paralela 45, Pitești, 2004, p. 561, footnote 1

¹⁰ Ernest Stere, *From the History of Moral Doctrines*, Polirom, Iași, 1998, p. 436

¹¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, Paralela 45, Pitești, 2004, p. 835

equivalent – so, how can we judge from a moral point of view? Sartre thinks that the answer is in the concepts of *authenticity*, *engagement* and degree of consciousness. These coordinates are constructive, but the idea of the the equivalency of our actions can lead us to situations such as : a man that kills to get revenge, for example, is engaged in that act, fully aware of his action and does it believing strongly in it. Can such an action be considered moral? Obviously not and this is one of the gaps in Sartre's vision. It is favorable, though, in this context, the critique of the philistine morality, as Andrei Iustin Hossu observes : "In the background of the conceptual distinction between "anguish" and "the serious spirit" (mediocrity, satisfied and sufficient, conformism and the typical bourgeois philistinism), Sartre rightly claims that the the social sanctification of the objective values of the spirit, attempted by the bourgeois morality, leads to their degradation, to the annulment of the principle and their humanist spirit; that is why their sense must be maintained with intrinsical attitude of spiritual restlessness and creative thinking, founded on values and enriching the values. But fighting "the serious spirit" gets to the other extreme, which is just as harmful : he concludes the relativism and the ethical nihilism on the ground of the false premise that there is no nature nor essence"¹². In this way, we notice that Sartre continues Nietzsche, by starting a project of revaluation of all values and denouncing the bourgeois inauthenticity, the lack of value, and the idea of taking the values as real without questioning them.

Although at a first sight the constitution of a sartrian ethics seems difficult, there are elements that sustain its possibility. The *being-for-itself*, the human existence, is, according to the philosopher, at the same time, *being-for-others*. Even though the relationships with *the other* are not always positive, the alterity is very important to each and every one of us, and the relationship of love and the experience of *us-subject* diminish the hostile tendency. Moreover, the postulation of the absolute freedom – it must be noticed that this absolute of freedom reffers to the power of man to determine himself and it also refers to the choice, but always in a *situation* – is balanced by introducing the concept of *responsibility*. This comes to rescue the fall into anarchy, bringing with itself also the concept of *engagement*. The *responsibility* and *engagement* are those that don't let the choices to be chaotic and hazardous. The *responsibility* actually has a considerable weight over the man, revealing him as an Atlas: when we make choices, we have the consciousness of our enormous freedom and we become aware of the fact that those choices don't involve only ourself, but the whole humanity. Every choice must be accompanied by the question "*how would it be if everyone would do the same?*", because our actions define us and also define the image of the man we consider good in general, thus affirming the value of what we choose. Going on this direction, we find another aspect that is favorable to the possibility of ethics, exactly in the

¹² Andrei Iustin Hossu, *The French Existentialism*, European Institute, Iași, 2006, p. 165

interest that Sartre shows towards the *responsibility*; we notice that in the question “*how would it be if everyone would do the same?*” and in the care for the model that we project, we find the tendency towards the universal. Thus it is revealed the desperate cry of the subjectivity towards generalization, towards overcoming the relativism, to an authentic meeting with *the other*. By assuming this great responsibility, we declare that, despite the different values that we have, we want to meet *the other*, we want to relate to him and we desire to show him that we see him as a freedom, equal to ourselves.

Notebooks for an Ethics, one of Sartre’s late works, which isn’t as orderly and systematic as his other works - being more a collection of thoughts - brings complements to the sartrian ethics. As we anticipated with the footnote that we quoted, from *Being and Nothingness*, we find here the idea of *conversion*. The morality is defined here as a permanent conversion, where conversion means the passage from the impure (accessory) reflection to the pure reflection, a passage to authenticity. In the pure reflection the consciousness understands itself through the transparent and instantaneous activity of its engagement in the world, while the impure reflection constitutes the unreflected consciousness as an ego and its contents as transcendent objects. Thus, in the pure reflection, the consciousness reveals itself as a free *for-itself*, while in the impure reflection, it imagines that the objects and the experience of its own ego constitute objective limits to its freedom. “In impure or accessory reflection, then, consciousness apprehends its activity only by fixing itself as though it were being-in-itself”¹³. The conversion appears following the failure of the impure reflection and the failure of man’s project to become *for-itself-in-itself*. Moreover, Sartre claims that the man cannot be converted alone: “In other words, ethics is not possible unless everyone is ethical”¹⁴. The conversion is possible in theory, but to finalize itself it is necessary to happen not only an internal change in myself, but also a real change in the *other*: “In the absence of this historical change there is no absolute moral conversion”¹⁵.

Sartre’s vision from *Notebooks for an Ethics*, dominated by the idea of conversion seems to be his second ethics, as Thomas C. Anderson claims in *Sartre’s Two Ethics*. If the first morality, sketched in the essay of phenomenological ontology can be criticised because of the pessimism that characterize it, the one from *Notebooks* is – in our opinion – utopian, therefore, unachievable: Sartre speaks about the existence of ethics only when the conversion happens to everyone. We already find ourselves in a world related more to fantasy than reality – how can we assume that every man is capable to realize such a conversion towards authenticity and engagement (leaving behind the ambitious project of being *ens cause sui*),

¹³ Jennifer E. Rosato, *Opening Oneself to an Other: Sartre’s and Levinas’ Phenomenological Ethics*, A Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, p. 148

¹⁴ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992, p. 9

¹⁵ *Idem*

especially when the notion of conversion itself is not explained well enough. Such a projection, although it constitutes a rule – much more profound and stable than the subjectivity from *Being and Nothingness* – is doomed: it can never be achieved in a complete form. Does that mean that we are left out without an ethics? What is also vague in *Notebooks* is the way people suffer this conversion and why some persons can achieve it and some cannot. Still, we have to keep in mind that this work is incomplete, unfinished and it is characterized by disorganization rather than the order that is in Sartre's other works. It is though to be appreciated the fact that the philosopher tries to get into the depths of creating an ethics and the increasing tendency to generalization and universal, towards an overcoming of subjectivity and relativism.

We cannot claim that we have a strong ethics in Sartre's system, we recognize its flaws but we can't go so far as to deny its possibility. Although we do not think the philosopher is right when he discusses the problem of *the other*, we can't deny that the experience is sometime a witness to Sartre's vision: we do have the tendency to see the other as an object, as a means and not a purpose (especially in the contemporary era of technique!) ; we don't see him as a freedom as he is, we have lost ourselves in the speed and we've lost the patience and the desire to create direct, real relationships. We make these observations referring to the contemporary world, a world that Sartre had the chance to know and looking from his point of view (he was a war prisoner!) maybe we can understand his reasons. We consider that we have to be honest in this matter, don't let the *bad faith* intervene – as Sartre would advise us – and not idealize the human relations: there are few saints in the world, comparing to their opposite and for us to see that all we have to do is look around.

Following the analysis of these aspects, we can conclude that an ethics of responsibility in Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy is possible, but rather in an implicit and incomplete way. We cannot deny the gaps of his system and we have to admit the fact that some contradictions appear. At the same time though, we must acknowledge that beyond the *anguish* that follows the man almost always, that beyond the *alienation*, there is a possibility of salvation. Due to the fact that the *freedom* and the *responsibility* are notions that are by all means positive and they also invoke the moral element, due to the the dignity that is given to the man, due to the idea of conversion, but especially with the idea of engagement and authenticity, we consider that Sartre created more than the sketch of an ethics : he offered real moral indications and norms that can guide the man. The *anguish*, that is an unpleasant feeling – it is troubling to feel the weight of the world on you shoulders – can be seen as a feeling that encumbers the man but also as an extension of the *freedom* and the *responsibility*, so not as negative, but as an alarm signal that doesn't let the authenticity and the care for the others to fade away. From a certain perspective we suggest that it can also be discussed about a sartian meta-ethics in the idea that – especially in

Notebooks for an Ethics, but also in *Being and Nothingness* – the French philosopher analyzed what an ethical behaviour means, which are its foundations, its conditions and criteria, its nature and properties and how such a behaviour can be constituted.

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A WORLD OF POWERFUL QUALITIES. IN DEFENSE OF
PROPERTY IDENTITY THEORY

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Abstract

A fresh – although not that new – debate took the central stage in the metaphysics of properties in recent years. Namely, a debate about the place of dispositions and dispositional talk in our metaphysical framework: are dispositional properties supervening on the categorical ones or, on the contrary, are they more fundamental, more basic? The parties are, as usual, utterly determined to show that their combatants are wrong while their theories are highly probable. It is my intention in this paper to support a theory (the Identity Theory) that actually tries to reconcile these two extremities by acknowledging the appeal of both while maintaining that, in fact, we are not talking about two utterly different categories of properties, but about one central category, differently conceived. I will therefore try to defend the Identity Theory of properties by using a Platonist framework (properties are universals, not tropes) and Peter Geach's notion of relative identity.

Keywords: Dispositions, Categorical Properties, Identity Theory, Relative Identity, Universals

Introduction

The world we live in is both powerful and full of qualities. From the micro-universe of quarks and strings to supernovas and galaxies, objects in the world appear to possess both dispositional and qualitative properties: a grain of salt is disposed to dissolve in a glass of water, while also having a particular molecular structure; an airplane has the disposition to fly, as well as two aerodynamic wings; a star has both a particular physical structure, and the disposition to become a black hole. What is then the relationship between these two apparent different kinds of properties? Are there two kinds of properties in the first place? And if not, which one supervenes on the other? And how?

The answers to these questions depend on certain presuppositions every author has. Some believe that a world of pure potentialities is impossible, and so they take only qualities as genuine properties (categorical realism). Others, on the contrary, believe that every property can be conceived as dispositional, and thus take dispositions as fundamental (pan-dispositionalism). The more pluralist ones admit them both as ontologically basic, but draw a sharp distinction between the two (property dualism). And, finally, there are those who believe in the existence of just one kind of properties, differently conceived, either as a disposition, or as a quality (identity theory).

The aim of this paper is to argue for a version of the identity theory of properties¹. The main argument against the identity theory is that it doesn't give a very good explanation for the differences between the two features of a property – the dispositional and the qualitative. I believe that this relationship can be better described by appealing to a realist conception of properties – taking them as universals – and by employing the concept of relative identity for describing the 'surprising identity' between the two. In the first part I will present the most appealing arguments for an identity theory, by contrasting it to other alternatives and by spelling out the benefits of taking the dispositional and the qualitative as being identical. In the second part I will concentrate more on the problems the identity theory has and on a possible solution of these problems, by appealing to a realist theory of properties.

I. Arguments for the Identity Theory

First of all, a note about terminology. I used in the introduction the term 'qualitative' for describing those properties which are not dispositional. A more frequently used word is 'categorical'². I will employ them

¹ Charles Martin and John Heil are the main promoters of the identity theory. I diverge from their conception by employing a realist conception of properties, in contrast with their tropist nominalism (for them, properties are 'modes', or ways the objects are). See Martin (1997), Martin & Heil (1999), Heil (2003, 2005), Engelhard (2010).

² Firstly introduced by Armstrong (1968).

interchangeably, although it is a custom for the proponents of the identity theory to stick with the former. Again, 'disposition' is a term of art. It doesn't have only the usual meaning of e.g. 'George is disposed to help you', specific to human endeavors – it applies to objects too. A common synonym for disposition is 'power'. As in the former case, I will use them interchangeably.

But what is the conceptual difference between the dispositional and the categorical?

What seems to be a mark of the dispositional, and thus differentiates dispositionality from the categorical, is the fact that the former has a certain 'directedness' towards a given manifestation and it entails by necessity certain conditionals, while the latter doesn't – not by necessity; it is a contingent fact if it does it or not.³ Also, an object possessing a disposition is 'ready to go', ready to exhibit a certain manifestation if the circumstances are met. And it doesn't even matter if this never happens. The disposition is still active. Molnar (2003) interestingly used the term 'physical intentionality' to define this characteristic of the dispositional.

The question naturally arises: is this semantic distinction based on a more fundamental, ontological difference? Are there two kinds of properties in the world? And if there are two, what is the relationship between them? There are, as I've already noted in the introduction, four main possible answers to these question:

i) property dualism – for which there are two kinds of properties in the world, ontologically irreducible to one or the other; Ellis (2001, 2002), Molnar (2003).

ii) categorical realism – a form of monism, stating that only categorical properties are real; the dispositions supervene on the more fundamental properties; Armstrong (1968, 1973).

iii) pan-dispositionalism – another form of monism, according to which dispositions are fundamentally basic; Shoemaker (1980), Mellor (1976, 2000), Bird (2007), Mumford (2004).

iv) identity theory – for which the dispositional and the categorical are two sides of the same kind of properties.

I believe the identity theory is the most appealing conception because it avoids some of the difficulties presupposed by other theories, while presenting a very elegant explanation for the given explananda.

The main problem for a proponent of property dualism is to explain the relationship between dispositions and qualities. If both dispositional and categorical properties exist, how exactly are they related? Ellis and Lierse

³ Mumford (1998) emphasized that the relationship between a disposition and the conditional is better defined by an entailment, rather than by identity – as Ryle (1949) once proposed. Mumford's theory came as a response to Mellor's famous critique (1974, 2000) of the idea that conditionals are specific only to dispositions. Mellor showed that every property entails a conditional. An object having the property of being two millimeters long (a categorical, qualitative property) also has the disposition of entering a three millimeters hole if pushed.³ Therefore, Mumford says, what is specific to dispositions isn't the fact that they entail certain conditionals, but that they do it by necessity.

(1994, 39) said that “we see no reason to suppose that such properties [categorical] can be ontologically reduced to dispositional ones”, and, a paragraph later, “real dispositional properties may supervene on categorical properties, but never on categorical properties alone”. Therefore, at the most fundamental level, there isn’t any supervenience relation, nor is there any reduction or dependence between the dispositional and the categorical. Apparently, there isn’t any relationship at all. But then again, this result makes it difficult to explain the conditionals associated with dispositions. If there isn’t any necessary relation between the dispositional and the categorical, how can we explain the actualization relation between the disposition and its manifestation?⁴ Furthermore, if there are two kinds of properties, how can a pure quality be detected? A pure quality makes no difference to the observer. Therefore, the very notion of pure quality, separated from its powers, seems unwarranted.⁵ I think these difficulties make it very hard to be a proponent of the pure dualist theory.

What about categorical realism? It appears that the relationship between the dispositional and the categorical is spelled more easily by a categorical realist, for whom dispositions are nothing more than their categorical basis. “To speak of an object’s having a dispositional property entails that the object is in some non-dispositional state which is responsible for the object manifesting certain behavior in certain circumstances.” (Armstrong 1968, 86) What makes a glass fragile is its categorical basis, its molecular structure, plus the contingent laws of nature in our world. Powers thus supervene on their categorical basis and on the contingent laws of nature. The problem with this view is that it depicts a rather powerless world,⁶ contrary to what science has shown to be the case. As Ellis and Lierse put it (1994, p. 32), the great majority of the fundamental properties science has described are dispositional in nature. To take just one example: gravitational mass is the disposition of a body to act on other bodies gravitationally.

This last argument led the pan-dispositionalism proponents to take a completely different world-view. For them dispositions, or causal powers, are the only genuine sparse properties. The world is constituted by intrinsically powerful properties. Nonetheless, the theory does have its problems. The most important ones are set up under the header *nothing ever happens* – “the world never passes from potency to act”, as Armstrong (2005, p. 314) put it. Both Armstrong (2002) and Lowe (2010) all pointed to some infinite regresses of the manifestation relation, for the pan-dispositionalist. If a power’s manifestation is another power, and a power is defined by its

⁴ In fact Ellis and Lierse denied the relevance of the conditional analysis in accounting for dispositions (1994, 38) in their dispositional essentialism.

⁵ See Heil (2003, 118).

⁶ It contradicts what Harré (1970, 82) called *Van Helmont’s Paradigm*, the paradigm of a dynamic world in which we intuitively live.

manifestation, then this second power has to have as its manifestation another power, which has to have as a manifestation another power... and so on ad infinitum. Or, to use Lowe's 'No identity fixation' argument: if the identity of a power is fixed by its manifestation, which is a power, then the identity of this second power is fixed by its manifestation, which is yet another power... and so on ad infinitum. This vicious circle is, again, I believe, a too powerful argument against the given conception.

The Identity theory, on the other hand, stands in a better position, I believe, both to the regress problem and to the 'argument from Science' stated against categorical realism. The main claim of the identity theory is that every property is at the same time both dispositional and categorical. In other words, the dispositional and the categorical are identical. In Heil's (2003, p. 111) words:

(IT) If P is an intrinsic property of a concrete object, P is simultaneously dispositional and qualitative; P 's dispositionality and qualitativity are not aspects or properties of P ; P 's dispositionality, P_d , is P 's qualitativity, P_q , and each of these is P : $P_d = P_q = P$.

Take 'sphericity' (Heil 2003, 112). A ball possessing the quality of being spherical also possesses the disposition to roll when pushed. The ball's sphericity is, at the same time, both a quality and a disposition. A proponent of the property dualism would say that these are simply two different properties. A proponent of the identity theory would claim that they are not different (for reasons explained earlier), but two sides of the same property, two ways in which that one property is conceived – as the two faces of a Necker cube. Properties are not compounds of two aspects, the dispositional and the qualitative. These 'sides' are rather one and the same thing. "A property's dispositionality or qualitativity cannot be abstracted as entirely distinct or separable ingredients"⁷ They are taken together as two ways of conceiving the same property. Furthermore, they are symmetrical and covariant: a change in an object's dispositionality amount to a change in its qualities, and vice versa. If a ball cannot roll anymore under the same circumstances, its structure or composition has to have been changed. Or, the other way around, if a ball is chipped in a certain way, changing thus its spherical quality, it will not roll any more.

It is easy to see now how the identity theory avoids pan-dispositionalism's regress problems. All properties are indeed dispositional, but they are also categorical. There isn't a vicious circle here, because there aren't any pure powers which would prohibit the world to pass into act. Also, the theory passes the 'argument from Science' test. An electron's mass, spin or charge are indeed dispositional. But this is exactly what the theory claims. Every property is both dispositional and categorical. The only test the theory

⁷ Martin & Heil (1999, 46).

still has to pass is the explanation of the differences between the two sides. This is by far the most important critique the theory has to respond to.

II. Identity Theory Reconsidered

Armstrong once harshly wrote (2005, 315): “I confess that I find this [identity thesis] totally incredible. If anything is a category mistake, it is a category mistake to identify a quality – a categorical property – and a power, essentially something that points to a certain effect. They are just different, that’s all. An identity here seems like identifying a raven with a writing desk.” What is Martin and Heil’s response to this critique? What does differentiate eventually the two sides – the dispositional from the categorical?

Qualitativity and dispositionality, they say, are two ways of considering the same property: i) as ‘what the property exhibits by its nature’ and ii) ‘what the property is directive and selective for as its manifestations’ (Martin & Heil, 1999, 47). In another place, Martin (1997, 216) says that a disposition is ‘ready to go’; it has what we usually call a certain directedness. Is this enough for a distinction between the two? I don’t think so. The identity theory has to accommodate what Katherine Engelhard (2010) called the dualist intuition. The intuition is that, given the fact that we have different epistemic access to dispositions in comparison to their manifestations,⁸ there has to be an ontological distinction between the two which grounds the semantic one.⁹ How could Martin and Heil accommodate this ontological dualism, while maintaining their identity thesis? They cannot. As Engelhard (2010, 51 - 52) explains, either both features of a property are ontologically distinct, and then the theory collapses into functionalism – an unhappy solution for the identity theory proponents¹⁰ – or it denies the distinction, but then the identity theory is inconsistent, because it declares both that there are two sides of a property and that there aren’t.

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The solution, I believe, is two-folded. What is needed is i) a different account of identity and ii) a different account (of a realist nature) of what properties are.

Peter Geach (1967) was the first logician to criticize the classical conception of identity. He thought that this conception yields irreducible paradoxes (the paradox of change, the paradox of constitution, the Ship of Theseus Paradox etc.).¹¹ To avoid these contradictions we should recognize

⁸ We define dispositions by their manifestations.

⁹ This presupposed dualism manifests itself at three levels: the distinction between cause and effect (the breaking of a glass is also caused by its fragility), the distinction between the possible and the actual manifestation (the glass’ breaking is virtual until certain circumstances occur, at which moment the breaking is actual) and between the two relata in the directedness relation (Engelhard, 2010, 47).

¹⁰ See Martin & Heil (1999, 47) and Heil (2003, 112 – 113; 2005, 246 – 250). The main argument against functionalism is the fact that it leaves dispositional properties causally inefficacious.

¹¹ See Deutsch (2007) for details.

that identity is relative. Every time we say that x and y are identical, we have to specify relative to what (property) are x and y identical.

When one says 'x is identical with y' this, I hold, is an incomplete expression; it is short for 'x is the same A as y' where 'A' represents some count noun understood from the context of utterance – or else it is just a vague expression of a half-formed thought. (Geach, 1967, 3)

Feldman (1969, 547) proposes the following analogy: we cannot use the relational predicate 'is better than' absolutely. Each time we use it we have to specify in which respect is x better than y : 'x is better *golfer* than y'; 'x is better *poet* than y' etc. He calls this kind of relations relative relations. Hence, Geach's relative identity is a relative relation. To give some examples (Nelson 1970, 241): the president of the local bank and the mayor are the same man, but different official personages; the first word and the fifth word of this sentence are the same type-word, but distinct token-words etc. Therefore, x is the same F as y , but different G .

How then can we use the concept of relative identity in our case? Geach's concept works, of course, for objects, which have multiple properties (the mayor, the fifth word). Nonetheless, our case is analogous, in the sense it presupposes a third term, relative to which two entities are identified. Take *fragility_d* as being an object's disposition to break if struck, and *fragility_q* the corresponding quality possessed by the object in virtue of possessing *fragility_d*. We should say, following Geach's example, that *fragility_d* is the same P as *fragility_q*, but different G , where P is the property *fragile* and G is what I will call '*fragility-side*'. More generally: if P_d is a disposition and P_q is a corresponding quality of an object possessing P_d , then P_d is the same P as P_q , but different G , where P is a property and G is a 'property-side'. Therefore, when we say that the dispositional and the qualitative are identical, what we should say is that the dispositional and the qualitative are identical relative to a given property. They are the same property, but different property-sides.

To explain what I understand by a property-side, I have to give an explanation of what I understand by a property. The Humean conception of properties takes them as static qualities, arranged in a certain way, yielding certain regularities, upon which the contingent laws of nature supervene. Powers, if a Humean is ready to accept them in his or her ontology, are nothing more than second-order properties supervening on their categorical basis and on the laws of nature. This, at least, is the usual Humean picture we are accustomed to. Dispositionality and qualitativity, in this account, are necessary distinct. The dualist intuition highlights this distinction and makes it impossible for an identity theory to be coherent. But I believe all these are built upon a wrong presupposition. Properties are not static, as the Humeans claim; they are dynamic, always directed towards other properties. From the very first moment they are created, they have a certain relation of

directedness to other properties. This is how they are built. Every property has from its birth a certain 'physical intentionality' (to use Molnar's term) towards other properties. Or, to be more precise, the object possessing a certain property is directed to a certain manifestation. Until here, the picture is very similar to Bird's relational dispositionalism. But this isn't the whole story. Besides being directed to some other properties, each property is something in itself. For the most part, this something (some philosophers called it a quiddity) is a specific structure the property yields to its bearer. I will call it the qualitative-side of a property. The former characteristic, the directedness, will be called the dispositional-side of a property. Therefore, the property-side is just the way a property is conceived: either as in the relation to other properties (the directedness relation), or as it is in itself – or, if the term 'in itself' is a bit too mysterious, as we conceive it apart from its relations to other properties.

Therefore, when we say that *fragility_d* (the disposition to be broken if struck) is the same *P* as *fragility_q* (a certain molecular structure), but different *G*, we actually say that the fragility-disposition and the fragility-quality are the same property, but different property-sides. The identity between them is relative.

Now, what about the manifestation-relation? What happens when a disposition isn't manifested? This is where I employ the realist conception of properties. If all properties are universals (in Armstrong's way), and every property is directed to other properties, then every disposition is active, even if not manifested. Or, to use the new terminology: the dispositional-side of a property is always active, even if the property to which is directed isn't instantiated. Therefore, the manifestation relation will be defined in the following way: every property is both a disposition and a manifestation of a disposition. Every property is, therefore, directed to at least one other property and it is the target of at least one other property. When we say that 'a disposition manifest itself, under certain circumstances', what we say is that an object, which instantiates a property having that dispositional-side, instantiates, at a certain moment, also the property to which the first one is directed. The triggering factor for this instantiation is a certain stimulus-property, instantiated right before the former instantiation occurred.

Or, to be more precise: An object *O* instantiates the property *P*. *P* has two property-sides: a certain disposition *P_d* and a certain quality, *P_q*. *P_d* = *P_q* relative to *P*. *P_d* ≠ *P_q* relative to *G*, where *G* is a property-side. *P* is in a relation of directedness to property *Q*. For the moment, *O* doesn't instantiate *Q*. *P* is, in other words, 'ready to go', it is directed towards *Q*. *Q*, an un-instantiated universal, is, in relation to *P*, what we should call a potential manifestation of *P*'s dispositionality-side. At a moment *t₁* *O* instantiates *C*, which is a triggering property (or a stimulus-property) for *Q*'s instantiation. Right after instantiating *C*, at moment *t₂*, *O* instantiates *Q*, which therefore becomes the actual manifestation of *P*'s dispositionality-side.

The definition is, undoubtedly, a mouthful, but I believe it explains quite well the manifestation-relation. To take an example: this glass of water is fragile. That means it has a property – ‘fragility’ (P) – which is directed (has the dispositional-side P_d directed) to the property ‘being broken’ (Q). In the manifestation-relation these two properties are called ‘the disposition’ and ‘the manifestation of that disposition’. But besides this discourse, the two are normal properties (universals), one of which is instantiated by this particular glass, while the other one isn’t. The manifestation occurs when a certain stimulus is present – in other words, when a certain stimulus-property (C)¹² is instantiated as well by this particular glass¹³ – and thus triggers the instantiation of the ‘manifestation’, the instantiation of ‘being broken’. Thus, everything to be said about the manifestation-relation is to be said in terms of instantiated properties (universals).

It can be easily shown that this conception avoids Engelhard’s dilemma and accommodates what she called the dualist intuition: properties are indeed both dispositional and categorical, but a disposition differs from its manifestation – they are simply two different properties. Furthermore, a disposition’s potential manifestation is an un-instantiated universal to which it is directed, while a disposition’s active manifestation is an instantiated universal to which it was directed. Hence we save both dualism and identity. The dilemma is solved; the identity theory survives the criticism.

Concluding remarks

The theory of properties I proposed in this paper can be stated under five headings:

- i) All properties are in rebus universals (universals in Armstrong’s way);
- ii) Every property is directed to at least one other property and is the target of at least one property (the ‘relation’ between two properties is called directedness). All properties are born/created in this way.
- iii) Every property has two property-sides: the dispositional and the categorical; the two property-sides are not aspects of the property, but ways of conceiving that property. Either as it is in relations to other properties, or as it is in itself.
- iv) Therefore, a property’s dispositionality and its qualitativity are a) identical: they are the same property and b) different: they are different property-sides.
- v) Every property, thus, is both a disposition and a manifestation of a disposition. The act of manifestation is to be described in terms of instantiations: the object instantiating the disposition also instantiates, under certain circumstances (meaning after instantiating the stimulus property), the property to which the disposition was directed.

¹² To be noted that there isn’t any a priori connection between the triggering property and the manifestation of the disposition. It is a matter of experience and a contingent fact what exactly triggers a certain manifestation.

¹³ Let’s say: when the property of being struck by a hammer is instantiated.

It is what I should call a realist version of the identity theory promoted by Martin and Heil. It avoids, I believe, the problems of the latter, while saving the elegance of such a theory. Its obvious disadvantage is the unpopularity of these two supplementary premises. Both relative identity and universals are “shameful in many eyes as pregnant spinsters used to be”, as once Mellor (1974, 157) said, referring to dispositions. It is, nonetheless, a matter of taste if one accepts such a rich ontology for an elegant ideology. I think it explains the best what we perceive as being a world of powerful qualities.

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THE TRANSCENDENCE OF *DASEIN*
IN HEIDEGGER'S *ON THE ESSENCE OF GROUND*

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Abstract

At the core of Heidegger's theory regarding Dasein's transcendence is founding (Begründen), bringing together the constituting elements of transcendence that were ignored in Being and Time: nothingness, truth, freedom, ground (world). As it will be shown, Dasein's transcendence is relevant for the understanding of our everyday encountering with things and others and for understanding the differences occurring between the various possibilities of comporting towards beings, possibilities raised by ontological understanding as a meaning given for Being. The task of self-understanding is, thus, essential for Heidegger's On the Essence of Ground, as it leads to the possibility of being authentic only through the relation to the others.

Keywords: *Dasein's* transcendence, ontological understanding, world, ground, truth, *Dasein's* freedom, grounding.

In *Being and Time* (1927), only temporality was analysed as constituting transcendence. In this paper I will present how Heidegger, in his text *On the Essence of Ground* (1929), reveals truth, nothingness,

temporality, freedom and ground itself as constituting elements that render possible transcendence to world.

Transcendence is *Dasein's* fundamental constitution¹. All beings that manifest themselves (our awareness of a being's manifestation is the state-of-unveiling) can manifest as such because of transcendence. The latter has three moments (distinct from its constituting elements): that which is the agent of transcendence – *Dasein*; transcending itself which is a surpassing of beings (equipments, the *Dasein* of others, myself); that towards which beings are surpassed – the world. World is a totality of meanings or senses which are interconnected. These meanings are both interconnected and not: they are all connected because they have as ground an understanding of Being, but are not interconnected because *Dasein* refers to a being alone² (in intentionality), which isn't necessarily in a meaningful relationship with other beings³: the tools from my kitchen can be related in meanings when I cook, but the owl that the Greeks symbolise as „wisdom” is not related necessarily to the significance of a rock, for instance, although both objects, in order to manifest as such, need to have their meanings grounded on the ontological understanding (the meaning of „to be” as given by *Dasein*). Transcendence is not a process that ceases to exist, it is something that always takes place due to *Dasein's* continuous unveiling of beings (rendering their manifestations). And this unveiling can only happen because of *Dasein's* ontological understanding, even though this understanding can be pre-ontological.

I said that there are several concepts that render possible transcendence. Let's take truth for now, in order to determine ontological understanding. The meaning of ground is established as follows: in the first two parts of *On the essence of ground*, Heidegger deals with the various approaches in the history of philosophy of the following concepts: 'world', 'transcendence', 'ground'. Heidegger's immersion allows him to retain and use the broader meanings of the three concepts mentioned. I already briefly talked about the first two concepts. Ground is 'that starting from which'. Also in the first part, the critique of Leibniz's conception of truth as propositional truth leads Heidegger to the argument for ontological truth. Predicating, i.e. stating that 'S is P', reckons 'S' as a being. But, in order to state something about that particular being, I first have to be aware of that being ('S'), i.e. to let it manifest itself, while I am aware of it. This fact shows that: 1) openness (which refers to my awareness and letting the being manifest) grounds judgments; 2) if the judgment has to be true, I have to verify it by appealing to the openness of beings; 3) the openness mentioned is pre-predicative; 4) truth is openness – this means that truth belongs to manifesting beings, contrary to the modern idea of correspondence-truth, which entails truth as

¹ Pertaining to *Being and Time's* terminology, being-in-the-world is transcendence.

² Or intentional object, in Husserlian terms (i.e. physical objects, state of affairs, imaginary objects, mental acts etc.)

³ Doesn't open an intentional horizon, in Husserl's terms.

something determined by the subject; 5) ontic truth (manifestation as a particular case of openness) grounds propositional truth. But ontic truth is, always, about a being. Being a phenomenologist, Heidegger rejects objectivism and scientific realism: there is no absolute 'objective' and unique truth about the world and the objects in it that has to be discovered by science, philosophy or religion. So, for Heidegger, whether we're talking about the beings we encounter in everyday life, or in science, religious experience etc., we always invest beings with various meanings. I can signify (not necessarily conceptualize) the car as 'a tool for getting from somewhere to somewhere else' or as 'a tool for showing I'm a wealthy man' etc. I can give meaning to my interactions with others: 'the man is wealthy, so I can use him to my own benefit'. I can give a sense to my own life as well ('meaning' becomes, in this case, my possibility of becoming). All these meanings can be attributed to the beings I encounter and thus rendering the manifestation of these beings in a certain way. But what determines which significations I can use to invest beings with and which I can't? Or, put it differently: what 'grounds' ontic truth and how? Ground is brought into discussion when talking about the relation between ontological truth and ontic truth. If we talk about the openness of something (a proposition, a showing of beings), then we refer to truth. Truth is always possible on the ground of something else, therefore truth is always in connection to something else which plays the role of ground. Something acts as 'ground' for putting forward a state of openness.

In ontic truth, the reference is only to one being. But in order for the being to reveal itself, *Dasein* has to put together a configuration on what 'to be' is and how it is (ontological truth). This means that *Dasein* has an understanding of Being (disclosedness⁴ of Being). The understanding of Being determines how beings manifest themselves for *Dasein*. Thus, ontic truth is grounded in the ontological truth. The understanding of Being can be pre-ontological, i.e. non-conceptual: in this case I am not aware of the way I understand Being and I don't form any concepts to bind Being; this pre-ontological understanding can be named 'ontological' in a broad sense; the understanding of Being can also be ontological - ontological understanding has here a narrower sense: Being is conceptually determined by means of a theoretical endeavour. Between pre-ontological and ontological understanding are intermediate levels, e.g. in natural sciences there is an understanding of the Being of nature that grounds the fundamental concepts of that science, e.g. time, space, movement etc., concepts that influence the way of treating, studying or considering beings; this is not a plain ontological understanding because it refers only to a limited domain (to nature), and not to Being itself. In spite of this, science can give an indication towards the way Being might be conceptualized, because science sets itself on some

⁴ Disclosedness, openness, unveiliness refer to truth. When understanding Being, *Dasein* forms himself a truth of Being. There can be various truths about Being, because it is not identical to beings. Transcendence entails the ontological difference: that towards which is transcendent is Being, which renders possible beings. This is the nothingness of Being.

ultimate, 'fundamental presuppositions'⁵, which are offered by the ontological understanding (in the broad sense). Truth is one of the components of transcendence (along with freedom, nothingness and ground). After speaking about ground, the final step is grounding, bringing forth freedom.

Freedom's relation to ground is called *grounding*. This means that there are three 'grounds', and freedom interacts with them. But those so-called 'three grounds' are in fact different instantiations of the world (which is the ground itself⁶). So freedom, in pertaining to ground, lets the world to 'dynamically' be, which means that 'World never is, but worlds'⁷. There are three forms of grounding, which are equioriginary existing in *Dasein's* limited freedom. 'Equioriginary' means that they happen at the same time, and the revealing of one cannot take place without the other ones, just as future cannot appear without past and present, all three of them manifesting themselves at the same time. This relation between the three forms of grounding is possible because transcendence is also grounded into temporality, as *Being and Time* had stressed out. The first two are components of world-projecting (which is the same as intentionality):

1. Laying-claim (*Stiften*) is a projection of *Dasein's* possibilities. Laying-claim is the 'positive' aspect of projecting, because *Dasein* is self-surpassing himself, having ahead of him many possibilities of action that can be brought into concreteness. Thus, he's comportment towards beings different from himself will be so that he can do what he's proposed himself to do.

2. Taking-possession (*Bodennehmen*) is projecting's 'negative' part: *Dasein* has plenty of possibilities that he can't choose to actualize because of the restricting conditions of being in the midst of other beings that don't allow certain possibilities to come about. Thus, *Bodennehmen* reveals *Dasein's* limited freedom. World, as I said, is a totality of meanings and possibilities put forth by *Dasein* in a threefold projection: he is projecting possibilities in regard to certain objects, others and himself. Because he projects himself, and all the other beings are encountered conforming to *Dasein's* project, the sake of which *Dasein* exists is himself, being-for-the-sake-of (himself) revealing itself as the fundamental feature of the world. Transcending towards the world is a transcending towards possibilities, thus *Dasein* is transcending towards himself. World is part of selfhood. All possibilities that *Dasein* has at hand when dealing with beings (whether they're beings from his everyday life or special kinds of beings belonging to the fields of science, religion, philosophy etc.) are possibilities for-the-sake-of-himself.

⁵ I coined the term from R.G.Collingwood's view on metaphysics, very similar to Heidegger's account on ontological truth.

⁶ This is why Richardson identifies world with (the understanding of) Being, see his footnote on p.168, *Heidegger Through Phenomenology to Thought*.

⁷ "On the Essence of Ground", p.126.

3. Founding (*Begründen*)⁸ – the two previous forms of grounding are in need of a third form for accounting and justifying themselves, this third form being founding. Ontological understanding (disclosure or understanding of being) is the ground for ontic truth (disclosure of beings), i.e. founding renders intentionality. The previous two forms correspond to ontic truth, which needs to be grounded on ontological truth (understanding of Being) in order for beings to manifest in a certain way for us. The projection of world offers certain meanings, senses, possibilities to different beings. But the justification for giving these certain meanings is assured by founding, which is a casting-over (of the world)⁹. Founding is the domain that answers to the ‘why’ questions: ‘Why in this way and not otherwise? Why this and not that? Why something at all and not nothing?’¹⁰. Founding is the transcendental possibility for ‘why’ in general. Through founding can one answer ‘why event X is the cause for Y?’, ‘why do I choose to have this projection of myself and not another?’ etc. Of course, the first thing that comes in mind is: how many justifications can I give? How further can I go into accounting for something? The answer is: as far as I want. Heidegger had already shown this when discussing the intermediate levels between pre-ontological and ontological understanding. On an intermediate level was physics with an understanding of the concept of nature which serves as a justification for the way we understand time, space, movement etc., which serve as justification for the way researchers comport themselves towards (intentional) objects. But that concept of ‘nature’ could have been further accounted, until it could have reached a final full conceptualized understanding of Being (of what ‘to be’ could mean). But even if this entire understanding of Being isn’t fulfilled, science itself still rests on a pre-understanding, i.e. pre-conceptual understanding of Being, an understanding that is implicit in the very theoretical endeavour of science. But the ontological understanding is not reserved only for science, philosophy or theology. Every *Dasein* has such fundamental presuppositions even if they are just pre-ontologically understood. The ontological understanding of Being sets the binds or the leeway in which the comportment towards beings that are non-*Dasein*, towards oneself and towards the *Dasein* of others can take place. This means that *Dasein* always has a pre-understanding of Being, pre-understanding that is ontological (in the broad sense), thus rendering possible the manifestation of beings in a certain way. For example, when perceiving some objects, the way I perceive them is always influenced by my (implicit) understanding of Being: if I think that all things are mere

⁸ In my paper I prefer using W.Richardson’s translation for naming the three forms of grounding. Alternate versions: 1. Michael Inwood’s translation: ‘founding’ (*Stiften*), ‘gaining ground’ (*Bodennehmen*) and ‘giving reasons’ (*Begründen*), cf. Michael Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary*, Blackwell Publishers, 1999, p.84; 2. William McNeill: grounding as establishing (*Stiften*), grounding as taking up a basis (*Bodennehmen*), grounding as the grounding of something (*Begründen*), cf. William McNeill’s translation of Heidegger’s “On the Essence of Ground” in *Pathmarks*, p.127.

⁹ In German, projection is *Entwurf*, whereas casting-over is *Überwurf*, literally meaning an over-projection of Being.

¹⁰ “On the Essence of Ground”, p.130.

representations¹¹, then I'll think that what I perceive isn't the thing itself, but a representation caused by the configuration of my senses, thus if my senses would've had another structure, I would've perceived the objects differently, hence what I see is just unfaithfully resembling the objects and I don't have nothing to assure me that what I see are the things as they really are. In this example, when I perceive, I am not consciously aware of all these ideas that form my understanding of Being, but I accept them implicitly in a pre-ontological understanding of Being. Or to take another example, if I consider that altruism doesn't exist, I will explain the entire behaviour of others as being egocentrically driven and I would think that I have to 'fight' for surviving, because nobody's cares in fact for my well-being. Another example: if two men are in front of an ocean, and the waters suddenly divide, one of them may accept it as a miracle from God (this man accepts, in his implicit ontological understanding, that there exist things that aren't empirically perceivable, so he can accept the existence of miracles), the other may not accept it as a miracle, but as something that ought to be scientifically explained (although he might accept the existence of God, but considers that God wouldn't interfere in the empirical world). All these examples refer to pre-ontological understandings. Though Heidegger doesn't mention this in this work, metaphysics, in the way Heidegger understands it in the so-called 'phenomenological decade', is the science of ultimate grounds¹². Metaphysics provides the strict ontological understanding, which doesn't provide certainty regarding the ultimate grounds, which function only as 'ultimate/absolute presuppositions'. This leads to an aspect of *Dasein*'s freedom: not having ultimate presuppositions to be certain of, we have the possibility of choosing from various understandings of Being, understandings made up by us for supporting the way we interact with beings in our everyday life, science, religion, philosophy etc. We cannot have certainty about Being, but only about beings rendered by our particular understanding of Being. Certainty is a value strictly for sciences in their activity, and the type of 'certainty' they offer depends on the scientific theory itself and its backing by a pre-ontological understanding. Sciences' concepts of certainty and truth are rendered only by these grounds settled in the understanding of Being.

All this process of transcendence discloses freedom (I've just given an example), because *Dasein* determines himself starting from himself: he isn't forced to choose one understanding of Being over the other, thus not being forced to choose a certain interaction with beings neither. This is a lack of exterior grounding, i.e. a being other than *Dasein* himself doesn't determine him to choose one ontological understanding over the other. But this freedom

¹¹ I'm talking here about representation in the sense given by modern philosophy: subject and object are two opposing elements, but there is an intermediate element, representation, which assures that the subject can transcend from itself towards the object. Representation is just an unfaithful resemblance of the object.

¹² For Heidegger, the term *metaphysics* will gain an unfavorable meaning only in the middle of the '30, when he begins interpreting Nietzsche. *Metaphysics* will then refer to the European philosophical tradition brought forth by Plato and Aristotle and ending with Nietzsche.

is finite, as shown in grounding as taking-possession. His freedom is finite for another reason too: *Dasein* cannot choose not to transcend beings towards his world. These are the reasons why Heidegger calls freedom 'ground of ground'¹³, but not being a usual ground, but a *Ab-grund* (abyss, literally meaning a lack of ground). It is meant that the 'ground' for a certain configuration of world is *Dasein* himself, through his *finite* freedom. If freedom weren't finite, it would have been plain ground. Obligation is given to *Dasein* not by something *outside* of him, but by himself (*Dasein* is obligated to himself, by himself) through choosing a certain understanding of Being and, thus, also a certain world-projection rendered by ontological understanding (intentionality). The three forms of grounding that render transcendence show how *Dasein* exists (how he relates to himself and to what is non-*Dasein*) and how the structure of ground is possibility, basis and account. The grounding which projects world, the grounding of *Dasein* in the midst of beings and ontological grounding all together assemble the essence of ground (world in its relation to *Dasein's* freedom). Transcendence, being equivalent to being-in-the-world, constrains *Dasein* to configure a content of ground taken in it's threefold manner. Every *Dasein* may put together a different content, i.e. a different understanding of Being. All this process enlightens *Dasein's* freedom, which becomes the essence of ground.

I think that there are numerous questions left open: what kinds of ontological understanding can there be ? How can we shift from one to another ? How can we choose which ontological understanding to embrace ? Is there an ontological understanding that could be the 'right' one ? All these are problems that Heidegger's later philosophy (his authentic philosophy) will deal with. The shift from the understanding of *Dasein* to the understanding of Being has now been fully made. But there may be another aspect that this text is important for: in my opinion, *On the Essence of Ground* fulfills the main task of phenomenology, as established by Husserl: a proper self-understanding of the subject in his concrete activities, the purpose of self-understanding being a moral one: 'And so the human being, existing as a transcendence that exceeds in the direction of possibilities, is a creature of distance. Only through ordinary distances that he forms for himself in his transcendence with respect to all beings does a true nearness to things begin to arise in him. And only being able to listen into the distance awakens *Dasein* as a self to the response of the other *Dasein* in whose company (*Mitsein*) it can surrender its I-ness so as to attain itself as an authentic self'¹⁴.

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¹³ "On the Essence of Ground", p.134.

¹⁴ Idem, p.135.

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SECTION II:
COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETERS – THE NEW REALITY IN/FOR A
COMPANY

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Abstract

Social media and marketers are the new reality for a company, even if it's a big one, a small one or we are a public figure reaching its fans. Since we get up in the morning until we got back to bed we check what happens on social media platforms, we read our e-mails, see what's new. Taking in consideration what is happening online, how companies communicate and interact with their costumers we can easily conclude that all means of communication have moved to digital area, leaving the offline way behind. If we want to be alive, we have to be active on all social media platforms and in order to do that we need to know what does social media mean, which are the benefits of using it (why we should use it in order to get to our customers or fans). But in the same time we have to be aware of the fact that if we don't use it properly we can generate a big crisis which will be difficult to stop. But, if something like that happens, a crisis strike on your social media you need to know what you have to do if you want to regain back your popularity.

Keywords: Social Media, Crisis, Marketers, Tips, Benefits

The move towards social media has been a self-evident thing that had to happen. The moment when companies understood that this way they are only a click away from those who are targeted, the Internet and its resources were no longer a mystery. If we take a look at what is happening online, in all discussions initiated on various topics, conversations and interactions between companies and their customers, we can easily see that all communication has moved to digital area, leaving the offline way behind. Audience also has been resized and now in the social media period we are talking about a community that shares the same ideals, goals, which is defined by the same set of features and principles.

But what is social media and how it came to overthrow the traditional way of communication of companies we will discuss below.

1. What does social media means?

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content"¹. Considering this, there are many social-media technologies which can take different forms such as internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, social networks. Nowadays, technologies include blogging, sharing pictures or music, wall-posting, tagging and so on.

Beside these technologies, there are many social platforms which are used in order to get more traffic on the site by using social media. Social media is the voice you need, it's a way of saying what you think or it's how you communicate with your costumers. If you are a company, social media is the way you can personalize your brand and which can help you to disseminate your messages in a relaxing cooling way. There are a few tactics which can help you such as: Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare, Google+, Instagram, blogs, LinkedIn, Youtube, Pinterest etc. Unlimited and fast connection to the internet, every day advancing mobile technology bombard us with too more information. We check our accounts on social networks, emails and favorite sites from the moment we wake up until we go to bed. I think that the next phase will be selecting information for each individual and use them as part of our life.

2. Which are the benefits of social – media?

It does not matter if you are a company or if you are a public person, both can use social media in order to say something, to reach to your clients or fans, to let others know that you exist. Many companies think that by

¹ Kaplan, M. Andreas, Haenlein, Michael, (2010), "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media", Business Horizons, p. 61

simply posting something on their web page or on their Facebook account, they will gain more customers and money. The things are not so simple, because you need time to build a community, it needs time to grow, and the benefits of using social media are not obvious as we would like to be.

Brand recognition on social media can help you decide on how to present your company, on what you want to communicate about your company. Only if you have a good content you can create for your company a good reputation for your brand, your products. The most important, your content has to be in harmony with your mission and values.

Building a community on social media is difficult and sometimes may seemed impossible, but once you made it everything will be much easy. You have to gain fans and only when they become part of your community you gained free and direct access towards them. This way you can find out what they think about you, what they like about your products, which support your ideas. This information that you gain this way can help you in the future and by talking all the time with them you can find out the most valuable ideas which are so hard to obtain by any paid marketing research².

Authority, role model by creating a real good content, answering to all your fans questions and taking in consideration their ideas, they will be more loyal than you ever can imagine.

Website traffic can grow due to social media if you know how to use them. When you publish different articles, when you share them on your page or blog, you give your fans a reason to access your website link and to visit your site. In the end, you can determine them to want to read your site, your newsletter all the time.

Competition advantage is another benefit which can help you to be different from the other companies which sell the same products as you do. If you become a social media guru you will be able to overcome those company which don't trust social media, which don't know how to handle it or which don't know social media even exists. If this is the case, you have the big opportunity to assert yourself as a brand and to do something that other companies don't do it so well. If you are stubborn and don't use social media, it's just another way to let other companies to gain or to take your audience³.

3. What happens if you don't use properly social media?

First of all you remain anonymous second of all you can create a crisis so big that will affect your life in social media forever. There are so many examples of company who were forced to manage a crisis in social media. One of them is KFC and its image crisis. A young man posted a photo about their product on social media, this photo went viral and worst of all was that

² David, S. Meerman, (2010), "Real-Time: How Marketing & PR at speed drives measurable success", John Wiley & Sons, p.28

³ Ibidem

KFC didn't react. While people were seeing this photo, KFC was keeping posting the same messages on social media as nothing has ever happened. In KFC situation were many other companies such as Starbucks.

If this happens to you, you should know that there are solutions and you can still make something in order to manage the crisis. First of all you should develop a plan with what you should have to do if a crisis occurs. Second of all try to find out the reason that generated the crisis and after this prepare an answer, but be careful of what and how you say it. Even if it's hard you have to let the talks flow and not to stop them, because you will do more harm than good. It will be an extremely bad decision to stop talking with your community or to delete their comments which at the moment is unhappy. At some point the crisis will disappear but you need to evaluate everything to see what happens and how to stop it in the future.

So, briefly, this is what you shouldn't do when a crisis strike on your social media platform:

- Don't hesitate the problem

- Don't hide yourself and answer to their questions

- Don't struggle, you need to be calm, at some point to make fun of yourself

- Don't lie, at some point the truth will be found out

- Don't be afraid of what's happening and take action

- Be honest with your community and they will understand you

4. What to do to regain your popularity?

Every company goes through this situation at some point. Every company will struggle with monotony at some point and it will have to figure it out what to do to regain its popularity. There are many things that you should do when your comments are not so many as it used to be, when your fans don't like or share anymore your content, when your posts aren't as viral as you want, when your reach is diminishing week by week. These are some of them:

- Post your content on other pages with a direct link towards your page

- Reward your community in most crazy possible ways, give them online badges for example to put them on their page

- Create games and contest with interesting prizes

- Ask them questions, try to gather them into conversations

- Let your fans know that you are proud of them

- Create polls

- Be inventive concerning your content by posting something new and different every day. For example, post serious news, but funny videos too.

- Use all the features that your page has, highlight and pin your posts

- Don't use too many words, try to say what you have to say in one sentence

- Ask them to show you that they like your post by commenting and sharing it

- Try to find out more about your community, what does it like
- Let them know that you care, so every time they comment your post appreciate their effort
- Don't try every single time to sell them your products
- Your subject should be related to your activity domain
- Use quality, creative and interesting images
- Give them a reason to search for you, to try to communicate with you
- Interact with them every single day and give them options
- Create events outside your online community and ask them to join you and after that posts photos about the event
- Offer them promotions or discounts
- Reach your fans at the perfect time. Establish when your fans are online and try to post your content then
- Be different and innovative, don't be afraid to express your views
- Say thank you to them as often as you can
- Don't post too often but in the same time don't let to pass by too much time between posts
- Try to reach their sentimental mood⁴.

These are just a few insights about what you should do or should not do on social media platforms. Nowadays almost all the company use social media and they recognize that in this way they are more close to their customers, can gain more easy new customers, can influence them, can found out what clients think about their products or services and all of these happened thanks to social marketers. Marketers are those who are trying to keep alive the company in online by posting interesting content, by reaching fans with what they would like to see, in other words they are those who put things on moving and why not, let's recognize those who make the selling process much easy. Without them everything will be more difficult, but in the same time, they can become an obstacle for the company visibility if they don't know what to do and how to use social media.

If you are a small company, if you are at the beginning, if you want to play on the same field with big companies you have to be present, alive on social media, people must know you, must read about you. So you have to reach them on every online, social ways.

You might ask you if you need to be alive on social media, and the answer is a big yes. In conclusion the social networking is very important, but it depends only on you if you are ready to recognize it or if you are ready to face up the great ways to protect and to build your digital reputations. Social networking is the new way of communicating, interacting with others by using all the tools which will make possible for you to be proactive when it comes of maintaining, building and protecting your brand and why not help you spreading your ideas. All you have to do is to be in theme with everything

⁴ Shama, Kabani, (2013), "Zen of Social Media Marketing", BenBella Books

that happens online, to constant learn about all of the opportunities that social media provide to you.

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