DERRIDA'S OTHER TRANSCENDENTAL AESTHETIC

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By going back to the starting point of Derrida's debates with some of the main representatives of structuralism in France, I propose to highlight the ambiguities that cover the very notion of structure, and to take the measure of the exact role that the reference to phenomenology plays then and will continue to play thereafter. Among these ambiguities: the one that touches the mathematical notion of structure, central in the triumphant structuralist mathematical current in France at that time; and especially: the one called "groups of transformations," the most important one to understand at the same time the audacities and the impasses of structuralism. The hard core of mathematization of modern physics, with Galileo's principle of relativity, then developed in a masterly way in Einstein's theory of relativity rest on this very structure. After tracing the broad outlines of these initial discussions, we engage in an analysis of how it is possible to understand the "epistemological contemporaneity" of relativity theory and Husserl's transcendental aesthetics. Based on a thorough exploration of the analyses of the intersubjective constitution of space, time and the objective common world, we identify this central structure that Husserl calls "intersubjective group of transformation." Equipped with this phenomenological structure, we trace this motif in Derrida's work. Its insistence allows us to understand how the phenomenological premises of his critique of structuralism can help to understand his theoretical positions, especially in contrast to Jean-Luc Nancy.

Keywords: structure, group of transformation, relativity, coordinate system, intersubjectivity, space and time, body.

ДРУГАЯ ТРАНСЦЕНДЕНТАЛЬНАЯ ЭСТЕТИКА ДЕРРИДА

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Возвращаясь к отправной точке дебатов Деррида с некоторыми из главных представителей структурализма во Франции, я предлагаю выявить неоднозначность, которая затрагивает само понятие структуры, и определить точную роль, которую здесь играет (и будет продолжать играть) отсылка к феноменологии. Среди такого рода неоднозначностей: математическое понятие структуры, центральное для господствовавшего во Франции того времени структуралистского течения в математике; и особенно та неоднозначность, которая касается «группы преобразований», поскольку она наиболее важна для понимания одновременно дерзости и тупиков структурализма. Жесткое ядро математизации современной физики связано с принципом относительности Галилея, мастерски развитого позднее в теории относительности Эйнштейна, и опирается именно на эту структуру. Проследив общие контуры этих первоначальных дискуссий, мы обратимся к анализу того, как можно понять «эпистемологическую современность» теории относительности и гуссерлевской трансцендентальной эстетики. Опираясь на тщательный разбор того, как интерсубъективно конституируется пространство, время и объективный общий мир, мы выявляем ту центральную структуру, которую Гуссерль называет «интерсубъективной группой трансформации». Вооружившись такой феноменологической структурой, мы прослеживаем этот мотив в творчестве Деррида. Настоятельность, с которой развивается этот мотив, позволяет лучше понять как феноменологические предпосылки критики структурализма со стороны Деррида, так и его собственные теоретические позиции, особенно по контрасту с позицией Жан-Люка Нанси.

Ключевые слова: структура, группа преобразования, относительность, система координат, интерсубъективность, пространство и время, тело.

1. AN HISTORICAL STARTING POINT:
A CONFERENCE ON STRUCTURE AND GENESIS

The scene is set in what was one of the high places of French philosophy of the last century: Cerisy-la-Salle. The colloquium, which brought together some of the essential protagonists (Piaget, Desanti, Derrida, Vernant, etc.), represents a missed opportunity in this respect, almost sixty years on. Due to fortuitous circumstances, the talks that took place during the Cerisy colloquium, *Genesis and Structure*[1], constitute one of the most decisive events in the intellectual history of the French language

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[1] Which Piaget co-organized with Lucien Goldman and Maurice de Gandillac, and was subsequently published as *Entretiens sur les not ions de genèse et structure* (De Gandillac & Goldman, 2011).

in the second half of the twentieth century, and in what was taking place around the constellation designated as "structuralism."

Following the script of these discussions, which were sometimes lively and often turned into a dialogue of the deaf, one becomes convinced that the quarrel over the fashionable opposition between genesis and structure was in fact a dispute over the *concept of* structure, over the right to a broad, even lax, use of the term structure *versus* the imperative requirement of a strict and rigorous use. This would *not* have been *necessary*, however, had it not been for a more fundamental question concerning the *possibility* of a structural approach to the *phenomenon* in the strictest and most inclusive sense—away from any reductionism. The possibility or impossibility of forming a rigorous concept of the phenomenon seemed to depend on its "analysability," so as to delimit "regions" in a non-arbitrary and non-violent manner and to divide them into discernible and nameable elements. Consequently, one of the lateral but recurrent polemics concerned phenomenology, its genetic and/or structural dimension.

Derrida was then working, as a phenomenologist, on *the problem of genesis in Husserl's philosophy*[2], which, because of the theses developed by Piaget, could not fail to provoke a lively and profound debate. For Piaget, "all genesis starts from a structure and ends in a structure"[3]. As a counterpoint, Piaget saw the "philosophy of Husserl," and then through *Gestalt theory*, which Husserl would have "inspired in part," as a psychological structuralism without genesis. This insensitivity to genesis was in his view inevitable because of his 'anti-psychologism,' which leads him to "an intuition of structures or essences, independently of any genesis" (De Gandillac & Goldman, 2011, 39).

2. MATHEMATICAL STRUCTURES AND STRUCTURALISM

Jean-Toussaint Desanti's (provisional) assessment of the short structuralist period shows that the use of this term, "to take things strictly," if we compare it to the use made of it by mathematicians at the same time, has been essentially *metaphorical*. Assuming that this assessment is correct, this does not preclude, on the contrary, the search for structures in phenomena. This is, after all, the path that physics has followed in mathematising itself, which cannot be reduced to a simple operation of dressing up phenomena[4].

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[2]   Post-graduate thesis written in 1953–1954, which was not published until 1990. See (Derrida,1990).

[3]   Discussions on the notions of genesis and structure in (De Gandillac & Goldman, 2011, 40).

[4]   Nor does Husserl do this, contrary to what is repeated, over and over, by a lazy tradition of Husserlian commentaries, which is as little interested in the positive epistemological aims of pheno-

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The theoretical potential of such a structural investment presupposes the respect of three *minimal* and, all in all, rather weak conditions, and this even before determining which type of structure we are going to approach (set, multiset, field, group, lattice, etc.): 1. That the set of phenomena is well defined; 2. That it is presented as a "system" that can be broken down into consistent relations, allowing a classification that is not purely descriptive of the phenomena in question; 3. Above all, that this system can be *analysed*, this last requirement being without doubt the most fundamental. As such, it is presupposed by the first two and independent of them. Desanti warns that if we do not satisfy this requirement of analysability, we will only obtain a verbal structuralism:

> You will not know which relationships to define, nor on what to define them. If this segmentation is assumed to be done, then you are no longer dealing with the original field of phenomena—but with another object—which you do not observe, but which you posit as the set of relevant components of your field of phenomena […]. If we cannot get through this first step, then it is better to abandon the idea of trying to reduce your system to some structure. (Desanti, 1976, 138–139)

The analysability referred to here, without being totally foreign to it, cannot be reduced to the criterion of *analyticity* put forward by the "logicist" current, even less to the linguistic application of this criterion of rigour which is considered standard within the so-called 'analytic' nebula. Even in its mathematical sense, it does not prejudge the nature of the elements, or the underlying formal ontology (e.g., assemblage), but it does postulate something essential that makes it possible to overcome an artificial antinomy between the historical (or genealogical) approach and the structural approach: namely, that the structures being sought are *already* at work, enveloped and pre-thematised in approaches that are said to be more "phenomenological" in the ordinary sense, i.e., empirical and descriptive. For "before becoming themselves formal objects of formal mathematics, 'structures' were at work in mathematics at its various degrees of formalisation and axiomatisation."[5]

This is true of one of the types of mother-structures enumerated by Bourbaki: topological structures. Let us recall this history *a tergo* which is one of the characteristics of French epistemology (and therefore of the history of science which should be based on it):

> Thus *topological structures* were defined in their purity by Hausdorff in the 1910s […]. However, the notion of a topological property (and even that of a field of topological

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menology as in the phenomenological implications and presuppositions of science. See the famous passage from the *Krisis* (Husserl, 1976b, 52). For another reading and a wider understanding of the problem of mathematization see, respectively: (Lobo, 2022b; Lobo 2022a).

[5]   Desanti "Genesis and Structure in Mathematics" (De Gandillac & Goldman, 2011, 44).

properties) had long been isolated. It had been mathematically fruitful by Riemann […] From the twentieth century, it had been *used in the practice of analysis* by Cauchy, Gauss, Abel […]. Finally, and without mentioning Leibniz, it had been used implicitly in Ancient Greece (cf. Archimedes). And Aristotle himself, in the *Physics* (V, 3), had conceived the rudiments of a naive topology. The same observation could be repeated for *algebraic structures* or *order structures* [the other two types of 'mother structures']. (De Gandillac & Goldman, 2011, 44)

A structure implies first of all a kind of "formalising abstraction." But upstream of this and the explicit *thematization* it allows, there is a "genesis" that corresponds to a series of gestures. Whatever the refinement of these gestures, it is important that the "domain of idealities" be given from the outset, for it is from it that the mathematizing subject receives its norms. Otherwise, any attempt to extend, apply or transpose a structural concept to other fields is indeed less than a "clothing of ideas," rather a symbolic embroidery or ornament. Conquering this starting point is not impossible for the so-called human and social sciences, but they must satisfy the three requirements[6], that we must define more formally: 1) A set—or a "multiplicity"—defined by *at least one* common property; 2) A "system" of relations defined on the set—at this stage we do not yet have a structure, and this does not imply nor exclude that the change of one element entails the change of all the others, i.e., independence versus additivity[7]; 3) Finally, analysability. Phenomena given in their compositional character are replaced by sharply cut-up phenomena, broken down into segmented regions, or even a single segmentation, or several: what you observe is the difference between "cat" and "rat," between "stop" and "step," between "nose" and "rose." These elements are distributed according to the properties of the relation they verify. The decisive step, properly mathematical, is the establishment of an application (a *mapping*), and eventually, of one-to-one correspondences between segmented regions, or if you like, of *functions*. As adventurous as it may seem, we must try, insists Desanti, even if it leads to failure. We can at least decide whether we are in the presence of two separate regions (thus condemning ourselves to a *metabasis eis allo genos*, i.e., to a purely *metaphorical* transition from the one to the other) or whether there are correspondences between these regions. The "architectural" vision of mathematics that guides Desanti here leads him to fold phenomenology into the expanding field of mathematics, so as to insert into this framework the tools likely to account for the autonomous develop-

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6   Of which the first two are weak conditions, to which he adds a supernumerary one (De Gandillac & Goldman, 2011, 138–140).

7   See the excessive and unintelligible condition put forth by Lévi-Strauss (1958, 307) and Derrida's critique in « La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines » (Derrida, 1967, 410).

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ment of mathematics, evacuating any trace of constituting subjectivity. But even, as he acknowledges the difficulty of producing a rigorous definition of structure, are such confidence and assurance well founded?

3. OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE PRINCIPLE OF PHENOMENOLOGY

Whatever these reservations may be, which we are entitled to make after the fact, this first obstacle was combined with a second one concerning the practicability of *pure reflection*. It corresponds to what I will call from now on *the objection of principle*, the one that is thrown at the head of phenomenology[8], as it is at the head of any philosophy advancing, even if masked, in the form of a *cogito*. That is to say, I fear, all philosophy. With the notorious exception of Derrida and a heterodox psychoanalyst, Nicolas Abraham[9], the objection was advanced—and tacitly assumed—by almost all the protagonists of the Cerisy conference; it was essential in particular for one of the organisers of this meeting, Jean Piaget.

The objection that Piaget addresses to phenomenology and had motivated his "de-conversion"[10] from phenomenology is precisely that such an analysis in the first person is impossible, and that the structures that emerge are therefore mere arbitrary constructions plastered on a vague self-perception. Let us note that, although he turns away from the eidetic of consciousness, Piaget will remember that psychology must henceforth beware of the trap of psychologism, and in order to do so, while seeking structures in the observed subject by induction, recognise the irreducibility of logic and mathematics.

This was a replay of an old debate. This objection of principle corresponds in fact very exactly to the objection commonly addressed to Husserl. It was formulated at the time of *Ideas I*, among others, by Moritz Geiger (Geiger,1911, 125–162)[11]. According to the latter, phenomenological reflection (which he assimilates to introspection or self-observation) would come up against an impossibility of principle which precisely forbids any analysis, and consequently any release of structures of consciousness. This would, *a fortiori*, be the case with feelings and affects.

It is in this objection that the stumbling block to the constitution of an authentic structural approach to consciousness lies, that is, a "mathematization" that does

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[8]   Derrida's expression, in (Derrida, 1993, 212, 215–219, 253, 272).

[9]   About the importance of this encounter, see Derrida's preface *Fors,* to Abraham and Torok's book which following Ferenczi tries to reconcile psychoanalysis and transcendental phenomenology (Derrida, 1976, 40–49). My comment: (Lobo, 2012, 411–412, 419–424).

[10]   Cf. Chap. I "Narrative and analysis of a deconversion" (Piaget, 1972). My comment: (Lobo, 2019).

[11]   M. Geiger repeats and systematises the argumentation of his thesis (Geiger, 1904).

not proceed from a simple arbitrary transposition, but discovers in the exploration of consciousness the motivation, the resources and the fundamental principles of an adequate and endogenous *mathesis*. We cannot engage in the steps of the Husserlian refutation of this objection as we have done elsewhere (Lobo, 2010). For this refutation coincides with the exposition of the analytics of consciousness. Let us also provisionally leave aside the subject of the dispute: the transcendental subject position that is at one with the reaffirmation of the Cartesian *cogito*, i.e., the claim to provide an elucidation of the conditions of possibility of science and of a scientific subject; or, in more speculative terms, a critical self-explanation of reason.

However, let us point out some milestones. The classical objection to introspection, understood as self-observation (*Selbstbeobachtung*), is formulated by Geiger in its least contestable aspect: the impossibility of observing and consequently analysing feelings, e.g., aesthetic enjoyment, at the moment they are experienced. Such self-observation, when it takes place, instantly changes the feeling. Self-observation would therefore only be exercised on a modified experience. Husserl remarks that this must be extended to *all experiences*, and that this applies to *all observations*. Conversely, the new experience incorporates such a modifying self-observation as a constitutive moment. On closer inspection, as Geiger and Piaget presuppose, many experiences include some form of self-observation as a *constitutive moment*.

The forms of reflection are indeed multiple: *reflection* in memory, in imagination, in judgement, etc., based on memories, empty, totally indeterminate, symbolic representations, or fresh experiences, etc. Introspection in its usual sense or in its positive, psychological sense, is a "non-pure" reflection, that is to say, a *repeatable* modification. The orientations of those immanent and constitutive reflections are also multiple (when reflecting in memory I can try to recall my position, what I perceived, what I felt, or even try to go back to the way in which those to whom I was speaking apparently perceived these words etc.). As such, these forms of reflection must be distinguished from pure reflection, i.e., from a reflection, which one might even assume to be ideal, i.e., *not performable*, which, *ideally,* would preserve the reflected experience. Such a non-modifying reflection is neutral and therefore presupposes an "operation" of neutralisation. Such is epoché. With the entry of the free imagination, we discover complete freedom in the circulation within these structures, provided that we suspend the question: *Did it really happen*?

Transcendental phenomenological reflection*,* as Husserl insists, because it is *pure*, is therefore not introspection. From the outset, it places itself in the element of a certain abstraction, which, although not that of formalisation, nonetheless draws on the same resources as the other formal disciplines (mathematics) and confers on it from the out-

set and not by any undue transfer the status of an eidetic—of a *mathesis*. One of these is the *modification of neutrality*[12], which suspends the preoccupation with whether the thing has really been experienced as it is, which, given the structure of consciousness and its internal and external connectedness, would be tantamount to making the truth of the description dependent on the presupposition of the "world thesis"; in the same way, mathematical physics is uninterested in knowing whether the event *of any kind* that it takes as the basis of its thought experiments has *actually* taken place; and the fact that an experiment confirms that it is the case is relevant only in so far as the "pure instantiation" of the law is readable in this individual and contingent case.

To the impossibility of an "analysing observation" (*analysierende Beobachtung*), Husserl responds by the effective practice of an analysis by abstraction (eidetic variation) of the moments integrated by a systematic classification of those phenomenological modifications (attentional, identifying, fulfilling, positional, modal, determining, clarifying, etc.) that no introspection could clearly distinguish. Each of these "intentional essence" with its moments can thus be described eidetically.

To the thesis of the impossibility of pure reflection, Derrida's response is two-fold, a double refutation in which his attachment to the phenomenological method is manifest. First of all, the so-called structuralist stagnation attributed to phenomenology corresponds only to a first phase of phenomenology, which is followed by a genetic phase—of which one can find more than one forerunner in the said first phase, if one questions what is to be understood under the title of "constitution" and "constitutive phenomenology."

The second objection, which is, on further analysis, only a part of the first, revolves around the question of the normative and normative facts. The participants agree on the centrality of this controversy, and two camps seem to be emerging, around a question that reactivates, with some confusion, the contentious issue as presented by Husserl, and from which he had nevertheless proposed a solution. In the absence of a re-execution and a re-appropriation of the solutions, we are once again in the presence of a typical example of the stammering of history, and of the perpetuation of problems and conflicts. Indeed, we see two camps emerging, those who approach norms (including epistemological norms) from an empirical point of view, as "normative facts," and those, fewer in number, who, like Derrida, recall that certain norms (in particular scientific norms) are irreducible to facts and must ultimately be based on or refer to "essences," "ideal units of objectivity" (De Gandillac & Goldman, 2011, 49).

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[12] Through the modification of neutrality, every actual and real intention of the real *cogito* is apprehended against the background of a *multiplicity of purely possible*, i. e. unreal, *potential intentions,* which is a characteristic feature of the mathematical attitude.

Because of its importance, the objection and Derrida's response deserve to be reproduced:

> Mr. Piaget's talk was about the psychology of intelligence. Now intelligence has to do with objects, with units of ideal objectivity, therefore universal. The problem [and the objection] is to know how a science that deals, in essence, with facts (even if they are described as structures, as totalities), with spatial-temporal events, can be a true psychology of intelligence,—how a genetic movement can respect both the sense of the psyche, proper to psychological science, and the sense of its ideal activity, which is precisely to escape from the sphere of the psyche, which is always a sphere of empirical subjectivity. (De Gandillac & Goldman, 2011, 49)

Piaget's response was not long in coming, and it consisted in placing the phenomenological theorist in the position of subject-theorist, which, in accordance with the experimental device of genetic psychology and its "metapsychology," had the effect of instantly transforming him into a subject-observed and converting his speech into speech-observed, while it placed the psychologist in the position of observer, or even, if he thematized and "reflected" this device, in the position of theorist-epistemologist (Piaget, 1967, 927 ff.). Piaget's operation amounts to neutralising the "will-say" of the transcendentalist phenomenologist. This allows him, without contradiction, but not without violence, to reduce "his norm" and what founds it to a simple fact. For the psychologist of intelligence, what is "normative for the subject" "is reduced to a fact or an event for the observer"—a "normative fact."

As for the term "metapsychology," it is not taken here in the psychoanalytic sense of the term. A more careful study of the relationship and positioning of Freudian psychoanalysis *vis-à-vis* what he calls "psychology" would, however, reveal that metapsychology, under his pen, is at once reflexive, speculative and genetic. Freud justifies in these terms the change of position on anxiety, and dissipates the apparent contradiction that results from it, by the passage from a psychological point of view to a metapsychological point of view, which corresponds to the passage from a descriptive and phenomenological approach (in the sense of Brentano) to a genetic and explanatory approach (integrating the economic and topical point of view), but above all authorising the use of hypotheses and consequently speculations: "If I expressed myself in this way in the past, it was because I was giving a phenomenological description, not a metapsychological presentation" (Freud, 1993, 9).

Without going further into this discussion, it is precisely the gesture of defending the principle of phenomenology and what insists in it that will keep us here. This defence is at work even in the later texts of Derrida. I have insisted elsewhere on this aspect. Let me turn now to a peculiar text dedicated to the problem of aesthe-

sis. I would like to consider the "tangents" that have been inserted in the volume *Le Toucher—Jean-Luc Nancy* (Derrida, 2000), which could be read as a phenomenological reading of post-structuralist approaches. Meanwhile, I would like to show that through a complex and rather tortuous path, Derrida is pursuing the same goal as in his early period: that of a transcendental aesthetics where, death and facticity, the relation to the other and intersubjectivity are already at work (Derrida, 1967, 244)[13]. This goes on a par with a strong structuralist requirement, that is comparable to those postulated by mathematical physics, under the principle of relativity.

4. "THIS IS MY BODY"—"HERE I AM" OR THE QUESTION OF ÆSTHETICS

Anyone who has practised the writings of Derrida or Jean-Luc Nancy will have immediately recognised, under the first quotation, one of the "places" of their dialogue, which is anything but a common place. Rather, it is a place where the question of the *possibility of something like a community* is replayed each time, and consequently that of things and a world in common.

To be fair and to be as short as possible, they would agree at least on this point, the "dialogue" they will have engaged in on this place is beyond them. I would have to mention here, for the first quotation, other voices that resonate there, that of Louis Marin and, following him, the voices of all those who are summoned there, by name or anonymously: in the form of an archived and recognised *corpus*, or an invisible, even mystical *corpus*. Beyond the generations that have merged into the readable corpus, these two hyper-citations record all the glorified or martyred bodies, reduced to the state of a mass grave, for which these formulas represent, whether we like it or not, whether we believe it or not, the rallying sign, but also the stele. The journey through this corpus, made up of texts, but not only texts, and not only texts *to be read*, forms an immense, disproportionate task, which Derrida evoked in the margin of the third chapter of *Le toucher—Jean-Luc Nancy*:

> It would be necessary one day to reread these texts on the *hoc est corpus meum* (in particular, therefore, those of Nancy) *with*—in a provocative configuration *with* all those that Louis Marin, through the immensity of his work, will have devoted, in such a lucid manner, to so many problematic dimensions (theological, historical, philosophical, semantic, logical) of the Eucharist. This necessary task is beyond my strength and the limits of this essay[14]. (Derrida, 2000, 78)

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[13] This transcendental æsthetics will be replaced by the concepts of "*archi-trace,*" « *archi-écriture* » while commenting « Freud et la scène de l'écriture » (Derrida, 1967, 315).

[14] See also: (Derrida, 1996; Derrida, 2003, 136–143). Reprinted in (Derrida, 2001). — Some milestones in Louis Marin's works: (Marin, 1975a; Marin, 1975b, 86–127); (Marin, 1977, 27–58); (Marin, 1981); or (Marin, 1986).

As for the second quotation, it refers to the other side of this same story, and to begin with the contemporaries, it refers to another dialogue, of which Levinas is one of the spokespersons.

5. POWER OF THE NEUTRAL: POWER OF EPOCHÉ

This title, as is easy to see, is a quotation. And even a *quotation of quotations*, to the point that, to be exact, it would have been necessary to indicate, by a superscript, the number of all those involved: "…"^{n}, to be read: "quotation of quotations… to the power *n*."

Applied to a quotation, such a power is not only a *number*, but a measure of the power of the neutral, if it is true at least that the inverted commas themselves indicate a potential of neutralisation, which refers to the specific neutralisation of *epoché*. Not that this is *sui generis*; for, as any reader of Husserl knows, the forms of *epoché* are legion. First of all, we have to consider its historically exemplary, but unfulfilled forms (such as Cartesian epoché, for example) or its vicious forms (such as the various sceptical figures), etc.; but we also have to take into account its methodical forms, within phenomenological practice, where, according to successive deepening, the multiplication of phenomenological reductions is accompanied by a multiplication of the related *epochai*. But for equally necessary methodological reasons, the transcendental *epoché*, because it neutralises the fundamental thesis that underlies all the other theses (the so-called *Generalthesis*[15] constitutive of the natural attitude and of the "belief in the world"), must remain, *idealiter*, unique. Uniqueness and ideal unity as a condition of ideality. We are here in a classical Platonic register. So it is perfectly correct to say at the same time that neutralisation, as an "operation," is not repeatable, as Husserl declares in *Ideen I*[16], while stubbornly indulging in the necessary deepening (from reduction to phenomenological reduction), to neutralizations of specific positions, exercising themselves on this or that stratum of the central sphere of "positionality" (Husserl, 1976a, 333; Husserl, 1950b, 483), sphere of what Husserl calls "qualities of act" or "modalities" (*Modalitäten*) in the narrow sense of the term. Within this sphere, we are particularly interested in the important stratum of meaning corresponding to the complex system of *intersubjective theses*, which becomes accessible only after the

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[15] See (Husserl, 1976a, §30, 60–61; §32, 65) with regard to phenomenological epoché.

[16] In contrast to the modification of imagination, neutralisation (*Neutralisierung*)—one of whose typical illustrations is epoché (transcendental or not)—is not iterable, in the sense that its repetition produces no modification, whereas the content of a consciousness of an image of an image… is directly affected by the number of iterations. See in particular: (Husserl, 1976a, §112, 253 ff.).

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implementation of the most radical reduction that Husserl calls "abstractive reduction" or "reduction to the proper" (Husserl, 1950a, § 44, 124–126).

There is, however, a *functional* form of neutrality. It may be involved in the construction of acts and the genetic stratification[17]. On the one hand, it is a general phenomenological law, stated as early as the time of the *Logical Investigations,* that the founded theses settle on the foundation-theses of whatever order they are, doxic or affective, theoretical, or practical, and correlatively, according to the orders of their ontic or axiological *posita* are not necessarily of the same kind as the founding ones. Consequently, neutrality *can* intervene in a targeted manner, for example in certain acts of ideation, so that the theses wrapped in the examples that underlie them do not reconduct the idealities to the positions of existence of the founding acts. This is typically the case in mathematical or geometrical activity, where the signs or figures drawn—whether perceived or imagined—normally have no bearing on the mode of position of the mathematical idealities at stake[18]. The same would be true in the case of acts of nominalization of a proposition. To take a classic example: the nominalization of a contradiction can be used as a basis (*Worüber-Etwas*) for true propositions. Beyond this functionality of epoché, we must also count on a literally *operative* modality, which presides over the institution of a professional activity, and to which corresponds a specific regime of "belief" (if you will, a "profession of faith" and a "deontology" of its own), a temporality and a mode of being-in-the-world of its own. When such a regime of activity—of "work"—enters into function, neutralisation is always at work in the form of an *epoché* of accomplishment (*Vollzugsépochè*)[19]. This *epoché* is constitutive of a habitus and accounts for the installation in a regulated, habitual activity, with its specific norms and its fundamental norm, in a "work" or a "profession." Husserl calls it, for this very reason, "professional *epoché*" (*Berufsepoché*)[20]. Without being able to elaborate on this theme here, we hope to at least give a glimpse of how epoché so understood is directly related to the question of the number of neutrality: of its multiplication (or division) and its "exponentiation," of its power; but above all, indirectly, how it could contribute to shedding light on one of the sources and resources of surplus-value and power in the economic and political order, which the critiques of political economy undertaken so far have overlooked. Such a contribution would require the patience of a long diversions through a phenomenology of value and appreciation (starting from the

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[17] As I proposed in: (Lobo, 2005, 45–49).

[18] See commentary on the *Fifth Logical Research*: (Lobo, 2005, 63).

[19] See in particular the indications in § 35 of the *Krisis* (Husserl, 1976b). These analyses have hardly received the attention they deserve from the sociologist, the anthropologist, the psychologist or the phenomenologist.

[20] See my study on this subject: (Lobo, 2009, 51–70). And previously: (Lobo, 2000, Chap. II).

quasi-pulsed individual values that advertisers and marketing practitioners try to capture) to the first elements of a critique of a *mathesis* of values, or even a metric of values, before being able to approach as rigorously and as elementally as possible the description of their economy (production, consumption, exchange).

With this idea of the *power of the neutral*, we are at least brought to the point indicated in the form of a somewhat cryptic subtitle, for a *non-mathematician philosopher*, but just as cryptic for a *non-philosophical mathematician*; to the "*originary coordinate system*" and to the "*intersubjective transference group through 'empathy'.*"

6. EGO—ORIGINAL COORDINATE SYSTEM AND TANGENTIAL ISSUES

The first refers to Husserl. Alongside numbers, the coordinate system plays a crucial role in this overall arrangement of culture, and in particular in the "idealising culture" of modern science. According to Hermann Weyl's famous formula, the coordinate system is the (ineliminable) residue of the *ego-elimination* (Weyl, 2017, § 13, 175) that modern science undertakes in its effort to objectify and mathematise the experience of nature. It constitutes, complementarily, for transcendental phenomenology, the index and the entry point *par excellence* into a transcendental aesthetics that is itself renewed and deepened, if we do not arbitrarily limit the role of "constitutive subjectivity" to rudimentary operations, but if we agree to see it everywhere at work, any formation of meaning (whatever its level of abstraction, of refinement) only "holds" on the condition that it is "supportable" and appropriable *subjectively and intersubjectively*. This is why it is important to find behind the products, the *gestures* of production, behind the administered and standardised operations, the ways of operating[21], and behind the 'given' and the donation, the modes of givenness, etc. The ego at its lowest level, prior to its "spacing" and "incorporation," was already presented in the lessons on *Thing and Space* as a *zero point* of a coordinate system (Husserl, 1973c, § 65, 175), a kinaesthetic zero point, a zero point of orientation, and thus the starting point of "linear transformations" (of coordinates) that allow for the constitution of complex surfaces, two-dimensional surfaces of positive curvature (which Husserl calls "Riemannian surfaces") (Husserl, 1973c, § 65, 315, 319–321). Later, in 1924, Husserl corrected this expression to "the *original system from which all other coordinate systems receive their meaning.*"[22]

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[21]   Cf. on this point, my article: (Lobo, 2017).

[22]   The expression "zero point of the coordinate system" is corrected by Husserl in 1924 by the expression: "*it is the original coordinate system from which all other coordinate systems receive their meaning.*" („*es ist das Urkoordinatensystem, durch das alle Koordinatensysteme Sinn erhalten*"). „<§ 5. *Das*

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The second expression makes explicit, what Gilles Châtelet has read in the immense problematic of intersubjectivity (Châtelet, 1979; Châtelet, 1993). This reading is confirmed by the exploration of the stages in the constitution of a common referential (that of the earth) and a "group" (in the anthropological sense) (in the sense of a primary sociality) (Husserl, 1973a, 218–219). This constitution presupposes a coordination of two consciousnesses (Husserl, 1973a, 222) (i.e., a transformation), which gives rise to a constituent multiplicity with a specific structure, that of an "intersubjective group of transformation" of kinesthetic manifolds, which constitutes the core of Husserl's monadology[23]. This group is a complex group in that the slightest overlap of the type "here I am," "here I am" presupposes an analogical pairing of my possibilities of being other (of alteration or alienation) and those of another (of being mine), which are in essence mutually *incompatible*, and to begin with the first pure variant, which allows me to grasp another body as that of an *alter ego*, it is in essence incompatible with the actual variant, the actual constitutive alteration of my actual self (Husserl, 1973a, 154, 161–162)[24]. This complex group structure of permutation appears as the condition of an intersubjective, i.e., common and, finally, objective space and time (Husserl, 1973a, 374–375).

It is probably no coincidence that these questions surface in Derrida's chapters of *Le Toucher—Jean-Luc Nancy*, entitled *tangents*. These *tangents* concentrate and maintain the maximum tension between a French phenomenological tradition with an anthropological or theological face or turn (which perhaps amounts to the same thing) and a certain Husserlian orthodoxy, which is itself in tension between several polarities: in addition to that of the "mathematical" and the philosophical, we must mention that of the *phenomenological* and the *ethical*, the *theological* and the *phenomenological*, etc.

The "*points of contact*" of these tangents are thus *overdetermined* (in Nancy and the French phenomenologists), by theological questions of the *mystical body* in the Eucharistic sacrament, but also that of the *glorious body*, up to this floating body, wit-

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Raumphänomen und die Entsprechung der Erscheinungen verschiedener Subjekte in der Normalität>. Jedes Ich findet sich als *Mittelpunkt, sozusagen als Nullpunkt des Koordinatensystems vor*, von dem aus es alle Dinge der Welt, die schon erkannten oder nicht erkannten, betrachtet und ordnet und erkennt. Jedes fasst aber diesen Mittelpunkt als etwas Relatives, es ändert z.B. leiblich seinen Ort im Raum, und während es immerfort ,hier' sagt, weiß es, dass das ,Hier' ein jeweilig örtlich anderes ist. Jedes unterscheidet den objektiven Raum als System der objektiven Raumstellen (Orte) von dem Raumphänomen als der Art, wie der Raum mit ,hier und dort', mit ,vorn und hinten', ,rechts und links' erscheint. Und ebenso in Ansehung der Zeit" (Husserl, 1973a, 116–117).

[23] See (Husserl, 1973b, 266–267).

[24] On the profile of transcendental monadology and the multiplicity of incompatible two-to-one variants, let me refer to my commentary on the *Fifth Cartesian Medidation*: (Lobo, 2014, 263–284).

ness-body or martyr-body, but already subtracted from violence and death, the one that says, in a neutral voice: *Noli me tangere*[25].

As for *the operation* referred to under the title of "*group*," if *it makes community*, it cannot, should not, in law, if it is to institute it, proceed from a community, but take the form of a *first effraction*, a "point of madness," a performative whose conditions of felicity (in the sense of pragmatics) are themselves simply promised.

The same would apply to the second quotation: "Here I am," "*Likewise*" in relation to over-determination, the promise of community, etc. But "*differently*" because the *tensions and polarities* are quite different. What resonates in this "*here I am*" is the *response to a summons to all matters necessary*, of which the Jewish tradition is the singular vector. Torn from itself, the "I" who answers is *first* obliged, before any appearance, before any summons before the law, to enter into negotiation with it. This line, which predates the Christian liturgy, is itself traversed by multiple tensions: between the phenomenology initiated by Emmanuel Levinas and its predecessors, between the "*here I am*" of the appearance before the law, of a provision *to the law,* and the "*here I am*" of a suspended and sublime amorous commerce (in the *Song of Songs*)[26]. Moreover, this tradition must be conceived as a series of unties, where the wrenching away from oneself only gives rise to a "*me,*" before any appearance, by subjecting it to a strange *law of series, which is itself a strange series of unties, interruptions,* etc.

The same would apply, and always differently, to the line that links the two "hyper-citations." It relates one to the other and tries to link two scenes and two "traditions," which are to be understood not as two *lines of transmission* of "meaning," of a "full meaning," but rather as two series of interruptions of meaning, *but series all the same, presupposing an iteration and a law of iteration.*

> The *hiatus* must insist, hence the necessity of the series, of the series of *knots*. The absolute paradox (of *the ab-solute*) is that this series, incommensurable with any other, an out-of-series series, does not tie threads but interruptions between threads, traces of intervals that the node must only notice, give to notice […] This *ab-solute* series is without a single node but ties a multiplicity of re-tied nodes, and which do not re-tie threads but threadless interruptions leaving open the interruption between interruptions. This

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[25] See on this point Nancy's beautiful meditation, *Noli me tangere,* especially in that point where it asymptotically touches on the question of belief. The passage itself is in inverted commas: "Do not touch me, do not hold me, do not seek to hold, do not hold back, renounce all adherence, do not think of a familiarity or security. *Do not think there is any assurance*, as Thomas will want one. *Do not believe, in any way. But stand firm in this non-belief*. Remain faithful to it. Remain faithful to my parting. Remain faithful to that alone which remains in my departure: your name which I pronounce" (Nancy, 2003, 77).

[26] Derrida notes: "I am sick with love," *Song of Solomon*, V. 8 (Levinas, 1976, 180–18l.) "Here I am" means "send me" (Derrida, 2000, 186).

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interruption is not a cut, it does not belong to a logic of cut but to an *abolished de-stricturation*. This is why the opening of the interruption is never pure. (Derrida, 1987, 180)

This series of interruptions refers back to within and beyond monotheisms, linking the Abrahamic "here I am" to the "here I am" of the *Communist Manifesto*. The words that Derrida then places in Marx's mouth are so many formulas on the borders of a phenomenology, since they touch on the manifestation of the essence of manifestation:

> Here is the manifesto that I am or that I operate, in the operation of this work, in act, I am myself only in this manifestation, at this very moment, in this book, here I am: 'It is high time (*Es ist hohe Zeit*) that the Communists expose their conceptions, their aims, their tendencies to the face of the whole world and that they oppose (*entgegenstellen*) to the legends of the Communist spectre (*den Märchen vom Gespenst des Kommunismus*) a manifesto of the party itself.' What does this manifesto testify to? And who bears witness to what? (Derrida, 1993, 169)

And it is no coincidence that such a manifestation of the essence of manifestation coincides with a joined and gathered temporality:

> This is the call, namely the Manifest in view of the Manifest, the self-manifestation of the manifest, in which consists the essence of every manifest that calls itself, saying 'it is time,' time meets and joins here, now, a now that comes to itself in the act and body of this manifestation, it is 'high time' that I become manifest, that the manifest becomes manifest which is none other than *this, here, now, me*, the present arrives, witnesses and joins itself. (Derrida, 1993, 169, emphasis mine. — C. L.)

The fact remains that these series will probably be difficult to bring together forever under *a single law of series* or *in a common (proper) body*, whether in the name of a single common God, or of his *corpus mysticum*, or in the name of humanity, reduced to its condition of carnal and earthly humanity. This hyphen between these hyper-citations is therefore anything but *a hyphen*, or a *hyperlink* that would make it possible to join and unify what is thus found on both sides. This should not, however, prevent us from measuring the distance, from exploring the essence (or meaning) of the distance that prevails on both sides, for example in Jean-Luc Nancy or Emmanuel Levinas. Such is the distance that Derrida tirelessly surveys.

7. GROUP STRUCTURE AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY

In order to continue and lay down some markers for a survey that I cannot decently undertake or even mark out here, I would add that it would be possible to reconduct the great Hegelian problem of the *reciprocal recognition of consciousnesses*

to what Gilles Châtelet calls the "Hegelian group," with two operators (1, — 1). This group becomes in Nancy what we could call the *group of transubstantiation*. From the Hegelian group, whose whole structure is taken over by the negativity of the concept, and the transubstantiation group, we must distinguish the "Husserlian group" which, as Châtelet says, is a "group of operators much more complex than Hegel's (1, -1) group" (Châtelet, 1993, 94).

A few words of explanation on what is meant here by *group*. It goes without saying that, although it can be applied to human or social relations, the concept is neither sociological nor anthropological. In its simplest form, a *group* is a mathematical structure defined as follows: a set of elements (which can be operators) with an operation or law of composition, which satisfies the laws of associativity, all of whose "elements" have an *inverse* or an *opposite*; with a *neutral* element, which transforms an element into itself, and which is obtained by composing an element with its opposite or its inverse. It may not be commutative. On the basis of the virtual set of all possible combinations or compositions (in finite or infinite number), it becomes possible to identify an *invariant* which is a global and structural formal property that underlies and ensures the stability of the set, finite or infinite, of possible compositions. If we try to represent each of the results of a possible composition by a point of a surface, we obtain more or less the following: the subclass of points representing a "neutral" result of a composition of an element (or combination of elements) and its complementary can be represented by an axial line or pole; the subclass of points representing compositions whose result is non-neutral are distributed on either side of the axis or pole of the "neutral"; the surface is organised around this symmetry (axial or polar). Figurative symmetries are only a special case of these symmetries: whether the operation is a permutation of the points on the right or on the left, a translation, a rotation, or any other transformation, such as accelerated motion, as is the case in the Galilean group of transformations, where inertial systems by congruent transformations symbolise the neutral subclass of the "system of nature." This is exactly what is at stake in the famous Galilean formula positing that a motion common to several moving body (or reference frames) is "like zero." Let us recall that the Galilean principle of relativity is restricted to inertial reference frames:

> the motion which is common to several motives is without effect and as nil […] it *operates* only on the relation which the latter have to other [bodies] which are devoid of it and in the midst of which their behaviour stands out.[27] (Galilée, 2000, 229, translation mine. — C. L.).

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[27] Salviati says in fact: "*il moto il quale sia comune a molti mobili… e come nullo… e solamente* operativo *nella relatione che hanno essi mobili con altri che manchino di quel moto, tra i quali si muta abitudine*" (Galilée, 1953, 29).—In the footsteps of F. Balibar (1984, 19), I underline in both cases.

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This subgroup of inertial reference frames forms the neutral subclass mentioned above.

Instead of sets of elements, we can start from the outset with sets or classes of operators. And this brings us closer to the intersubjective group, and to begin with the "Nancy group." A "transubstantiation group" is what we can call the enigma towards which *Corpus* and *Ego sum* converge. Against a certain triumphant "anthropologism" or "sociologism" (with Foucault and a certain phenomenology), it was a question of pointing towards the enigma of a "*co-ipseity*" that is *neither* "a social" or "communal" dimension, *nor* a "sociality," *nor* an "otherness that would come to cross, to complicate, to put into play, to alter in its principle the instance of the subject taken as *solus ipse*." Let us quote this passage extensively:

> What thus comes to light is not a 'social' or 'communal' dimension added to a primitive individual datum, even if it is an essential and determining addition (just think of the number of schemes and circumstances of ordinary discourse in which this order is imposed on us: first the individual, then the group, first the one, then the others, first the legal subject, then the actual relationships, first an 'individual psychology,' then a 'collective psychology,' and above all, as one persists in saying in an astonishing manner, first a 'subject,' then an 'intersubjectivity'…). It is not even a question of a sociality or an otherness which would come to cross, complicate, put into play, alter—in its principle—the instance of the subject understood as *solus ipse*. It is more and it is something else again. It is what, in principle, determines the *ipse* whatever it may be ('individual' or 'collective,' if these terms have a precise meaning) only by co-determining it with the plurality of *ipse* each of which is *co-original* and *co-essential* to the world, to a world that henceforth defines a co-existence to be understood in an as yet unheard of sense, because it does not take place 'in' the world, but forms the essence and structure of the world. (Nancy, 1996, 64)

Nancy refuses to name it "intersubjectivity" in its banal sense, which assigns it to the register of a worldly subjectivity. The *with*—of subjects or *egos*—can no longer be reversed or reduced to an "intersubjective dimension." He argues:

> Without doubt, *the with as such* is not presentable. I have already said this, but it must be stressed. *The with* is not "unpresentable" as a withdrawn presence, nor as an Other. *If there is only a subject with other subjects*, the 'with' itself is not a subject. It is or it makes the union/disunion trait which by itself appropriates neither union nor disunion as substances posited under the trait: the latter is not a sign for a reality, not even for an intersubjective dimension. (Nancy, 1996, 64)

This would presuppose a "law of composition" between subjects, an "absolute ground" and an "ultimate horizon," a plane freed from all contingency and exteriority. Thus, when Husserl states: "The being, first in itself, which serves as the foundation of all that is objective in the world, is transcendental intersubjectivity, the totality of

monads that unite in different forms of community and communion" (Husserl, 1950a, §60), Nancy continues: "Generally speaking, the being of philosophical ontology cannot have a co-essence, it has only the correlate of non-being. *But what if being itself is the co-essentiality of existence*?" (Nancy, 1996, 64). This is why, right from the start of *Ego sum,* a return not to the subject, but to the *ego*, was undertaken, one of the first objectives of which was, at a time of triumphant *epistemes, to* return to the roots of Cartesian *mathesis universalis* in order to show and awaken a potential ontological instability of the substantial distinction and the distinctiveness of the *ego,* as well as another articulation of the encyclopaedia of sciences and arts. Nancy made it clear from the outset that what has been covered up by the prevailing philosophical anthropologies is not the question of the "subject," but of the *ego*. And against Foucault, he proposed another articulation of the question of *episteme*[28].

Although the letter to Mesland of 9 February 1645[29] is not mentioned, it is indeed to a "transubstantiation without miracle" that the dense and tight analyses of *Ego sum* come close, through the motives of "incarnation… without mystery" (Nancy, 1979, 132), of the distinction of *ego* from the subject, of the "punctuality" and of the retrenchment of the ego from and in its *form*, etc. The ontological instability of *ego*—and its body—will be concentrated in *Corpus*, in the deixis of the sacramental formula. The *ceci* of "*Hoc est enim corpus meum*" is assimilated by Nancy, *"without more,"* to the *here,* even to a "here I am." He makes this "dimension" the generating principle of a "General Encyclopedia of the Sciences, Arts and Thoughts of the West." Nancy can therefore continue: "the body of God is here."

> We are obsessed with showing a *this*, and with convincing ourselves that this here *is* that which cannot be seen or touched, neither here nor elsewhere—and that this is *that* not in any way, but *as its body*. The body of *that* (God, absolute, as you will), and that it *has a body* or that it *is* a body (and therefore, one might think, that it is *the* body, absolutely), that is our haunting. The presentified this of the Absent par excellence: relentlessly, we will have called it, summoned it, consecrated it, captured it, wanted it, absolutely wanted it. We will have wanted the assurance, the unmixed certainty of a *VOICI*: here, without

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28   "Everywhere, under the heading of theoretical work, this type of discourse, or more precisely, of discourse that mixes in variable proportions the document and the analysis, both taken from the vast field of our new *episteme*: that is, from the field of a general anthropology that […] does not claim to be any less positive" (Nancy, 1979, 12). This concept of *episteme*, Nancy adds, because it belongs to the "anthropological concept of general anthropology," "is not a philosophical concept" (Nancy, 1979, 12).

29   Letter to Mesland, 9 February 1645. AT, IV. Cartesian bibliography on the subject: (Adam, 2000; Armogathe, 1977; J. de Baciocchi, 1964; R. Descartes, 1964–1974; 1963–1973; H. Gouhier, 1978). To which we must add Derrida's Cartesian gloss on this subject, in the margin of a commentary on Louis Marin's work, revolving around this exemplary "operation" of Christianity (Derrida, 2001, 158).

more, absolutely, here, this, *the same thing*. '*Hoc est enim.*' *defies, appeases all our doubts about appearances, and gives the real the true last touch of its* pure Idea: its reality, its existence […] *Hoc est enim* […] *can generate the* entire corpus of a General Encyclopaedia of the Sciences, Arts and Thoughts of the West. (Nancy, 1992, 7–8)

The transfiguration of the proper body into an encyclopaedic and universal *corpus* is something deeper than a simple metaphorical shift. The Hegelian group seems to lurk in the background. A replica of the Eucharistic operation, as Derrida suggests in another commentary, it corresponds to an intimate desire to be able to anticipate one's own disappearance and substitution—a will to power. A desire that would be expressed in the words: "Transfigure me into a *corpus*." So that there is no longer any difference between the place of a real presence or the Eucharist and the great digital library of knowledge (Derrida, 2001, 169). The question will remain open as to whether the exemplarity of the Eucharist, by virtue of its very historical singularity and uniqueness, concentrates within itself all the power of substitutability, whether of sign or image, or whether this very exemplarity, because it is essentially operative, does not itself submit to the genetic and generational law of substitutability, without which there is no *mathesis*. In this question hangs the whole question of knowing and believing[30], and their "complementarity."

8. FROM THE OWN BODY AS AN ORIGINAL COORDINATE SYSTEM TO THE INTERSUBJECTIVE GROUP OF TRANSFERENCE THROUGH EMPATHY OR THE OTHER "TRANSCENDENTAL AESTHETIC"

We are then at the point from which space (or any order of coexistence) emerges from the *ego*, without it knowing it, or knowing how. The continuous space instituted by *ego* is subjected by *corpus ego* to an unbinding, "an indefinite, discrete loop traversed from place to place, of all places" (Nancy, 1992, 27). We thus come

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[30] Let us simply pick out these few threads in "Faith and Knowledge," forming the core of this question. That of the exemplarity of witness—even Christian—which cannot be free of all "calculability" ("the truth of what I believe to be the truth, I tell you this truth, believe me, believe in what I believe, where you will never be able to see or know in the irreplaceable and yet universalisable, exemplary place from which I speak to you" (Derrida, 1996, 83)). Further on: "*Pure* attestation, if there is any, belongs to the experience of faith and miracle. Involved in any 'social link,' however ordinary, it is as indispensable to Science as to Philosophy and Religion" (Derrida, 1996, 84). This "source" can be dissociated, among other things, "where what constitutes the said 'social bond' in belief is also interruption. There is no—fundamental—opposition between 'social bonding' and 'social unbonding.' A certain interruptive unbinding is the condition of the 'social bond,' the very breath of any 'community.' This is not even the knot of a reciprocal condition, but rather the possibility open to the untying of any knot, to the cutting or interruption" (Derrida, 1996, 84).

to the statement of a group of transubstantiation, as a group of com-penetration (of "non-impenetrability") and "*intersection of monads in totality*" (Nancy, 1992, 27); to this community supposedly representing the flip side of any metaphysical or transcendental monadology:

> *Corpus ego* is without property, without 'egoism' (and how much more without egotism). Selfishness is a (necessary) meaning of *ego*: *ego* binding itself to itself, binding the unbinding of its pronunciation, binding the body, tightening on it the lace of self. The ego establishes the continuous space, the indistinctness of the times of existence […], the loop of meaning or meaning as a loop. — *Corpus ego* makes sense unbuckle, or makes its indefinite loop, a discrete crossing from place to place, of all places. A body traverses all bodies, as much as it is through itself: *this is the exact reverse of a world of closed monads*, unless it is, *finally in body, the truth of the intersection and compenetrating of monads in totality*. — *Ego* always *articulating-hoc*, *et hoc*, et *hic*, et *illic*… — , coming and going of bodies: voice, food, excrement, sex, child, air, water, sound, colour, hardness, smell, heat, weight, sting, caress, consciousness, memory, syncope, look, appear, finally all the infinitely multiplied touches, all the proliferating tones. (Nancy, 1992, 27, emphasis mine. — C. L.)

Because the different parts (the bodies) of the expanse (*res extensa*) are not substances, and the expanse does not suffer from substantial distinction, Descartes could interpret transubstantiation under the register of modal transformations, the ego alone proceeding to the unification of the part of the matter. Nancy proposes to move from this restricted group of transubstantiation, in that it continues to subject the world to a Euclidean space (continuous, homogeneous, compact), to the group of generalised transubstantiation, to the "world of *corpus ego,*" prior to space and generating it by "spacing." Nancy concludes:

> The *world of bodies is the non-impenetrable world*, the world that is not first subject to the *compactness of space* (which, as such, is only filling, at least *virtually*), but where *bodies first articulate space. When bodies are not in space, but space in bodies, then it is spacing, tension of place.* (Nancy, 1992, 19, emphasis mine. — C. L.)

This is the meaning of Derrida's remarks in one of the *tangents* that divide *Le toucher—Jean-Luc Nancy*. Taking up the delicate problem of the constitution of the proper body as a human, worldly, objectified body, Derrida notes one of the entanglements to which the project of transcendental genesis exposes itself, that of the proper body as a natural object ("man" or "animal"), where the higher and later layers would be, as it were, "introjected" (and retrojected) into the lower and earlier layers. He believes, however, that he can identify in Husserl a *gesture of exclusion of the possibility* that emerges here: namely "that a certain *introjective empathy*, a certain 'intersubjec-

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tivity'" must already "have introduced the other and the analogical appraisal into the touching-touched in order for it to give rise to an experience of the proper body that allows one to say 'this is me,' 'this is my body'"[31] (Derrida, 2000, 202). As Derrida immediately points out: "We are here in the zone of the immense problem of phenomenological intersubjectivity (of the other and of time)" (Derrida, 2000, 202). What Derrida is aiming at here, under this title, is the very thing that had guided him in his first forays into phenomenology and, almost simultaneously, into Freud (in 1959 and 1962)[32], that is this other "*transcendental aesthetic*," where [the possibility of] death and the other, or what amounts to the same thing, of *prosthetic* mediation, come to be lodged at the heart of the aesthetic *a priori*. This motif is taken up again (Derrida, 2000, 58) under the title of a "psychoanalytical transcendental aesthetic," which, apart from all anthropology and all psychology, would achieve a deepening whose requirement would be announced by Kant himself.

> What difference is there, and is there any, between the two? Is Freud more or less of a psychologist than Nancy? Is one still a psychologist when one asserts that the psyche is extended, though not yet spatial? And that there is an internal expanse? What would be a non-spatial expanse, and still without an exterior, this psychic expanse from which we would derive, *by projection*, space? […] And what if, far from opposing Kant, Freud only wanted to interpret and refine the Kantian model by substituting for it, but in the same logic, a sort of improved formalisation? In the following sentence, explaining what he has just said, he writes "instead of" (*Anstatt*): "Instead of the *a priori* conditions, in Kant, of our psychic apparatus. Extended psyche, it knows nothing about it." (Derrida, 2000, 58, emphasis mine. — C. L.)

Whether one is reluctant to admit that transcendental aesthetics announces certain "metapsychological" speculations, it is indisputable that they preserve the memory of them, and that, as paradoxically as one might wish, they explicitly claim to prolong them. Wasn't it Freud himself who drew a parallel between the naive tendency of external perception and that of internal perception to believe in the absolute reality of its object, on the one hand, and between the inhibition to which criticism and psychoanalysis respectively proceed, on the other?[33]

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[31]   See also Derrida (Derrida, 1976, 51–52).

[32]   A new "transcendental aesthetic" in which "the themes of the Other and Time *were to* reveal their irreducible complicity" (Derrida, 1967, 243, emphasis mine. — C. L.). In his reading of Levinas: "non-presentation or de-presentation is as original as presentation," and that the "living" of the living present "is originally worked by death" (Derrida, 1967, 195).

[33]   So it is with the parallel between the *a priori* subjective conditions of the experience of internal and external phenomena, filtered undoubtedly by Brentanian psychology and its distinction between internal and external perception: "Just as Kant warns us not to forget that our perception

According to this last reading (that of a more adequate or consequential substitution, but in the same perspective), a transcendental psychologism, more precisely a transcendental psychoanalysis, or better still a *transcendental psychoanalytic aesthetics,* would account for spatiality from a psychic apparatus that should indeed be understood to include, among the two pure forms of sensible intuition, an *a priori* form of external sense. And when Kant, this time in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and not in an *Anthropology*, […] declares: 'Space is a necessary *a priori* representation that serves as a foundation for all external intuitions,' does he not indeed announce a certain Freudian argument? (Derrida, 2000, 58)

The Derridean deepening of transcendental aesthetics involves the introduction of the mediation of the other and of death in the relation of the proper to oneself, which suggests that Husserl would nevertheless remain a prisoner of what he calls "*haptocentrism*" (the illusion of an immediate contact between oneself and oneself), in reserve or retreat before the possibility of an *original intrusion of* the other, which would thus precede the solipsistic constitution in law.

But according to a characteristic motion in Derrida, as he gets closer to the Transubstantiation group in Nancy, it is at the heart of a certain "Husserlian orthodoxy," even if he defends it, that Derrida will find the resources for questioning the presuppositions or the limits of a certain haste to assign limits to transcendental phenomenology. Thus, the examination of the limits hastily assigned by Merleau-Ponty to the Husserlian theme of *Einfühlung*, which occupies the *Third Tangent* (Derrida, 2000, 223). It is then that, in the course of the brackets, a *first digression* returns to the *with*, and to the "Measure of the with," in order to note, in Nancy's commentary that we mentioned above, the expression "Husserl shows how phenomenology *touches* its own limit and transgresses it" (Nancy, 1996, 83 (quoted by Derrida, 2000, 226)). *Tangent IV*, in the context of another reading, that of Didier Franck, qualifies as aporetic such a claim to assign a limit to phenomenology:

The aporia here consists in touching, reaching, encountering, certainly, a limit that bars the passage; but also, at the same time, in being embarrassed by the contradiction that consists in passing the limit that one should not cross at the moment of touching it. (Derrida, 2000, 254)

Following the meanderings of the *Cartesian Meditations* (Husser, 1950a, § 59, 117 (quoted by Jean-Luc Nancy (quoted by Derrida, 2000, 257))), Derrida then completes the quotation, given above, with the other side, situated beyond the "egoic core,"

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has subjective conditions (*subjektive Bedingtheit*) and not to hold it identical with the unknowable perceived, so psychoanalysis commits us not to put the perception of consciousness in the place of the unconscious psychic process which is its object" (Freud, 1968, 74; Freud, 1997, 130).

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namely this contradiction that "*the world as constituted*" is however also "constituting," that "the constitution is itself constituted…" Interrupting the presentation of the two aporias that the attempts to go beyond, by the analysis of the flesh proposed by Didier Franck and by the transubstantiation group of Nancy, Derrida then reintroduces the "classic" motifs of the Husserlian group, those that mark two forms of interruption, of anaesthetic suspension: *epoché* and the non-real inclusion of the *noema* in the phenomenological lived experience of consciousness:

> *On the one hand,* from the threshold of its possibility, the epochal reduction suspends the reality of the contact in order to deliver its intentional or phenomenal meaning: the *meaning of* the contact is given to me, as such, by this interruption or by this suspensive conversion. […] For on the *other hand*, another interruption, another conversion, another disappearance, the noematic content—corresponding to the inclusion, real for the time being, of a noesis or a hylo-morphic correlation—can only appear […] by *not really* belonging *either* to the thing touched […] *or* to the fabric of my *Erlebnis*. Such would be the law of the *phaneisthai.* (Derrida, 2000, 257)

The "anaesthetic" or "anaesthetizing"—in a word, *epochal*—suspension would represent the condition of openness of sensibility and of appearing in general, the non-sensible *a priori* of all aesthetics. Underneath its exorbitant character, perhaps this represents only an extreme implication, if you will, if there must still be something like an *a priori* of sensibility and, if there must be, for us who turn back to this *a priori*, after the fact, some intelligibility as to the way in which thought awakens from (the point of madness) of the body.

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