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SECTION I:
PHILOSOPHY

THE SEDUCTIVE FORCE OF IMAGE

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Postmodernism and postmodernity represent two opposed and interrelated phases of the postmodern world. David Lyon (1994/1998, p. 40) argues in this approach that postmodernism is the cultural aspect referring to denying foundationism and postmodernity is the social aspect, focusing on the problems posed by consumerism, globalization and the eclipse of production. This last problem appears in Baudrillard's works, particularly in *Seduction*. Production, a phenomenon that characterizes modern times, appears useless in postmodern culture as a mechanism because here we consistently have to make choices. Consumerism involves a series of choices and every choice may mean giving up thousands of alternatives. We are not concerned with the production since it is already industrialized, now remains to be seen what we can do with what we produce, and especially what we really want, and this choices that we have to make forms an aesthetic problem. But the essential difference from existentialism is that ultimately we do not choose, but we are seduced.

We call this *integrationist perspective* or *soft* because it does not relate to postmodernism (it is not a critical approach), but tries to integrate it in the entire process of post-modernization. The other possibility, adopted by the Baudrillard and Lyotard is a more radical one or critical, because it has a critical approach towards postmodernism, although postmodernism is increasingly seen as a result of post-modernity. It remains to note that the

path from post-modernity to postmodernism has been made possible by the characteristics of postmodern itself. The extreme change, in the abuse version, (postmodernism seen as an abuse of postmodernity) is not only a quantitative but a qualitative change.

The production is inevitably subject to material order. Economics is the surface-dimension of this approach. Distance cancellation between individuals erases the border between public and private, underlining in public what can not be discussed or shown in any private space. Baudrillard's example in connection with deleting this enigmatic function of language appears in *The Vital Illusion*. There is exposed a group of monks who want to reveal the nature of God, therefore to calculate the ten billion names of God, but calculations not being easy at all they decide to call some people from IBM to make them. Although it was known that when the names will be revealed all the world will come to an end, the IBM team ultimately finishes these calculations. Baudrillard is then showing the IBM team coming from work and heading home while the stars fell from the sky. Of course, this example is typical of what Arthur Kroker called postmodern atmosphere, (postmodern mood) that is a perpetual feeling of panic, the feeling of impending disaster. Postmodernity gives us the sensation of a culture located in times of disaster. This anguish of the end appears here, as everywhere else in the examples of Baudrillard to illustrate his theories, with the specific irony that dissolves every trace of gravity (see especially *Fatal Strategies*). The anguish of the end appears very stunning in *Seduction* where Baudrillard describes the loss of meaning dimension, where significance is neutralized. Behind significance lies the secrecy and seduction.

Seduction is a strategy of displacement. Baudrillard explains the etymology of seduction relating it to the concept of *se-ducere*: to divert, to take aside, to divert one's path (1978/2001, p. 22).

Image means perspective space, scene, imaginary, illusion. It follows that the image implies a constant need of representation. Hyperreality is linked to seduction by means of the visible. The seduction and production are linked to visible. Baudrillard's concept of production is more *to make something appear*, to be visible than only to produce (1978/2001, p. 34). But seduction is located not only here, but also at the opposite of interpretation (1978/2001, p. 57). Although not acknowledged, it is possible to interpret in this manner Susan Sontag's concept of acceptance and not just because of Baudrillard's well-known affinity for its text.

"Seduction is the way object relates with the subject. The subject is seduced by the object, as Baudrillard explains the appearance of preferences, and more generally said, to taste. Seduction appears to Baudrillard opposite to production. This opposition is theorized in these terms: To produce is to materialize by force what belongs to another order, that of the secret and of seduction. Seduction is, at all times and in all places, opposed to production. Seduction removes something

from the order of the visible, while production constructs everything in full view, be it an object, a number or concept.

Everything is to be produced, everything is to be legible, everything is to become real, visible, accountable; everything is to be transcribed in relations of force, systems of concepts or measurable energy ; everything is to be said, accumulated, indexed and recorded." (1978 / 2001, p. 34-35)

Martin Heidegger describes the technology as the essentially human desire for domination, a desire so strong that if we try to avoid the technology it brings us deeper into its constraints and we can not resist it otherwise than accommodating ourselves with our condition. From this point of view, Lyon considers Heidegger one of the precursors of postmodernism, and indeed it seems to be followed by Kroker¹.

Kroker describes Baudrillard's concept of seduction by taking into consideration the technology. The individual can not be separated today from the technological aspect of his life; Kroker describes in these terms the concept of possessed individual (possessed by technology). The possessed individuals are not only consumers but also objects of consumption; we observe this in the mechanism that causes the seduction.

The field of seduction turns out to be larger than the field of production. We can only produce real objects, but by seduction we come into contact with illusions. The production refers to real objects and signs, while seduction refers to illusory objects and signs.

Seduction is described by Baudrillard as a game. The main feature of a game is that it is manifested in the area described by its own rules; beyond this area the rules cease to have effect. Baudrillard sees rules as opposed to laws. Laws are always the subject of interpretation and are always interpreted by a subject, instead, the subject is indifferent to any rule (1979/2001, p. 132). Being devoid of metaphysical or psychological foundation, this does not involve our beliefs and opinions. We limit ourselves to *observe* the rule, our adherence to it does not matter (Baudrillard 1979/2001, p. 133).

Games are serious, not having to do with pleasure, are more sober than the ordinary events of life (Baudrillard 1979/2001, p. 133). Rituals dissolve and cancel meaning (Baudrillard 1979/2001, p. 138). The games are all like simulacra. Arbitrary games fascinate us, and end up seducing us. It is the cohesion of the image with the real that exercises the seduction. In literature we can observe games as superstructures (superstructures as they are extended at the magnitude of an entire society). Baudrillard's example is Borges' fable *The Lottery in Babylon*, but one example that I find more striking is the game (although this term does not appear even once in the pages of the novel) from *The Hearts of the Four* by Vladimir Sorokin. But not only literature abounds with images of games as simulacra, but also daily life (we take the example of the lottery) but the games here are not extended to

¹ Even if Kroker doesn't recognize this influence

the entire society, and, of course, could not be. Society is the zero degree of seduction, (Baudrillard 1979/2001, p. 155) games are defined in opposition to it, and so their destiny is to remain marginal activities in society.

The television, criticized as the main source of pan-imagism, leads through its own abuse to the disappearance of image. Television is increasingly criticized because it gives you the story behind the picture, then the imaginary remains inactive. The problem does not affect the imaginary because it does not resort to the force, but to the inaccuracy and the fragility of image. From a quantitative point of view television practices a zero degree of seduction because it doesn't have that flaw which can seduce us. Giving us more becomes obscene. Baudrillard puts cinema in contrast with television, which relies on the imaginary (1978/2001, p. 162). Cinema does not stand for that form of ailing communication, desperate, obsessive and ... postmodernist. Television enters in a perverse form of communication through talk shows, news and entertainment. Everything appears to involve the television viewers in a delirious hyper-reality: advertising - transforming them into consumers, shows like Big Brother giving them the celebrity status only to turn them into celebrity-victims in the end.

Baudrillard calls this hypnosis *cold seduction*. Communication is now in its metastasis phase because the images are received in quantities we can not comprehend. The media game is not serious; here the playful element reaches its metastasis phase in order to create entertainment. The language used in the "radio bands litany" (Baudrillard 1978/2001, p. 164) abuses the phatic function of language in order to not have anything to say, but communicate only by establishing contact, no information has become available (it is even the contrary of the obese described in *The fatal strategies*). Baudrillard argues that the language does not require contact, but we are the ones who need communication (Baudrillard 1978/2001, p. 164) and those comments make sense if we consider texts. Phatic function always involves a truism: if you say something, then you are communicating already, there is no need to establish contact (Baudrillard 1978/2001, p. 164). Establishing contact in contemporary society appears as a desperate attempt to communicate, the very existence of the phatic function of language shows that media language (radio and television) needs such a function because the message is no longer valued. We need to establish contact because anything we say is no longer heard. Television and radio are based on this assumption; that is the reason for the usage of a specific phatic function. But why systems like the internet do not need this function? They don't need it because loneliness and isolation are more profound there. Bits have no significance.

Seduction is the only way to overcome the simulacrum. Seduction can not be separated from image because it entails the existence of a mirror, when we are seduced we are seduced intentionally, even by a painting or a novel or a play (to be precise, someone has made that work in order that its

message to be perceived, otherwise it would not make any sense). The item that has seduced us has fallen himself into the trap of seduction. Even if we consider the most outrageous examples of Baudrillard: laboratory animals execute the commands of people managing a higher contempt and irony. They are still in the laboratory (to be exact they are involved in the game of seduction). "The one who seeks to please the other has already succumbed into the other's charm" (Baudrillard 1978/2001, p. 177). Therefore seduction always interposes as a mirror between the seducer and the seduced, or, to a certain extent we like something just because that was done to please us, so we are enslaved. Baudrillard interprets the entire culture and religion based on the report of seduction. But consider that for the seduction to take place there is necessary a trap that involves a double, as a mirror is interposed between the seducer and the seduced, and that double is, of course, an image in the most primitive sense. Seduction always implies a double effect. Seduction always involves a double process, it is dual in the sense that one can not seduce without being seduced. Between the image and its double there is always a certain distance. The game can be maintained only by maintaining the distance between image and its double. The extinction of distance destroys the game of seduction.

The obscene is called by the Baudrillard "more visible than the visible" (1983/1996, p. 62). Perhaps the most appropriate image of the obscene would be a picture so zoomed that we are not able to discern what it represents. This sort of zoom loses its image because it loses its distance. Without distance can not have images, or without slowness, as Virilio points out. The speed also means the loss of image.

The loss of image is described by Baudrillard as the loss of scene. Baudrillard's obscene occurs in all spheres and domains. *Many things are obscene because they have too much sense as taking up too much space. They reach such an exorbitant representation of truth, explicitly, the apogee of simulacrum* (1983/1996, p. 64). Here the obscene meets the obese because obesity is the figure which has as fundamental feature the desire to accumulate more and more information. The obese is not a corollary of image, but of the volume of knowledge accumulated. The emergence of this monstrous figure is largely due to the inability to discern between the amounts of information suitable for our needs. Most critics, however, interpret the obese as a critique of image abuse. Obscene also represents the lack of mask for Baudrillard (1983/1996, p. 64).

The obscene leads, as the other figures of Baudrillard, at disappearance through abuse (their maximum extension point leads to their disappearance). The obscene takes the image to its disappearance (caused by abuse). By zooming (enlargement) of an image we see it very well because at some point we lose clarity. Hyper-vision represents the absolute proximity of the object (Baudrillard 1983/1996, p. 67) in which the image is

lost. Without illusion, without simulacra, without the required distance, objects lose their image and ability to charm, becoming obscene.

The exacerbation of information leads to transparency, which Baudrillard characterizes as obscene. Clarity and transparency does not lead to knowledge, but just the reverse, they lead to a de-structured universe because the secret disappears. The removal of enigmatic function of language leads society to disastrous consequences. Transparency involves the dissolution of this function. Baudrillard discusses his well-known trans-politic figures of: obesity, hostage and obscene. They involve transparency and are related even to theory in the form of information. Obscenity makes things disappear through their visibility. This strategy to cancel something by abusing it (and you don't just obliterate it, but you find the opposite) is repeatedly used by Baudrillard. It is interesting that the main detractor of postmodernism uses the same strategy to show why he criticizes the postmodernism.

The obscene is the figure that announces the disappearance of the game. The most damaging loss in the case of the obscene is the loss of distance. This loss also leads to transparency, as another loss that takes place at the level of this figure: the loss of secrecy. When we know everything we don't have anything to find out, nothing secret, the information becomes obscene, so the essence of science is always something obscene. The discovery and research itself involves revealing secrets. The idea that as much as we will seek we will not end up knowing everything preserves this vital secret of human thinking. Things can not get to full transparency. Baudrillard's example with the billion names of God shows at the end the team from IBM going home without noticing the stars that fell from the firmament. Here are two possible interpretations: either indifferently how much information the men (as specie) will have the individual will remain limited (or his ignorance will save him), either this lack of knowledge at individual level will eventually be fatal to him.

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ZENO OF ELEA AND THE ORIGIN OF DIALECTIC AND
SOPHISTIC¹

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Zeno of Elea's significance is given mostly by his arguments that were handed down to us, preserved by different ancient sources (Plato, Aristotle, doxographical works etc.). Zeno seems to be the first who used what we call today logical laws².

The aim of the following text is to discuss Zeno's position at the beginning of the argumentative philosophical tradition. It is highly possible that Zeno influenced, at some extent, important figures of the Classical Greek period. We can count among them the Sophists, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Since the first surviving testimony regarding Zeno is taken from Plato and Aristotle, it is inevitable that the subsequent tradition was greatly influenced by their opinion about the Eleatic philosopher.

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² Given the lack of surviving texts one can only conjecture that Zeno was the first to use explicit logical reasoning or that he employed logical principles consciously when he wrote his arguments.

In the 20th century there were many that maintained that Zeno suffered marginalization in the whole history of philosophy mainly because the same authors that preserved his thought for the first time.

ZENO IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Concerning Zeno, the nature of his arguments and the manner in which the philosophical tradition assessed their value, there have been many disputes. For instance this is what Bertrand Russell said at the beginning of the 20th century:

„In this capricious world, nothing is more capricious than posthumous fame. One of the most notable victims of posterity's lack of judgment is the Eleatic Zeno. Having invented four arguments, all immeasurably subtle and profound, the grossness of subsequent philosophers pronounced him to be a mere ingenious juggler, and his arguments to be one and all sophisms.”³

Starting with the 19th century we can witness a rebirth of the interest around Zeno's arguments. Those who tried to bring back Zeno into the main scene of philosophy usually accused other philosophers for the negative image that was handed down through the centuries. Plato and Aristotle were considered to be mainly responsible for this, because they recorded Zeno as a sophist (Plato) and they dismissed his arguments as fallacies (Aristotle). Also the sophists were accused of distorting Zeno's arguments for their own purposes, hence their nature as seen in Aristotle's *Physics*.

A synoptic view, up to the first quarter of the 20th century, on the attitudes toward Zeno's arguments is offered by Florian Cajori⁴. Apart from the ancient philosophers and commentators who wrote at some extent about Zeno and his arguments (Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, Plutarch, Seneca etc.), Cajori presents the modern authors who assessed Zeno's arguments as fallacious: Bayle, Hobbes, Prantl, Zeller, Windelband etc.⁵. The next step in Cajori's presentation is the opposite assertion, that Zeno's arguments are valid. First, we have Victor Cousin who advanced the idea that the Sophists were responsible for Zeno's negative reception, because they altered his arguments for their own agenda and the arguments reached Aristotle in their altered form. For Cousin, Zeno's intention was not to attack all kinds of plurality, only plurality that exist with the complete lack of unity, for that way the things would be divided infinitely⁶. Second, George Grote held that Zeno's arguments are the first manifestations of Greek dialectic and their purpose is to extract absurd consequences out of accepted hypotheses. As

³ Bertrand Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, London and New York: Routledge Classics, p. 352 (first edition 1903).

⁴ Florian Cajori, *The Purpose of Zeno's Arguments on Motion*, Isis, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Jan., 1920), pp. 7-20.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 11-13.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

in the case of Cousin, Zeno's way of arguing is contrasted with the artifices of the Sophists with whom he is wrongly associated, for he does not try to prove both sides of the contradiction⁷. Thirdly, and for Cajori this is the best and most respected analysis of Zeno's arguments, Paul Tannery's interpretation. In Tannery's opinion, Zeno attacked the Pythagorean assumptions that space is a sum of points and proved that movement is not possible in a space considered in that manner⁸.

This view was popular in the first half of the 20th century and was also supported by a number of scholars like: V. Brochard, G. Noel, H. Hasse, H. Scholz, F. M. Cornford or H. D. P. Lee. The main emphasis in their interpretation lays on considering Zeno's arguments as anti Pythagorean and underlining the fact that Zeno was more subtle than Aristotle makes him appear⁹.

The anti Pythagorean hypothesis was questioned by invoking the lack of evidence from ancient sources. Among those who criticized this hypothesis were G. Calogero, van der Waerden, N. B. Booth and G. E. L. Owen. They provided proof that the anti Pythagorean hypothesis is conjectural and considered that Zeno's arguments were more likely oriented against common sense and all the opponents of Parmenides¹⁰.

More recent historians of Presocratic philosophy also tend to have divided opinions concerning the nature of Zeno's arguments. Guthrie, for instance takes for granted Aristotle's presupposed claim that Zeno was the inventor of dialectic, in his lost dialogue *Sophist*, for Zeno's method, described by Plato is the same with the one Aristotle describes in his *Rhetoric*¹¹. Guthrie also takes as genuine testimony the fragments of the *Parmenides*, concerning Zeno's purposes¹².

Another scholar, Jonathan Barnes, considers that the impression Zeno left us from the existent testimonies does not justify his image as the first dialectician, but rather of a clever arguer, who sometimes used fallacies to refute his opponents. Some can consider him an eristic, as Plato makes him describe himself at the beginning of the *Parmenides*. Zeno was not a monist¹³, thus his purposes were destructive. Zeno was not the inventor of the *reductio* argument, for his arguments do not resemble complete *reductio* arguments¹⁴. Zeno can rather be considered the first sophist¹⁵.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 14-15.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 15-19.

⁹ Guthrie, W. K. C. *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2: *The Presocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965, pp. 83-84.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 84-85. See also the bibliographical Guthrie provides on pp. 85-87.

¹¹ *Rhetoric* 1355a. Guthrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83.

¹² Ibid., pp. 87-88.

¹³ Barnes, J. *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd edn. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982, p. 185.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 186.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 231.

In what follows, we will try to go back to the roots of the problem, the view on Zeno held by some classical Greek philosophers, mainly Plato and Aristotle.

ZENO AS A SOPHIST

We can consider Zeno a sophist from three points of view, based on three characteristics that were allegedly shared by all the Sophists of the Classical Age:

- He was a paid professional;
- He was an outsider (i.e. not a citizen of Athens)
- His methods and purpose were questionable.

Both the dialectician and the sophist concerned themselves with educating the youth, the main difference between them was that the latter used to charge his pupils. It is known from the testimony of Plutarch that Zeno was an educator.

“Pericles was also the pupil of Zeno the Eleatic who discoursed on the natural world, like Parmenides, and perfected a species of refutative catch, which was sure to bring an opponent to grief.”¹⁶

Only with this in mind we cannot assert that Zeno was a sophist, since the money is not mentioned. Also his interest in the natural world was not a distinguishing feature of the Sophists. More, the refutation was not an instrument employed solely by the Sophists. We can only think that he was successful in training a bright young man as Pericles and his methods came to fruition later by the prodigious career of his pupil. But this is an incomplete picture. If we are to believe the testimony found in the spurious dialogue *Alcibiades I*, Zeno appears as one of the most expensive educators around:

“I can name Pythodorus, son of Isolochus, and Callias, son of Calliades, who became wise through their association with Zeno; they paid him a hundred minas each and became famous experts.”¹⁷

That Zeno can be considered an outsider to Athens is obvious. We can conclude that he visited Athens based on the above mentioned fragments concerning his position as a paid educator. At the beginning of the *Parmenides* Plato introduces us a Zeno in his *floruit*, visiting Athens with his old master, Parmenides, for the Great Panathenaea¹⁸.

An ancient source that seems to contradict this fact is Diogenes Laertius:

¹⁶ Plutarch, *Lives*, 5, 4. Tr. Bernadotte Perrin (Loeb, Plutarch, *Lives*, III, p. 11).

¹⁷ *Alcibiades I*, 119a. Tr. D. S. Hutchinson. About Zeno’s association with Pythodorus see also *Parmenides* 126b-c.

¹⁸ *Parmenides* 127a-d.

“His native place, the Phocaeon colony, once known as Hyele and afterwards as Elea, a city of moderate size, skilled in nothing but to rear brave men, he preferred before all the splendour of Athens, hardly paying the Athenians a visit, but living all his life at home.”¹⁹

If what we see in this fragment is taken for granted, this would mean that everything Plato said about Zeno’s visit to Athens should be taken as literary fiction. Anyway, the account of Plato is still historically plausible.

The most important aspect of this discussion is, without doubt, the one concerning itself with Zeno’s methods and purpose.

Zeno was openly considered a sophist even in ancient times. One of the ancient sources that consider Zeno a sophist was Isocrates. In his *Encomium of Helen* he describes Zeno as one “who tried to show that the same things are possible and again impossible”²⁰.

Zeno is described in the *Phaedrus* like one who:

“The Palamedes of Elea has an art of speaking, such that he can make the same things appear to his audience like and unlike, or one and many, or again at rest and in motion.”²¹

The same image of Zeno emerges from Plutarch:

“His was a tongue that could argue both ways with a fury resistless, Zeno’s; assailer of all things.”²²

Plato presents Zeno in a similar manner in the *Parmenides* where, after Zeno offers a public reading of his arguments (*logoi*), a young Socrates starts to inquire him about his purposes:

¹⁹ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and opinions of eminent philosophers* IX, 28. Tr. Robert Drew Hicks.

²⁰ Isocrates I, translated by David Mirhady & Yun Lee Too. University of Texas Press-Austin, 2000, p. 33. In the same place Isocrates refers also to some of Socrates’ followers, including Plato. The main disagreement between Isocrates and Plato was on the nature of true philosophy. Isocrates tried to show that rhetoric is the authentic way of philosophizing, while Plato maintained that dialectic is the true philosophy. Isocrates had a negative view on the dialogue form used by the dialectical method and some say that it is possible that Plato wrote the *Sophist* to discern his own philosophical method of sophistry in defense of this accusation. See Guthrie, W.K.C., 1978, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Volume 5, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 122.

²¹ *Phaedrus* 261d. Tr. R. Hackforth.

²² Plutarch, *Lives*, 5, 4. Tr. Bernadotte Perrin (Loeb, Plutarch, *Lives*, III, p. 11). Also Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and opinions of eminent philosophers* IX, 25.

“What does this statement mean, Zeno? ‘If things are many’, you say, ‘they must be both like and unlike. But this is impossible; unlike things cannot be like, nor like things unlike’. That is what you say, isn’t it?”

Yes, replied Zeno.²³

Later on, in the *Parmenides*, Zeno is associated with the eristics and their eagerness to refute anything:

“The book is in fact a defense of Parmenides’ argument against those who try to make fun of it by showing that his supposition, that there is a one, leads to many absurdities and contradictions. This book, then, is a retort against those who assert a plurality. It pays them back in the same coin with something to spare, and aims at showing that, on a thorough examination, their own supposition that there is a plurality leads to even more absurd consequences than the hypothesis of the one. It was written in that controversial spirit in my young days, and someone copied it surreptitiously, so that I had not even the chance to consider whether it should see the light or not. That is where you mistaken, Socrates; you imagine it was inspired, not by a youthful eagerness for controversy, but by the more dispassionate aims of an older man, though, as I said, your description of it was not far wrong.”

Plato’s own views can be easily recognized in this passage. The “youthful eagerness for controversy” is one of the dangers set for dialectic by its contentious sister, the eristic.

Dialectic can degenerate into eristic and there is a possibility for those practicing it to be “infected with lawlessness”²⁴. Eristic lures especially the young and inexperienced, those who lack the proper propaedeutic and start practicing dialectic without it. The behavior of the bewildered youth that gets a hold of dialectic is described in the *Philebus*:

“As soon as a young man gets wind of it, he is as delighted as he had discovered an intellectual gold mine; he is beside himself with delight, and loves to try every move in the game. First he rolls the stuff to one side and jumbles it into one; then he undoes it again and takes it to pieces, to the confusion first and foremost of himself, next of his neighbors at the moment, whether they be younger or older or of his own age. He has no mercy on his father or mother or anyone else listening to him – a little more, and he would victimize even animals, as well as human beings in general, including foreigners, to whom of course he would never show mercy provided he could get hold of an interpreter.”²⁵

This way Plato links Zeno to the appearance of the eristic movement, the best illustration of which he gives in the *Euthydemus*.

In the *Phaedrus*, Zeno is mentioned as “The Eleatic Palamedes”, who is able to “make the same things appear to his audience like and unlike, or

²³ *Parmenides* 127e-128a.

²⁴ *Republic* VII, 537e. Tr. Paul Shorey.

²⁵ *Philebus* 15d-16a. Tr. R. Hackforth.

one and many, or again at rest and in motion"²⁶. Also in the *Sophist*, at the beginning of the dialogue, the visitor of Elea is shown as a "spirit of refutation" bent on discovering flaws in one's discourse²⁷.

A more in-depth consideration on Zeno's arguments can be found in Aristotle. Aristotle considered Zeno's arguments to be fallacious. There are several places where he speaks of Zeno. In the *Topics* we are told that:

"We often hear arguments that are contrary to common opinions, whose solution is yet difficult, e.g. the argument of Zeno that it is impossible to move or to traverse the stadium."²⁸

The context in which this example is given by Aristotle is concerning the universal affirmations during a dialectical dispute. If the opponent proposes a universal premise reached by induction, then we should accept it or put forward a counter example. In what follows the earlier mentioned fragment, Aristotle advises the reader to try and give a counter example, even though the opponent sustains something contrary to common opinion.

Also, when Aristotle speaks of solving a fallacy, he advises that it is not enough to show that the conclusion is false, but we need to show how the deduction was fallacious and he gives the example of Zeno's argument against motion²⁹. It is not enough to dismiss the statement that motion is impossible, but it is required to show why the assumptions or the process of deducing it was fallacious.

In both these places we can observe that Aristotle considered the arguments of Zeno as erroneous, but, in the same time, he considered them good enough for dialectical purposes. Let us see how Aristotle assessed Zeno's arguments against motion in the *Physics*. First, the *Dichotomy*: we consider space and time as continuous; Aristotle distinguishes between two types of temporal and spatial infinity: (a) infinity in extremes; (b) infinity in division. One cannot go through an (a) type infinity in a finite amount of time, only through one of type (b). Zeno was oblivious to these differences therefore he thought his argument used to demonstrate his thesis was sound³⁰. Second, the *Achilles*: In many aspects, this argument resembles the *Dichotomy*. It is different because here one does not encounter a continuous halving. Zeno concludes that Achilles has no possibility to reach the one he follows, even if he is faster. Since this argument, as we said, is almost the same as the first, its solution resembles the first's: an (a) type infinity is needed here as well³¹. Third, the *Arrow*: This argument supposes that time is composed of moments. If someone denies this, then getting to a conclusion

²⁶ *Phaedrus* 261d. Tr. R. Hackforth.

²⁷ *Sophist* 216b.

²⁸ *Topics* VIII, 8, 160b. Tr. W. A. Pickard-Cambridge.

²⁹ *Sophistical Refutations* 24, 179b.

³⁰ *Physics* 233a. Solution developed in *Physics* 263a.

³¹ *Physics* 239b.

will be impossible³². But time, as Aristotle says, it is not made of a succession of indivisible “at this instant” moments³³. The mistake in Zeno’s argument is to assert, after supposing that (1) each thing occupies a definite space and (2) movement is a row of present moments (“at this instant”), that a thing in movement is actually unmoved³⁴. Fourth, the *Stadium*: The flaw in this case is to be expecting a body to pass alongside another in movement in the same amount of time as if it were unmoved. Even the solution, in its absurdity, a definite period of time is equal with half of it, points out that this argument is misleading³⁵. And fifth, the *Space*: Aristotle indicates that space is not a cause (material, formal, etc.) and it is not a part of the thing contained in it³⁶.

Until this point Zeno appears to us as one of the Sophists, being a paid educator, an outsider to Athens and one that uses contentious methods. But we cannot find any place in Plato and Aristotle where he is referred to explicitly as a sophist.

ZENO AS A DIALECTICIAN

Now that we have mentioned the cases in which Zeno was treated as a sophist, we can pass on to those in which he can be considered a dialectician. This can be achieved at least in two aspects:

- His role in the politics of his native Elea
- His use of dialectical methods

For Plato, the philosopher (i.e. the dialectician) was the one of the pillars in the ideal state. Studying dialectic was reserved to a few chosen, after an arduous process of selection³⁷. It was the duty of the philosopher (dialectician) to get involved in politics

Was, from Plato’s standpoint, a comparison with Palamedes defamatory for Zeno? In the *Second Letter*, addressed to Dionysius II, the tyrant of Syracuse, Plato speaks about how men of power are remembered in association with the wise. Among the pairs enumerated we can find Odysseus and Palamedes³⁸. Many of the examples given by Plato are pairs in which the wise men were punished, as one can clearly see in the example of Zeus and Prometheus. When we want to distinguish between the pair formed by Odysseus and Palamedes we can encounter some difficulties To

³² *Physics* 239b.

³³ Zeno errs here because he doesn’t admit infinite divisibility for time, as he asserts for space.

³⁴ *Physics* 239b.

³⁵ *Physics* 239b- 240a.

³⁶ *Physics* 210b.

³⁷ As seen in *The Republic*, especially book VII.

³⁸ *Second Letter* 311b.

whom did Plato attribute the status of wise man and to whom that of man of power? Both Odysseus and Palamedes were rulers, though only Odysseus had the chance to actually rule. Palamedes was the son of king Nauplius and he never got the chance to inherit the throne, because he was the victim of Odysseus' betrayal. In the *Apology*, after the death sentence has been passed, Socrates tries to show the audience that there is no serious reason for one to be afraid of death. Discussing the possibility of afterlife, he shows himself more than happy about it, for that way he could exercise his questioning on many important men. Among those figures we find Palamedes (whose unjust trial Socrates compares to his own) and Odysseus³⁹. Having these in mind we cannot say with certitude that Plato had a negative opinion of Palamedes. But why does he associate Palamedes with Zeno? The common answer is that both of them were renowned for their cleverness. But it is also possible that both had in common another thing. The two died as a result of abusive use of power. Palamedes was set up by Odysseus and condemned to death. Zeno was murdered by the tyrant of Elea, as some ancient sources suggest⁴⁰. If Zeno really died by the hands of a tyrant, then we can infer that he was an active citizen of Elea, involved in public affairs. This image of Zeno is in clear contrast with one of a wandering sophist. Also, if we ponder on some things said in the *Phaedrus*. Here Nestor and Odysseus are used to account for Gorgias and Thrasymachus (or Theodoros)⁴¹. Given the fact that the two were well known Sophists and considering Odysseus' negative portrayal in the *Hippias Minor*, we can speculate that Plato considered Zeno in a somewhat better light than the allegedly fellow Sophists.

It is said that Aristotle considered Zeno the inventor of dialectic⁴². This contrasts with the fact that Aristotle ascribes to himself the status of being the originator of dialectic in a well known passage found at the end of his *Sophistical Refutations*⁴³. Also, he states that Plato or Socrates invented dialectic. We can find these affirmations in the *Metaphysics*⁴⁴. We can

³⁹ *Apology* 41b-c.

⁴⁰ There are different versions of how Zeno met his end. See Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and opinions of eminent philosophers*, IX, 26-28.

⁴¹ *Phaedrus* 261c.

⁴² Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and opinions of eminent philosophers*, VIII, 57 and IX, 25. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians*, VII, 7.

⁴³ *Sophistical Refutations* 34, 183b. Aristotle here did not refer to demonstration, as some scholars conjectured.

⁴⁴ In *Metaphysics* A (I), 6, 987b we can read about Plato: "His divergence from the Pythagoreans in making the One and the numbers separate from things, and his introduction of the Forms, were due to his inquiries in the region of definitory formulae (for the earlier thinkers had no tincture of dialectic) (...)" (tr. W. D. Ross). Also at M (XIII), 4, 1078b he says about Socrates the following: "he was seeking to deduce, and the essence is the starting-point of deductions. For there was as yet none of the dialectical power which enables people even without knowledge of the

wonder if Aristotle simply contradicted himself. Inventing dialectic could have meant a lot of things, depending on the context. If we refer to the first usage of arguments that can be identified as dialectic then we can say that Zeno or Socrates invented dialectic. If we refer for the first technical usage of the term then we can turn to Plato. Finally, if we have in mind the first systematic approach on dialectic we can accept Aristotle's claim that he was the inventor of dialectic.

We can try to give a dialectical interpretation to the fragments from the beginning of the *Parmenides*, corroborating it with some of Aristotle's own views. When Socrates asks Zeno about the purpose of his arguments at the beginning of the *Parmenides*:

"If unlike things cannot be like or like things unlike, it is also impossible that things should be a plurality; if many things did exist, they would have impossible attributes. Is this the precise purpose of your arguments – to maintain, against everything that is commonly said, that things are not a plurality? Do you regard every one of your arguments as evidence of exactly that conclusion, and so hold that, in each argument of your treatise, you are giving just one more proof that plurality does not exist? Is that what you mean, or am I understanding you wrongly?"

No, said Zeno, you have quite rightly understood the purpose of the whole treatise."⁴⁵

Attacking common belief by means of argument is a feature of dialectic. Arguments against (*para*) common belief (*doxa*) were not something awkward in Ancient Greek Philosophy. For example we can find out a great deal about them and their role in dialectic from Aristotle. Dialectic is described in the *Topics* as argument based on *endoxa* (i. e. reputable opinion, generally held opinion or common belief) which is described by Aristotle as follows:

"Those opinions are reputable which are accepted by everyone or by the majority or by the wise – i.e. by all, by the majority, or by the most notable and reputable of them."⁴⁶

These *endoxa* are not necessary in nature, but have a certain degree of probability. Later in the same treatise Aristotle discusses the nature of dialectical premise⁴⁷. A premise can be considered dialectical if it falls under

essence to speculate about contraries and inquire whether the same science deals with contraries. For two things may be fairly ascribed to Socrates – inductive arguments and universal definition, both of which are concerned with the starting-point of science." (tr. W. D. Ross).

⁴⁵ *Parmenides* 127e-128a.

⁴⁶ *Topics* I, 1, 100b. Tr. W. A. Pickard-Cambridge.

⁴⁷ See *Topics* I, 10-11, 104a-105a. In these chapters Aristotle speaks about dialectical propositions and dialectical problems. Dialectical propositions have an assertive form and present the main body of the dialectical debate. The dialectical

the acceptance conditions mentioned about the *endoxa* and, Aristotle formulates a negative condition, it is not paradoxical. For it would be improper for the simple man to sustain something contrary to common belief. To do so it is required to present arguments and only some well known wise men are capable of this. The examples given by Aristotle include the theses put forward by Antisthenes (contradiction is impossible), Heraclitus (everything is in motion) or Melissus (everything that exists is one). We can include Zeno's thesis among these, based on its features.

Let us continue with the reading from the *Parmenides*:

"I see, Parmenides, said Socrates, that Zeno's intention is to associate himself with you by means of his treatise no less intimately than by his personal attachment. In a way, his book states the same position as your own, only by varying the form he tries to delude us into thinking that his thesis is a different one. You assert, in your poem, that the all is one, and for this you advance admirable proofs. Zeno, for his part, asserts that it is not a plurality, and he too has many weighty proofs to bring forward. You assert unity; he asserts no plurality; each expresses himself in such way that your arguments seem to have nothing in common, though really they come to very much the same thing. That is why your exposition and his seem to be rather over the heads of outsiders like ourselves.

Yes, Socrates, Zeno replied, but you have not quite seen the real character of my book. True, you are as quick as a Spartan hound to pick up the scent to follow the trail of the argument, but there is a point you have missed at the outset. The book makes no pretense of disguising from the public the fact that it was written with the purpose you describe, as if such a deception is something to be proud of. What you have pointed out is only incidental."⁴⁸

Here Socrates advances with the remarks about Zeno's purposes. The fact that Zeno defends Parmenides' thesis indirectly and, as himself says, incidentally, is a legit dialectical move if we assess it from an Aristotelian point of view. Aristotle tells us that:

"Dialectical propositions also [...] propositions which contradict the contraries of opinions that are taken to be reputable."⁴⁹

That the same thing hold of a thesis is clear, since a dialectical thesis is a paradoxical opinion held by a reputable philosopher and sustained by arguments, as we mentioned above. Therefore, if the contrary of "there is one" is "there is a plurality", and the contradictory of "there is a plurality" is

problem has an interrogative form and is present at the beginning of the dialectical debate. We can obtain a problem out of every assertive proposition by formulating it as a question. When a reputable philosopher chooses an alternative out of the two possible answers for a problem, alternative which is paradoxical, then we can name it a thesis. Not all problems are theses, but every thesis is a problem. See also: *De interpretatione* 11, 20b and *Topics* I, 4, 101b.

⁴⁸ *Parmenides* 128a-c (tr.

⁴⁹ *Topics* I, 10, 104a. Tr. W. A. Pickard-Cambridge.

“there is not a plurality”, it results that this last statement is also a legitimate dialectical thesis, which can be derived from the first.

When Zeno says that his purpose was to defend Eleatic monism, some maintained that these words are put in his mouth by Plato, and his purposes were nothing of the like⁵⁰. Actually, if we take what Plato tells us for granted, then one can say that Zeno uses a dialectical stratagem, devised to hide the final conclusion from his opponent so the opponent would admit many of his premises⁵¹.

Another aspect worth mentioning here is that, from an Aristotelian perspective, the way Zeno is presented as one that can argue about anything is actually consistent with the way in which Aristotle presents his purpose at the beginning of the *Topics*:

“Our treatise proposes to find a line of inquiry whereby we shall be able to reason from reputable opinions about any subject presented to us.”⁵²

Even though both Plato and Aristotle were inclined to see Zeno as an eristic disputant, there is no doubt that he influenced their own dialectical technique. We can say that he was a major influence in the Sophistic movement as well, for as Aristotle shows dialectic and sophistic (or eristic) work in the same context, and the differences are in purpose and the nature of the premises used⁵³. Even if an evolution toward the technical usage of the term can be ascribed to Socrates and Plato (the question and answer method, the Socratic refutation etc.) we need to acknowledge the fact that Zeno had his influence on these thinkers and this way Aristotle’s affirmation from his lost *Sophist* is not entirely false.

⁵⁰ See Barnes above.

⁵¹ *Topics* VIII, 1, 155b.

⁵² *Topics* I, 1, 100a. Tr. W. A. Pickard-Cambridge.

⁵³ *Prior Analytics* I, 1, 24a-b; *Topics* I, 1, 100a-b.

L'ADAPTATION ET LES VALEURS MORALES

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Thèses et d finitions

L'ouvrage s'appuie sur deux thèses pr liminaires et sur deux d finitions. La premi re th se est celle de la philosophie morale, selon laquelle, la morale repr sente une appropriation pratique – spirituelle du r el; la deuxi me th se  nonce l'id e que la morale est une forme sp cifique humaine d'adaptation des individus   la vie sociale, finalement, au cadre naturel de la vie.

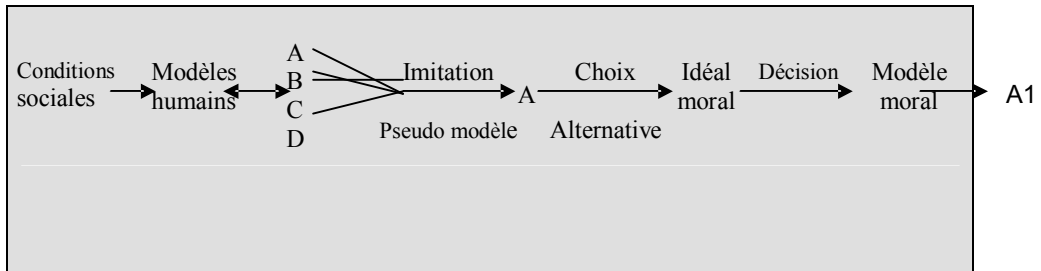
Les d finitions impliqu es dans nos raisonnements appartiennent au zone des valeurs. Il s'agit de l'id al moral comme une configuration r sultant de l'op ration complexe de la chois morale. Celle-ci reste toujours au-dessus de la r alit . Pour surprendre la r alit  l'id al se transforme en mod le en rapport avec l'id al.

Le mod le morale peut  tre ph nom nal (un ensemble des caract ristiques morales) ou conceptuel (un ensemble des r gles morales, comme les codes).

Dans la gen se du sujet moral, sur la relation entre l'id al moral et le mod le moral se d roulent les conflits moraux et  ducationnels.

Conflits moraux et éducationnels

La thèse selon laquelle dans le développement de la conscience morale, en liaison avec le développement psychologique de l'ego et de la cognition, il y a une succession relativement stable de niveaux et d'étapes (Kohlberg) et de configurations axiologiques, pragmatiques et pratiques (idéal, modèle), semble être confirmée, sans aucun doute, par l'observation et par la recherche empirique. Notre conception là-dessus est en partie illustrée par le schéma suivant:



Le schéma ci-dessus sera lu de la manière suivante : le sujet A est en contact formatif avec les modèles sociaux qu'il trouve autour de lui ou bien avec des modèles livresques, dont il choisit un pseudo-modèle. Vers seize ans, grâce au progrès de la maturité, par choix et idéalisation, le jeune arrive à un idéal moral propre, dans la perspective duquel il approche la vie d'une manière personnelle. Vers l'âge de dix-neuf ans, si la vie sociale le sollicite par des engagements et des responsabilités, il devra se décider quant au modèle moral qu'il va suivre et extraire ce modèle de l'idéal. Le sujet gardera ce modèle pendant longtemps et même pour toute la vie, puisque l'individu est déjà formé. Son vrai modèle moral est celui-ci et non pas le premier, adopté par imitation.

Si, au cours de la socialisation, chaque individu suit à peu près ce trajet, il est clair que les rencontres entre les individus des groupes sociaux, quelque larges qu'ils soient, mettront en relation des individus d'âges divers, situés à de différents niveaux et étapes du développement de leur conscience morale. Les relations conflictuelles importantes entre individus apparaissent surtout à cause de la germination, de la formation de l'idéal chez les jeunes personnes, dans cette période. Celles-ci contestent les plus âgées. Se trouvant dans la voie de leur authentique formation, elles ne peuvent accepter les dires et les conseils des autres – parents ou autres personnes. C'est toujours dans cette étape de formation que les jeunes doivent subir «l'assaut» des éducateurs et enseignants qui n'acceptent pas toujours l'indépendance revendiquée par ceux-ci. Cela aboutit parfois à des conflits moraux et éducationnels entre parents et enfants, entre enseignants et élèves, entre jeunes gens et personnes âgées. Les adultes et les vieux sont souvent accusés par les jeunes de manque d'idéal, tandis qu'aux

jeunes on reproche le manque de réalisme et d'adaptation ; les gens mûrs sont critiqués pour leur paternalisme, leur sûreté de soi, leur étroitesse spirituelle, leur autoritarisme, tandis que les jeunes sont blâmés pour leur impertinence, leur désobéissance, leur manque de compréhension, de sagesse et d'adhésion à la vie sérieuse.

L'explication que nous donnons à ces conflits est en accord avec notre conception de l'idéal et du modèle moral: les personnes âgées parlent en utilisant le langage et en se plaçant dans la position de leur propre modèle (auquel ils sont liés par leurs décisions, adoptées en rapport avec l'idéal) qu'elles proposent aux jeunes, tandis que ceux-ci se trouvent dans la position et emploient le langage des individus en voie vers l'idéal moral : leur langage est encore dans la phase de la liberté de choix et leurs décisions dans la zone de la conscience morale sont encore à prendre. La riposte des jeunes est l'expression d'une nécessité intérieure. Il s'agit d'une confusion de plans y compris au niveau du langage, confusion qui peut avoir parfois des conséquences dramatiques au niveau des groupes familiaux, ainsi qu'à celui des groupes éducationnels. On peut faire référence aussi au fait que dans les années '60, '70 en Europe on a beaucoup parlé d'un conflit entre générations, conflit que je ne crois pas disparu de nos jours, mais auquel on n'accorde plus la même importance. Ceux qui disposent déjà de leur propre modèle moral et sont bien installés dans leur vie, oublient l'étape de l'idéal qu'ils ont parcourue aussi autrefois et deviennent d'habitude critiques vis-à-vis des jeunes.

Mais il existe un cas historique d'individu qui, paraît-il, n'a pas réussi à former le modèle moral proche aux jeunes. Il s'agit de Socrate, nommé aussi « l'éternel étudiant », auquel les athéniens ont reproché de ne pas avoir cessé de philosopher (de ne pas avoir cessé l'investigation conceptuelle) pour s'engager dans une fonction civique. Sa capacité de comprendre les jeunes et de les stimuler dans leur développement personnel, indépendant, a été jugée comme « corruption » de ceux-ci, respectivement corruption morale. Le fait que, spirituellement, il n'a pas suivi sa génération s'est avéré fatal pour lui. L'histoire de Socrate nous offre aussi un exemple expressif de conflit moral causé par la différence entre idéal et modèle.

L'exemple de Socrate nous montre que le raisonnement éthique basé strictement sur l'idéal est dangereux pour l'individu, car il ne prend pas en compte le contexte sociale ou pratique de l'action morale, qui impose un traitement plus flexible des valeurs morales. Appliquer directement l'idéal, en ignorant l'expérience acquise par l'intellect en relation avec le contexte social peut conduire au sacrifice de l'individu par la société ou bien à l'autosacrifice de celui-ci.

La société a parfois exigé le sacrifice de l'individu et l'histoire en offre d'exemples, comme celui de Giordano Bruno, qui a été brûlé pour n'avoir pas renoncé à son idéal moral et scientifique.

Le cas de Galileo Galilei, qui, lui, évite l'exécution et accepte la conception cosmogonique de ses juges, illustre l'exemple contraire: la vie de

l'individu est sauvée par le modèle. Pourtant, l'idéal est resté vivant dans son esprit, car, à ce qu'on sache, à la sortie du jugement, il a murmuré pour soi la célèbre phrase: E pur si muove.

Conclusions

Nous avons présenté un modèle du fonctionnement de la conscience morale dans le cadre de l'action morale, basé sur les concepts d'idéal et modèle moral. Ce modèle a l'avantage de mettre en lumière le plus haut degré de liberté de la conscience morale et par là, de l'action morale. Rien ne peut entraver cette grande liberté, sa dernière prise de conscience dans les raisonnements des individus étant rendue par la phrase: «je fais ce que je veux.» La conscience de cette liberté est progressivement née dans le cadre des sociétés. On peut mettre sur son compte, au moins en partie, la naissance des démocraties. La tolérance du politique face à la pensée et à l'action morale des individus n'est pas due à sa générosité, mais à l'impuissance de celui-ci de briser cette liberté. Dans les démocraties, le politique a modelé pragmatiquement les valeurs en se sauvant lui-même. Les grandes tyrannies ont fini par être détruites, plus ou moins vite. Pourtant, l'émancipation dans la direction de la liberté reste, même de nos jours, un processus difficile, impossible au cours de l'histoire à courte échelle, au moins pour certaines communautés.

Par comparaison au modèle du développement de la conscience morale de Kohlberg, le nôtre semble plus proche de la réalité de la conscience morale, car il suggère avec plus de force le caractère libre des déploiements dans cette zone. Le modèle de Kohlberg semble trop déterministique par corrélation avec une sorte de maturation morale des individus, congruente et même conditionnée par le développement psychologique. Bien sûr, on peut identifier plusieurs étapes du développement psychologiques se trouvant à la base du développement moral, mais seulement en tant qu'offre de possibilités. Rien de plus.

SOME ASPECTS OF INTENTIONALITY
IN JOHN SEARLE'S EARLY WORK

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John Searle's account of intentionality was a constant subject of debate along his public and academic career. As it is known, beyond the elements which are relevant for a phenomenological approach or for the philosophy of mind in general there are certain details from his account of intentionality which are more than relevant for the entire set of issues from social sciences epistemological and ontological level. Within this study we

will try to disclose a brief picture upon the issue of intentionality from John Searle's early work. In order to do this we will focus our attention especially upon his book from the year 1983 upon the concept of intentionality¹. We must underline from the very beginning the fact that our study is not designed to offer solutions or some new different perspective upon John Searle's point of view upon intentionality from his early work. Instead of this we will try only to emphasize few aspects which we consider as fundamental in order to understand his theoretical perspective about how intentionality could be used to obtain a set of elements able to finally draw a social ontology.

Intentionality and Social Sciences

First of all we must underline the fact that the concept of intentionality, and in general the whole phenomenological type of approach, was not too much used within the area of theoretical approaches which deliberately tried to offer some epistemological and ontological solutions for social sciences. Of course, there had been attempts to put phenomenology at work in order to clarify some epistemic and ontological issue in social sciences but this approach, however, was not too much extended if we compare with proportions of others general theoretical approaches. John Searle's efforts were among most prolific ones because his account of intentionality does not remain only at a level of pure phenomenological approach but it goes further and tries to establish link with issues from the foundational level from social sciences areas. In what will follow we will try to disclose some aspects from John Searle's account of intentionality within his early work but only those aspects which are, or could be, in direct link with theoretical problems from the ground level of social sciences.

One of the most important things which have to be understood regarding intentionality is its pure, so to speak, technical features. And one of these technical things is the fact that the concept of intentionality was a concept designed to understand and to explain the very complicated relation which exists between human mind and its thoughts and the objective reality which is supposed to be ontologically independent from human mind. Without entering here in too many details we must, however, notice that one of fundamental features of intentionality is the fact that there are no mental phenomenon without an object. This means that any mental phenomenon is always directed to something. Strictly speaking, it is complete absurd to say that right now, for example, "I am thinking about *nothing*". There are no empty frames within human conscience. Starting from this fundamental observation we must question the status of intentionality in John Searle's early work and especially its relation to a possible use of it in order to understand how the social reality is created.

¹ Searle, J. – *Intentionality. An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind*, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

In present days there are many studies which are attempting to disclose the status of intentionality in Searle's work and not only its status during his early academic career. Some of them are firmly anchored in issues regarding the relation with Husserl's phenomenological approach while others strictly underlying only the role of Searle's concept of intentionality within his attempt to understand the social reality. We will not focus upon details, which, in some cases, are many and very complicated. We will try, in what will follow, only to disclose what we call a key feature of intentionality in Searle's early work which not only that is fundamental in order to understand how the social reality is created in Searle's opinion but also to understand some crucial differences between Searle's and Husserl's points of view upon intentionality. And this key feature is represented by the concept of Background as it appears in John Searle's view.

Before we enter into analysis we must underline another fundamental aspect. This time is not about some technical features of intentionality on Searle's or Husserl's points of view but about the role which intentionality is playing within those two types of fundamental phenomenological approaches. Here we will say directly that while for John Searle intentionality is studied under the presupposition that it could ultimately have a fundamental word to say about how social reality is created and about how it should be understood for Edmund Husserl this were quite different in the sense that the study of intentionality was intended not to disclose some fundamental and key features of it which ultimately eventually could help us to understand the ontology of social facts but to disclose features of intentionality which in the end may lead us to an understanding of conscience in its epistemological and transcendental functioning. So, while for Searle the main issue and the main goal was to clarify the concept of intentionality in order to use this concept for building a social ontology for Husserl the main goal was to surpass the relativism of all the theories about conscience in order to find a way to absolute transcendental truth. However, there are many similarities in both types of approach even if in John Searle's one the fundamental target was to achieve through intentionality a reasonable theoretical frame in order to understand the basic level of conceptualization in social sciences in general.

One last observation here: of course, in Husserl's perspective and analysis there are many aspects which could be of interest for social scientist if they want to use them for an ontological research but these aspects were not designed in Husserl's work for something like this. Rather they were collaterally obtained within his analysis upon the transcendental conscience than deliberately obtained. And we talk here, for example, about a concept such is intersubjectivity. However, there are no deliberately efforts in Husserl's work of using the results from the study of conscience in order to achieve some type of social ontology. There are no direct link, assumed by

Husserl himself, between intentionality and social science at least in the way which we commonly know these sciences.

John Searle and the Background

The concept of Background, without any doubt, is among most productive within John Searle's entire endeavor of understanding intentionality and its key possible role within any ontological theory regarding the birth and evolution of concepts in social sciences in general. But what is after all the Background and how it can be related to some concepts from, for example, Husserl's account of intentionality? And, beside all of this, what are the weak points in Searle's account of intentionality and in its relation with the concept of Background?

The number of studies upon these issues is relatively great and just because of this we will try in what will follow to offer a brief possible perspective. And, after this, we will try to disclose our point of view especially regarding some possible problems in the way in which Searle was trying to give his account of the Background.

About the Background the things seems to be relatively clear, at least to a point. But this point is yet not too far as some would believe. Let us remember its functions within John Searle's undertaking. First of all we must remember that for Searle the Background is a necessary concept because this concept could lead us to a reasonable understanding about how intentionality is functioning and, after all, how the intentionality is possible in some distinct modes. The Background appears as "a set of nonrepresentational capacities that enable all representing to take place. The Background includes biological and cultural capacities, skills, stances, assumptions and presuppositions"². And we must add to this the fact that Searle himself has admitted that his account of the Background it was not clear from the very begging. This was the reason way he repeatedly and, in some senses we could say desperately tried to improve and to clarify his concept of Background. But, regardless its heterogeneity the Background could be assimilated as a sort of general and ultimate condition through which its capacities can be put at work in the sense that they are enabling all possible types of representations to occur and to take place. For example, as it was suggested, the Background is necessary to the functioning of intentionality. In this case the authors usually prefer to give some simple examples such is the example with the intention of buying a book. They say that this intention could never be achieved without existing of what they call, accordingly to Searle's view, *the condition of satisfaction* of my intention. These conditions of my intention, in this case the desire to buy a book, could be understood only and only under the presuppositions that the bookstores

² Chris Eliasmith (ed.) online resource – <http://philosophy.uwaterloo.ca/MindDict/thebackground.html>.

are selling books, that I am living in a specific type of economy which allows buying and selling of books and so on. So, without the Background, which enables in this case the whole set of conditions through which I ultimately can not only to buy a book but to understand what I am actually doing, the intentional state which makes me to buy a book not that could not exist at all but it could never be understood. Of course, there are others circumstances and they are not few, in which the Background can be seen at work. We will not enter here in details that could illustrate others forms in which, according to Searle, the Background is present. We just use the above example to illustrate the general and fundamental function of the Background in Searle's view. Maybe one of the most beautiful descriptions which were ever expressed regarding the Background is Chris Eliasmith's sharp observation:

The Background can be seen as one solution to the rule – or representation – grounding problem: how does one prevent an infinite regress in the interpretation of a rule or a representation? Searle's basic argument is that no rule or meaning is self – interpreting; a person needs a contextual understanding in order to arrive at the correct application or interpretation. According to Searle the literal meaning of a sentence underdermines its truth conditions; our correct literal reading of, e.g., a verb can only be secured given a certain Background in relation to which a clarifying interpretive context can be established. The Background, then, functions as the precondition for the intelligibility of representation and intentionality in general³.

Without entering in anymore details let us notice that the Background is more like a form of a priori conditions, not in the Kantian mode, which allows ultimately that our functioning of intentionality create everything which might be called social life or communication in general. As it is Known Searle makes some distinctions between what he calls "Deep Background" and "Local Background" distinctions which are designed to underline the different forms of those nonrepresentational capacities. We will not analyze them here⁴. We just emphasize the fact that Searle's concept of is yet far to be a perfectly coherent and homogenous one. The certain fact is, anyway, that without the Background the functioning of intentionality within John Searle's general conceptual frame would not be possible. But what is the status of intentionality in Searle's early work? In order to obtain an answer to this question let us now turn back to the issue of intentionality.

³ Idem.

⁴ Lepore E. and Van Gulick, R., eds. (1991). *John Searle and His Critics*. Cambridge, MA, Blackwell. In this book we find a detailed position from John Searle regarding the issue of Background. We can not say that this one is definitive and complete but it is a refined one by comparison to his position about the same issue from 1983 for example.

Intentionality and the Issue of Social World in John Searle's Early Work

This study is not aiming to achieve a complete comparative discussion upon John Searle's concept of intentionality in his early work. As we said in the beginning we want to draw a picture upon how intentionality was used by Searle in that early period of his work to obtain a specific type of interpretation about how the entire human social reality is created, about those elements which could be used as items within a social ontology. This goal will enable, of course, the possibility of having some comparative debates upon Searle's concept of intentionality and others authors which were interested in this concept. But before that it is important to see the specific of Searle's account of intentionality in his early period.

In order to achieve our task we will begin by underlying the fact that for Searle the Background is crucial for the functioning of intentionality not in some particular cases but for creating the social world in general. Any human act which involves contact with other person within the frame of "society" it is not possible for Searle without the presence of the Background. Let us suppose that we want to buy some gasoline from the petrol station. In this case our intentional state could not be fulfilled without the existence of the petrol station. Or, let us take an example from the natural world. Suppose that we want, accordingly with our intentional state, to enjoy a swim in the ocean. This would not be possible without our biological skills and without the existence of the ocean. Without entering into further technical details about John Searle's vision upon the Background, which we already seen its heterogeneity, it is simple to notice that in large variety of occasions our intentional state could not be actualized without the existence of something which exist outside of our conscience. And we are not talking about meanings but the about the existence of things in their role of preconditions for the actualization of intentionality. This is happening because the Background contains even that so called "...knowing what culturally-specific objects are for, recognizing culturally-specific situations as appropriate or inappropriate for certain types of behavior, and so forth"⁵.

Which are the implications of the above situation for the understanding of intentionality in relation with the issue of forming the social world in John Searle's early work? The question, from a technical point of view, is a simple one: there could be no social facts or institutional facts without the existence of the Background. In order to have a social relation within, let us say, a labor union, I must in the first place have a kind of mutual knowledge about what this institution means and about its specific behavior within a larger social horizon. Of course, in almost all of these situations the language has its own role in constructing and manipulate, so to speak, the entire our social

⁵ Chris Eliasmith (ed.) online resource – <http://philosophy.uwaterloo.ca/MindDict/thebackground.html>.

existence. But here are not important the relatively large number of technical aspect within Searle's perspective. *All that is counting is the fact that intentionality could not be operational properly in Searle's conceptual frame without having some initial type of possibility to know the things which are forming the ground on which intentionality is ultimately operating.* We are not saying that within the Background we can find meanings but we underline the fact that from some possible perspective the Background itself could be seen as a sort of tacit form of knowledge even if this it is not very easy to understand⁶.

The issue of the Background is crucial in order to understand how intentionality is functioning within Searle's conceptual frame and maybe one of the most important questions that could be formulated is this: the Background it is or it is not a form of knowledge? By form of knowledge we understand here a set of *meanings*. As we already seen, Searle's seems to strongly deny this possibility. However, there were some authors which have not been so convinced about this. Chris Eliasmith for example, is making a very deep analysis upon Searle's concept of Background and admits that it is no simple task to determine whether the Background is or is not a form of tacit knowledge:

There would seem to be a certain amount of ambiguity in the Background. A major source of ambiguity, as Searle acknowledges, is the difficulty of avoiding terms associated with mental representation per se for describing the Background's nonrepresentational capacities⁷. (...)

Searle's response to the suggestion that Background's cognitive capacities are a kind of tacit knowledge would probably be that Background capacities are not themselves a form of knowledge (such as beliefs, theories, empirical hypothesis, and so forth) but rather are the preconditions of knowledge. He might further argue (...) that though it is very difficult to describe the contents of the Background other than in language that is more appropriate to the description of representational content, Background capacities are not representational. By this he means that Background capacities are "not features of the world independent of the mind"⁸. (For Searle, mental representation is defined in terms of such mind-independent features as conditions of satisfaction, and direction of fit and causation).

It is interesting to notice that for Chris Eliasmith there could be no doubt that at least some elements from within the Background are indeed elements and forms of knowledge. He put this aspect in these words:

⁶ Idem.

⁷ Searle, J. (1983) – pp. 156 – 157.

⁸ Lepore and Van Gulick – p. 291.

Still, the case for understanding some Background items as elements in a cognitive unconscious is compelling. Much of what Searle consigns to the Background does seem to contain information about how the world is and as with hypothesis is subject to falsification, as in cases of breakdown. In addition, a Background at least partly composed of induced generalizations would flesh out the otherwise vague suggestion that the Background is (or contains) a mechanism that is sensitive to the appropriate features of the world, such as socially or culturally specific rules⁹.

We are not claiming here that indeed there are certain conceptual routes in Searle's early work which could enable us to certainly determine that in Searle's perspective the Background is truly a form of tacit knowledge. But, as we seen above, we must take this possibility in a serious manner. And if indeed things are as are they have been described by Eliasmith and if indeed within the Background we can find some certain cognitive elements which are, in a tacit mode, describing our world even if we are not completely aware of this, then how it could be avoided the infinite regress of question about how the meanings are forming? And this question could be formulated even if we admit, together with Searle, that any meaning is contextual. Because if every meaning is considered to be contextual and within the Background we can yet find cognitive elements about our world then how these elements appear at all? And the issue it is not limited here only to the fact of contextual meanings but to the *mechanisms* which allow appearing meanings about the world within the Background itself. Perhaps there could be no certain answer to this kind of question. But, anyway, to admit that the Background has its own cognitive capabilities, regardless of how this is possible, is to admit the fact that there is indeed a form of intentionality within the Background. This path of investigation it is not a distinct and elaborate one within the field of research about John Searle's work but it could be one of the most interesting.

Another possible path of describing John Searle's account of intentionality during his early work is to consider this concept in relation with Husserl's point of view upon it. But this is a different and a very distinct approach and it could be performed separately and independently of an extended and strictly analysis about intentionality within John Searle's early theoretical position. For us it was important to underline the significance of intentionality in its relation with the concept of Background and, of course, to offer some detailed elements of analysis upon this last concept. However, it is important to mention that Searle's type of investigation does not start by putting the world away, by isolating it in order to later obtain, by a sort of reduction, a pure and absolute understanding of intentionality in its transcendental condition. Searle seem to accept the objective reality of the world in a way that is significantly different from Husserl's phenomenological

⁹ Searle, J – *The Construction of Social Reality*, New York, Free Press, 1995, p. 146.

investigations. For example, the concept which is named by Searle “direction of fit”, a concept which is used by him in order to describe a particular condition of intentionality in its relation with the objective reality, is a very proper concept in order to illustrate that for Searle the objective reality is playing a serious role in the mode through which intentionality is functioning. In this example, the meaning of an element from the objective reality it is not strictly determined by an intentional state but the intentional state has a “direction of fit” to a *meaning* from the objective reality. Because, it seems according to Searle that when I am admiring a landscape my state of mind is fitting upon an element from the objective reality, an element which has a meaning that it could not be obtained only through my pure an isolated intentionality. And here we can see that “direction of fit” which in some parts of Searle’s works is so extendedly described. Of course, not even this point of view is completely clarified within Searle’s work but for us is important to mention it because it is disclosing a feature of intentionality which could be used in constructing an social ontology after all. And this feature is exactly that type of relation with the objective reality which is so obvious within the above examples.

For John Searle a feature of intentionality, beside others which are traditionally for a phenomenological approach, are indeed fundamental for any possible construction of a social ontology. This is *the necessity of Background for the functioning of intentionality*. But beside this obvious picture what is really important for any kind of fundamental research upon the roots of any social ontology is to clarify the issue of meanings within the Background itself. Because, beyond all Searle’s efforts which have been made in order to sustain that within the Background there are not representational cognitive acquisitions it is hard to believe, after all his description about how the Background is finally working, that indeed there are no such elements within it. But this task overcomes the purpose of our study. However, we make here one last consideration: the task of clarifying how the Background could be seen as a reservoir of distinct types of meanings regarding the objective reality is situated at the most fundamental level of any phenomenological approach. *It is, of course, directly linked with issues from the ontological level but, and this is strange in some way, it could be performed without affecting the empirical research of social scientists at all.*

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ONTOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF METAPHORICAL REFERENCE
IN PAUL RICOEUR'S HERMENEUTICS

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What some authors¹ refer as “the ontological turn” of Ricoeurs’ hermeneutic methodology expresses the problem of primary background of comprehension, of the conditions of possibility of textual meaning and metaphor. The ontological assumption of textual meaning and metaphor is connected, in hermeneutical framework, with the stipulation that any type of discourse (with some exceptions reminded by the philosopher without many insistences²) should send at some reality, should refer at a world. Taking into account Frege’s³ distinction between sense and reference, Ricoeur sustains that the reference of a metaphor (which expresses its truth value) is provided by its pretension of sending at a reality. The metaphorical language appears as a significant system of a reality that precedes it, furthermore the reality is understood as what can be meant in language. The identification of the referential function, concerning a text, presupposes the detachment of its

¹ For example Thompson, John B., Venema, Henry Isaac.

² Ricoeur reminds about texts without reference, in which the link between significance and significant is canceled, in *De la text la acțiune. Eseuri de hermeneutică II*, Editura Echinocțiu, Cluj-Napoca, 1999, p.176

³ Frege, Gottlob, “Sens și semnificație”, in *Logică și filosofie*, Editura Politică, București, 1965

non-ostensive references. The text refers at a “world” which is expressed, described or represented within. The purpose of the referential function of language becomes to assembly a bond between men and world. It follows that interpreting a text means understanding the reality at which the text refers, according to this Ricoeur will impose a distinction between “textual meaning” and “psychological meaning” based on the hermeneutical principle of “division”.

We will analyze now the analysis of appliance of ontological postulate at metaphoric linguistic constructions. The concept of metaphorical truth, assumed as a “ontological project of metaphorical enouncing”, supposes the reconsideration of metaphor as a discursive strategy that is not limited at a descriptive utterance of reality, but the possibility of its transgression (a linguistic modality of re-describing reality based on heuristic fictions).

Firstly, we underline that the passing from the semantic level to the hermeneutic level, in other words, from phrase to discourse (literary work, poem, story, essay etc) opens a new convoluted horizon. This new horizon is not centered on metaphor as discourse figure focused on word, or on the sense of metaphor as an instauration of a new semantic pertinence. The main problem is the reference of metaphoric content, its pretension to refer at an extra-linguistic reality, to re-describe reality, in other words – to have truth value.

Ricoeur validates this transition through the connection, within the discourse, between sense, as an “intern organization” and reference, as capacity to send at a reality exterior to language⁴. Under these circumstances, metaphor becomes a “discourse strategy” that, expressing the creative power of language, expresses also the heuristic capacity devolved into action.

The pretension of metaphoric speech to be referential is congested by the objection, of many theoreticians, that fictional discourse, especially the one that uses poetical and metaphorical formulas, ought to be non-referential or referential. For example, R. Jakobson sustains that the poetical function of language is fundamentally oppose to the referential function. This function expresses the evidence of message for itself and not for anything in addition. In fact, this function underlines the sensible aspect of signs imposing more a more the fundamental dichotomy between signs and objects⁵.

Another objection, even more radical, comes from Northrop Frye, who generalizes non-referential at any literary work, not just poetry. Referring to the symbolic functions, the author argues that it refers to something, is “a sign made for something” or is something only in educational or informative discourse, while in the context of literary discourse, the same symbol refers to itself although correlated, within the discourse, parts of a whole⁶. The work

⁴ Ricoeur, Paul, “Prefață” in *Metafora vie*, Editura Univers, București, 1984, p.16

⁵ Jakobson, Roman, *Fundamentals of Language*, Nouton Haga, 1956, p.218

⁶ Frye, Northrop, *Anatomy of Criticism*, Princeton University Press, 1987, p.78

of the poet and the mathematician are in accordance only with the logic of their assumptions without sending to a descriptive reality. On the other hand, positivist epistemologists argue that literary discourse is “emotional”, expressing the subject’s core and not some outer reality. As we mentioned, Ricoeur frequently referred to a mention of Tzvetan Todorov on the non-referentiality of certain types of speech, whose meaning is determined solely by structuralist methods of analysis.

Ricoeur sustains that the suspension of literary reference is a necessary condition for releasing a reference in the second degree, which, however, not be confused with the actual poetic reference. He opposes his conception to conceptions about the non-referentiality of poetic discourse. It is not only challenged the notion of *double meaning*, but also the notion of *duplicate reference*⁷. Metaphorical interpretation raises not only the new semantic relevance, obtained by diverting the literal meaning of words, but a “new referential project”, by the very abolition of reference that corresponds to literary interpretation. In other words, the metaphorisation of sense corresponds to a metaphorisation of reference. To appropriate reference literal sense, lexicalized - level I, it is added a reference level II - corresponding to metaphorical sense, that does not cover concrete world of objects, but what is essential in connection between our being and the existence.

The theory of metaphoric reference is supported by Ricoeur by recourse to “the generalized theory of denotation”, formulated by Nelson Goodman in his work *Languages of Art. An approach to the Theory of Symbols*. According to his view, any symbol (linguistic or nonlinguistic) has value only insofar as it relates to a concrete reality:

“Symbolic systems *make* and *remake* the world (...) reordered the world in terms of works and works in terms of the world”⁸.

This assertion is based on the relationship between cognitive and emotional level, which is the foundation of aesthetic experience. It is commonly acknowledged that in aesthetical experience, the emotions are involving a cognitive aspect, since it enables the assimilation of meanings contained in that work. If “the truth of art” involves the representation of a subjective reality or non-subjective through stylistic categories of creative arts, it means that “the truth of metaphor” implies the same description of reality by linguistic categories. As Ricoeur states, “metaphor refers to a reverse operation of reference, to which it adds a transfer operation. It must therefore follow very carefully the chaining: reversed reference - example -

⁷ About this particularity of metaphorical text analysis, Ricoeur sustains that this text is based on “a referential conception of poetic language that is connected with the abolition of common language and regulates the concept of doubled reference” in *Metafora vie*, Editura Univers, București, 1984, p.354

⁸ Goodman, Nelson, *Languages of Art. An approach to a Theory of Symbols*, [Hackett Publishing, Cambridge, Indianapolis-Indiana](#), 1984, p.241

possession (literally) of a predicate - expression as metaphorical possession of non-verbal predicates (a sad color). To climb the chain originated from possession (literal), before falling to the metaphorical expression"⁹. The series *denotation - example - possession* supports both verbal symbols (in the order of description) and for the nonverbal, (in the order of representation) thus, the metaphor being correlated with the referential aspect.

Contemporary epistemology will call into question the metaphorical reference in the context of "a theory of patterns" and "a logic of the heuristics". For example, M. Black and M. Hesse will argue that in the genesis of scientific theories always operates a "pattern", a "heuristic instrument of re-description" which, concerning his nature and his role, manifests a coincidence with the metaphor. Regarding the reference to reality, metaphor is for poetic language what is pattern for scientific language. Theoretical explanation must be understood as "metaphorical re-describing of explanation domain"¹⁰, theoretical patterns assuming an isomorphism in order to legitimize the transfer.

Ricoeur sustains that the appeal to the re-describing preceded by the metaphor is a consequence of the inability to obtain a strict relationship of inference between *explanans* and *explanandum*, in the best case we can speak of a *close connivance* between them, but not a similarity. Therefore, the common feature of metaphor and patterns is their heuristic strength, their ability to describe and highlight the new dimensions of reality through the abolishing of our faith in previous descriptions.

Ricoeurs' hermeneutics becomes, finally, a statement of the re-describing poetic language capacity in terms of "metaphorical truth". The metaphor has a cognitive- heuristic function opening new meanings at the same time, it has a referential function, as far as re-described or, rather, re-configures reality, revealing new aspects of it. The theory is extended to the referential report between metaphorical statement and reality. To the three types of tension raised by Ricoeur - the tension in the statement (between *tenor* and *vehicle*, *focus* and *frame*), the tension between the two interpretations (the literal and metaphorical) and tension in the relational function of copula (between identity and difference) - must be added a fourth: "the tension in the metaphorically asserted being"¹¹. If the first three types of tension are applied to the immanent meaning of the statement, the new concept of tension is aimed at the reference itself, the metaphorical statement refers to a reality, "ontological vehemence of metaphorical *is*" in terms of DiCenso. The example of the French philosopher to illustrate this kind of tension is very suggestive:

⁹ Ricoeur, Paul, *Metafora vie*, Editura Univers, București, 1984, p.361

¹⁰ Hesse, Mary, B., "The explanatory function of metaphore", in *Models and Analogies in Science*, University of Notre Dame Press, 1970, p.258

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p.381

“When the poet says *Nature is a temple of living columns...*, the verb *to be* doesn't just make a link between the predicate *time* and the subject *nature*, depending of the triple tension that we underlined; the copula is not only relational; it implies also the fact that, through the predicative relation, it is re-described *what it is*, it says *that* it is like that... Tension takes place than between an “is” and an “it is not”; so, “*to be like*” should be considered as a metaphorical manner of the copula itself: this *like* is not just a term of comparison between other terms, it is included in the verb to be, modifying its force”¹².

We appreciate the time that “is” metaphorically signifies the same time “it is not” and “it is like”. Only then can we speak of “metaphorical truth”, but also in a tensional sense of the word “truth”.

The metaphor becomes a rhetorical technique used in various fictional speeches to re-describe reality. The relationship between fiction and re-description reported to conclude that the last “place” to produce the metaphor is no word, no phrase, no speech, but the copula of the verb “to be”¹³. In the case of metaphor, duplicate reference means that the usual reference is the negative condition of a reference of second degree, adjust the power to re-describe composed of heuristic fictions. The concept of second-degree reference requires the formulation of a different concept of truth, different from the usual conception, the usual “truth-checking” or “empirical verification”. Duplicate reference expresses that tension which characterizes metaphorical statement is borne ultimately by the copulative “is”. In these circumstances, “to be like” means both “to be” and “not to be”. By metaphorisation not only meaning is duplicate, but the reference itself. Metaphorisation process “cancels the reference of normal speech, of objects that meet one of our interests” (control or manipulation), producing a second degree reference, which is nothing other than the power of fiction to re-describe reality.

As shown, the theory of tension, assumed by Ricoeur as guidance of hermeneutics of metaphor is extended to the relationship between metaphorical statement and its reference. Starting from the distinction between relational and existential meaning of the verb to be, Ricoeur eventually reaches to a tensional conception of metaphorical truth. If at the semantic level, the tension is between the focus and frame (metaphor- word and metaphor- phrase) at the hermeneutical level, the tension manifests itself between the two types of interpretations - the literal and metaphorical, on the one hand, the identity and difference of similarity process, on the

¹² *Idem*

¹³ Reality becomes “the ultimate category beginning from this complexity which language is – although unrecognized – as the voiced being of reality”, *Ibidem*, p.472

other side. In other words, the tension theory applies to relational function of copulation itself.

Adopting a tensional theory to metaphorical reference allows Ricoeur to avoid the risk of falling into the extremes of a theory of metaphorical truth: it is the concepts that support the so-called "ontological vehemence" of metaphorical discourse, namely, "mythologized metaphor critique". Being on the open direction of the romantic philosophy of myth (Schelling), but also bergsonian intuitionism, much of the neo-romantic literary critics (Coleridge, Wheelwright) proclaims the idea of a ontological vehemence of metaphorical language, especially the poetic one, considering it as an *ecstatic moment* of language, as opposed to the rigidity and opacity of technical-scientific language. Although Ricoeur considers to a point that the intentions of these line of metaphorical speech rehabilitation¹⁴ for the purposes of supporting a primary link with reality, his main objection concerns especially vague terminology usage (terms such as: intense, alive, tension aliveness, connotative fullness) and the vitalist-intuitionist trend insufficient in terms of a hermeneutic-critical foundation of language. We are not surprised; therefore, that Ricoeur calls this theory as being more one of "ontological naiveté".

Unilateral interpretative direction is open by the theory that supports the critique of mythologized metaphor, based on structural analysis of myth, metaphor is considered only as a perceptual faith, abusive language form, like the myth, which can have no more than a rhetoric function in the speech. Based on the assumptions of neo-empiricist and positivist, claiming a verificationist sense of metaphorical truth, such a theory, as Ricoeur critically considers, it seems that "reflects on scientific patterns rather than on poetic metaphors"¹⁵.

At this point of discussion is not irrelevant to note the similarity between Ricoeurs' critique addressed at the above-mentioned theories and the position assumed by Douglas Berggren in *The Use and Abuse of Metaphor*. Riceour himself admits that "owes a lot"¹⁶ to the work mentioned above, considering the authors' effort to mediate critically between the theories mentioned in order to support a tensional opinion on the metaphorical truth.

Previous explanations are not unimportant, especially given the intention to subscribe Ricoeurs' approach to subscribe the metaphor of a kind of truth which is not either positivist-empiricist and either pragmatic, circumstantial, but to a hermeneutical one: metaphorical language must be regarded not such in terms of production and innovation of sense, but even more importantly, in light of the interpretation and reception. Even the understanding of metaphorical production is produced starting from the

¹⁴ Especially Wheelwright, whose dialectic theory of metaphor presents, as we noticed, some similarities with Ricoeurs' tensional theory.

¹⁵ Ricoeur, Paul, *Metafora vie*, Editura Univers, București, 1984, p.388

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p.391

interpretive process. Furthermore, the perception of metaphor involves not only identifying emerging meanings, as an indication of their link with the extra-linguistic existential dimension. Hermeneutical importance of metaphor lays not so much in the semantic innovation resulting from juxtaposition of the two meanings - literal and figurative, as in the interpretive effort that it raises. The truth metaphor is hermeneutic, located beyond the purely instrumental or purely literal manner, implying a new concept of understanding designed to emphasize the ontological inflection of metaphoric speech, as a starting point of being. Thus it becomes clear that the stake of metaphorical language is the expression of a hermeneutic truth, supported by the possibility of a metaphoric reference as a discursive instance to open new aspects of reality. In the context of Ricoeur's hermeneutics, the metaphoric dimension of language is active insofar as it opens and allows our interpretive report with the being, a more assumed communication, we might say - authentic with each other.

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THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE IN THE WEAK THINKING DISCOURSE

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If I say that I believe to believe, in what
particular thing of the Christian doctrine,
as all of us got it, I think I believe?

(Vattimo 2005, 75)

Abstract

The objective of the present study is to retrieve the interest for the Christian religion message, constituted into a true 'theology of secularisation' on one of the most visible Italian philosophers, Gianni Vattimo. First, we are searching for the attributes of the term 'secularisation' in order to further establish which are its connection with the Christianity. We then remark the fact that the secularisation is inherent to that sort of Christianity that lives in an era characterised as the end of metaphysics. Thus, following Vattimo, today only the *charity* makes possible a nonviolent interpretation of the Christian message. The most sensitive moment of this philosophical route is due to the question concerning the speaking about belief, each one in his own name, yet not apart from Tradition. Vattimo's solution came by appeal to continuity, to history and context, by which the interpretative character through which we can connect ourselves to

the Christian tradition is guaranteed. The last part of the study presents some critics brought to this secularised and weakened approach offered by Vattimo. However, some distinctions advanced by Vattimo in support for his view are also to be presented.

Keywords: Christianity, secularization, weak thinking, charity.

The return of religion in the late modernity's culture of the mankind, the secularization as constitutive feature of the modernity, and our Christian inheritance are the key terms that define Vattimo's vision in connection with the role played today by the Christian religion's message. Also, *pensiero debole* is an essential concept in Gianni Vattimo's philosophy, a concept that could be translated as "a theory of weakening as a characteristic feature of the Being, in an era of the end of metaphysics" (Vattimo 2005, 24). Through this Vattimo describes the process of Christianity's retrieval, a process that takes place into a history of modernity that is one of metaphysical dissolution, one that is "weakened", and in which the secularization is even an exceptional case of this weakening. The norm of secularization is charity between people, and between God and human beings, and through it and by it is guaranteed the interpretability of the Christian message, as Vattimo thinks.

We have reached now, following Vattimo, to think the relationship between *Philosophy-Weak Thinking-Christian message* in terms of secularization, weakening, and of Incarnation. Thus, we are called to understand the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God as the proclamation of an ontology of the weakening, we approach the relationship that we can establish between all the things stated before and religion, especially Christianity. There are many terms that will be explained, contextualized, connections that are to be highlighted, and all these will be made only to the extent to which we will not lose touch with how Vattimo decided to address these issues.

We choose as a first contact with Vattimo's ideas to be through the work that Rorty described in Anticlericalism and atheism as the "original book ... *Crede di credere*" a book in which, considers Rorty, "Vattimo has used all his philosophical learning and sophistication to argue for the reasonableness of a return to the religiosity of their youth" (Rorty 2003, 40).

For the man of the late modernity it seems apparently impossible to solve the many problems of his time - with the aid of reason or of technique-, and on this background it becomes understandable the return to religion in our culture.

'Secularization is a constitutive feature of modernity', wrote Vattimo, and he aims to develop the consequences 'of a non-metaphysical conception of the Being as an Ontology of the Weakening' (Vattimo 2005, 34). The next step will show how, from this weakened ontology it derives an ethics of nonviolence that can be grounded even in our Christian inheritance.

For Vattimo, the religious issue is one in whose approach we do not ever start from scratch, because 'it is always a repetition of experiences already taken' (Vattimo 2005, 6) The precaution of the Italian author in the manner of using terms such as sacred, God, the ultimate reason, is invoked from the beginning, arguing that he uses those terms in 'the public conversation', something we consider necessary to show just to avoid possible reproaches for repetition.

Using the term 'repetition', Vattimo announces that he is planning to 'individualize the secularization as a constitutive feature of a genuine religious experience.' (Vattimo 2005, 7). Yet, what is it meant by secularization? "The secularization is a relation derived from the sacred core from which we had gone away, and which still remains active even in its fallen, distorted version" (Vattimo 2005, 7). This recursion or getting back implies revisiting the origin, creature's dependence from God. Following Heidegger, - "the oblivion of the being" - Vattimo will say that we do not remember the (forgotten) origin in order to put her in its own rights, but we remember that we had always forgotten it. Yet, the process of bringing back to the memory of this oblivion "is what constitutes the only authentic religious experience" (Vattimo 2005, 7).

When asked how this return is taking place, the author rely on the experience of death as a possible example, like the physiology of maturation and of aging, or of special historical circumstances.

In Christianity, the realization of salvation "is not in a total discontinuity with our history and our earthly projects" (Vattimo 2005, 10), so that the return of the issue of religion and faith is connected with the history and cannot be reduced at various stages of life conceived "as a permanent model equal to itself" (Vattimo 2005, 10).

The problem of God appears to Vattimo in connection with:

- a. encountering a limit,
- b. the occurrence of a failure,
- c. political reasons - the pontificate of John Paul II and the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, or Islam,
- d. philosophical reasons - the Modernity's crisis, the positivism's scientism, the Hegelian historicism, the Marxist historicism.

Thus, and by appealing to Nietzsche and Heidegger, Vattimo's trip starts on "nihilism as an arrival point of modernity, and about the task for thinking, arising out of here, to acknowledge the end of metaphysics" (Vattimo 2005, 16).

For Nietzsche, modernity means the final consummation of the faith in being and reality (see *Twilight of the Idols*), while Heidegger thinks about the

being in terms different from those of metaphysics. Following the ideas of the two, Vattimo will try to answer to the question: "what is the relationship between my personal Christian heritage and the Nietzsche-Heidegger nihilism?" (Vattimo 2005, 22).

It appears that Vattimo's writing personalizes itself, making place to that request stated since the beginning, according to which to talk about faith is possible only in your own name.

The concept that needs to circumscribe this discussion is the *pensiero debole*, which does not necessarily refers to a thinking more aware of its own limitations, a thinking which leaves apart the great metaphysical visions, but rather is understood as "a theory of weakening which is constitutive for the being in an era of the end of metaphysics" (Vattimo 2005, 24). Also, the interpretation of Heidegger's thinking as a weak ontology can be thought of as a rediscovery of Christianity, namely as a result of his legacy's permanent action.

The debolist reading of Heidegger and the idea that the history of the being would possess as a leading wire the weakening of the strong structures, means for Vattimo the transcription of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

Invoking René Girard, Vattimo's discussion starts from the experience of the sacred, a sacred akin to violence, as it appears painted not only in secular philosophy, but also in religious reflection.

In *Philosophy of the present* (1990), in dialogue with Italo Mancini, one of the most renowned experts in philosophy of religion in Italy, Vattimo attempts to outline the philosophical status of the sacred, a sacred that is expressed or appears in opposition to reason. Following this line of thought, he will emphasize the contradiction between reason and the sacred as being that between "a thinking that understands to liquidate the sacred and a thinking that preserves the sacred's dimension as being an absolute transcendence" (Vattimo 2003, 76). The first reproach brought by Mancini to Vattimo is the coincidence between the sacred and the transcendent, the Italian priest choosing rather to define the sacred as "the alleged immediacy of the relationship with the divine, the idea of a sentimental or emotional privileged access to the immeasurable power of God" (Vattimo 2003, 76).

In the critique advanced from a religious point of view, which Vattimo proposed against the concept of the sacred, the invocation of Girard was unavoidable, especially through Girard's support of the opinion that the sacred represents a permanent violent character, and Judaism and Christianity were only two ways in which it was revealed that violent core of the sacred. In such a context, Jesus does not possess the status of the perfect victim, but He is the one sent to death from outside, the one who came to reveal the violence hidden in the sacred. We mention here, parenthetically, Mancini's comment on Elie Wiesel, who said that God will not be free of suffering until the man himself will be fully released.

Thus, for Vattimo it becomes symptomatic the fact that we suffer from sacralization - an important component of the claim to speak in the name of God, which involved many historical forms of violence.

Before going further, we will stop for just one more observation. In religions in which death of the god is not assumed, it could be observed how, together with the weakening, and the dissolution of the faith, the gods tend to share the same fate, to disappear, to dissolve as well. However, when a faith presupposes the death and the resurrection of a god, the moment of the faith's dissolution or even the dissolution of his death raises the following theological question: the world can no longer be thought of as born without God, but only as a world that has been a while of God and now there is no longer than the world of Gott ist tot - but even so, God remains the reference of a world that was Christian. The world that is no longer Christian, is inevitable an anti-Christian world, because the world that has been but is no longer Christian is not simply the world before Christianity. Thus, under conditions of a weakening, we can speak of a world that is widowed . There was a *deicide*.

Here it is what Vattimo writes: "The non-violent and non-absolute God of post-metaphysical era has as the distinctive feature, that precise vocation towards weakening of which Heidegger's philosophy speaks about" (Vattimo 2005, 29). He will design the characteristic secularization of the modern Occident as being an inner fact of Christianity, positively connected to the meaning of Christian message, the history of modernity being one of weakening and of dissolution of the being, of the metaphysics. If the sacred is no longer a violent mechanism (see Girard), but the violent mechanism that Jesus came to refute, then secularization, says Vattimo, is just the positive effect of Christ's teachings. This meaning is retrieved by Vattimo in the writings of Max Weber, in his studies of sociology of religion: "Modern science could arise in the Judeo-Christian culture also because this culture have freed nature of all deities. (...) We have built a natural science and a technology also because the Judeo-Christian God - spiritual, unique, etc. - helped to unbewitch the world" (Vattimo 2003, 80).

Vattimo will consider secularization as the exceptional case of weakening. However, the term will remain central, because it emphasizes the religious meaning - the weak ontology is transmitting the Christian message. Moreover, Mancini has noted that, while metaphysics, with its speaking about God, is a surrogate of true religion, which is talking *with* God, the alternative to this metaphysics is *kerygma*, the message. Vattimo takes over the importance of this term for the twentieth century's philosophy and he opposes it to the metaphysical tradition. When hermeneutics reaches "to present itself as a *Koine*, the it must be defined again in a more coherent and rigorous way, retrieving his own original inspiration - that means Heidegger's meditation on metaphysics and its destiny. (Vattimo 2000, 43). For Vattimo, hermeneutics appears, perhaps, as the only form in which a religious

experience can be made to survive - because hermeneutics is message transmission.

The basic text represented by Judeo-Christian Scripture, the tables of the law written by Moses under the guidance of God, appear now invoked by Vattimo, and “what tables can tell us today is the outcome of the game, or of the conflict of various interpretations that were given to the tables in time” (Vattimo 2003, 85).

At the beginning of another important work of his own, *Beyond the Interpretation* (1994), the Italian philosopher will show that the interpretation does not claim the right to retrieve the authenticity (Vattimo 2003, 14), and the fact that any experience of truth appears as an act of interpretation emphasizes exactly the constitutive elements of hermeneutics: that of ontology and that of the linguistics.

For Vattimo it is established also a circularity between:

- a. Christian heritage;
- b. the weak ontology;
- c. the ethics of nonviolence;

Thus the Christian heritage, that reverts to the weak thinking means just the inheritance of Christian precept of charity and the denial of violence. Unlike Rorty, Vattimo considers as being important and useful to know which are *the roots* of our ethical preferences, emphasizing that the ethics of respect and solidarity gets its justification from the explicit relationship with its origin.

The Christianity retrieved by Vattimo, as he himself admits it, is that one that appears to himself in this era of the end of metaphysics. Salvation's history and that of interpretation occur in close liaison, because the salvation is taking place in history. “Salvation takes place in history and with the help of a more genuine interpretation of the Scriptures (...) The leading wire of the interpretation that Jesus gives to the Old Testament is the new relationship, more intense, of charity, between God and humanity” (Vattimo 2005, 42). Moreover, the *kenosis* means nothing less than denial of metaphysics and the possibility to teach the human being to overcome the violence of the sacred.

The *kenosis* is a non-violent and non-absolute act, impossible to fit through the methods of any metaphysics; she denies the natural features of the divinity, and it is confirmed by secularization, because, for example, she has a purifying effect concerning the relationship between faith and time.

However, the question is: how are we to understand the history of salvation? Surprisingly, Vattimo's response is very close to that of apologists: “Revelation does not reveals a truth-object, it speaks of an ongoing rescue (...) secularization, that is a progressive collapse of any naturalist sacrality, is the very essence of Christianity” (Vattimo 2005, 42). Jesus is the only one who sets a new relationship with his people, based on what Vattimo calls *charity*, in two aspects: between people, and between people and God. This charity ensures the interpretability of the Christian message.

Vattimo will summarize the retrieval of the current interest for Christianity in what he called “a strange sort of search and disappointment motion” (Vattimo 2005, 57) toward the Church that fails, however, to be a giver of *the words of eternal life*. Thus, the author believes, the retrieval of Christianity is made possible only because of the dissolution of metaphysics - as Christianity is a doctrine of salvation, that is of *kenosis* and secularization. In such a context, one cannot avoid the link between the ontology of the weakening and a theology of secularization. The relationship between the two is recognized “in a framework of secularization’s conception that provides just such a philosophical transcription of Biblical message; yet it does not considers the transcript an ambiguity, a masking, an appearance that should be shattered to find the original truth, but as an interpretation, justified by the doctrine of the incarnation of God ... “ (Vattimo 2005, 59). Thus, secularization is a positive sense of the Christian revelation, which reopens the dialogue way with the Christian tradition. Therefore, the Christian love will presuppose some applications which we will invent according to the different contexts that will require them.

Thus, in the terms of a non-metaphysical thinking, we say that many of the achievements of the modern reason are rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, moreover, we could not think them outside it. Yet the reasonable way to relate to this fact is nothing else than the formulation of an interpretation. The interpretative recognition of the membership relationship that binds us to the Christian tradition “is precisely the fact that in its doctrine the interpretation, and the universal interpretative character (kenotic) of the history of being are provided” (Vattimo 2005, 65).

Here we are, to a special and sensitive moment: “If I say that I believe to believe, in what particular thing of the Christian doctrine, as all of us got it, I think I believe?” (Vattimo 2005, 75). It is the moment when Vattimo comes back with that “only half-faithful” which he asserts whenever he describes his personal relationships with the Christian religion, and because of which he has no possibility for a comprehensive response to the question set out above.

However, a first possible answer emerges in connection with the articles of faith. The Creed, for example, means for Vattimo “a symbol with external value, through which the members of the community recognize themselves, a kind of password, a password *card* designed to function as a sign of recognition” (Vattimo 2005, 76).

Taking the biblical revelation as directed only to our *guidance*, Vattimo proposes an understanding of the revelation itself in terms of continuity, and therefore its meaning can only be given into historical context, the context in which we live. Even Christ’s message is one that addresses us, by engaging us.

Then, referring to his master, Luigi Pareyson, Vattimo describes the tragic, apocalyptic vision of Christianity stated by him as that of “the last great ambiguity of the Christian thinking” (Vattimo 2005, 81). Vattimo’s doubt

vis-à-vis this tragic Christianity translates itself into considering it as “just the reverse, equally unacceptable, of that sort of Christianity which believed to legitimize itself through the traditional metaphysics” (Vattimo 2005, 83). It is an Old Testament’s inspired Christianity which puts Christ’s incarnation on a secondary place, in other words, a predominance of Jewish religiosity in the return of religion in contemporary thinking.

Yet, for Vattimo, the Scripture and the Tradition, as sources of revelation, are further preferably to Protestant *sola scriptura*; however, what he does not accept is the *ex cathedra* teaching the Scripture, and he complains that about the Pope in particular, observing that he would not have take into account of “the living tradition of the community of believers” (Vattimo 2005, 87).

Many accusations have been made to Vattimo’s secular and *debolist* approach, and the manner in which he addresses the problem of sin, for example, is even tendered in this regard. Here is how it could be dissolved and losed the meaning of divine justice in such a *debolist* key: “For me the only Christian sense of sin is the exclamatory word, like when they say *What a pity!*” (Vattimo 2005, 89).

The norm of secularization can be charity, yet does the latter gives us a limit by which we can secularize, for example, the Ten Commandments? Because from the unproved fact (for Vattimo) of fewer pages of justice than those of mercy in the New Testament, it cannot be outlined an argument for his belief that “the divine justice is an attribute rather still near to the natural idea of the sacred, which must be secularized precisely in the name of love’s commandment” (Vattimo 2005, 91)

However, the secularization is not regarding only the Scriptures, but also the *worldly orders*, as Vattimo calls them - it must be accomplished a larger opening towards the reasons of those we consider guilty, and not only to set the right of the victims. The sin does not appear as a violation of some sacred principles metaphysically decreed, but as a mistake toward those which we had to love: on God himself and on our neighbor, under which disguise he appears to us.

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SECTION II:
COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

BRAND PHILOSOPHIES IN TERMS OF PRACTICAL
PHILOSOPHIES

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In Need of a Definition to Brand Philosophy

Obviously, with the analysis of the phenomenon of 'brand' and 'branding' we enter more and more the territory abstraction, of conceptualisation and signs. Too many attempts to define the brand have made it to be surrounded by a conceptually nebula, oscillating from the pragmatic concreteness of the economics, to the holistic approaches of the philosophy of culture. One explanation for this diversity may be that, although the term "brand" has been discussed by marketing experts, over the years its definitions were adjusted for the reference framework of practitioners or teachers from related fields of the communication sciences, social sciences, or design. We believe, therefore, that the word "brand" and the discussions around it are the best contextualized summary of the contemporary world.

We chose to address such a topic from the perspective of practical philosophy because of the critical approach to its discourse. We will also try to support the role of philosophy in modern society, by presenting brands as a possible forms of practical philosophy that shape reality.

Therefore, we will try to justify philosophy's role in conceptualising the brand's activity from at least two points of view:

1) First of all, philosophy may be able to conceptualize in specific notions the fact that brands and the branding activity are fundamentally linked to the way we experience our contemporary life and how we offer a meaning to it.

2) On the other hand, a philosophical perspective on branding as "praxis" can improve the way in which a brand is thought and built, by proposing models of actions at a social level. Acting as real "guidelines" of behaviour engaged in an open dialogue with the public, the powerful brands from nowadays can develop descriptive models for the way we establish a relationship, we think or we behave ourselves - establishing different ways of social activity.

While analysing in a thorough way the content of the Social Sciences, more and more theoreticians state the fact that definitions tend to be seen as "an endless spiral of language twisters."¹ We draw on the attention on the Social Sciences' perspective in order to reflect the similarities between different remarks as to identify an essence of what could be "a brand philosophy". Nevertheless, if we tried to analyse these various definitions not as concurrent, but as complementary ones, then we could be able to "unblock" them or to reactivate them in connection with their integrated and virtual history. Our work is going to support the approach of the branding phenomenon from a cultural perspective, contextually and dynamically speaking and according to the contemporary definitions given in an interdisciplinary approach. This means that the contribution of every perspective, including here the practical philosophy, participates in forming a perspective which is in a permanent exchange of contents and of the lens through which the phenomenon is visualized.

If we recognize the capacity of the many ways through which the brands were comprehended and interpreted, then we cannot agree with just one definition to the concept of "brand" or "branding". The rich contexts and environments in which brands operate nowadays call out inevitably the multiplication of the definitions concerning this topic to an interdisciplinary approach.

As brands are considered in Economic Sciences as being immaterial entities that can propose new concepts, rules of social behaviour and values that endow with life, we advance the assumption that brands could be analysed as real formulas of practical philosophy that endow with life our contemporary period, giving it a specific perspective.

However, we are trying to start our approach from the simplest definition. In a short way of speaking, following Philip Kotler's conception,

¹ David Glen Mick, (2007) 'The End(s) of Marketing and the Neglect of Moral Responsibility by the American Marketing Association', *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing* 26(Fall): pp. 289–292 online source <http://stakeholder.bu.edu/2007/Docs/Mick,%20David.%20Ends%20of%20Marketing.pdf> 02.12.10, 19:46

every brand can be analyzed as a name or a symbol which define or makes the difference between entities (not only at an economic level, such as products, but also at a personal stage) and which distinguishes itself throughout its attributes, benefits, values, culture, personality; all these features are being regarded as positive meanings sent from one field to a targeted other. And we should not be deceived: we speak about personal branding as well as we speak about a product brand or the brand of a country, because the “brand” notion is not granted to commodities. More than that, from a semiotic point of view every brand was defined as a mechanism which can produce speeches having a meaning that is going to be transmitted to the receivers². It is the *sign-concept* characteristic of a brand that transforms it in a meaningful vector and places it among the post-fordism³ approaches which emphasise its imaterial aspect, its mental image and the way in which these looms involve and associate symbols.

We define “the brand philosophy” as the overall coordinates concerning the existential identity of the trademark which are able to determine behaviour conducts at the social level. As a notion introduced by the language of the economic sciences, the “brand philosophy” is here considered as representing a specific behaviour of a brand towards its socio-cultural content. Expressions like *brand architecture*, *brand strategy*, *brand equity*, *brand value* which belong to the brand philosophy’s glossary, point out the rational essence of the brand made up of ideas and concepts. These are means to describe the contemporary world by analyzing in a critical way the contents to which they belong. More than that, the mission, the vision or the values communicated by a brand’s identity seeks to propose some patterns of value and behaviour to its targeted public.

From an organisational perspective, brands act on the community as indicators, by grouping values and immaterial characteristics in recognizable packets located on different levels of trust or approval. From the public’s point of view, brands are not just a shortcut for our conception about the world but, however, they can be an expression of unuttered aspirations. This is, of course, the main care of the critics concerning brands as ‘commercial instruments – in the way they create the desire, rather than accomplish it. Nevertheless, we believe that in this global content in which the hyper-customer is already educated concerning consumption, it is quite easy to

² Carlos Scolari (2008), „Online Brands: Branding, Possible Worlds and Interactive Grammars”, în *Semiotica*, 169(1), pp. 169-188

³ *Post-fordism* refers to the name given to the dominant system of economic production, consumption and associated socio-economic phenomena, in most industrialized countries since the late 20th century. In our paper we will take in consideration the Neo-Schumpeterian approach, based upon the theory of *Kondratiev Waves*, in which post-Fordism is seen as the techno-economic paradigm of the fifth wave, which is dominated by Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

recognize the strategy of the brands as to create a meaning for ourselves and for the others.

As O'Malley and Tynan⁴ have already shown it, the metaphor of interpersonal relations is quite useful here for analyzing the relations concerning brand communication. Taking into account this point of view, a brand can be comprehended as an entity with personality whose characteristics are very much alike to those of human beings. Recent studies concerning brand research have pointed out an important and revealing reconsideration about how branding operates at this level in terms of anthropomorphism. Studies have proven the transference of the attention from the producers to the public's response in order to differentiate services as to understand the way in which brands create value at a social level.

Thoughts on Brands, Anthropomorphism and Brand Philosophies

The outlook of the brand anthropomorphism has been cultivated since 2000, starting with the sensory branding and the emotional experiences said to be offered by this entity (ex. Martin Lindstrom, *Sensorial Brands*), up to the idea of "the marriage" between a customer and a brand (according to William McEwen's point of view, *Married to the Brand*) and even to the affirmation of brand concept as Lovemarks founded love and respect (in Kevin Roberts' *Lovemarks* version).

Every brand appears to the contemporary society as an immaterial entity, "a living entity enriched and weakened by time, the cumulative issue of thousands of little gestures" (Michael Eisner, CEO, Disney), turned into a real social and cultural phenomenon. In a society in which a choice of rational consumption is more and more replaced by a personal and emotional one, brands present themselves though "transparency, positiveness, consistency, ordinance, and affiliation – that is everything that human beings need as to define themselves. Brands mean identity."⁵

However, Gilles Lipovetsky considers that this emotional consumption corresponds only partially speaking about trademarks; it designates much more than the effects of a marketing trend, it belongs to the customer, "appearing as a self-conscious logic, based on the research of the sensations and of the great subjective benefit"⁶. This fact matches with a re-evaluation in human being's nature and his relations with the objects around him; we do not look for the product any more, we do not want objects, but the vision and the imaginary view of a brand, the emotional involvement in its consumption. Therefore, it is natural why more and more brands try to assume an anthropomorphic appearance. In fact, we consider that the post-fordism period of time crossed by the contemporary society would

⁴ Lisa O'Malley, Caroline Tynan „Relationship Marketing in Consumer Markets: Rhetoric or Reality?“, în *European Journal of Marketing* 34(7), 2000 pp. 797–815

⁵ Wally Olins (2008), *Despre Brand*, ed. Comunicare.ro, București, p. 27.

⁶ Gilles Lipovetsky (2008), *Fericirea Paradoxala*, ed. Polirom, Iași p. 37

correspond with a revaluation of the subjectivity, a keen need of individualization and personalisation at the social actors' level. This claim of the subject is not demanded in the absence of the merchandise, as our contemporary individual is aware of the power already gained by these objects. The regain of the vitality concerning the subjectivity will be therefore done by relating to the objects. The individualisation of Man begins with the very consumption of commodities.

We live in a universe of hyper-realities consumed in a more and more assumed ways, in which patterns, language twisters and social codes determine and maintain behaviours, in which the multimedia communication offer experiences much more intense than the ordinary reality. In this world, human beings abandon the desert of everyday life in the favour of the isolated tastes offered by the patterns of the mental images. Thus brands are feeding our imagination. This means only the fact that brands have become much more than a mark of the producer. They look like an environment or a social engine because they establish a relationship between people, they "touch" them in different ways and meanings, they transform their lives and, therefore, they transform themselves.

From this point of view, what makes the difference between a brand and any other type of sign is its extraordinary inconstancy of its senses. In other words, the practical quality of a brand consists in the fact that there is no meaning that should be patterned before this process or forever. Being tributary to a social content (even to a global one), the brand is predestined to an endless semiotics "but not from the Pierce's point of view in which every sign supposes an infinite semiotics, as every person who interprets something becomes in his turn a sign,"⁷ but with the meaning of a perpetual readjustment of the sign to the forever changing social reality. Following the pattern of ideologies⁸, brands can be comprehended as mental conceptions due exactly to the limited matrix of meanings, to the competitive contents of notions in which they were generated. In other words, taking into account the fact that brands join the human being's accomplishment in a certain socio-cultural space, this fact becomes necessary for the conceptual environment of our society of hyper-consumption and it is obvious for us to recognize the everywhere presence of the brands in our existence.

By recognizing the power of advertising to express the identity of the brands, Bernard Cathelat sustains the fact that "advertising is not only a commercial speech, but also a political speech, a social speech, a moral speech and at the same time, an ideological one." Therefore, an extremely important issue for analysing brand philosophies is the socio-cultural influences on human being by taking into account the messages of the brands communicated in advertising's rhetoric. Cathelat discusses this topic

⁷ Nicoleta Corbu (2009), *Brandurile globale. O cercetare cros-culturală*, ed. Tritonic, București p. 77.

⁸ Stuart Hall, „The rediscovery of ideology: return to the repressed in media studies”, în *** (1982), *Culture, Society and Media Studies*, ed. Arnold, London, pp. 52-86.

from McLuhan and Baudrillard's perspectives, in the sense of assembling human individuality on external seductive factors which leave their mark on us from early childhood. We are not in full agreement with such a perspective, but we may notice the external socio-cultural references that lead the social actor to pass through different levels of intercepting suggested behaviours. During all "the training" received in their education, the individual assimilates (and sometimes interiorises) different principles, standards, roles, values, patterns of moral behaviour that facilitate his social integration.

On the other hand, the contemporary sociology emphasizes the fact that, as to be able to interact at the social level, every person has to adopt some forms of behaviour accepted by the community, by appropriating and gathering certain accepted forms of behaviour, such as social and cultural rules, or lifestyles. These are in most cases their reasons of behaviour, this one becoming the engine of their activities.

In these circumstances, advertising fulfils an important role; it tries to please every person's needs from a symbolic point of view (although, we may say, not only from this point of view) while taking into account the cultural patterns of our society. In this process of hyper-consumption, more than ever, advertising has to assume this role, in view of the existence of a universe with pulverized values, a universe divided and segmented according to some norms that belong rather to the subjectivity of lifestyles than to the educated norms (either ethic, social or aesthetic ones). Advertising has to address to a cultural level and propose symbolical satisfactions which should correspond to the social re-evaluated patterns, ways of living, self-images, patterns of existence and behaviour with which individuals can relate themselves.

In the same way, we ought to take into account the norms which determine the roles that every person assumes during their social existence. These norms show the social attitudes that the person adapts to every situation. These norms depend on social and socio-cultural models, on domestic and professional models, on stereotypes of behaviours that depend, among others, on age, sex or social statute.

Brands and Lifestyles

We must draw every one's attention to this point and make the distinction between 'ordinary norms' and 'role norms' as perceived in practical philosophy. The ordinary norms are those that can suffer a generalization concerning a group or even our society. All these form the totality of values, convictions and even life habits of a group or of our society. The role norms have a much more restricted signification, an individual social function, being those that determine the role that every person plays in the social life, the way he chooses to participate as a social actor in a context. They are however registered in a collective logic and they have to be first of all accepted from a social point of view.

In this way, the brand communication allows the consumer to respect some norms, to assume its role, respectively to assume its statute by accepting the values that the product and the brand propose or promote. In the same time, it helps the customer to adapt to social changes, to the evolutions and the transformations that belong to the local trends or other social manifestations working just as a practical philosophy "guide". The transmission of life governing rules from a brand's perspective to its public can be realized by using the communication models of the media. These models rely on contemporary norms of socio-cultural interaction and play their part of social guidance.

As a communicative link of the brand philosophies, the advertising discourse proposes to decode the human beings' role expectations and especially to discover the link between the products and these expectations, allowing the product through its symbolical power to confirm and to impose a role for its consumer. By its adjustment, structure, regularity or its complementary process, the product guarantees to its user the acceptance of the role that it suggests. Sometimes, these roles are static and easy to be determined; the power of the contemporary advertising consists in the discovering the dynamic ones and accomplishing them, or, even more, discovering new roles, and imposing them by using an associative presentation. In this way, promoting the idea of changing the social rules, respectively of the new roles that could result from this, means to put an end to some educational schemes, while we expect to the human being to put up resistance in this respect. A new pattern could be adopted if it is presented on the basis of some patterns that already exist, socially accepted and registered in the culture of the group. As far as we recognize the important role that it plays, we may say that advertising is an element of balance for the contemporary hyper-consumerist towards the loss of his/her values. Though its communication models, advertising permits the diminution of social differences, the attenuation of the conflicts between classes, the reduction of the differences between generations, the development of the tolerance of everything that may be different, etc.

Therefore, the value of the brands consists, at last, of the ability to organize more or less distinct forms of affective turnovers on the personal level. A brand becomes a mechanism that includes, strengthens and examines such emotional investments as to offer measurable and consequently valuable results. In the same spirit of what we have presented up to now, we can maintain the fact that brands are mechanisms used for transforming the affective "energies" into valuable forms of immaterial work. That is why the point of view that we take into account in this paper aims to emphasize the fact that every brand, regarded as an immaterial entity, has become for the society of hyper-consumption a mirror that expresses itself as personality, affiliation, individualization, by describing, concisely speaking, conceptual patterns and way of behaviour that can be registered in a pattern of philosophical practice. That is the reason why we consider an absolutely

necessary the study of integration in the brand activity, of life governing rules in their synthesized and evocative form.

The challenge that brands address to their public represent, in fact, the voice of an entire media culture which tries to express itself with the help of specific means. In this way, we try to put forward a challenge concerning the brand philosophies from another point of view than the one we were used to, meaning the brand philosophies seen as real forms of value communication of a consumption culture. These take upon themselves not only an instructive and practical role in the contemporary society, but they also succeed in joining the chaotic development of a person who knew the postmodern decentralization. In the same time, a brand never forgets to advance the value norms of the products and of the society. On the other hand, as long as branding uses advertising as the voice for the masses, this communication instrument must be regarded as the emanation of a certain social, political and cultural order in which the public would recognize itself or would want to recognize itself. That is why the life styles proposed by the different brand philosophies -- such as 'Think different!' (Apple), or 'Just do it!' (Nike) -- can be easily used and exploited for the purpose of forming the socio-cultural progress as to offer alternatives to the cultural styles and to the speeches that have existed up to now.

Therefore, we consider that brands and the lifestyle models proposed by them (what we called brand philosophies) act on the social level in the same way the modern philosophical systems used to function: by shaping ways of behaviour and by supporting a certain point of view concerning the contemporary world with which they identify themselves. The way we accept that every branding activity reflects the reference of the contemporary human being to the world and this activity is capable to propose different models of human activity and interaction, the existential co-ordinates of the mark identity -- presented by us as brand philosophies -- can become legitimate topics of a critical and philosophical approach.

However, the *praxis*⁹ trends of the contemporary brands, which have become more and more powerful and capable of living for the present interdisciplinary research, proposes to open the perspective of a new approach of the topic, by offering some viable premises regarding a new research direction to the practical philosophy. As the artisan of the qualitative progress of the products, as well as the interpolation that permitted a new direction in valuing companies' profit to the consumer, the brand philosophies have brought first and foremost maybe the most important ethical value of hyper-consumerist society: freedom of choice.

⁹ A term used since Aristotle, by *praxis* we will not understand 'something distinguished from theory', but more an 'accepted practice or custom'. We will consider in here Marx's perspective that the concept of *praxis* becomes central to the new philosophical ideal of transforming the world through revolutionary activity.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL REALITY
JOHN SEARLE AND THE MAKING OF SOCIAL WORLD

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Without any doubt today science has a major role in our life. This is true not only as a general statement but even at the level of our everyday life. Centuries of evolution, which sometimes was very slow and other times very quick, has brought us to a point in our historical evolution which allow us to understand more and better huge parts of the objective reality. And by this we do not mean that today man owns the absolute truth about his life in the

Universe but only the fact that now the massive body of knowledge is making possible a deeper vision upon reality and a much better possibility to manipulate the objective reality in order to build artifacts which can improve our comfort and quality of life in general. This observation is very true for the natural sciences because one of its purposes is not only to understand and clarify the entire set of objective phenomena but also to use the knowledge about them in order to improve of our life. But how is really working these sciences? Upon what are they build and how we can explain their huge progress? And what are those elements which are similar for natural sciences but also for social sciences as well? And in what terms we can speak about "progress" within social sciences?

In what will follow bellow we will try to offer a brief perspective *for a general type of public* about the way in which science is functioning and, beginning from this point, we will try to draw a picture about John Searle's recent perspective about the way in which social sciences can work without a complete understanding of their ultimate conceptual bases. We will not use too much a scientific and complex language because of the simple reason that this article is destined only and only to a general public, a type of public which is not familiar with the language of science.

John Searle's Perspective about the Making of Institutional Facts within Social Reality

Any particular science is possible through its system of concepts. This system has, as a main purpose, the task to describe and after this to understand the series of objective facts which are described by the conceptual system. Within this general picture there are two main issues, among others, which are fundamental in order to understand the way in which science is working. First is the issue about the *forming of those conceptual systems. In other terms, the question is here about way in which those concepts are related with the objective reality.* The second issue is about the way in which those conceptual frames are tested in relation with the objective reality *after they are already accepted by a scientific community.*

Regarding the first issue the general public must know that there are relatively many way and methodologies by which a particular science is building its conceptual frame. For example, some authors will prefer an empirical oriented approach but others will work with a more artificial and constructivist approach. Anyway, regarding the mode by which is obtained the base conceptual system, in any science the next step is to test those frames in order to achieve objective knowledge about the parts of reality which are supposed to be researched.

The second issue is about, on the one hand, the way in which is interpreted the relation of those conceptual systems with the objective facts, and, on the other hand, *the way in which are finally interpreted the results*

which occur after testing them within general empirical approach. Of course, it is almost needless to say that neither in this second situation there are not general agreements and universal standards of approach. Anyway, the general public must be aware that the so called *natural sciences* are in a better position than the social sciences or human sciences. Even if within natural sciences there are enormous problems with the way in which concepts are formed at the level of fundamental research there seems indeed that those sciences can achieve much easier general standards of interpretation and objective knowledge in general. But how the things are going within social sciences? How, for example, are formed the concepts of sociology or psychology? *And how the entire social reality is possible after all?* To these questions we will try to get an answer in a simple manner beginning from John Searle's perspective from his latest book¹.

In order to achieve our task we will begin by saying in a very simple manner that for John Searle the whole social reality, with its *institutions* and *concepts* which are designating those institutions *is a sort of a very particular construction through language and collective recognition of what language is describing.* In other terms, the social reality in itself is nothing more than a sea of objective significations which are made possible through language. This is also imply the fact that the entire set of concepts used by sociologists when they are trying to explain different parts from social reality is a form of standardization of ordinary language which. For example, when the sociologists are using the term "union" they are referring to a type of institution which is possible only and only through language and by collective and mutual acceptance of the general signification of the term "union" by all. And for John Searle this is also true for all others types of social institutions and social reality in general. Of course, nobody could ever deny the fact that in John Searle's theory about how is constructed the entire social reality things are not this simple. Anyway, here we only wanted to draw attention to the power and role played by language in John Searle's theory. Bet let us see how John Searle himself speaks about his general theory:

We live in a sea of human institutional facts. Much of this is invisible to us. Just as it is hard for the fish to see the water in which they swim, so it is hard for us to see the institutionality in which we swim. Institutional facts are without exception constituted by language, but the functioning of language is especially hard to see. This might seem an odd thing to say because we are often conscious of language when we engage in a conversation, receive a telephone call, pay our bills, answer our e-mail, and so on. What I mean is that we are not conscious of the role of language in constituting social reality. We are aware of such things as the actual conscious speech acts we perform, and we are often aware of such unimportant things as the accents

¹ Searle, John, *Making the social world: The Structure of Human Civilization*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

*with which other people speak, but the constitutive role of language in the power relations in which we are immersed is, for the most part, invisible to us*².

The above paragraph is enough for someone which is not familiar with the issues of sociology's grounds to understand John Searle's point of view regarding the enormous power of language to create, to build social reality in which we are living. *But Searle says something more: the language has indeed the power to create institutional facts but all those institutional facts are engaging deontic powers.* This implies the fact that any institutional reality created through language has always a deontological structure in its background which Searle calls it a set of "deontic powers". These deontological structures which Searle is claiming that are present in any institutional reality build by language are more like a set of rules, a form of contract which have to be respected by all individuals which are participating to those institutional realities. But let us now see in Searle's own words how he understands the distinction between the realities of institutional facts in general and the presence of those so called deontic powers within institutional facts in particular:

*Institutional facts range all the way from the informality of friendship to the extreme legal complexities of international corporations. The simplest test for whether a phenomenon or fact is genuinely institutional is to ask, does its existence imply deontic powers, powers such as those of rights, duties, obligations, requirements, and authorizations? There are (uncodified) rights and obligations of friendships and dinner parties, just as there are (codified) rights and obligations of citizenship and employment. There are deontologies without institutional facts (I am, for example, under a moral obligation to help people who are in desperate need of immediate help and whom I am able to help), but there are no institutional facts without some form of deontology*³.

Of course, nobody could deny that things are a little bit more complicated than we show them here. For example, in order to obtain and to appear an institutional fact it would never be enough the simple element of language. Peoples, when they talk to each other in the sense that Searle is claiming to be able to produce an institutional fact, *must have a common intention and a mutual acceptance of the whole set of significations present within the language which is used.* Anyway, the picture which is emerging from Searle's words is enough to see and to recognize the huge power of language in creating the social reality after all. Because of the nature of our article we do not intend here to go further and to plunge into Searle's elaborated points of view. But we will try to offer in what will follow bellow a

² Idem, p. 90.

³ Idem, p. 91.

brief, systematic and transparent picture for the general public about John Searle's perspective upon the issue of emerging the social and institutional reality.

Social Reality and the Significance of Language in John Searle's *Making the Social World*

There is a doubt that John Searle had really the intention, in his latest book, to overcome some older and well known conceptions about the language. All that he did was to offer a general and maybe not to elaborate perspective upon language in its relation with social reality. As he says, language is a very particular reality in the sense that it not only preserves a functional society but also it makes possible the social world in itself. As we did above let us see this assertion in John Searle's own words:

In order that you can begin to explain the nature of society, or the role of language in society, you first have to answer the question, What is language?. (...) I want to answer (at least part of) that question in a way that will enable us to see how language is different from other social institutions, different in such a way as to make the existence of all others dependent on language. You can have a society that has language but does not have governments, private property, or money. But you cannot have a society that has government, private property, and money, but does not have a language. I think everyone would agree to this, but the philosophically important task is to say exactly why it is true. All human social institutions are brought into existence and continue in their existence by a single logico-linguistic operation that can be applied over and over again.

(...) There is a top-down connection between language and institutional facts: you cannot have institutional facts without language. And once you have a shared language you can create institutional facts at will. We could, right now, decide to form a club of people interested in the issues discussed in this book. But there is also a bottom-up connection, because once you have language, it is, I believe, inevitable that you will get nonlinguistic institutional facts. Given a language you can, so to speak, create institutional facts at will (that is the top-down part); but when you have a language, other social institutions will inevitably grow up out of language (this is the bottom-up part)⁴.

We must underline the fact that John Searle's analysis are not ending at this level of understanding the role of language in creating forms of social reality. For example, there are also present some relatively elaborated analysis about the set of particular forms in which language can be involved in creating social reality and institutional facts, particular forms which are not restricted to the simple manner described until now within this article. But

⁴ p.63.

those particular forms are representing, at least to a some point, pure technical descriptions about the features of language that allow to create distinct forms of social reality and institutional facts. We will not insist here upon them. All we wanted to describe and to show here was to huge role of language in general, on the one hand, and the ability to commonly accept its significations by peoples on the other hand in creating social reality by forms of institutional facts. Of course, and this must be also emphasized, John Searle's position about the relation between language and its power to create social reality was criticized by some authors which saw here no deeper analysis but just a simplistic approach, which starts with the natural language in its most generally forms and ends by claiming that is possible to obtain in such a manner a final and true picture about how our social world is creating. There is not the place here to plunge into these critics and debates. All we wanted is to show in front of a general public how one of the most prolific authors of our days is using the understanding the role of language in creating social reality in general. And starting from this point we will go now further and, in the same manner, we will try to disclose for a general public the way in which could be solved the issues of fundamental concepts and ground frame for social sciences in general if it is to be used the John Searle's approach.

The Issues of Fundamental Concepts within Social Sciences in John Searle's view

In what will follow, inevitably, our description will be an abbreviated version about the issues of fundamental concepts in social sciences in John Searle's view. In order to not put pressure upon the reader we will be very brief and will try to offer a simple version about the issue of fundamental concepts within social sciences in John Searle's view. In order to do this we must formulate two simple questions. The first one is about the concepts which are used by social scientists in their research work. We need to know how they are elaborated and in what consists the relations between those concepts and empirical areas. The second one is about the basic level of reality in social sciences, the level which is called by social scientists and philosophers the level of *ontological ground*. These two issues are fundamental for any type of science and not only for the social sciences. In what will follow we will try to offer a brief perspective regarding these two issues for a general category of public, a category which is not familiar with those types of problems.

We must admit that the issue of fundamental concepts within a science is not a subject of debate designed to remain only at the highest level of abstract discussions between specialists. Even if this could be true until some point, as John Searle himself recognize this, the issue of fundamental concepts within a particular science has to be clarified at least at the level at

which the set of fundamental concepts encounter the empirical reality. Even if, in general, this task could never be properly achieved it must always, however, obtained a minimal agreement between the scientists in order to make empirical research possible. But how this task is achieved in social sciences? Let us see in what will follow John Searle's point of view regarding the way in which are build the concepts within social sciences and, after this, to see his opinion about the way in which empirical research is not necessary affected in a negative manner by the epistemological debate upon fundamental those fundamental concepts. And also here we will see what it could be said about that "minimal agreement" between social scientists.

First of all, let us remember: in John Searle's view, in its simplest version, there could no institutional facts or social reality in general without the existence and the power of language to create them. The particular features of language have been analyzed by Searle during his almost entire academic and public career. We not enter here in details. It is enough to underline that the language is not responsible only in creating social reality in general but also in creating those fundamental concepts which are used by social scientist in order to understand and to explain the reality that is been researched. So, in a first stage, the language itself is also responsible for the entire set of concepts which can be encounter within different parts of social sciences. So to speak, the language, in John Searle's view, is not only creating the social reality but it is also describing this type of reality in order to be more accessible for social scientist. For example, the word "government" is translating, so to speak, not only a particular part of social reality but they are also creating those parts of reality. And by creating them they are also describing them. And if they describe they are simultaneously the source of that reality and the fundamental concepts of the same reality because there could be no other way to disclose those parts of social reality within research work. In simple words: the language is not only creating institutional facts and social reality but even more: the elements from within the language, even from the most usual and ordinary language, are simultaneously, or could be, *the concepts* that are been used by the social scientists when they do their work of research on theoretical but also at empirical level.

In addition to what has been already said about the role of language in John Searle's view and especially in its relation to social reality in general we must remember that the language itself it is not enough to create a *collective* social reality. In order to express a collective reality the language have to be able to describe a type of reality that is been commonly recognized. The problem it is not a simple one. John Searle's attempt to explain the fact about how language can create a collective social reality is taking into consideration the so called *collective intentionality*. By using this concept Searle, in his vision at least, was convinced that it could be found a solid explanation about the issue of collective and general significance of the

language in its action to create social reality. We do not want to enter here in the details of his intellectual adventure of searching the explanation about how it is possible for language to create a type of social reality which could be recognized by all. We said here only that, whatever his solutions were, they are all recognized, direct or indirect, that the language and intentionality are both capable to generate a type of social reality which is the same for all participants to social life. At least to some point this fact is based upon a kind of mutual acceptance of the different significations of language from anyone who is participating to social life in general. Even more, not only general significations are possible but the functions, at the social levels, of those significations which they are made possible by the language. For example, beyond any theory from John Searle's work, he seems to say that the word "government", a word which is designating, of course, a very distinct part from social reality, is not only capable to generate a collective significance but also it is able to generate specific functions, rules and obligations, which are also recognized by all, at the level of that "institutional fact".

What is the basic level in social sciences and how it is affecting the empirical research within John Searle's perspective?

At the end of our brief incursion into John Searle's general perspective upon social sciences let us see, also in short, what Searle has to say about the so called basic level of social sciences. This level, as we already seen, is crucial because, beside very different other things, this level is the supreme level of any science in general. It is the level which through any particular science is possible. So, what does level means for Searle, at least for Searle which is present in his latest book from year 2010 *Making the Social World?* Briefly, the answer could be this: the fundamental, so called *ontological level* is, of course, the level from which any empirical investigation begins and investigations ends. The fundamental level contain the fundamental concepts, in our case, as we already seen, the concepts which describe those parts of social realities that are, or will be, under social scientists investigation. For example, the part of social reality which is called "union" or "government" are in the same time an ontological categories, because through these words are described institutional facts which exist in its theoretical self sufficient conceptual autonomy but they are also *fundamental concepts* because any empirical investigation must be developed within the conceptual frame which are described by these words. In addition to this the ontological level can be investigated from another point of view: the theoretical mechanisms which are making possible by it the birth and functioning of those so called fundamental concepts. In John Searle's view these mechanisms are almost purely phenomenological and they are functioning through existence of intentionality. Anyway, this issue is not our goal here. It is important only for the general public to understand the relation between

fundamental concepts within social sciences and that ontological supreme level in John Searle's vision.

One last question: how does it look the real relation between the issue of having clarity at the ontological level and the ordinary functioning of empirical social research? If there is no such clarity or, even more, if there is not even possible to obtain the ultimate clarity at the supreme ontological level this would mean that empirical research must be stopped? Or, if it is not stopped this means that empirical social research it is just relative and it has nothing to say about the way in which things really are within social reality?

Of course, these questions are interesting in a way which is independently from any particular theoretical perspective but let us see John Searle's vision upon them. As we did until now we will let the author to "speak" and after this, in the end, we will make some brief considerations in order to add a supplementary transparency to the author's clarifications. So, let us see in John Searle's words some possible answers to the questions we raised above:

Suppose I am right that human society is largely constituted by distinctive institutional structures that create and distribute deontic power relationships by assigning status functions, and with those status functions differing social roles, in the society. What implications, if any, does that account have for actual research in the social sciences? I guess the short answer is that I don't really know. It is impossible to tell in advance what is going to be for useful research. It seems that there are many areas of social science research in which, at least in principle, it is not necessary to understand the foundational issues⁵. So, for example, when I lectured on these subjects at the Memorial for Pierre Bourdieu in Paris, one of the other participants, an American sociologist specializing in the sociology of labor unions, told me that his work began where mine ended. And I take it he meant that it is not necessary for him to know the ontological foundations of trade unionism. All he was to understand is the actual operations of particular historically situated organizations. The picture I think he had was that, just as a geologist might study the movements of tectonic plates without understanding the details of atomic physics, so he might study the movements of trade unions without understanding the details of social ontology⁶.

⁵ Idem, p. 200. Here Searle makes one of his most clear statements about a one possible relation between the side of empirical research and the side of foundational issues. As he admits it seems that empirical research could be developed without too much concerning about the foundational problems of that social empirical research.

⁶ Idem.

So, as Searle clearly says, it seems indeed that significant parts from social empirical research do not really need an ultimate clarification of the set of foundational issues. But let us see what Searle thinks about those foundational issues in relation with their capability to disclose more about any particular science if there is indeed the will to clarify them even if there is no need to do this in direct relation with empirical social research:

My instinct, though, is to think that it is always a good idea to understand the foundational issues. It is much more plausible to me to think that an understanding of the basic ontology of any discipline will deepen the understanding of issues within that discipline. In any case, I am not in this book attempting to provide a philosophy of existing social sciences but to offer a logical analysis of the fundamental ontology of the entities studied by the social sciences. This may – or may not – prove useful to the social sciences in the future⁷

And, of course, if the things that Searle's is talking about will be indeed useful for the social empirical research that is a fact which only the future can decide about it. Anyway, Searle's final analysis from his book *Making the Social World* it is enough in order to show to the general public that, at least to a point, there is indeed no need to have a complete clarification of epistemological and ontological issues within a particular social science. Indeed, we can make empirical research upon, for example, a social class, or a social institution in general without having a complete and absolute knowledge about how the concept of that particular social institution is possible at all. Here will be always present that general agreement between social scientists about the words and concepts that they are using, a general agreement about which we already talked.

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⁷ Ibid.

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SECTION III:
BOOK REVIEW

BOOK REVIEW: *CONCEPTELE ȘTIINȚEI*

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The author of the book *Conceptele științei* (*The Concepts of Science*), Mr. Ioan Biriș, is a PhD Philosophy Professor at West University of Timișoara. He is specialized in various domains of philosophy, ranging from Philosophy of Science (with specializations in Germany and Italy), to Ontology and Philosophy of Culture. He has also a PhD in Sociology at “Babeș-Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca. The books written by Mr. Biriș cover a large area of interest in philosophical and sociological research: *Totalitate, Sistem, Holon* - first edition (1992) and second edition (2007), *Istorie și Cultură* (1996), *Valorile dreptului și logica intențională* (1996), *Sociologia Civilizațiilor* (2000). In 2009 Mr. Biriș received the “Mircea Florian” Prize of Romanian Academy for his second edition book *Totalitate, Sistem, Holon*. Also, since 2001 Mr. Biriș has been a Jean Monet Professor, and since 2005 he has been the Director of the Philosophy Doctoral School at West University of Timișoara.

*Conceptele științei*¹ is a work in philosophy of science that aims to discuss an aspect almost neglected by the majority of contemporary books on the issue. As the author himself emphasize in the *Foreword* of the book, the scientific concepts are the “final goal” of any science². Usually books on

¹ Ioan Biriș, *Conceptele științei* (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2010).

² *Ibidem*, 9.

philosophy of science are focused on other important products of scientific knowledge: explanations, scientific laws, theories, theorems and so on. Therefore, the announced task of the book is not only an enquiry into the issue of the concepts of science, but mostly that of creating an original perspective in that subject matter, according to the contemporary theories in philosophy. To ensure this path of enquiry, professor Biriş has drawn from the beginning the basic directions for the investigation. As he asserted in the *Foreword* of his work, this approach in philosophy of science “presupposes to take into account the triangle Reality-Language-Thinking”³. Thus, the purpose of the first three chapters of the book is to discuss the three sides of the triangle, understood as essential relations: Reality-Language, Reality-Thinking, and Thinking-Language. Some of the questions that guide this investigation are mentioned explicitly by the author: “What is language?”, “What is the relation between thinking and reality?”, “What is the relation between thinking and language?”⁴. The first three chapters leads the investigation to a study in the logic of concepts, an intensional and extensional approach, and some aspects concerning the typology of terms, with an emphasis on the study of collective and distributive terms.⁵ These last matters are the subject of the next two chapters. The questions that asks for their answer are: “What new problems are asked today about the denotative side of the concepts?”, “How is the content of the terms organized, and what are the implications of this organization to the analysis of the scientific concept?”, “What are the logical properties of partitive relations?”, “What are the specific properties of collective conjunctions and terms?”⁶. The sixth chapter is devoted to presenting and analyzing some classical and contemporary theories of scientific concepts. The analysis of these theories constitutes the ground for offering an original typology for scientific concepts in the seventh and last chapter of the book. In the next lines we will try to summarize the content of each chapter, following the main ideas of the author.

The first chapter of the book, “Reality and Language” starts its analysis on scientific concepts by reference to the classical work of Aristotle, *Categories*, where the Greek philosopher reveals the complexity of the concept issue: terms or words that are not combined have reference and meaning. These interconnections suggested by Aristotelian thought is represented by the author through a triangular model that present the relations between Language, Reality and Thinking, or, to be more specific, between terms, things and concepts or notions. As it is announced by the title of the chapter, the first relation to be investigated is the one established between language and reality. If Parmenides understood language as an

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Ibidem.

⁵ Ibidem, 10.

⁶ Ibidem.

image for reality, he seemed to be just the speaker of an entire mythological tradition. Even Heraclitus, which held the idea of a universal law that rules everything, also agreed to the idea that language is a sort of copy for reality. Yet, the Sophists are the first ones who doubted this kind of relation: "Are words expressing the reality of things, or they are just determined by subjectivity of those who had conceived them?"⁷. The question led to the need to further examine the relation in discussion. Plato, for instance, conceived a methodological approach on the issue that led him to his particular view on knowledge. For Plato, the linguistic level of the knowledge was just the first one. In order to reach the true and correct knowledge, one must rise to the last level of knowledge, the rational or epistemic knowledge. The Aristotelian perspective, shortly summarized above, encouraged a strong relationship between logical, ontological and linguistic levels. His perspective was perpetuated throughout the Medieval Age. However, Thomas Aquinas and Saint Augustin believed that words are some sort of images of the things. The constant difficulty of the issue emerged in the so-called *the Quarrel of Universals* from the XIII-rd century, a philosophical dispute that eventually was gained by the nominalist idea: only the individual things have reality.⁸ This nominalist success appeared to be a first important step on an extensional perspective concerning the relation between language and reality. The Renaissance rediscovered the Platonic ideas and thus directed the research toward a mathematical approach of the relation. The field of the research would not be fully prepared for the works of Galilei, if there would not have been Descartes' urge for a *mathesis universalis*, and *lingua universalis*.⁹ However, the truly extensional perspective on the issue emerged from empiricists. Hobbes and Locke were the first modern philosophers that, through conceiving the origin of words in experience, prepared the way for what the author of the book calls "perhaps the strongest radicalization of this thesis"¹⁰. It was Bertrand Russell, the British logician and philosopher the one that proposed a sort of Cartesian epistemic methodology. As a consequence, it was seen as mandatory for the knowledge of things to presuppose the experience of things. By this it followed that a kind of certainty in knowledge requests a description procedure. The ideal of certainty in knowledge and the fact that the natural language is full of ambiguities, led Russell to deepen his enquiries into "philosophical grammar", and his efforts met the thinking of another great analytic philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein will sustain the line of thinking opened by Russell, and his first major work, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* tried to workout the idea of a language that copies reality. This old, yet mathematically updated idea was the seed that, in the author's opinion, gave birth to three philosophical directions that colored the

⁷ Ibidem, 15.

⁸ Ibidem, 16.

⁹ Ibidem, 17.

¹⁰ Ibidem, 17.

philosophical landscape of the XX-th century: *verificationism*, *behaviorism* and *operationalism*. The first one - *verificationism* - was the creation of the *Vienna Circle*, and was mostly due to Carnap. His work, *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* (1928) presented a philosophical program that could be seen as a pinnacle for empiricism¹¹. The *principle of verifiability* - the meaning of a linguistic expression is its method of verification - was not only a criterion for meaning, but in the same time a guide for separating the scientific sentences from those that could not contain knowledge about the world. Carnap's condition that any meaningful sentence must be understood in relation with experience, was a strong one and very unlikely to be practical. Therefore he tried to refine his criterion through the criteria of testability and confirmation. However, as the author underlines, there is at least a weakness that can be attributed to verificationism. This weakness (noticed by Dummett) is determined by verificationist's focus on sensibility. Thus, verificationism does not see the propositions of observations as being just an extremity - the left one - of the propositions' continuum. Ignoring this fact and the other extremity - the right one, consisting in mathematical propositions - leads to a lack of understanding of the general picture of the relation between language and reality¹². As the author writes, *behaviorism* represents a special situation. Grounding its main ideas in experience and therefore into the possibility to observe, behaviorism is determined by its presuppositions to eliminate language and thinking. The reductionist force that this movement induces tries to translate every 'thought' or 'linguistic' manifestation into behavior. Its main representative thinker, although not the only one, is B. F. Skinner.¹³ The third extensional approach developed is *operationalism*. The operationalism is grounded in some works written by Mach, Poincaré and Einstein. The main idea of this philosophical view is that the scientific concepts could be equivalent with the operations that describe different objects of reality¹⁴. Yet, all this directions, says professor Biriş, have one thing in common: "an exacerbation of the reference, and the reduction of language and mind importance"¹⁵. The attacks advanced from many philosophical perspectives, especially those from cognitivist side, forced the empiricist reductionism to gradate its perspective on the reality-language relation. "There are no inherent properties of thing that could determine the human subjects to a certain way of perception" and "language does not have to necessarily 'correspond' to things or 'to be similar' to them"¹⁶. Even the efforts of Quine to revitalize an extensional semantics had nothing of the anticipated success. His lasts attempts to reach a philosophical position that can be characterized as being closed to that which had been proposed by

¹¹ Ibidem, 19.

¹² Ibidem, 20-21.

¹³ Ibidem, 21.

¹⁴ Ibidem, 21.

¹⁵ Ibidem, 22.

¹⁶ Ibidem, 22.

Carnap, eventually led to a map of experience, which is not really an image of reality. Therefore, as professor Biriş repeatedly emphasize in his book, the empiricist conception of the particular relation between reality and language must have been be nuanced. This idea was enforced by the last development of Wittgenstein's philosophy. In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein holds a totally different opinion than that from *Tractatus*, asserting an instrumental perspective on language, and not one that reflects reality.

The first chapter leads to the following conclusions¹⁷:

the old perspective on the relation between reality and language is no longer sustainable: language does not reflect reality.

the connection between terms and their references from reality is mediated by the individual and collective mind.

The second chapter, "Reality and Thinking", aims at describing the already announced relation. Starting with the influence of anthropological perspectives on the relation between reality and thinking, the author leads its way into the empiricists' views on the subject matter. From Hume's idea that concepts are copies of sensible impressions¹⁸, to Locke's and Stuart Mill's views that concepts are "abstractions of things from reality", the empiricist's ideas on the investigated relation were centered on the essential and prime role of the facts, or experience. Yet, this empiricist vision on concept's production is amendable. For instance, Ernst Cassirer held a different opinion on concept formation, one that involves a selection process, rather than one that is grounded in abstraction. This perspective was supported also by a contemporary philosopher like Alberto Marradi.¹⁹ Also, Kantian schematism interposed an intermediary stage between the "pure concepts of the intellect" and "empirical intuitions"²⁰. This new method of theorizing the relation between concepts and reality is still being investigated in contemporary philosophy. Professor Biriş mentions the nuanced observations of Ilie Pârvu on Kantian pure concepts.²¹ As Professor Pârvu emphasized, the Kantian schematism is a structural-mathematical frame that determines the possibility of laws and models of the theories. Because this mathematical frame is a creative one, and is differentiated by the conservative logical way of thinking, it has generated some influence on logical and mathematical analysts, as well as on philosophers. One noticeable influence of Kantian way of thinking was that on American philosopher Ch. S. Peirce. Peirce, says Professor Biriş in his work, studied the structures of inferences and tried to elaborate a large frame for analyzing

¹⁷ Ibidem, 25.

¹⁸ Ibidem, 27.

¹⁹ Ibidem, 29.

²⁰ Ibidem, 31.

²¹ Ibidem, 31.

thought and language²². For Peirce, signs are 'mediators' between the objects of reality and the subjects that interprets them. However, it is not Peirce's semiotics that constitutes the largest part of the second chapters' analysis, but Carnap's ambitious project from *Der logische Aufbau der Welt*. Professor Biriş holds the opinion that "in the last years, this masterpiece returns into the centre of philosophical attention, because it has been acknowledged that Carnap's project contains almost all the major reasons of contemporary epistemology"²³. Carnap's project is fundamentally connected with the context of the 'new logic', a logic that is grounded in a scientific way of approaching concepts and in the different modalities by which the sensible data of experience can be controlled. Two reasons determined Carnap to engage himself in the new logic project: (i) it offers a model for mathematical reconstruction, and (ii) as an analytical tool, logic allows a broadening to the entire scientific knowledge. Dwelling into Carnap's project, professor Biriş presents and analyze the vision of German philosopher with noticeable observations on the elements advanced by the new logic: relations, concepts, definitions, structures. On this last aspect, the author underlines Carnap's interest in perceiving the objects as secondary in relation with structural relations, a direction that puts Carnap closer to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*²⁴. However, the influence from the Analytic School in philosophy is not the only one that influenced Carnap's project. Some considerable influence on Carnap was due to German traditional philosophy - Kantian and neo-Kantian -, and to the physical theories of those days - Helmholtz, Boltzmann, Hertz and Mach. Another influence mentioned was that of Gestaltist psychology. Only one of the two branches of Gestalt psychology interested the first period of Carnap's project - the one that, inspired by the ideas of phenomenology, understood the Form as "constitutive to the perceptive conscience's activity to induce structure"²⁵. These premises determined Carnap, to launch a "super-program" in philosophy of science, built on three main directions: (i) the transformation of the entire domain of scientific knowledge by the means of the new logic; (ii) the "naturalized epistemology"; (iii) the mathematization of experience²⁶. Carnap's project to build the logical system of scientific concepts had offered an essential role to the structural relations between entities. The sensible elements that represent the *Urelemente*, are understood through the Gestalt philosophy and brought together by the set theory created by Bourbaki group. Each concept is being conceived on a large pyramidal structure, where the next level is built from the elements of the preceding one. The above mentioned set theory helped Carnap to integrate the preceding concepts into the new ones also according to Russell's theory of types. At the most basic level of the

²² Ibidem, 33.

²³ Ibidem, 35.

²⁴ Ibidem, 41.

²⁵ Ibidem, 45.

²⁶ Ibidem, 46-47.

pyramid the fundamental relation between elements of sensible experience (*Elementarerlebnisse*) is the relation of similarity. Following Moulines, professor Biriş identifies the relation of remembering the similarity (*Ähnlichkeitserinnerung*) as the key relation of the entire construction. Thus, argues the author, Carnap emphasized the relations between the elements of the structure, and leaves the elements of the relation as unanalyzable. The system obtained by such a constructionist method is not a classifying one, yet a derivational and genealogical one.

Even with the recognized fact that the ideas that led Carnap to this project also influenced a couple of other scientists and philosophers (Brücke, Du Bois-Reymond, Helmholtz, Mach, Poincaré) this mathematization of the experience is the most original part of Carnap's project²⁷. The many objections advanced by Hempel and Goodman cannot diminish the importance of the ideas from *Aufbau*. Quine himself found a common ground with Carnap in developing his naturalized epistemology. Also, many of the themes attacked by Carnap remind us today of the contemporary discussion in philosophy of mind - intentionality, mind-body dualism, etc. However important Carnap project might be, at least one ontological question still seems to be asking for its answer: "what could be the reality level from which we could start [to build our scientific knowledge]?"²⁸ For Carnap, this ground is the relation of similarity. For Quine, "there is nothing more basic to thought and language than our sense of similarity"²⁹. The conclusion of the second chapter is derived from the complex analyze of this fundamental relation of similarity. Thus, as Carnap-Quine conception is confirmed today by the recent discoveries in cognitive sciences, the reality-thinking side of the triangle appears not only as a complex and problematic one, yet as one that needs for its deeper understanding another complementary investigation that will be developed by the author in the third chapter.

The third chapter is devoted to the relation between thinking and language. Starting with the classical questions concerning this relation - "can thinking be an accurate 'expression' of our language or vice versa, can language be a 'copy' of our thoughts?", "is there any bijective correspondence between the two registers?", "is there only an interdependency?" - Professor Biriş introduces his investigation into the subject matter with the philosophical perspectives of the stoics. The stoic term *lekta* was originally associated with three simultaneous aspects: the signifier, the signified, and the object. However, due to some ambiguities of the term, this stoic perspective led to two different directions of interpretation on the investigated relation: one direction assimilates the term with thoughts, and the other direction assimilates it with sounds. If Aristotle held a strong connection between logic and ontology, as it was presented in the first chapter, in the Middle Ages, and with the Port-Royal's Logic some

²⁷ Ibidem, 50.

²⁸ Ibidem, 56.

²⁹ Ibidem, 57.

considerable mutations that separate even more the process of thinking from the reality had taken place. The only one connection that was not dismissed was the one between thinking and language. The extensional approach on logic and the propensity to develop algorithmic logic eventually led to the idea that language is an instrument for thought. Yet this direction of thinking is not the only one that is investigated in the third chapter. The empiricist movement tried to understand language and its relation with thinking out of its own philosophical presuppositions, and therefore tried to see it as phenomenon. Two main directions emerged from the empiricists philosophical considerations on language. One of them was supported by Bacon, Locke, Berkeley and it was characterized by a sort of suspicion on behalf of language: language falsifies reality. As professor Biriş argues, the last of the empiricists mentioned (Berkeley) had changed his attitude toward language, yet this was only an episode in the large empiricist picture regarding language³⁰. Another important moment mentioned by the author in his quest for a comprehensive analyze of the thinking-language relation, is that represented by Humboldt. Humboldt's position on this peculiar relation was not a unitary one, for it was ranging from a sort of preeminence of thinking over language, to a kind of identity between the two poles of the relation. Humboldt position, as complex as it was, offered an important insight into the investigated issue, for it advanced the idea that there must be a mediator between thinking and language. This intermediate instance was also the answer to the issue in question that the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce gave to the simple and direct question concerning our ability to directly access things³¹. Peirce saw this mediator as being of an emotionally-affective nature and he preferred to answer to the old yet troubling question "can we think without signs?" with the only solution that avoids an infinite regressive series: "thinking must precede any sign"³². The philosophical remarks and contributions of Wittgenstein and Gadamer complete the first part of the chapter. Yet, the first part of the analysis is not at all complete without another important contribution to the subject brought by the line of thinking that rose from Bolzano, and continues with Frege, Meinong and Husserl. This philosophical direction has the merit of "expelling the thoughts from the subjectively, interior world of mental experience"³³. The background of this spectacular philosophical direction is that of the objective-subjective relation. In order to surpass the difficulties of this relation and of its correspondence in the relation between thinking and language, Frege postulated a so-called 'third world', a world of timeless entities where thoughts abide. This solution appeared to have pushed Frege toward a sort of divergent understanding of the relation between thought and language:

³⁰ Ibidem, 71.

³¹ Ibidem, 76.

³² Ibidem, 76.

³³ Ibidem, 81.

“the essential task of the logician is the release from language”³⁴. Yet this struggle determined the “linguistic turn” in philosophy. The remarks on Fregean philosophy offered by Michael Dummett helps us to understand the importance of German philosopher contribution on the subject³⁵: (a) the structure of the thought is reflected in the structure of the language; (b) only the thought can hold truth values; (c) the meaning is objective, and thinking is not necessarily intrinsic to the meaning. These characteristics of Fregean thinking determined the distinction between meaning and reference, and the associated upsetting question concerning a term: could a term have meaning, if it lacks reference? The positive answer of Frege is still hard to be accepted, because it is difficult to understand what is a relation when its second element of the relation is lacking, argue professor Biriș, following Dummett³⁶. The difficulty to coherently answer to the question above determined professor Biriș to bring into discussion the philosophical perspective of Husserl. The creator of phenomenology offered the solution of “objectual intentionality”, which is rather an objective content property of the mental act. However, the phenomenological direction of investigation is not one that will be followed in the chapter. Instead, more clarification concerning Fregean conception on thinking, language and their reciprocal relation are to be brought into the reader’s attention by the author. Thus, the opinions of Dummett, Evans, Meyer are drawing the complex picture of the issue. The last part of the chapter is dedicated to presenting and analyzing the three perspectives on meaning: *inferential*, *communicational*, and *performative*. The inferential perspective is that which associate meaning with evidence and the inferences from those evidences. It was developed by authors like Carnap, Ayer, Lewis, Hempel, Sellars, Quine and others. The communicational perspective is that which investigates linguistic expressions in their capacity to communicate (Morris, Stevenson, Grice, Katz and others). The performative perspective dwells into the ability of language acts to perform, to “do things with words” as Austin eminently shows in his fundamental work. Among the philosophers that subscribed to this direction are mentioned Wittgenstein, Searle, Nowell-Smith and others. All this philosophical perspectives on meaning have the result of bringing into the readers attention the complexity of the thinking-language relation, and furthermore, to prepare the logical aspects of terms and concepts that stand at the base of scientific knowledge. These aspects of the investigation are presented in the following chapters.

The fourth chapter announces a deepening into the structure of terms. Professor Biriș advances his investigations stepping into the logics of concepts, by references to the works of Aristotle, Frege, Mill, Bunge, Quine, Russell, Strawson, Sartori, and of Romanian logicians Enescu, Botezatu, Surdu, and Dima. Among the most important issues presented, it is

³⁴ Ibidem, 82.

³⁵ Ibidem, 82-83.

³⁶ Ibidem, 85.

necessary to mention those concerning the extension of terms and the relations of membership and inclusion. The logical-philosophical insights of the author combine the ideas of Analytical School in philosophy with those of semioticians. The analysis on Frege and denotative tradition revolves around the issues of reference, meaning, informativeness, representation, Fregean principles (compositionality and substitutivity), and others. The author remarks that Frege's distinction between objects and functions had an impact on the future development of theorizing scientific concepts³⁷. Two other important aspects revealed by Frege's theory are emphasized: one aspect concerns the inadequacy of traditional logic to distinguish certain cases of singular term, which are in fact general terms; the other aspect is the lack of traditional logic's capacity to accurately distinguish between membership, inclusion, intersection and identity relations. However, the most interesting and challengeable difficulty that had risen from Fregean denotative conception is the one that asked questions concerning the ontological status of the reference. This problem with the reference is further analyzed by taking into account some solutions advanced by Russell, Strawson, and Donnellan. Thus, the reader is invited to travel into the worlds of definite descriptions, contextual and interpretative analysis of the reference. The extensional dimension of concepts, however important it may be for the entire argumentative structure of the book, it is not the one around which the chapter makes its revolving movement. This central place is taken by the intensional dimension, where the author builds an original approach on the subject. Grounding his analysis in the works of Aristotle, Sartori, Goblot, and especially on Teune, professor Biriş discuss the issues of homonymy and synonymy, of identity and similarity. The key observation that seems to emerge from these analysis is that there is an important difference in the way the content and the extension of a term is organized. As the author underlines, following Petrovici and Goblot, "whenever we define the terms, the defined expresses the sphere of the denoted individuals, and the definition itself expresses in a compressed way an analysis of the content of those terms"³⁸. This analysis led the author to the idea of investigating the possibilities for organizing the content of any concept, because "the determinations from the content of terms do not represent a simple collection, but a totality"³⁹. Professor Biriş' approach, a logical and philosophical one, proposes to the reader a classification of the integrative relations between the determinations within the content of concepts. This classification distinguishes different types of bonds or connections, ranging from systemic to non-systemic, from entities of the same nature to entities of a different nature. These complex analyses led the author to a new classification of terms and concepts, a classification that uses the new

³⁷ Ibidem, 145.

³⁸ Ibidem, 173.

³⁹ Ibidem, 176.

relations found in the investigation. Thus we could read of *aggregate terms, pattern terms, inter-structural terms, and synthetic terms*.

The next chapter, the fifth one, is dedicated to the analysis of the distributive and collective terms. This direction of research was determined by the observation of a lack of clarification associated with this issue, and by the importance of these particular types of concepts in scientific knowledge⁴⁰. The difficulty to distinguish between singular terms or general terms, on one side, and distributive or collective terms on the other side facilitate the need for an analysis that requires a partitive logic. To argue the use of such logic, the author proceeds with the main logical properties of the part-whole relation. Following Rescher, Goblot and Lesniewski, the main theories concerning the “collective class” are to be presented. For instance, from the axioms offered by Lesniewski’s mereology it can be observed not only the role assigned to the elements of mereological classes, but also the types of relations intrinsic in those primitive terms (“these terms designate a relation that is irreflexive, asymmetric, and transitive”⁴¹). Why is all this investigation of any importance for scientific knowledge and scientific concepts, someone might ask? For one single yet important reason, answers professor Biriș, for the fact that a series of contemporary sciences actually works with concepts that involves such important distinctions like those from collective and distributive concepts and because there is no such adequate logical tool to use in such cases. Biology, Geography, Chemistry, and Social Sciences especially, all use collective and distributive notions. However, in order to complete his convincing argumentation, professor Biriș goes forward to analyze the logical operator of conjunction, in its double hypostasis as ‘distributive conjunction’ and ‘collective conjunction’. From the fundamental tension between unity and diversity, general and particular, the journey of explaining the announced distinction of conjunction have its first support in the ideas of Aristotle. For the Greek philosopher the unity is of two types: predicative, and integrative. This ancient distinction, notices professor Biriș, is the ground on which the future distinction between distributive and collective relation was made. Furthermore, following some suggestions from Botezatu and Petrovici, the author finds his way in creating an original typology for the collective terms, on the lines of the preceding chapter. Thus, according to two criteria advanced - *homogeneity* and *subordination* - the following *collective terms* could be distinguished: *the aggregate, the system, the whole, and the totality*. The same theoretical and practical necessities determined the author to analyze and to put forward an original classification for *collective conjunctions: the collective summative conjunction, the collective assembly conjunction, the collective integrative conjunction, and the collective synthetic conjunction*. These distinctions, as argued by the author in the last part of the chapter, offers new and fruitful possibilities for logical and philosophical explanations and for a better understanding of scientific

⁴⁰ Ibidem, 194.

⁴¹ Ibidem, 201.

concepts⁴². This assertion is further documented with a comprehensive analysis on some insights on the subject offered by Romanian philosophers D. D. Roșca and Lucian Blaga.

The sixth chapter of the book announces a presentation of the most known theories on scientific concepts. This exposition starts with the classical Aristotelian theory, which, along with its essential role in the common and scientific understanding of the concepts, has many limitations. The basics of the theory could lead to three main ideas for the understanding of the concept⁴³: (i) the concept is in fact a definition; (ii) the essential role of the concept is that of classifying objects; (iii) the *tertium non datur* principle is presupposed. However, the limitations of this theory are noticed by many philosophers and correspondingly many solutions have been advanced. The author searches his way through the solutions proposed by Wittgenstein, Cassirer, Rickert, Smith and Medin. The critics of Eleanor Rosch (the *prototype* theory), and Murphy (the *concept* theory) are the considered and analyzed in the second part of the chapter. The concept theory is also discussed in connection with Carnap's view from *Aufbau*, and with his understanding of the relation between *explanandum* and *explanans*. However, this analysis is enlarged by investigating the conceptual perspective along the remarks of Quine, Wittgenstein, and Bachelard in a logical, philosophical and scientific context. The last theory discussed is the *cognitive* theory. If the intension of the concept was the key factor in the classical and conceptual theories, the cognitivist view holds on to the extension of the concept. From the classical empiricists to the pioneers of phenomenology and analytic philosophy, the idea that different general concepts are just concepts with particular references, assumed as symbols for other similar particular references⁴⁴ appears to be one that have given rise to profound discussion. Frege and Husserl are deeply interested on it, and their letters is an evidence for the matter. Cognitivism offers several solutions to the concept's reference: (i) the *typological theory*, proposed by Medin and Schaffer - which holds that the reference of the concepts are their types of individuals, and not abstractions; (ii) *the prototype theory* - advanced by Eleanor Rosch, and representing a sort of refining of the typological theory; (iii) *the conceptual empiricism* - proposed by Jesse Prinz, who, influenced by classical British empiricism, holds that everything that is contained in the concept comes from experience and reaches the mental image by the use of copies and copies of the copies; (iv) *the conceptual atomism* (coined by Jerry Fodor) - which holds that the human mind is organized in a modular way, and thus our concepts are similar to some atoms that make the connection between our mind and the world; (v) *the conceptual roles theory* (Peacocke) - that holds the importance of the concept's connections with other concepts.

⁴² Ibidem, 230.

⁴³ Ibidem, 241.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, 282.

The final chapter of the book is offering to the reader *a possible typology of scientific concepts*. Following the suggestions of Lucian Blaga⁴⁵, professor Biriș describes a classification of scientific concepts that refers to the qualitative, quantitative, comparative concepts. The classification also includes the image-concepts, ideal types and hermeneutic concepts. The last type, the hermeneutic concepts was developed following some insights of the Romanian philosopher Noica in his last work, *Letters on Hermes' Logic*. The limits of induction and deduction, the art of symbolization, the necessity for a sort of logic that merge together the individual and the general, the whole and the part, determines Noica to think about a hermeneutic logic using the model of a *holon*. The relation of similarity plays an essential role in the logical dynamics of the *holon*, as the author argues in the last part of the chapter. Yet, this relation is the key not only to the understanding of Noica's hermeneutic logic, but to "decipher the unilateral identity" advanced by Noica as a dynamic perspective in concept construction. The fact that this hermeneutical approach on the logic of concepts meets Carnap's vision from *Aufbau*, is no longer a coincidence.

Understood as a work of pioneering in the explored, yet still unsettled domain of philosophy of concepts, the book of professor Biriș recommends itself as one that cannot be ignored. From the beginning to the end it encompasses the trained reader with its steady steps on the lines of argumentation, leading the way through the historical, philosophical and logical problems around the concepts' issues, and augmenting the text with carefully chosen examples from natural to social sciences. The book appears to be not only a well organized map on the subject matter, a documented and argued philosophical perspective on the issues approached, yet as well an original and insightful journey on what is and could be philosophy nowadays.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, 293.