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Foreword

Mikhail Bakhtin has survived both his boom and his cult, and is now a twentieth-century "classic." This is a very good thing. The tidal wave of obligatory references to dialogue, carnival, and chronotope has passed. For a decade now, the most exciting work in Bakhtin Studies has been shifting away from literary or political applications of his famous (and somewhat over-extended) terms and toward the finer, far more interesting arts of historical recuperation: Bakhtin's intellectual debts and philosophical contexts.

In this project, the year 1990 was something of a watershed. It marked, of course, the beginning of the end of Soviet Communism, which made it possible for Russians to pursue more pluralistic and de-ideologized scholarship throughout the humanities. For English speakers it was also the year that Bakhtin's writings from the 1920s (combining Kantianism and phenomenology in a distinctive moral philosophy) were published in the excellent annotated Liapunov translations. It took several years for the importance of these difficult early texts to be assimilated, for the received image of Bakhtin was incompatible with it. That image, based on several widely (and quickly) translated texts from his middle-to-late period, was polarized between those who wished to see in Bakhtin a pragmatic, systems-shunning liberal humanist and those who preferred a more radical, subversive message. Neither variant had firm documentation (the liberal least of all). The debate over Bakhtin's Marxism had ended in a draw.

By the mid-1990s several Bakhtin scholars, most prominently in Britain and Russia, began to suspect that Bakhtin's ideas were so shockingly famous because we had forgotten, or insufficiently investigated, the richness of the historical period of which they were an organic part: the German and then Russian philosophical debates of the 1910s-1920s. With the appearance of the first volumes of the *Collected Works*, M. M. Bakhtin: *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1996-) and, in English, of the work of Galin Tihanov, Ken Hirschkop, David Shepherd, and Craig Brandist, it became clear that the "trademark" concepts, painstakingly restored to their appropriate contexts, would have to critically rethought. The present volume contributes handsomely to this important and growing body of knowledge.

Vladimir Nikiforov resurrects that potent circle of thinkers who inhabited "shared Russian-German cultural space" on either side of the turn of the twentieth century. Their distinct focus was the vagaries of the "I." These secularized personalists, drawing on predecessors as varied as Lotze and Stirner, generated a fascinating array of models for self-expression, self-legitimization, and moral responsibility. Most of them did not survive the Great War. The task (or better, the crisis) after 1920 was to build from the bottom up, concretely and with an eye fixed on the ruins, a new paradigm of selfhood within culture. That this line of thought was soon to be violently absorbed in supra-personal structures in both Germany and Russia makes the reconstitution of this debate all the more precious. Husserl and Rickert are shown to be vital precursors to the special Russian adaptation of phenomenology (especially in Shpet's modification of Husserl) that dominated Russia's elite war-time academies.

The integration of this German material with Bakhtin's emerging concerns is subtle and highly sophisticated. Nikiforov provides the necessary background for an entire branch of Bakhtin Studies that is pursuing the secular and theological sources for the powerful philosophy of the Word that was often the conduit for salvaged parts of the ambitious projects of the "German mandarins." Acknowledged sources for this philosophy are neoplatonism, the patristic

theology of the Eastern Orthodox Church, German Romantic philosophy, and neoKantianism. Indeed, when sociopolitical frameworks failed, the word itself became the site for personal identity (a fascinating odyssey blending patristics with Alexander Potebnia and Humboldt—and bearing fruit in thinkers as curiously diverse as Pavel Florensky, Sergei Bulgakov, Aleksei Losev and Gustav Shpet). At stake here is the possibility of a "communal subjectivity" where the One and the Many are not sacrificed to one another but realized through one another. Nikiforov provides this story at its German roots. But Russian contexts are not slighted. Bakhtin's vexed relationship with Futurist poets is interpreted, for example, as a struggle over the hierarchy of times: can we be as creative and personalizing with the past as with the future, and does memory—personal as well as cultural—anchor us or enslave us? Nikiforov's final chapters on Bakhtin's celebrated I-Other constructs reveal the Russian thinker to be perhaps less original, but even more thrillingly eclectic and synthesizing, than had heretofore been imagined.

One final comment is in order. Much energy has gone into "exposing" Bakhtin's debts (mostly uncredited) to German thinkers from Max Scheler to Ernst Cassirer, and this book reveals other many vital connections. Accusations of plagiarism have been made. But about these matters, Russian intellectuals in the 1910s and 20s had their own rules. Bakhtin, as far as we can tell, was indifferent to institutionalizations of power. He borrowed episodes from his brother's c.v. in an attempt to bolster his own academic credentials (due to a chronic bone disease that eventually cost him his right leg, Bakhtin was too ill to be a full-time student anywhere, and until the amputation, a full-time teacher). He finally decided to submit his study of Rabelais as a doctoral dissertation in 1940 because he and his wife badly needed the upgraded ration card that this higher academic rank would provide. Throughout his writing life, Bakhtin was careless with annotating his sources—perhaps out of negligence, but also one can almost say out of principle. In 1924 he prepared an article for publication on literary interpretation, prefaced by this dismissive comment: "We have freed our study from the superfluous

ballast of citations and references, for they lack any direct methodological significance in studies of a nonhistorical nature, while in a compressed work of a systematic nature they are entirely superfluous. For the qualified reader, they are unnecessary, and for the unqualified, useless."

Which is to say: if you did not recognize those five pages as the words and ideas of Ernst Cassirer, what does that say about you as a reader of European philosophy? If you need a footnote, then you are so ignorant of the relevant contexts that it's hardly worth your while to try and understand my contribution to the debate. Bakhtin and his study-circle colleagues lived in a world where scholars presumed a high degree of shared literacy. There is less pressure to label ideas with the names of their owners when it is clear to the readership whose mouth had spoken the words. And it appears that he was reluctant to change this practice even when he "entered print": he took the "community of scholars" seriously, as a high and responsible art. Nowadays, in times of information glut and cyber-depersonalization of knowledge, our terror at the unfootnoted reference grows in proportion to our lack of familiarity and our ignorance. Thus our scholarship is an anxious, more litigious and possessive one.

Bakhtin's cozy economy will not satisfy us today, and should not. Nikiforov takes a mature stand on these idea-ownership squabbles and scandals. The German mandarins and even more so the Russian intellectuals who admired them and learned from them were not building their careers. They were having discussions among themselves about matters of life, death, and survival. Filling in their blanks is the task of today's scholars, and this book will prove one of the most illuminating.

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In the process of my research I spent many days in the libraries: British Library, Kungliga Bibliotek in Stockholm, the university libraries in London, Birmingham, Stockholm, Gothenburg, Atlanta, and Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. The staff were always helpful, kind and patient. My deep gratitude to all of them.

A Note on Transliteration and the Use of Capital Letters

All Russian words have been transliterated according to the British Museum system (The BGN / PCGN 1947 System).

The capital O is used to discern between the derivatives of the German *Gegenstand* (English *object*, small o) and *Objekt* (English *Object*, capital O). In that, I follow the standard of the English translations of Husserl as recommended by Cairns in his *Guide for Translating Husserl* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973). I hold the same convention in the translation of the corresponding Russian pair: *predmet* (the exact translation of the German *Gegenstand*) and *ob"ekt* (equivalent to the German *Objekt*).

Subject (capital S) stands for the opposite of *Object*, otherwise the small s is used: *subject* (a topic).

Being (capital B) corresponds to the German *Sein*, *Dasein*, etc. and to the Russian *bytie*; small b is used otherwise.

A Note on References

Cross-references in the main text

* (asterisk) *before* a word:

a reference to the *Analytical Subject Index*, where many terms are explained. Thus, **sense* recommends that the reader consults the entry *sense* in the *Analytical Subject Index*.

(§x.y):

A reference to chapter x section y of this essay.

References to the bibliography

All bibliographical references are given in the footnotes. They are divided into two groups:

- A. The references to the bibliography of **primary sources**. The name of the author is usually given in the main text. The work is referred to by its, possibly shortened or abbreviated, title, e.g. *Individual and Society*, p. 65.
- B. The references to the bibliography of **secondary sources**. The name of the author and the year of publication are both given in the footnotes: Ringer, 1969, p. 333.

1. INTRODUCTION: THE SCENE

The conception of individuality, the nucleus of genuinely *German* thought, goes back to the Romantic Movement of the early 19th century, though its foundations had already been laid by Eckhart and Leibnitz.¹

The Romantic movement in Germany was essentially a Counter-Revolution inspired by anti-bourgeois idealism. It was the revolution against a law-like, equalitarian ethic, against the mechanical spirit of science, against the conception of Natural Law. The West European (British and French) tradition of thought was seen from Germany as soulless rationalism combined with equalitarian atomism. That tradition magnified the immutable Law: the mathematical laws of Nature as much as the Natural Law of secularised Christianity. The paradigms of atomising natural science were projected onto moral and social life, leading to the radical doctrine of natural rights as the laws which social atoms are to obey. That gave rise to optimistic expectations of a rational solution to all social problems and to the messianic idea of the progress of 'humankind'.²

The concept of individuality was probably the chief product of German Romanticism:³

¹ See Troeltsch, 1934 <1923>, p. 212; on the concept of individuality in Leibnitz see also Windelband, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 63.

² See Troeltsch, 1934 <1923>, pp. 204, 207, 210.

³ See Ringer, 1969, p. 100.

German Romanticism in general derived from its conception of individuality a new principle of reality, of morality, and of history.⁴

This new principle takes as *the basis* of reality not material and social atoms, which are completely identical and indistinguishable from each other and which are combined according to absolutely valid, unchangeable laws, but unique personalities involved in constant metamorphosis under the impact of plastic, formative forces.⁵

The period covered in the present work begins in the 1890s. We cannot, however, do without a history of the preceding period. Its central personage is Rudolf Lotze.⁶

§1.1. Pre-history: Rudolf Lotze

Lotze's original concept of the individual is *Gemüth*, the term which he coined.⁷ *Gemüth* is the individual sphere of feelings and sentiments and alludes to the German religious tradition of the 'inner life' of the soul, as Windelband (a pupil of Lotze's) put it:

The traditions of Mysticism pass through Pietism [...] up to the summits of idealistic development; and indeed the doctrine of Eckhart and transcendental philosophy are in close touch with the spirit which desires to transpose all the outer into the inner; both have a genuinely Germanic savour, they seek the world in the *Gemüth*.⁸

Gemüth is the response to the abolition of the soul by materialism, it refers to

⁴ Troeltsch, 1934 <1923>, p. 211.

⁵ See Troeltsch, 1934 <1923>, p. 211.

⁶ Hermann Lotze (1817 - 1881) is a key figure in the history of philosophy in the nineteenth century.' Schnädelbach, 1984, p. 169. William James refers to him as 'great Lotze' (*Pragmatism*, p. 123). Husserl says he owes Lotze 'a great deal' (*Prolegomena*, p. 218 <B 219>). Windelband calls him 'by far the most important among the epigones of German philosophy' (*A History of Philosophy*, p. 630). For the bibliography of Lotze's works see Santayana, 1971, pp. 233 - 269. For Lotze's biography and for the bibliography of works on him see Willey, 1978, pp. 40 - 47. On Lotze's influence in the English-speaking world see Kuntz, 1971, pp. 48 - 68, where the author claims that the period of intellectual history from 1880 to 1920 should be called Lotzean (see *ibid.*, p. 49).

⁷ See Schnädelbach, 1984, p. 173 where the author traces the concept back to Schelling's notion of the 'whole spirit'. Another parallel could be found in the ideal of 'beautiful soul', the *schöne Seele*, in Romanticism: see Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 602.

⁸ *A History of Philosophy*, p. 583. My italics.

what cannot be disclosed by an autopsy, what is beyond the *mechanical universe: the inner life, the human universe, the microcosm, the complete image of the all.⁹ The splendid versatility of a genius like Goethe would be the original intuition for the concept of *Gemüth*.

Unlike a pure cognitive Subject of whatever kind, *Gemüth* is able to grow. A developing organism and its environment would make a rough analogy: *Gemüth* unceasingly assimilates knowledge, turning the unknown into the known. Philosophy should study the dynamics of *Gemüth's* self-completion,¹⁰ which is called the *Bildung*, the cultural formation of *Gemüth*:

First, the course of the world is given to the ingenuous *Gemüth* in changing and varying appearances: they pass and form the material for considerations which, by the comparison of particulars, separate the essential from the inessential, the perpetual from the transient, the valuable [das Werthvolle] from the indifferent; and so we see the outcome of that sensory observation precipitated out of the experience of life: the *Bildung* [formation] which acquires from a certain sum of experience a content of the truly existent, which is relatively constant and determinable by thought.¹¹

Bildung is the precipitation of the truly existent, which is characterized as *valuable*. It is a process which involves, in Kantian terms, both theoretical and practical reason. Indeed, *the valuable* in the conception of *Bildung* is inseparable from the morally relevant.¹² On the other hand, *Bildung* is the process of cultural formation: as creative spirits, we are participating in the cosmic process of 'diffusing and distilling' the Highest Good, and this duty is essentially creative.¹³

⁹ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 1, p. 401 <1 453>. * (asterisk) before a word is a reference to the *Analytical Subject Index*.

¹⁰ See *Metaphysik*, 1841, p. 4.

¹¹ Dem unbefangenen Gemüthe geben zuerst die Erscheinungen des Weltlaufs wechselnd und veränderlich vorüber und bilden den Stoff zu Ueberlegungen, die durch Vergleichung des Einzelnen das Wesentliche vom Unwesentlichen, das Beständige vom Vergänglichen, das Werthvolle von dem Gleichgiltigen zu scheiden unternehmen; und so sehen wir aus der Erfahrung des Lebens sich die *Bildung* als das Ergebnis jener sinnigen Beobachtung niederschlagen, welche aus einer gewissen Summe von Erlebnissen einen verhältnissmässig sich gleichbleibenden [...] *Metaphysik*, 1841, p. 8. My emphasis.

¹² See *Metaphysik*, 1841, p. 13.

¹³ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 1, p. 401 <1 452>.

Therefore, the philosophy of value is necessarily the philosophy of culture.

Although Lotze did not leave a conclusive theory of values, the emergence of value-philosophy is normally associated with his name.¹⁴ As Windelband put it,

The frequent appearance of the word 'value' in modern philosophical language began with Lotze [...]¹⁵

The Lotzean doctrine of values highlights the centrality of any personal *Gemüth*; indeed a *Gemüth* turns the valuable (i.e. truly real) into the existent:

There is no true subject, no substance, no place in which a good, like the valuable or the sacred, could become reality except the individual Ego, the personal *Gemüth* [...]¹⁶

The realization of the Idea was at the centre of the Hegelian concept of history, which, in Lotze's opinion, implies that living individuals count for nothing in history.¹⁷ Realization, as Lotze understands it, is the realization not of the Idea but of values. Realization so understood is the privilege of every individual *Gemüth*; it is its development, *Bildung*, that confers meaning on history and on the historical community. State or society are built neither on the ground of a contract which a number of identical members made for a rational purpose,¹⁸ nor for the sake of some impersonal idea of humanity. The conception of values makes it possible to articulate the priority of personal life over social life, even if society makes a metaphysical claim to supremacy:

Beyond the inner life of the subjective spirit [...] there is no higher realm of the so-called Objective spirit, the forms and articulations of which are in their mere existence more valuable than the subjective spirit. It is imagined that the Objective spirit reveals itself in the mere forms of social life - but all relations between individuals have a value only as far as they are, and

¹⁴ See Werkmeister, 1970, pp. 9 - 26; Schnädelbach, 1984, pp. 166 - 180. Monographs on 'value theory' began to appear in the late 1880s: by Brentano (1889), Rickert (1892), Meinong (1894). von Ehrenfels (1893) and others. The first PhD thesis on value theory was submitted in 1893 at the University of Heidelberg - see Werkmeister, 1970, pp. 27, 52, 86, 166.

¹⁵ An Introduction to Philosophy, p. 14.

¹⁶ Es gibt kein anderes wahrhaftes Subject, keine andere Substanz, keinen Ort, in welchem irgend ein werthvolles oder heiliges Gut Wirklichkeit hatte, als das einzelne Ich, das persönliche Gemüth [...] *Microcosmus*, <3 425> cf. vol. 2, pp. 539 - 540. My italics.

¹⁷ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 156, 159 <3 33, 36>.

¹⁸ See Troeltsch, 1934 <1923>, p. 211.

because they are, not only *between* those individuals but also *in* them, being felt and enjoyed in living *Gemüth* according to their value.¹⁹

It is living *Gemüther* which alone make society possible.

With regard to any individual, the philosophy of values presupposes an unceasing and integral involvement in the process of *Bildung*, i.e. in the realization of values. This process finds its expression not only in thinking but in all the spheres of personal activity. Lotze formulates the imperative of his ethics, based on the principle of individuality, the imperative of **individuality*:

The whole of morality does *not* consist in this - that each has simply in a general way to fulfil the moral commands, and therefore each to be just the same as others; but within the limits of this obedience to the universal, it is the duty of each to develop his own individuality, and, by *the good which he and none other can thus accomplish*, to help exhibit and to realize the glorious results which moral Ideas are capable of producing. The task of the nation is no other.²⁰

Lotze's philosophy had a number of dramatic turns. His original idea was to turn the valuable into the integrating moment of the All. In the first version of his metaphysics he simply declared the valuable (which is also the highest Good and the Ought) the ground of existence:

The substance of the world can be [found] only in the course of development, it is that which ought to be.²¹

Lotze believes it is possible to arrive at the system of 'grounds' [Gründen], which would demonstrate the relation of the existent to the ought, of *Gemüth* to its ideal. He concludes his early metaphysics with a motto:

[...] The beginning of metaphysics is not in metaphysics itself but in ethics.²²

More than thirty years later, in his last work, Lotze returns to this dictum:

I admit that the expression is not exact; but I still feel that certainly I am on the right track when I seek in that which should be the ground of that which

¹⁹ *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 540 <3 425 - 426>. I have slightly changed the translation.

²⁰ *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 554 <3 441>; my emphasis.

²¹ Die Substanz der Welt kann nur in dem Bewegen der Entwicklung sein, was sie sein soll [...] *Metaphysik*, 1841, p. 328.

²² [...] der Anfang der *Metaphysik* ist nicht in ihr selbst, sondern in der Ethik. *Metaphysik*, 1841, p. 329.

is.²³

Now, however, it is more a matter of feeling and seeking: the metaphysical principle is turned into a heuristic one and Lotze is well aware that it would escape any conceptual framework. Lotze comes to accept the unbridgeable dualism of the *mechanical universe and of the universe of values, of the necessity ruling the world of atoms and of the free development of individuals. The significance of that cannot be overestimated. Indeed, instead of creating a universally valid system of 'grounds', Lotze now formulates a *negative* principle: no metaphysics could embrace both *is* and *ought* without an element of personal faith in a personal God, the Creator:

the true reality that is and ought to be is not matter and still less Idea, but the living personal Spirit of God and the world of personal spirits which he created. [...] we would repeat an avowal that [...] when we view the world as a whole, we see everywhere wonders and poetry, that it is only a one-sided apprehension of particular departments of the finite that is prose.²⁴

The conception of value is, therefore, the conception of the original split in our image of the world, *das Anbild des Weltganzen*. This image is compared to a patch-work of poetry and prose, of the two mutually irreducible genres employed by the Author. The presumption of this single Author is the only unifying factor in Lotze's metaphysics,²⁵ which can survive as metaphysics only because of its theism.

Indeed, religious faith is undemonstrable, while the split into values and forms is supposed to be evident. If faith is excluded from consideration, such a philosophy falls into two world-views which are *mutually incomprehensible*. Without an Absolute or a Creator, the valuable and the existent are not unifiable; the split between them is irreconcilable. The Lotzean conception of value is intrinsically bi-logical (or dia-logical): the logos of the *mechanical universe has no communion with the logos of purposes, of values. To these two Lotze adds

²³ Lotze's *System of Philosophy*, Part II, p. 536.

²⁴ *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 728 - 729 <3 623>.

²⁵ Lotze actually says the dualism of forms and values can be reconciled only in mystic ecstasy: see *Microcosmus*, vol. 1, p. 400 <1 451 - 452>.

logic, the necessary laws of thought, so that the cosmic order becomes even *tri*-logical and we come to

three elemental forms of our knowledge, forms upon which we must base all our judgement of things, without, however, being able to embrace all three in one comprehensible notion, or from any one to obtain the other two by logical deduction.²⁶

The central problem of value philosophy is therefore

the connection in which this world of *existing reality stands to the world of the ought-to-be values.²⁷

In other words, the *mechanical universe in itself is senseless and value-irrelevant: *an interpretation* is necessary to invest it with sense and values. However, no clue for such an interpretation can be found either in intuitable reality or in the valid truths of logic or in the realm of values.²⁸

The conception of value is pregnant with the problem of alienation, of cosmic absurdity. The very idea of interpretation immediately introduces the subjective element into our image of the world whole. The division of the world into a substrate which in itself is value-irrelevant and could mean anything or nothing, and its meaning / value which could well be conferred on another conceivable substrate, makes it possible to deny the very presumption of the world having a meaning and a value. Any philosophy using the conception of value in its original Lotzean context is, therefore, essentially a *Weltanschauung*.

§1.2. The mandarin community

Lotze's philosophy reflected the ethos of a community which did not survive the Great War and whose influence virtually vanished by 1933. Fritz Ringer, a student of the period, calls this social group 'the mandarins', a word which implies a comparison with the educational elite of Imperial China:

I would define 'the mandarins' simply as a social and cultural elite which owes its status primarily to educational qualifications, rather than to

²⁶ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 574 - 575 <3 461>.

²⁷ *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 346 <3 229>. I have slightly changed the translation.

²⁸ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 575 <3 461>.

hereditary rights of wealth.²⁹

The group, whose roots go back to 18th century, consisted of cultivated men with higher academic degrees: doctors, lawyers, ministers, government officials, secondary school teachers, university professors. The university professors (chiefly in humanities and social studies) played a special role in maintaining the high standards of mandarin qualification and in speaking on the behalf of the whole group.³⁰

The mandarins began to notice the first signs of a possible loss of their status in the 1890s:

[The mandarins] thought of themselves as a priestly caste, and they meant to legislate ultimate values to a peasant population. That was their model: it has to be assumed, if any of their *fin de siècle* anxieties are to be understood. All the logical flaws in their account of cultural decline seem to correct themselves once this is clear. Technological change accelerated the dissolution of wisdom, because it made the achievement of intellectual 'totality' more difficult. [...] All modern developments seemed to strive in the same direction: the decline of Idealism and the entry of the 'masses' into higher education, positivism and the threat to academic standards, realism in foreign policy and realism as an intellectual and literary orientation, popular materialism and scientific materialism.³¹

Civilization against culture, society against the community, knowledge against cultivation, technical expertise against wisdom - all those clichés of academic moralising expressed little more than the personal fears of a major social shift driven by anonymous social forces. Not uncommonly, hidden by these Manichean oppositions, the vital questions raised by change remained unarticulated and unanswered. It seems that the threat of losing a secure place in society blocked all creative energies, releasing instead the irresistible quest for certainty. This fear was later reinforced by the Great War, which was interpreted by the German

²⁹ Ringer, 1969, p. 5. Ringer creates a heuristic model of a 'mandarin', an *ideal type* (in M. Weber's sense) - see *ibid.*, pp. 3 - 6. His analysis should not be immediately applied to individual cases. Regrettably, Ringer did not include phenomenology in his otherwise extraordinary study. 'I do not really understand Husserl's work', he confesses (*ibid.*, p. 372).

³⁰ Ringer, 1969, pp. 5 - 6.

³¹ Ringer, 1969, pp. 268 - 269. Those '*fin de siècle* anxieties of German academics' made a grotesque reappearance in the 1980s, when the philosopher of Krakow turned them into his papal magisterium, legislating ultimate values to 'the world'.

academic community as the ultimate battle between *civilization* ('The West', mainly England and France) and *culture* (Germany).³²

The concept of individuality was one of the most important in the mandarins' ideological arsenal. Its privileged field of application was the philosophy of history: 'the principle of individuality'. In Lotze's time a German historian, under the influence of Leopold von Ranke (1795 - 1886), would tend to consider historical periods, states, groups, phenomena like the Renaissance or Reformation, as 'individual totalities', historical individualities:

Individuality, then, was the motto of both Ranke and Humboldt. The only difference was that the concept of personality now reached out to encompass the great collective personalities. The pioneering discoveries in the realm of the individual that the German mind had undertaken [...] began to include the individuality of all those phenomena which united individuals into masses. When Ranke now said of nations and states that 'true harmony will emerge in differentiation and self-determination', it was an echo of the basic assumptions of Humboldt and of classical individualism.³³

If there are both 'individual' individuals and 'supra-individual' individuals, what could be the relation between the two? If individuals form a hierarchy, would it not necessarily lead to the disregard of individuals at the lower levels? All possible conflicts were supposed to be settled after the pattern of 'symphonic analogy'. A symphony played by an orchestra is not just a sum of scores. Each musician is indispensable and the perfect performance of each, limited, individual part leads to a perfect performance of the whole.³⁴

What happens if the orchestra turns to be an army dying in the trenches from poisoned gas? Is it not possible that some of the musicians would rather reconsider their participation? Nobody seemed to be concerned with problems like these. A Russian pupil of Windelband's remembers pre-War academic Germany:

The indifference to sociology and political insensibility of the German neo-idealist philosophy were amazing indeed. The fact that Nietzsche was a poet

³² See Ringer, 1969, pp. 267 - 268, 398 - 399.

³³ Meinecke as quoted in Sterling, 1958, p. 44.

³⁴ See Ringer, 1969, pp. 101, 117.

and philologist and Marx was an economist and politician was enough for the eminent professors of philosophy either never to bother studying Nietzsche and Marx, or to adjust their ideas to 'scholarly' philosophy [...]³⁵

Mention of a Russian student of German philosophy brings us to another feature of the pre-War world which had also disappeared by the mid-twentieth century.

§1.3. Russia and Germany: a single cultural space

Before the Great War Russia and Germany, two neighbouring empires, formed a single cultural space. Mahler conducted in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Pasternak studied philosophy in Marburg, Max Weber (who spoke Russian) published two monographs on Russia, Kandinsky taught at the Bauhaus.³⁶

Of course, the culture which is meant here belonged to the educated, cosmopolitan elite. A peasant in a Siberian village lived a life very different compared to that of a peasant in a Bavarian village. Such a difference would be considerably less in the case of two industrial workers. In the case of two university professors there would be hardly any significant difference at all: they would enjoy the same privileged status, based solely on their educational merits.³⁷ The German would be perhaps more like a government official, an expert, whereas his Russian colleague would be more popular among the general public as a teacher of life.³⁸ But the themes of their doctorates would belong virtually to the same area, in many cases, simply because they would have graduated from the same German university.

This tradition had very deep roots. Thus, in February 1841 Schelling's lectures in Berlin were attended not only by Engels and Kierkegaard but also by Bakunin

³⁵ Stepun, 1990, vol. 1, p. 148.

³⁶ See Schlögel, 1994, pp. 50 - 52; Ovchinnikov, 1990, p. 20 - 21; Haardt, 1994, pp. 57 - 63; Plotnikov and Kolerov, 1994, p. 74. For a detailed analysis of cultural links see Antonova and Merkert, 1996.

³⁷ To give one example, Zelinsky, a classics professor at the University of St. Petersburg, enjoyed a civil rank equal to that of an army general; he was also decorated with several Imperial Orders. See Otchet, 1913, p. 13.

³⁸ See e.g. Stepun, 1990, vol. 1, pp. 103 - 107.

and Turgenev.³⁹ Higher education in Russia was European in its content and structure; moreover, in many cases students received it in Europe, most commonly, in Germany. Between 1900 and 1914 the number of Russian students at German universities and high schools increased almost threefold. The university of Berlin alone had more than 1,000 students from Russia; at most universities they made up more than half of all foreign students.⁴⁰

Philosophy is especially instructive in that respect. To give one example, at the Imperial University of St. Petersburg (faculty of history and philology) in 1909 / 1910 the undergraduates were offered a course on methodology of history which provided an introduction to the most recent developments in German philosophy and social sciences as presented by Windelband, Rickert, Max Weber, Wundt, Sigwart, Dilthey, Husserl, Simmel.⁴¹ Among the staff at the department of philosophy, Hessen got his doctorate in Germany, Frank and Sesemann studied in Germany, Lapshin did his research into English Kantianism in London and published his articles in German.⁴² At the University of Moscow the picture was the same: Shpet did his doctoral studies in Göttingen with Husserl, Stepun in Heidelberg with Windelband, Il'in attended the courses of Simmel and Husserl,⁴³ to mention just a few.

Those who gravitated to a 'Russian' world-view, the epigones of 19th century Slavophilism, could not conceal their anxiety at the huge popularity of German Neo-Kantianism, phenomenology and sociology:

[...] even in Russia, it is expected, for example, for even a beginner in

³⁹ See Carroll, 1974, p. 19. The extraordinary influence of Hegel on Russian thought is studied in much detail in a special monograph: see Chizhevsky, 1939.

⁴⁰ See Williams, 1972, pp. 24 - 25. The majority of students did not belong to the elite: they studied medicine, engineering science, law and were often of Jewish origin, which made education in Russia impossible for them. See *ibid.*

⁴¹ See Lappo-Danilevsky, 1910. The course, with certain variations, continued up to the Revolution: see e.g. Otchet, 1916, p. 92.

⁴² See e.g. *Kantstudien* (Berlin), Band 14, pp. 89 - 168.

⁴³ See Lossky, 1991, pp. 191, 308, 369, 371; Stepun, 1990, vol. 1, pp. 95, 100 - 102, 110, 130. Il'in was also among the first patients of Freud's: 'Nowhere outside [...] Vienna and Zurich did psychoanalysis emerge so early and so fully as in Russia': see Ljunggren, 1989, pp. 173, 179 - 180.

philosophy to be acquainted with Rickert, Husserl, while at the same time it is quite permissible for one not to be acquainted with the works of Teichmüller, or Vladimir Solovyev, or other Russian philosophers [...]⁴⁴

Another Russian phenomenon should be mentioned here: the great tradition of translations from foreign languages. In the field of philosophy the stream of translations in the 1900s and 1910s was unprecedented in its breadth and volume. To give just few examples, the incomplete list of translations includes Russell, Kierkegaard, Cassirer, seven titles by Henri Bergson, seven major works by William James, almost all important works (11 in number) by Rickert, 29 translations of Simmel!⁴⁵

In 1912 - 1914 a sixteen-volume series, *New Ideas in Philosophy*, was published. It consisted of translations or reviews of the most recent works on philosophy in foreign languages.⁴⁶ *The Problems of Philosophy and Psychology*, a periodical on philosophy published in Moscow, should be also mentioned. In its 1,500 pages a year there was enough space not only for the original articles by Russian philosophers but also for reviews of, and discussions about, foreign authors. To give one example, Rickert's philosophy was the subject of ongoing debate over a period of eight years.⁴⁷ Another such author was Husserl.

According to Herbert Spiegelberg, 'the first public notice of Husserl's work taken outside Germany' appeared in France in 1910.⁴⁸ That is true only by excluding Russia, where such notice was taken as early as in 1906 by Nicholas Lossky, a lecturer at the University of St. Petersburg.⁴⁹ The first foreign language into which Husserl's works were translated was Russian (in 1909).⁵⁰ The

translation of *Prolegomena zur Reinen Logik* was edited and introduced by Semyon Frank, a colleague of Lossky's at the same University.⁵¹ In 1914 Gustav Shpet published in Moscow his *Appearance and Sense*,⁵² which was, probably, the first monograph on phenomenology outside Germany. By 1917 references to Husserl in the main works on philosophy became common, if not obligatory.⁵³ The reception of Husserl's ideas in Russia was fruitful: it is enough to mention Roman Jakobson with his structuralism.⁵⁴

§1.4. *Logos*: on the verge of a great epoch

With regard to philosophy, the unity of the German-Russian cultural space found by far its best expression in the joint project of *Logos*, an international journal on the philosophy of culture. It was launched by doctoral students of Windelband's, Russian as well as German.⁵⁵ *Logos* was Janus-faced, with two different editorial boards, in Moscow and Freiburg.⁵⁶ The young, enthusiastic editors succeeded in attracting major names of the time: the list of contributors on the German side includes Husserl, Rickert, Simmel, Weber, Windelband, Troeltsch, Meinecke; on the Russian side, the St. Petersburg professors Zelinsky, Lappo-Danilevsky, Vvedensky and others.

Russian and German editions differed not only in language but also in content: the same programmatic articles were accompanied by 'minor' articles intended to introduce authors as yet little known to the corresponding audience. Thus, in the first issue the Russian edition published a detailed introduction to the recent

p. xiii; Ljunggren, 1989, p. 173.

⁵¹ It was followed by the Russian translation of Husserl's programmatic article *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft*: see *Logos* (Moscow), vol. 2 (1911), book 1, pp. 1 - 56.

⁵² See English translation: Shpet, 1991.

⁵³ See an incomplete list of Russian publications on Husserl and phenomenology in Haardt, 1991, pp. xxvii - xxxi.

⁵⁴ On Jakobson's phenomenology, see Hollenstein, 1977.

⁵⁵ See Stepun, 1990, vol. 1, pp. 130 - 132, 174 - 177, 180, 185 - 186.

⁵⁶ There was also an Italian *Logos* edited by B. Varisco; French and American editions were under discussion.

⁴⁴ Askoldov, 1968 <1914>, p. 103. Gustav Teichmüller (1832 - 1888), German by origin, was a professor of philosophy at the University of Tartu in Russia.

⁴⁵ See Appendices 1 - 3; see also Ionin, 1981, pp. 126 - 127.

⁴⁶ See Lossky and Radlov, 1912 - 1914. The series had its parallels in other fields, such as sociology, mathematics, physics, etc.

⁴⁷ See Sofronov, 1905, Rubinshtein, 1907, Yakovenko, 1908, Berdyaev, 1910, and Yakovenko, 1913a.

⁴⁸ See Spiegelberg, 1982, p. 431.

⁴⁹ See Lossky, 1906, pp. 249, 278, 279, 282.

⁵⁰ That would be true also with regard to Max Weber or Sigmund Freud: see Draghici, 1989.

trends in German philosophy, whereas a German reader could become acquainted with a popular Russian economist and sociologist, Peter von Struve, and with the doctoral thesis of Sergius Hessen.⁵⁷ Both editions published a series of programmatic essays on the journal's main subject: philosophy of culture, or, better, philosophy and culture. We find among the authors Husserl, Rickert, Simmel, Windelband.⁵⁸

Logos proclaimed a philosophical renewal. A new philosophy is expected to come as 'synthesis and system': philosophy is the quest for complete synthesis.⁵⁹ However, this quest is undermined by scepticism, pessimism, lack of creativity within philosophy itself. Called to give culture a systematic form, philosophy has been so far unable to overcome its shock of meeting the coming age. The present condition of philosophy is inferior to its great past:

What we are experiencing now is probably the epoch of decline, which is not only the decline of culture in general but of philosophy in particular. [...] Working with the legacy left to it by the epoch of creativity, modern philosophy is somewhat afraid of the ultimate depths of this legacy: its timid thought carefully avoids the shining revelations of eternity in the great works of creative periods.⁶⁰

Boris Yakovenko, a Russian co-editor of *Logos*, used even more messianic terms in his works. Philosophy, which is now oppressed by the inimical realms of culture and is submerged in the chaos of life and yoked with its prejudices,⁶¹ can already see the 'Eternal Throne of Truth':

We are standing before the gates of Paradise and are about to enter it.⁶²

This liberation myth explains the image of a philosopher as a saviour hero, which was first associated in Russia with William James, a forerunner of the philosophical Renaissance to come.⁶³ James was very popular in Russia not only

as a psychologist but also as a philosopher, as the long list of his Russian translations demonstrates.⁶⁴ His books were regularly reviewed in Russian philosophical journals. To name only the leading St. Petersburg philosophers, Lossky, Frank, Lapshin, all wrote articles on James' philosophy.⁶⁵

James, however, appeared to be in the end but the precursor of Husserl. It was Husserl who defeated scepticism and relativism and cleared the way to the source of timeless, absolute norms. No wonder Husserl was given the title of the leader of the coming new era in philosophy.⁶⁶ Philosophy, in its turn, was declared the centre of the world to be. As a Russian commentator put it, the task of modern philosophy was

[to become] the transcendental essence of every culture and all life. In this sense *philosophy is the original foundation of life*.⁶⁷

Husserl, who called for an ongoing, archaeological expedition to the extratemporal realm of the ideal, where the roots of all Being lay hidden, could not but become the symbol of a positive and constructive approach to the crisis. Profound studies of Husserl's phenomenology changed Shpet's pessimism about the incurable infirmity of philosophy into almost euphoric enthusiasm:

Indeed, we do not stand on the verge of a great epoch. We are *already* in it, in its irrepressible striving!⁶⁸

Of course, all this echoes Husserl's words about 'a great age' we live in.⁶⁹

§1.5. From the threshold of Paradise to the world in ruins

In the first part of the present work (chapters Two to Six) we meet the principal

p. 298 - 299) called James 'a brilliant thinker'; Lopatin (1913, p. 77), and Shpet (1912, p. 257) found no better word than 'a genius'. Husserl was never given such treatment by his Russian colleagues. Nor was Husserl ever made an honorary member of the Moscow Psychological Society (which at that time also included philosophers) - as James was in 1899!

⁶⁴ See Appendix 1.

⁶⁵ See Frank, 1913; Lapshin, 1892; Lossky 1902.

⁶⁶ See Yakovenko, 1913b, p. 139.

⁶⁷ Yakovenko, 1912, p. 97; my italics.

⁶⁸ Shpet, 1991 <1914>, pp. 179 - 180.

⁶⁹ *PRS*, p. 145 <340>.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Logos* (Moscow), vol. 1 (1910), book 1 and *Logos* (Tübingen), band 1 (1910/1911).

⁵⁸ A more detailed analysis of their articles will be given in the course of the present work.

⁵⁹ See Editorial, 1910, pp. 5 - 6.

⁶⁰ Editorial, 1910, p. 7.

⁶¹ See Yakovenko, 1912, p. 95; cf. *PRS*, p. 146 <340 - 341>.

⁶² Yakovenko, 1911, p. 92.

⁶³ These and other equally laudatory terms are used e.g. in Kotlyarevsky, 1910. Berdyaev (1910.

actors just 'before the gates of Paradise'. By 1914 Husserl and Rickert are both in their fifties, at the peak of their fame; their main works have already been published. I shall give a critical account of their achievements up to 1914, which means that the works unpublished by that date are excluded from the scope of the present essay. At the centre of my analysis will be the opposing views of Husserl and Rickert on the problem of the individual.

The third person, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895 - 1975), was by 1914 an undergraduate student of philosophy at the University of Odessa in Southern Russia.⁷⁰ In 1915 - 1918 he continued his studies (classics and philosophy)⁷¹ at the University of St. Petersburg, a cosmopolitan and elitist milieu. From the beginning he was singled out for his contribution to the seminar *Plato as a religious and historical source*.⁷² He began working at his project of philosophy in the early 1920s, after the Great War and the Revolutions in Russia and Germany.

The theme of the individual connects the pre-War German mandarins, Husserl and Rickert, with their junior Russian colleague, Bakhtin. The development of that theme in Bakhtin reflects in many ways the experience of pan-European social catastrophe. The philosophy of the individual, developed 'before the gates of Paradise', had to become a philosophy for a new, the post-War, world. Indeed, Franz Rosenzweig, of the same generation as Bakhtin, had to write his philosophical essay in the trenches,⁷³ and Bakhtin himself lived through the civil war under the threat of starvation.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ For the biography see Clark and Holquist, 1984; Konkina and Konkina, 1993.
⁷¹ See *Chelovek* (Moscow), 5 (1993), pp. 148 - 153.

⁷² For his paper on *Timaeus*: see Otchet, 1916, p. 78; although no first name is given, we know that Bakhtin's brother (who also studied classics at the same university) was enrolled to the army in 1915: see Konkina and Konkina, 1993, pp. 41, 363.

⁷³ See Bergman, 1991, p. 173.

⁷⁴ Bakhtin had to leave St. Petersburg in 1918 because of starvation (see *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 1993, 31 (4 August), p. 6). In 1921 he writes to Kagan about a friend of theirs: 'He is in a terrible condition: his clothing is absolutely shocking, he is gaunt, and looks like a madman.' In another letter he says 'I eat well' and mentions another friend whose situation is 'wonderful' - for his lessons he is given 'a room and good board'. See *Pamyat'*, 4 (1981), Paris, pp. 261, 263:

That new world was covered in ruins. By a 'ruin' I do not necessarily mean the result of physical destruction but a cultural phenomenon. A ruin is a cultural object which has changed its social function, even if it remains physically intact or is restored to its original state. Thus, when a living house becomes a commemorative museum, it is turned into a ruin. A friend of Bakhtin's, Konstantin Vaginov,

compared post-War St. Petersburg with Rome after it had been ruined by Barbarians: there were only a few hundreds inhabitants left, wolves appeared in the streets, but palaces and temples stood intact as before.⁷⁵

Those former palaces and temples, however, now functioned as museums and cinemas, prisons and hospitals. Palaces aside, the very mandarin community and its strongholds, universities, slowly but steadily turned into ruins before being finally integrated into the ideological machine of the totalitarian state, both in Germany and in Russia.⁷⁶

Before that happened, the concept of the individual, together with the principle of 'symphonic analogy', was one of the central problems of the mandarin's debate.⁷⁷ The mandarins divided the world into two, according to different concepts of individuality. While Germany is a developing, supra-individual individuality with a distinct personal identity, its Western neighbours, France and especially England, according to Troeltsch, tend to see themselves as systems of social mechanics where individual elements interact in the same way as billiard balls. The Great War thus was interpreted by Sombart as the contest of the trader (England) and the hero (Germany): the trader, whose idea of individual freedom is but the freedom of trade, is trying to rob other nations of their freedom to be unique individuals; without that freedom the world becomes a faceless social mechanism.⁷⁸

my italics.

⁷⁵ Bocharov, 1993, p. 87.

⁷⁶ See Ringer, 1969, pp. 445 - 449;

⁷⁷ See Ringer, 1969, p. 397.

⁷⁸ See Ringer, 1969, pp. 183 - 186, 342.



Simmel, in a historical-philosophical context, also distinguished between the two concepts of the individual. The quantitative individualism of the 18th century ('natural' man) found its expression in the category of *Einzelkeit*, corresponding to a single particular, a single case in its class. The Romantic tradition developed the concept of *Einzigkeit*, *only-ness, the ultimate uniqueness, which makes no reference to the class of similar objects.⁷⁹

The first is the ideal of fundamentally equal, even if wholly free and self-responsible personalities. The other is that of individuality which, precisely in its innermost nature, is incomparable and which is called upon to play an irreplaceable role.⁸⁰

Simmel interprets that conflict sociologically as the conflict between equality and freedom, egalitarian socialism and liberal capitalism: equality without freedom and freedom without equality.⁸¹ This unresolved conflict is the legacy of the 19th century. Simmel believes that an alternative can be found to both extremes:

I should prefer to believe, however, that the ideas of free personality as such and of unique personality as such are not the last words of individualism.⁸²

Finally, we have to mention Hermann Cohen, the founder of the Marburg school of Neo-Kantianism, who made eyebrows rise when he turned from his patently scientific philosophy to a metaphysics based on Biblical monotheism. Posthumously published in 1919, *Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*⁸³ departed radically from his earlier view of any religion as a temporal, self-annihilating surrogate for ethics.⁸⁴ He also recognized the fiasco of his

famous 'ethics of pure will', which had entirely overlooked the problem of the individual.⁸⁵ Now both metaphysics and ethics had the individual at their centre: God as the Only One, and man who becomes an *Ich-Individuum*, only in correlation with God.⁸⁶

Cohen's 'conversion' meant nothing less than the end of rivalry between the two schools of Neo-Kantianism. The alternative, Baden, school made the individual its main subject from the very beginning in the works of Windelband,⁸⁷ as a reaction to the neglect of the individual by the generalizing paradigm of natural science. Cohen's 'conversion' did not signal, however, the victory of the Baden school, which was struggling with its inner problems.

As we shall see in the course of the present study, the main concept of the Baden school, *value*, remained unarticulated. The new standard of philosophical rigour which had been set by Husserlian phenomenology in the 1900s made the Baden school look hopelessly imprecise. To reconcile the two was not at all easy, because Husserl started with disregard of the individual. Is a phenomenology of the individual possible? Bakhtin answered that question positively, as the present work tries to demonstrate.

§1.6. Bakhtin: the outline of reconstruction

Only fragmented, draft papers of Bakhtin's essay on the individual survived and were published posthumously, in 1979 and 1986 (English translations in 1990 and 1993).⁸⁸ We have, therefore, an unprecedented situation: a 20th century

Berlin. He also personally knew Cassirer and Simmel, among other German philosophers. The proofs of Cohen's *Religion of Reason* were available already in February 1918. Kagan left for Russia only in spring-summer 1918. See *Pamyat'*, 4 (1981), Paris, pp. 249, 255 - 256; Theunissen, 1984, p. 267; Saltzman, 1981, pp. 88, 122; Poole, 1997, pp. 170 - 173.

⁷⁹ See *Individual and Society*, p. 81 <95>.

⁸⁰ *Individual and Society*, p. 79 <92 - 93>.

⁸¹ See *Individual and Society*, p. 73 <85>.

⁸² *Individual and Society*, p. 84 <98>.

⁸³ See Cohen, 1972 <1919>.

⁸⁴ On Cohen's break with orthodox Neo-Kantianism, see e.g. Saltzman, 1981, pp. 76 - 89. It is unlikely that Cohen's book was available to Bakhtin during his work on the project. However, already in 1915 Cohen had published an earlier version of it, *The Concept of Religion in the System of Philosophy*, with a sketch of his main ideas. That book in its turn was preceded by Cohen's seminar in Berlin. This was probably attended by Matvej Kagan, a close friend of Bakhtin's in the early 1920s. He got his doctoral degree in philosophy in Marburg under the supervision of Natorp and later happened to be under the patronage of Hermann Cohen in

⁸⁵ See Cohen, 1972 <1919>, p. 167 <195>.

⁸⁶ See Cohen, 1972 <1919>, pp. 35 <41>, 168 <196>.

⁸⁷ See *History and Natural Science*, p. 171 <139>.

⁸⁸ See *Bibliography: Primary Sources* for the details of publications. The research for this book was finished by 1999 (see Nikiforov, 1999) before the new academic edition of Bakhtin's early texts (see Bakhtin, 2003). However the new reading of Bakhtin's manuscripts appeared to have no effect on my project which is essentially a reconstruction.

philosopher left us only disjointed fragments, like pre-Socratic philosophers.⁸⁹ The second, major, part of the present essay is devoted to the reconstruction of Bakhtin's unfinished project, dating from early 1920s. As I intend to demonstrate, the project appears to be a moral philosophy of the individual, a phenomenology in its method.

The methodology I employ for the reconstruction of Bakhtin's philosophy of the individual is taken from the same philosophy of the individual as presented by Rickert and Max Weber.⁹⁰ The main principle for the selection of material in the present work is its relevance to the evolution of the concept of the individual between 1900⁹¹ and 1924 in the single, German-Russian, cultural space. The principle of reconstruction is the link between Bakhtin's text and the philosophical problems of his time, regardless of what we have to say about them now. In other words, Bakhtin's text is analysed not in 'our' perspective but in his own philosophical perspective.

With regard to foreign authors, that perspective does not reach beyond 1918, when the conditions of civil war disrupted academic life.⁹² The publication of the philosophical journal *Mysl'* (Thought), the heir to the pre-Revolutionary *The Problems of Philosophy and Psychology*, was resumed after a three-year break only in February 1921. In its first issue a review of recent publications on philosophy had to be borrowed from a German periodical and was accompanied by the following apologies:

The long period of the war and the revolution have led to a considerable break in the cultural exchange between Russia and Europe. Scientific literature, or indeed, any printed matter from abroad, comes only with great difficulties, mostly by chance. True, books on technology, medicine, natural sciences are arriving in numbers in a more or less regular fashion. But that

could not be said about works on history, literature, and - most of all - philosophy. For example, in a relatively large consignment of foreign books, which was received recently (in February - March [1922]) by the Public Library of Petrograd [St. Petersburg], *there are no books on philosophy*.⁹³

If the situation in the capital city was so deplorable, the provincial town of Vitebsk, where Bakhtin lived from 1920 to 1923, must have been the worst place imaginable for philosophical research. In 1921, working at his project, Bakhtin writes to a friend in Moscow:

There is absolutely nothing in Vitebsk, which makes my work terribly difficult.⁹⁴

The fragments which use the same characteristic vocabulary pertaining to Bakhtin's major project give the material for a reconstruction. Those fragments were written, probably, between 1919 and 1924. The dating is by no means absolute. It is true that Bakhtin's ongoing works on moral philosophy, aesthetics and psychology are mentioned in 1921 both in his letters and in magazines.⁹⁵ It is also widely believed that the fragments in question belong to the 'Vitebsk' period (1920 - 1923).⁹⁶ But there is no reason why *the text* of the fragments could not be written or re-written later: in Bakhtin's 'drafts' dated from the 1940s there are sometimes self-quotations from his works dating, presumably, from the early 1920s.⁹⁷ However, it is easy to believe that the main *ideas* of the project were articulated before 1924. In 1924 Bakhtin returns to Leningrad (St. Petersburg) where he lectures on the problem of 'author and hero', the title pointing to the aesthetic part of his project.⁹⁸ In the rest of his works philosophy, even if present

⁹³ *Mysl'* (St. Petersburg), 2 (1922), p. 135, my italics. Censorship (which was introduced as early as in 1918) is the most probable explanation here.

⁹⁴ *Pamyat'* (Paris), 4 (1981), p. 262.

⁹⁵ For the letters see *Pamyat'*, 4 (1981), Paris, pp. 257, 260, 262 - 263; see also Clark and Holquist, 1984, pp. 53 - 55, where the magazines are named.

⁹⁶ See e.g. Bocharov, 1986, p. 80; for a detailed discussion see Gogotishvili, 2003, pp. 415-418. Poole finds some arguments in favour of a later dating of the manuscripts: see Poole, 2001, p. 110 ff.

⁹⁷ Cf. e.g. a 1943 draft entitled 'A man looking in the mirror' (*Literaturnaya Ucheba* (Moscow), 1992, book 5 - 6, p. 156) and the corresponding fragment from *A&H*, pp. 31 - 32.

⁹⁸ The lecture notes made by Pumpyansky in summer 1924 contain the summary of a lecture

⁸⁹ See Averintsev as quoted by Bocharov, 1993 p. 85.

⁹⁰ See Weber, 1949 <1904>, pp. 72, 79, 81 - 82, 90, 98 - 99.

⁹¹ Husserl's *Prolegomena zur Reinen Logik* was published in 1900.

⁹² Thus, Oswald Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (which was published in Germany in 1918) reached Moscow by sheer chance only at the end of 1921 and was beheld by a Russian philosopher 'with the feelings of a cave-dweller who by a miracle can see the morning light coming through a narrow cleft'. Steppun, 1990, vol. 2, p. 276.

disguised, is never the main subject.

The fragments of Bakhtin's philosophical project would not meet the requirements for publication if judged by the academic standards of the time: there is neither beginning nor end, no coherent argument, no concise terminology, some fragments are duplicated (different versions), and, most important, the drafts pertain only to the first and second parts of the project; the rest of it was probably never written.

I presume, however, judging from Bakhtin's text,⁹⁹ that the drafts were intended to be developed into a completed work of philosophy. The purpose of the present book is limited to the reconstruction of the first part of Bakhtin's project: moral philosophy. For that purpose the textual elements are considered according to the course of the (hypothetical) argument and not according to the actual sequence in the surviving fragments.

The argument begins with the impotency of contemporary philosophy as demonstrated by the Great War and its effects (Ch. 7). The alternative philosophy, which is able to provide orientation in the new, changing world, is based on the concept of the individual, practical act, a unit of praxis (Ch. 8). Such an act is an intentional process and can be dealt with by the methods of phenomenology; all morally valid acts form a coherent unity, the 'ultimate' context (Ch. 9). This ultimate context is the process of Being (Ch. 10). In order to belong to that context, an act should be 'responsible', i.e. be directed to the synthesis of all its elements, concrete-historical as well as theoretical. That directedness points towards the 'absolute' future and is the teleological element necessarily present in a moral act (Ch. 11). The world-panorama correlative to an individual consciousness in the process of a moral act is described phenomenologically as an ego-centred world (Ch. 12). A historical parallel, the ego-centred philosophy of Max Stirner, gives ground for criticism of such a model (Ch. 13). This possible

entitled *Hero and Author in Aesthetic Activity* - see *Lectures* (Pumpyansky), p. 233. The lecture *The Problem of 'Hero' in a Work of Literature* was also delivered 28 June 1924 in The State Institute for the History of Art - see GIII, 1927, p. 49.
⁹⁹ See *PhP*, p. 122.

criticism is answered by the moral imperative of individuality: the ought is the contraposition of two forms of prime experience: *I-for-myself* and the *Other-for-me*. That brings the argument to an end (Ch. 14).

§1.7. Bakhtin and Bakhtinology

'Bakhtin' is, of course, a very famous name in the theory of literature.¹⁰⁰ His ideas in that field were broadly disseminated in the West by Julia Kristeva¹⁰¹ in the late 1960s and as 'epigones follow success as surely as bad translations precede it',¹⁰² by the 1980s in America

it has become fashionable to pay attention to the Bakhtin circle - often resulting in misreadings and misinterpretations.¹⁰³

The 'Bakhtin Industry', as Gary Morson called it,¹⁰⁴ was booming in the 1980s; after the Iron Curtain had been raised, a huge crowd of Russian Bakhtinologists was discovered. Bakhtin's image became 'an increasingly valuable commodity'.¹⁰⁵ Nowadays, a data base would contain more than 1,000 articles having 'Bakhtin' in the title, and the corresponding number of books has exceeded 50. Just to describe the panorama of research in this field (which called itself 'Bakhtinology', 'Bakhtin Studies', etc.) it has required a full-size monograph.¹⁰⁶

To be sure, Bakhtin's fame has very little to do with his early philosophical fragments, only recently translated from the Russian.¹⁰⁷ In the introduction to one of those translations, Bakhtin's biographer, Michael Holquist, has to apologize:

One reason why Bakhtin has so quickly become popular with so many (and

¹⁰⁰ 'The most important Soviet thinker in the human sciences and the greatest theoretician of literature in the twentieth century'. Todorov, 1984, p. ix.

¹⁰¹ See Kristeva, 1981 <1969>; 1973 <1970>.

¹⁰² Morson, 1986, p. 81.

¹⁰³ Diaz-Diocaretz, 1989, p. 1. The Cold War contributed greatly to the interest in Bakhtin: both left and right wings in the Western academic world claimed Bakhtin's name for themselves (see *ibid.*, pp. 2 - 3).

¹⁰⁴ See Morson, 1986, p. 81.

¹⁰⁵ See Emerson, 1997, p. 51.

¹⁰⁶ See Emerson, 1997. In my view, it is by far the best introduction into 'Bakhtin studies'.

¹⁰⁷ See a review of works on Bakhtin's early philosophy in Emerson, 1997, pp. 208 - 220. See also Eskin, 2000; Brandist, 2002; Nielson, 2002; Brandist, Shepherd, and Tihanov, 2004;

varied) readers is that they have found him easy to read. These texts, by contrast, are extremely difficult [...] In addition, many of their terms and concepts are currently unfashionable. [...] Obviously, we believe the extra effort will be well repaid, first of all because these texts make possible a deeper understanding of Bakhtin's previously published books.¹⁰⁸

The present work has no such purpose: a better understanding of Bakhtin's theory of literature. I assume that a reconstruction of Bakhtin's early philosophy is valuable in itself, regardless of its possible implications for aesthetics. The problem of such a reconstruction has never even been raised by 'Bakhtinologists', probably because their basic problem is *Who was Mikhail Bakhtin?*¹⁰⁹

Such a question is pregnant with messianic connotations and, indeed, a considerable part of Bakhtinology represents a personality cult (especially in Russia, where such cults are endemic). 'Bakhtin is a mystery', 'a man from the other world', who lived in a 'spiritual cosmos' where 'we' are not admitted.¹¹⁰ In this messianic context, the present work can be compared to Biblical criticism. I presume that the fragments under investigation were produced at a known time within a well-known community (the *mandarins) with its well-documented cultural tradition.

A reconstruction of Bakhtin's project can be least of all likened to appending arms to the torso of the Venus of Milos: it begins, rather, with three arms of different sizes and with no torso at all. My approach may be called 'anatomical': the missing torso must have a normal anatomy, the same number of ribs as everybody else, for example. Bakhtin's drafts are considered in the 'normal' context of the philosophy of the period as just one project of many parallel projects.

Apart from the texts themselves, Bakhtin's 'naturalness' can be illustrated by

¹⁰⁸ Holquist, 1990, pp. ix - x.

¹⁰⁹ See Emerson, 1997, p. 3. Unfortunately, that is often understood as Bakhtin's standing for / against 'us': in most cases *The Question* is if he was a Marxist, a Russian Orthodox saint, a 'patriot' and anti-Semite, a forerunner of post-modernism, a Stalinist, etc. See *ibid.* pp. 48 - 54, 171, 174; on the alleged anti-semitism of Bakhtin see Ponomareva, 1995, p. 71

¹¹⁰ See Turbin, 1991, p. 11. Iconoclasm came as the natural reaction to Bakhtin's personality cult. The whole debate is described with minute detail in Hirschkop, 1999, pp. 111-196.

the fact that he had a kind of double. José Ortega y Gasset, twelve years his senior, belonged to the same cosmopolitan mandarin community (he studied in Leipzig, Berlin and Marburg). Just as in Bakhtin's first project, phenomenology replaced Neo-Kantianism¹¹¹ in Ortega's first monograph, which was a piece of literary criticism (on Cervantes),¹¹² whereas Bakhtin's first published book was literary criticism of Dostoevsky. Ortega's themes are patently Bakhtinian: a theory of the novel, communications in mass society, laughter and irony,¹¹³ even *ludic* theory (the theory of folk festivals, a parallel to Bakhtin's study of carnival).¹¹⁴ There is, however, no 'Ortegology' which would ask who Ortega was: he wrote finished pieces of philosophy which can be studied in the context of philosophy.

The difficulties of reading Bakhtin's early texts are due not to their unfathomable depth but mostly to the fact that they are no more than drafts, very poorly written. The absence of footnotes or quotations is not, of course, untypical for a mandarin philosopher: Simmel's *Philosophy of Money* has not a single footnote or direct quotation in a text of 500 pages.¹¹⁵ What is much worse, Bakhtin has no concise terminology: instead of a conceptual apparatus he lets an organism of words develop freely. Bakhtin often exploits the hidden potential of linguistic stems which, as he believed, reflected primitive mythology.¹¹⁶ His technique of writing can be called verbal pointillism: a few 'basic' words form a number of fixed combinations which are spread all over the text so that the reader often finds himself in a real jungle where

sentences of enormous and undifferentiated length pile up. These labyrinthine sentences are, however, built out of a rather small lexicon. Ideas (words, phrases, whole sentences) seem to recur in patterns at

¹¹¹ See Silver, 1978.

¹¹² See Ortega y Gasset, 1963 <1914>.

¹¹³ See Ortega y Gasset, 1968 <1925>.

¹¹⁴ See Orringer, 1969 and 1979. It is certainly beyond the limits of the present work to demonstrate the affinity of the lexicons used by Bakhtin and Ortega.

¹¹⁵ See Frisby, 1990, p. 5.

¹¹⁶ See A&H (2), p. 156. That was a device common to the avant-garde literature of the period, so called *korneslovie*: see Barzakh, 1995, p. 49.

astonishingly short intervals.¹¹⁷

The task of the present work is to demonstrate the existence of interesting philosophical ideas concealed under the rubble of an unfinished project.

§1.8. The method of translation

I had to make all the participants (German-speakers and Russian-speakers) speak the same English language. For that purpose the existing English translations of German and Russian sources often had to be amended, or in other cases a new translation had to be made. The difficulties of philosophical translations from the German into English are, of course, well known.¹¹⁸ Happily, in the field of phenomenology, Dorion Cairns, an assistant of Husserl, compiled a thesaurus which has become standard and which I use extensively.¹¹⁹ One of the most unusual features of that standard is the use of the upper and lower case 'o' in order to distinguish between the derivatives of the German *Gegenstand* (English *object*, small o) and *Objekt* (English *Object*, capital O). In phenomenology that difference is crucial.

Sometimes it sounds strange when I use the English word *only* for the Russian adjective *edinstvennyj*, which is more or less equivalent to the German *einzig*. I chose to translate it as *only* and not as *unique* because the latter brings connotations of comparability which are undesirable in the Bakhtinian context. *My only friend* is not the same as *my unique friend*; if my name is John Smith it is hardly *unique* though it is my *only* name, and so on. Besides, *unique* has a different Russian equivalent, *unikal'nyj*, stemming from the same Latin root, which Bakhtin does not use.

All the translations of Bakhtin from the Russian are mine.¹²⁰ I had to keep in

¹¹⁷ Emerson, 1984, p. xxiii. Some 'Bakhtinologists' would, of course, ascribe this ineffective and bizarre style to Bakhtin's extraordinary profundity or to his fidelity to Russian, not philosophy. but semi-artistic 'philosophizing' which would on principle disregard clarity and on purpose dispense with consistency.

¹¹⁸ See e.g. Frings and Funk, 1973.

¹¹⁹ See GTH.

¹²⁰ The correspondence between page numbers in the Russian originals of Bakhtin's texts and

mind that Bakhtin was bi-lingual: both German and Russian were the first languages he began to speak and think in.¹²¹ Unlike English, the Russian philosophical language makes the translations from the German easy because, to a large degree, it was formed by such translations. Quite a few Russian words were invented simply for rendering German terms.¹²² The period in question (1900 - 1924), as mentioned above, was especially rich in translations. They provide an excellent Russian-German matrix which I use in many cases in order to find a German equivalent of a Russian term. Then I follow the current praxis of its English translation.

Fortunately, in the area of phenomenology there is already a translation from Russian into English of Gustav Shpet's 1915 monograph on Husserl's *Ideas*.¹²³ That translation employs the same approach in rendering terminology: the German equivalents are found and then translated into English, using Dorion Cairns' standard.

their existing English translations is given in *Appendix 3*.

¹²¹ See *Interview, Chelovek*, 4/93, p. 150.

¹²² Thus, the Russian equivalent of the Lotzean *Geltung* (*znachimost'*) was probably coined by Vladimir Solovyev: see *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* (Moscow), vol. 21 (1910), No. 102, p. 188; *Logos* (Moscow), vol. 1 (1910), book 1, pp. 272 - 273; Rajnov, 1913, p. 96.

¹²³ See Shpet, 1991 <1914>.

2. PHENOMENOLOGY AS THE DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF MENTAL PHENOMENA

The opposing views of Husserl and Rickert on the problem of the individual will be at the centre of our analysis now. I shall give a critical account of their achievements up to 1914, which means that the works unpublished by that date are excluded from the scope of the present essay.

The development of the philosophy of the coming 'great age' became Husserl's life's work. In order to enter the gates of Paradise philosophy had first to go through Purgatory and to purify itself of *relativism*.

§2.1. Husserl's ideal: philosophy as rigorous science

Husserl considers first a particular form of relativism which he calls *anthropologism*. Its expression is the *Protagorean maxim 'man is the measure of all things',¹ or, as Husserl puts it:

Man *as such* is then the measure of all human truth. Every judgement whose roots are to be found in what is *specific* to man, on the constitutive laws of

¹ See *Prolegomena*, p. 138 <B 114 - 115>. In his letter to Husserl in 1905 Brentano pronounces his anathema against psychologism, which he associates with this dictum of Protagoras - see Boer, 1978, p. 94 - 95. Plato was supposed to be the protagonist of Protagoras. In Russia Semyon Frank, in his critique of pragmatism (which was but a kind of anthropologism), associated it with Protagoras, himself taking sides with Plato - see S. Frank, 1913, p. 129. On the same opposition of Plato and Protagoras, see also Yakovenko, 1911, pp. 87 - 88. * (asterisk) before a word is a reference to the *Analytical Subject Index*.

man as species - is a true judgement, for us human beings.²

In the same way as all too human *feet* and *stones* gave way to metres and kilograms, *Homo Sapiens*, the Protagorian measure unit, had to be replaced by a more reliable scientific instrument. A considerable part of Husserl's *Prolegomena* was devoted to the demonstration of how anthropologism / psychologism refuted itself in failing to base logics on psychical facts.³

To give one example, Sigwart's anthropological concept of truth included necessarily a truth-bearing human subject:

In Sigwart's view, it would be a fiction to speak of truths that *hold* in themselves unknown to anyone [...] The judgement expressed in the formula of gravitation was not true before the time of Newton, which makes it [says Husserl], strictly speaking, a self-contradictory and wholly false utterance, since an unrestricted *validity for all times is plainly part of what it means to assert. [...] Truth, however, is 'eternal', or, better put, it is an Idea, and so beyond time.⁴

Absolutely valid ideal truths form a nexus, a 'realm' [Reich der Ideen], which is 'timeless' [unzeitlich]⁵ and totally independent: the eternally valid judgement about gravitation does not itself belong to the spatio-temporal world where gravitation can actually be the fact.

Anthropologism is a variety of *naturalism*. Husserl traces it back to the development of natural sciences, which all, consciously or not, presuppose *nature*, the single unitary framework of reference.⁶ Naturalism includes *pragmatism*, which Husserl considers as the most perfect embodiment of *Protagorian relativism.⁷ Indeed, it was a British pragmatist philosopher, F.C.S. Schiller, who made the Plato - Protagoras opposition popular in the 1900s. Schiller believed that justice was never done to Protagoras, the first ever

humanist.⁸ In James' view Protagoras was the first among many who tried to challenge rationalism,⁹ the original sin of philosophy. This is how James presents his notion of truth:

True ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify. False ideas are those that we can not. [...] The truth of an idea is not the stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true, by events. Its verity is in fact an event, a process: the process namely of its verifying itself, its veri-fication. Its validity is the process of its valid-ation.¹⁰

James says the verity of *truth is a process, belonging therefore to the world-process occurring in actual time and space. The truth of an idea so far is not like a fortune which the idea gets by right of succession from other ideas. 'Truth is made, just as wealth',¹¹ through marketing: to the horror of his German colleagues James the desecrator asks this sacrilegious question:

What, in short, is the truth's cash-value in experiential terms?¹²

Thoughts, ideas, truths are temporal. They are and remain valid as long as their claim to represent empirical reality remains substantiated. A new truth replaces the old one, which has appeared to be 'absolutely false' and cannot keep its cash-value any more.¹³

No matter how superficial and vulgar his view-point might seem to the German academics of his time, James uncovers a serious weakness of any philosophy which pretends to be scientific by declaring the priority of self-sufficient, timeless truth. The natural science of the period was passing through painful scientific revolutions. The eternal validity of Newtonian physics, which Husserl took as the model example,¹⁴ turned out to be a problem in itself. In a

² See *Prolegomena*, p. 138 <B 115>.

³ See *Prolegomena*, Nos. 32 - 51.

⁴ *Prolegomena*, p. 148 <B 128 - 129>.

⁵ See *Prolegomena*, pp. 149 - 150 <B 130>, p. 225 <B 228>.

⁶ See *PRS*, p. 79 <295>.

⁷ See *PRS*, p. 81 <296>. *Pragmatism* is also one of the explicitly mentioned targets of Bakhtin's criticism (see *PhP*, pp. 90 - 91) as well as Rickert's (see *Zwei Wege*, pp. 172 - 173). Rickert actually returned fire in response to James' attacks on him in *Pragmatism*, pp. 109, 113.

⁸ See Schiller, 1907, pp. 22 - 70.

⁹ See *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 106.

¹⁰ *Pragmatism*, p. 97.

¹¹ See *Pragmatism*, p. 104.

¹² *Pragmatism*, p. 97.

¹³ See *Pragmatism*, p. 100.

¹⁴ See *Prolegomena*, pp. 100 <B 63>, 106 <B 72>, 148 <B 127 - 128>, etc. It is interesting that in later writings Husserl prefers to take the examples of ideal laws from mathematics; actually he

certain way the validity of this physics lost its universal character, becoming a particular case of a more fundamental, Einsteinian physics.

With his full awareness of the limits of natural sciences, Husserl nevertheless believes in the possibility of turning philosophy into a rigorous philosophical science which will bring us to the ultimate, unchangeable truths:

only science can decide, and its decision bears the stamp of eternity.¹⁵ But that is science as *Idea*, the ideal science of the future, the all-embracing science of the ideal.

Naturalism adulterates science in the same way as physics was adulterated by the 'muddy' [trübe] natural philosophy of the Renaissance. It was Galileo who turned it into the exact, crystal clear science of physics. Following the same paradigm Lavoisier turned *alchemy into the strict science of chemistry.¹⁶ Has the time not come for the same radical turn in philosophy? Does it not experience 'a secret nostalgia',¹⁷ a longing to become at last what it claimed to be from its early beginnings: a rigorous science of true origins?¹⁸ How long shall we live with a situation in which

Philosophy, whose vocation is to teach us how to carry on the eternal work of humanity, is utterly incapable of teaching in an objectively valid manner. [...] I do not say philosophy is an imperfect science; I say simply that it is not a science at all, that as science it has not yet begun.¹⁹

Philosophy as a historical phenomenon is to be opposed by the *valid [gültig] philosophy.²⁰ This philosophy is still to come. Husserl refuses to call his approach a *Weltanschauung* philosophy. His philosophy is to be rigorous. A rigorous philosopher does not act on the value of 'wisdom', or *Weltanschauung*. He is in pursuit of a different value, not of philosophical wisdom but of

uses the same few examples.

¹⁵ PRS, p. 142 <337>.

¹⁶ See PRS, p. 84 <297>.

¹⁷ See *Ideas*, p. 142 <118>.

¹⁸ See PRS, pp. 71 <289>, 146 <340>.

¹⁹ PRS, p. 73 <290>.

²⁰ See PRS, p. 126 <325>.

philosophical science [Wissenschaft].²¹ Husserl's project of rigorous science rejects the vagueness of intuition, *Anschauung*,²² and rejects wholeness understood intuitively. Moreover, it rejects the claim of the category of wholeness to the central place in philosophy. Rigorous philosophy will rise from below.²³

No more passive waiting: the time has come.²⁴ Philosophy is in need of, and ready for, 'Umwendung', conversion.²⁵ The difference between existing religion, art, law, philosophy, and their ideal correlates would no more be disregarded. Husserl's prescription to meet 'the spiritual need' of the age, to heal its infirmities, is clear:

there is only one remedy for these and all similar evils: a scientific critique and in addition a radical science, rising *from below, based on sure foundations and progressing according to the most rigorous methods - the philosophical science for which we speak here.²⁶

Husserl hopes that this ideal philosophy would actualize the cultural ideal: *valid [gültig] art, law, philosophy and religion.²⁷

He begins with the analysis of 'acts of consciousness', or 'mental phenomena'.

§2.2. Act of consciousness: a structure versus the structureless immediacy of life

Sometimes (not without good reason) Husserl was classified by his critics under the umbrella of life philosophy. However loosely defined, life philosophy has a central thesis: life in its immediacy is the most original reality which is

²¹ See PRS, p. 135 <332>.

²² See PRS, p. 130 <328>.

²³ See PRS, pp. 141 - 142 <337>.

²⁴ See PRS, p. 141 <336>.

²⁵ See PRS, pp. 75 - 76 <291 - 292>. Quentin Lawer systematically translates *Umwendung* as *revolution* and disregards the inverted commas Husserl uses sometimes to show the metaphorical character of this image.

²⁶ PRS, pp. 141 - 142 <337>; my italics.

²⁷ See PRS, <325>, cf. p. 126 of the English translation, where the mention of religion is omitted by the translator.

accessible in inner experience.²⁸ This experience is called *Erleben*, mental living, that what is lived. Life is therefore related to inner life-experience: all that we experience, what we *erleben*, is life.²⁹ Husserl found a poetic description for this original experience of introspection:

I am looking at life flowing in its present actuality [ich auf das strömende Leben in seiner wirklichen Gegenwart hinblicke] and, while doing so, apprehend myself as the pure subject of this life [...], I say unqualifiedly and necessarily that I am, this life is, I am living: cogito.³⁰

Husserl does not remain at this point of elation but moves on to the analysis of 'flowing life'. Life is experienced as the tissue of mental processes; the general structure of a mental process, of *Erlebnis*, is Husserl's main objective. Another name for a mental process is *act of consciousness*, or simply *act*. The word 'act' still keeps³¹ one of the meanings of its Latin root: a part of the total performance, as in the theatre. Act is a structured fragment of inner experience. In this (very wide) sense the term was in use already before Husserl.³²

Relating *'stuff' to a structure was the paradigm of many disciplines of the period. The *fin de siècle* was marked with an intense philosophical debate among physicists. Phenomenological interpretation of physics (which left its mark on Husserl's ideal of rigorously scientific philosophy) limited itself to the purely functional description of observable phenomena. The laws of nature were thus turned into the patterns of description. This de-ontologization led to the elimination of any fixed discrete structure from the physical world. It was only a description that had the structure. For example, the atomic theory was ridiculed as a superstition, as the remnant of metaphysics.³³

But the remnant of metaphysics would be perhaps easier to detect in the belief that the world was nothing but a structureless continuum. The very apparatus of functional description in physics was designed to describe continua and not discrete structures. The breakthrough came with Max Planck's seminal works on quantum physics which opened the way to the radical remaking of the model of the physical world. The crux of the matter was to reconcile the view of the ever-changing continuum of electromagnetic waves with the discrete atomic and sub-atomic structures. Planck's starting-point was to suggest that energy, emitted by particles, cannot constitute simply any amount, but is always calibrated, i.e. is divisible by the same constant. We say that particles exchange their energy in discrete amounts, in *quanta*. Albert Einstein (who got his Nobel prize for the further development of quantum physics) is credited with the jocular form of the quantum principle: beer is always served in beer mugs.³⁴

The formal analogy between this joke and the metaphor used by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* could not be more striking. Talking about the stream of consciousness and the role of concepts, James compares it to the flow of a river: the water could be drawn from it only in buckets.³⁵ Again we have the same 'quantum' theory: the endless stream of consciousness is related to the discrete mental structure like a language. Concepts, those 'quanta' of the stream of consciousness, are the vehicles of exchange, of communication.

There is convincing evidence that Husserl carefully studied James' book.³⁶ It might have influenced his theory of acts. In the beginning of *Prolegomena* cognitive acts were related to the objectified text of science.³⁷ That imposed a discrete structure on the continuum of acts. As Husserl goes deeper into his

²⁸ See more about it in Ringer, 1969, p. 337.

²⁹ Rickert considered such concept of life as too general: see *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, p. 154.

³⁰ *Ideas*, p. 100 <85>.

³¹ In all the languages relevant for our analysis: German, English and Russian.

³² Husserl changed his terminology in the course of his work: see *LIS*, Introduction, p. 534 <B1 344>; *Ideas*, p. 201 <170>; *Ideas*, p. 203 <172>.

³³ See Schnädelbach, 1984, pp. 86 - 87. In this connection Husserl actually mentions phenomenalism, the ideal of a 'natural science without bodies', or a 'psychology without a soul'

- see *LIS*, p. 547 <A 339>.

³⁴ I do not know if Husserl paid any attention to Planck's works. Heidegger shows familiarity with the works of both Planck and Einstein in his inaugural lecture (1915) - see Spiegelberg, 1982, p. 358.

³⁵ See *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 246.

³⁶ In an article of Husserl's there is a reference to chapter IX ('The Stream of consciousness'); a copy of the book in Husserl's archive bears intense marking: see Spiegelberg, 1982, p. 102.

³⁷ See *Prolegomena*, p. 60 <B 12>.

Logical Investigations, the concept of act becomes progressively abstract. Now it is the self-sameness of their *'intentional objects' which divides the continuous flow of experience into discrete acts 'directed' to those objects.³⁸ Not each and every fragment of the mental stream is an act. Sensations like pain have no intentional object and are examples of non-acts [Nicht-Akte].³⁹ Acts are nothing more than the structured 'quanta' of consciousness:

In talking of *acts*, on the other hand, we must steer clear of the word's original meaning: *all thought of *activity must be rigidly excluded*.

And Husserl adds in the footnote:

we define 'acts' as intentional experiences, not as mental activities.⁴⁰

A motion-picture film would perhaps provide a better illustration of this inseparability of continuous motion, the 'flow of life', and discrete pictures, acts.⁴¹

The term 'act' appears here in the context of descriptive psychology together with the other, originally psychological, terms: experience, content, attitude.⁴²

§2.3. Descriptive psychology and phenomenological description

Descriptive psychology was the invention of Husserl's teacher, Franz Brentano, who divided psychology into descriptive and explanatory parts after the pattern of natural sciences of the time. Originally Brentano's *descriptive psychology (alias descriptive *phenomenology*) was supposed to produce only an initial description of psychical phenomena, so preparing the way for the inductive empirical discipline (genetic psychology) which would explain away those phenomena.⁴³ Opening his *Logical Investigations*, Husserl employs Brentano's

³⁸ See *LI*, p. 557 - 559 <B1 370 - 373>; p. 565 <B1 382 - 383>.

³⁹ See *LI*, p. 572 <B1 392>.

⁴⁰ *LI*, p. 563 <B1 379>; Husserl's italics.

⁴¹ This image had already been used by James: see *A Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 105 - 106.

⁴² See e.g. *LI*, p. 536 - 537 <B1 347 - 348> where Husserl explains how he uses the concepts of psychology. Later Husserl had to abandon the term *act* as too contaminated by some undesirable (psychological) connotations.

⁴³ Brentano never realised his project, concentrating instead on descriptive psychology as such: see Oskar Kraus' commentary in Brentano, 1973, pp. 28 - 29, fn 1; see also: Boer, 1978, pp. 203 - 213; Bell, 1990, pp. 5 - 7.

terms for his project of phenomenology, though with certain reservations:

Phenomenology is descriptive psychology. [...] The expression 'descriptive psychology', as it occurs in the talk of many scientists, means the sphere of scientific investigation, which is marked off by a methodological preference for inner experience and by an abstraction from all psychophysical explanation.⁴⁴

It seems that phenomenology is the new name for the pre-science Husserl designed in *Prolegomena*:⁴⁵ it is to provide a sort of mathematics for the non-exact natural sciences like psychology; moreover, now it appears to underlie mathematics itself! Indeed, not only pure logic but even 'all forms of rational criticism', including epistemology, are dependent on it.⁴⁶

We come now to the starting point of Husserl's argument. The *pre-theory cannot itself be a theory. Nor can this First Science be explanatory: the first principles can neither be deduced nor founded on anything. As geometry begins with self-evident axioms, so the beginning of sciences can only be a descriptive *a priori* science free from any presuppositions.⁴⁷ Its only basis is inner experience, truths not deduced but self-evident, grasped immediately by intuition.⁴⁸

The difficulties of such a project are obvious. Husserl presents his *Logical Investigations* as reflections on

the relationship between the subjectivity of cognition and the objectivity of the content of cognition.⁴⁹

The most general objective truths should be discovered in inner experience which

⁴⁴ *LI*, Introduction to volume two, p. 262 - 263 <A 18 - 19>. This paragraph raised the suspicions of Husserl's psychologism / anthropologism (§2.1) and in the second edition of 1913 it was replaced by the opposite statement: phenomenology is *not* descriptive psychology if psychology is understood as a non-philosophical natural-scientific discipline - see *ibid.*, p. 261 <B1 18>.

⁴⁵ In the second edition of *Logical Investigations* Husserl sometimes simply replaces 'logical' for 'phenomenological', e.g. see *Prolegomena*, p. 238, cf. <A 245> and <B 244>.

⁴⁶ See *LI*, Introduction to volume two, p. 262 <B1 18>.

⁴⁷ See *LI*, Introduction to volume two, No. 7.

⁴⁸ See *LI*, Introduction to volume two, p. 251 - 252 <B1 5 - 6>; cf. *LII*, p. 307 <B1 72>.

⁴⁹ [...] das Verhältnis zwischen der Subjektivität des Erkennnis und der Objektivität des Erkenntnisinhaltes [...] *Prolegomena*, Vorwort, <A VII>.

is individual and subjective. This antinomy was considered by Gustav Shpet as central to Husserl's project, indeed as the basic problem of *any* philosophy since Aristotle:

Every Being is individual while every cognition is general.⁵⁰

It is probably this tension between universally binding objective truths and an individual confined to his subjectivity that arouses certain heroic feelings in Husserl. The invitation to ultimate and final knowledge turns into the messianic 'here and now' and suddenly breaks the surface of his otherwise colourless and impassive writings. Husserl sees himself as Archimedes who finally *has* found the point for overturning the world:

I can compel [zwingen] nobody to see what I see. But I myself cannot doubt; I once more see, here where I have insight, i.e. am embracing truth itself, that all doubt would be mistaken. I therefore find myself at a point which I have either to recognize as the Archimedean point from which the world of doubt and unreason may be levered on its hinges, or which I may sacrifice at the peril of sacrificing all reason and knowledge.⁵¹

Nietzsche himself would hardly have minded endorsing such a manifesto. Standing alone against the whole world, which bars the way out like prison's doors hanging on its hinges of doubt and unreason! The antagonistic dualism of reason / unreason [Unvernunft / Vernunft] makes the personal choice somewhat eschatological. Husserl speaks out like a prophet who cannot compel others to see the truth that lies revealed before him, but feels obliged to warn them not to remain blind to the ultimate effects of their choice. Under the dull name of descriptive psychology, a revolutionary doctrine is developed, a lever is cast which will overturn the world.⁵²

The task of descriptive phenomenology can be formulated as the separation of the general from the individual within inner experience. The border line between

⁵⁰ Shpet, 1991, <1914> p. 13. This understanding of Husserl's project was shared by other Russian philosophers of the time, in particular, by Bakhtin's lecturers: see Lossky, 1906, p. 249, Frank, 1915, p. 83. In an account more detailed than mine much could have been said about the four possible combinations of objective-subjective and general-individual.

⁵¹ *Prolegomena*, p. 159 <B 143>.

⁵² Cf. PRS, p. 78 <293 - 294> where Husserl speaks prophetically about the coming 'conversion' [Umwendung] of philosophy (Quentin Lauer chose to translate it as 'revolution').

the general and the individual could, of course, be drawn at different levels. Genetic (explanatory) psychology studies the general components of the inner experience of *human beings. That is not general enough for descriptive psychology / phenomenology, which severs any link with the species *Homo Sapiens*: after all it is but one species among many other *thinkable* species of 'judging Beings'⁵³ like e.g. 'mathematical angels'.⁵⁴

Phenomenology, however, does not discuss states of animal organisms [animalischer Wesen] (not even as belonging to a possible nature as such), but perceptions, judgements, feelings *as such*, and what pertains to them *a priori* with unlimited generality [...]⁵⁵

In Husserl's use, therefore, *descriptive psychology is not like psychology proper, and he has to abandon the term after much misunderstanding on the part of colleagues. At the next stage, after 1907, Husserl's pure phenomenology becomes *transcendental*.⁵⁶ It now claims to be 'first' philosophy⁵⁷ but still retains its descriptive character. As Husserl explains, a descriptive science is essentially inexact, e.g. geometry works with the ideal concepts expressing something that cannot be seen; a 'descriptive natural scientist', on the contrary, appropriately and unambiguously uses concepts like 'lens-shaped' or 'umbelliform', which appeal to direct sensuous intuition prior to any geometry.⁵⁸ Generalizing this dichotomy Husserl concludes that

deductive theorizings are excluded from phenomenology.⁵⁹

'Descriptive' in this context means *'pre-theoretical', free from any presuppositions,⁶⁰ self-referential. Such descriptive phenomenology is a

⁵³ *Prolegomena*, p. 159 <B 142 - 143>.

⁵⁴ *Prolegomena*, p. 163 <B 149>.

⁵⁵ *LI, Introduction to volume two*, p. 262 <B1 18>.

⁵⁶ See e.g. Boer, 1978, p. 197. This development did not remain unnoticed in Russia, where it was welcome as a return to Platonism: see Frank, 1915, pp. 8 - 9, 85; cf. Shpet, 1991 <1914>, pp. 11, 49, 53, etc.

⁵⁷ See *Ideas*, p. 148 <121> where Husserl uses inverted commas probably to exclude any metaphysical connotations; cf. Shpet, 1991 <1914>, pp. 10, 13.

⁵⁸ See *Ideas*, pp. 166 - 167 <138 - 139>.

⁵⁹ *Ideas*, p. 169 <140>.

⁶⁰ See *LI, Introduction to volume two*, p. 263 - 266 <B1 19 - 22>.

completely free discipline, free even from logic itself.⁶¹ No wonder: this 'first' philosophy should give freedom to the old world of unreason and doubt.

§2.4. The mental stream

As we saw in the previous section, a phenomenological description appeals directly to inner experience, abstaining from any attempt to explain this experience theoretically. Under the inspiration of William James, Husserl calls the whole of inner experience 'the stream'⁶² (the *mental stream, the stream of consciousness, etc.): it is within this stream that Husserl's Archimedean point is to be found. The stream of consciousness is the most originary stratum of inner experience and can never be excluded from it. Everything else can be doubted, even the existence of any other 'consciousness'.⁶³ But the stream is before and beyond any doubt, it is inseparable from my life, it is *my* life itself which is streaming:

The stream of mental processes which is mine, of the one who is thinking, no matter to what extent it is not grasped, no matter how unknown it is in the areas of the stream which have run their course and which have yet to come - as soon as I am looking at life flowing in its present actuality [ich auf das strömende Leben in seiner wirklichen Gegenwart hinblicke] and, while doing so, apprehend myself as the pure subject of this life [...], I say unqualifiedly and necessarily that I am, this life is, I am living: cogito.⁶⁴

We find hardly more than a mention of this originary stream in Husserl. Very little indeed could be said about it. The fullness of our most immediate and intimate inner experience resists being grasped in categories. Husserl actually uses here a *metaphor* referring to some universally valid intuition of 'flowing'. This is, of course, in line with the method of descriptive phenomenology which appeals to intuitively grasped evidence, using pre-theoretical portrayals like

'swimming along' ['mittschwimmende']. Swimming along with the stream, how can we comprehend it?⁶⁵

On the contrary, it is in the stream which we are 'looking at' that the absolute beginning of all cognition can be 'seen'. Looking at flowing life we see it this or that way, sometimes with perfect intuitive clarity, in which case we do not need to bother with arguments:⁶⁶ we are at the spring of all knowledge⁶⁷ where the birthright of intuitive data⁶⁸ overrules any other prerogative. Husserl formulates it as

'the *principle of all principles': that every originary presentive intuition [originär gebende Anschauung] is a legitimizing source of cognition, that everything originally [...] offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being [...]⁶⁹

It should now be noted that according to Husserl we can 'see' what would have been considered by many as unseen in principle. He holds that even universals (e.g. redness as such) can be intuitively 'seen'. Though such seeing is non-sensuous, it nevertheless is originary.⁷⁰ Now we can formulate the basic problem of Husserl's phenomenology: *how* to 'look at' the stream so as to guarantee the clarity of intuitive 'seeing', i.e. truth.

The stream is pregnant with originary intuitions and in this sense it is the ultimate source of every cognition. It is also ultimate in another sense: I cannot leave it.⁷¹ Any reflection on it, indeed anything which I consider as my immanent experience, would belong to the same flow of my life, together with the experience of encountering transcendent 'things'. There are essential differences in the mode of givenness *within* the stream but no thing at all could be thought of as

⁶⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 97 <82>.

⁶⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 181 <151>.

⁶⁷ See *Ideas*, p. 338 <293>.

⁶⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 48 <48>.

⁶⁹ *Ideas*, p. 44 <43 - 44>; italicised in original.

⁷⁰ See *Ideas*, p. 36 <36>.

⁷¹ See Shpet, 1991 <1914>, p. 62 - 63.

⁶¹ See *LI*, Introduction to volume two, p. 249 <B1 2 - 3>; cf. Shpet, 1991 <1914>, p. 50.

⁶² German *Ablauf, Fluss, Strom*. There are good reasons to attribute the concept to William James: see Spiegelberg, 1982, pp. 102 - 104; cf. Stevens, 1974, pp. 40 - 46. In Russia James' psychology was, of course, well known, due to the 1898 Russian translation of his *Psychology Briefer Course*, which treated the stream of consciousness at some length (in ch. XI).

⁶³ See *Ideas*, p. 101 <85 - 86>.

⁶⁴ *Ideas*, p. 100 <85>.

given to me *apart* from the stream.⁷² That cannot exclude the existence either of other egos with their streams or of transcendent things. Nor can it imply any such existence.⁷³

Two essentially identical streams are inconceivable.⁷⁴ Other egos taking different *places in the world⁷⁵ can indeed enrich the stream of my consciousness.⁷⁶ Nevertheless,

what is cognizable by one Ego must, of *essential necessity*, be cognizable by *any* Ego.⁷⁷

Husserl formulates this thesis with a promise to explain it in future investigations. Different 'worlds of experience' [Erfahrungswelten] separated in fact can be linked together in principle, 'concatenated' [zusammenschliessen], so making up the only intersubjective world (§12.2). But the different streams of consciousness cannot merge: what Husserl means here is but the essential coherence of the data already extracted from the immediacy of mental streaming. This coherence makes it possible for those data to enter *one* mental stream.⁷⁸

The archetypal image of the stream of life has, of course, strong Heraclitean connotations. In the stream of consciousness nothing can ever reappear.⁷⁹ It is eternal,⁸⁰ it cannot begin or end.⁸¹ It never stops in its

absolute flow, as being-now which is already 'fading away', clearly seen as it is constantly sinking backward into its been-ness.⁸²

It remains to bring up the problem of spatio-temporal reality in connection

⁷² See *Ideas*, p. 90 - 91 <77 - 78>.

⁷³ See *Ideas*, p. 102 <86>.

⁷⁴ See *Ideas*, p. 198 <167>.

⁷⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 55 - 56 <52>.

⁷⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 100 <84>.

⁷⁷ *Ideas*, p. 108 <90>.

⁷⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 108 <90>.

⁷⁹ See *PRS*, p. 106 <312>.

⁸⁰ See *PRS*, p. 110 <314>.

⁸¹ See *PRS*, p. 107 - 108 <313>; cf. *Ideas*, p. 194 <163>.

⁸² [...] absoluten Fluss, als Jetzt und schon 'abklingend', in schaubarer Weise stetig zurücksinkend in eine Gewesenheit. *PRS*, p. 107 <313>; I have changed the translation (see GTH for *Gewesenheit* and *zurücksinken*).

with the mental stream. The mental stream cannot be related to space: we cannot see it as flowing 'in here' or 'over there'. But the situation becomes more complicated when we contemplate that unceasing turning of being-now into been-ness so that the temporality of this flowing life is manifest. Husserl developed the phenomenology of 'inner' time (in opposition to 'objective', cosmic time)⁸³ but his lectures on the subject (edited by Heidegger) were published only in 1928. For the moment it is enough to quote Husserl's characterization of inner time as

an *immanent 'time' without beginning or end, a time that is not measured by chronometers.⁸⁴

Husserl discerns terminologically between what is *reell*, i.e. belonging to immanent time, and what is *real*, i.e. of the 'outer' realm of things in space and time which chronometers measure. Phenomenology describes the stream of inner experience which is *reell* and not *real*.⁸⁵ In a more traditional language we can say phenomenology is the study of psychical phenomena.

§2.5. Phenomenology as the description of psychical phenomena

The talk about 'the stream' has no metaphysical context. It postulates no parallel reality behind my immediate experience. Nor does it refer to the 'common sense': the flow of *my* consciousness cannot be eternal as I am not eternal. I *know* I am mortal but this knowledge fails to be lived in experience as it becomes a fragment of my looking at the flow of life.⁸⁶ The stream is simply 'seen' as not having beginning or end. But may we ask why? Answers Husserl:

Not to assign any value to 'I see it' as an answer to the question, 'Why?' would be a countersense - as, yet again, we see.⁸⁷

Phenomenologically speaking, the eternity of my mental stream is self-evident and does not need any further argumentation.

⁸³ For the bibliography and a commentary see Sokolowski, 1970, pp. 74 - 115; see also Boer, 1978, pp. 462 - 463.

⁸⁴ *PRS*, p. 108 <313>; the translation is slightly changed.

⁸⁵ See *LI5*, p. 576 <B1 397>, fn 1.

⁸⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 100 <85>.

⁸⁷ *Ideas*, p. 37 <36>.

Such a paradigm is radically different from any metaphysics, which would be trying to discover Being as it 'really' is *beyond* phenomena. According to the principle of all principles, Husserl's phenomenology starts exactly where its name suggests - with phenomena.⁸⁸ The mental stream can be interpreted as the flow of phenomena:

Immanently regarding the flow of phenomena, we go from phenomenon to phenomenon [...] and never to anything but phenomena.⁸⁹

Limiting our activity to 'regarding the flow of phenomena' we make any 'beyond' or 'behind' inconceivable. Instead of regarding 'reality' we now come to regard the *phenomenon* of 'reality'. In doing so we perform **psychological reduction*.⁹⁰ A psychological phenomenon appears as itself and through itself.⁹¹ In this sense the phenomena always are what they 'really' are:

in the psychical sphere there is no difference between **appearance* and Being, and if nature is a factual Being [Dasein] that appears in appearances, yet appearances themselves (just what is considered as psychical by the psychologist) do not appear as a Being [Sein] by means of some further underlying appearances [...]⁹²

How can we possibly know that? The principle of all principles is applied once again. A psychical phenomenon is 'seen' with a certain absoluteness: it is not experienced through the medium of appearances.⁹³ It is seen beyond any doubt, and that is the firm ground for building up all knowledge, starting with *phenomeno-logy*.

⁸⁸ Paradoxically, Husserl tried to avoid using that term because it brought undesired connotations. particularly with Franz Brentano's descriptive psychology. For Husserl's clarifications on this matter see *LI6, Appendix*. Nevertheless, Husserl speaks about *phenomena* in *PRS*, so putting phenomenology into a broader philosophical context.

⁸⁹ Im immanent Schauen dem Fluss der Phänomene nachschauend, kommen wir von Phänomen zu Phänomen [...] und nie zu anderem als Phänomen. *PRS*, p. 108 <313>; I have changed the translation (see GTH for *nachschauend*).

⁹⁰ See Boer, 1978, p. 199, fn 5.

⁹¹ See *PRS*, p. 107 <313>.

⁹² In der psychischen Sphäre gibt es m. a. W. keinen Unterschied zwischen Erscheinung und Sein, und wenn die Natur ein Dasein ist, das in Erscheinungen erscheint, so sind die Erscheinungen selbst (die ja der Psychologe zum Psychischen rechnet) nicht selbst wieder ein Sein, das durch dahinterliegende Erscheinungen erscheint [...]. *PRS*, p. 106 <312>; I have changed the translation (see GTH for *dahinterlegend*).

⁹³ See *PRS*, p. 107 <312>.

But no claim to a *phenomeno-logy* would be possible without relating the phenomena to some 'logos', which immediately introduces a Platonic context.⁹⁴ Husserl is aware that conventional methods of analysis are inadequate for this purpose: psychical phenomena have no 'Being' which could be hunted down and anatomised:

something psychical, a 'phenomenon', comes and goes; it retains no enduring, identical Being [Sein] that would be objectively determinable as such in the sense of natural science, e.g., as objectively divisible into components, 'analysable' in the proper sense.⁹⁵

Then how can we hold on to anything amidst this fluidity? If nothing can be objectively determined, shall we not have done with any inter-subjective validity? Is it not extremely sceptical relativism that Husserl is preaching here?

Husserl's remedy against relativism suggests the integration of relativity into his phenomenology. What we see in the stream depends on how we look at its flow.⁹⁶ 'What' is inseparable from this 'How', and in this sense is correlative to it:

One must, it was said, take phenomena as they present themselves, i.e., as this flowing 'having consciousness', intending, appearing [...] as they turn this way or that, *as they become reshaped according to changing attitudes* [Einstellungen] or modes of attention.⁹⁷

But this correlation itself is no longer relative: it is essential, absolute. We can characterize Husserl's phenomenology as the study of the correlation between 'looking at' (the **attitude* taken) and 'seeing' (the content seen). We can - yet

⁹⁴ 'The conception of a "logos" of the "phainomena" is quite Platonic and can be traced more or less to Plato's attempt to salvage the appearances from the world of Heraclitean flux by relating them to the world of the logos, i.e. of the changeless Forms.' - see Spiegelberg, 1981, p. 7. Husserl's phenomenology was understood by many of his colleagues as Platonism (for the Russian references see e.g. Frank, 1915, pp. 8 - 9, 85; cf. Shpet, 1991 <1914>, pp. 11, 49, 53, 101, 134, esp. 170). On the complex problem of Husserl's Platonism, see Boer, 1978, pp. 260 - 269.

⁹⁵ *PRS*, p. 107 <312>.

⁹⁶ In the terminology of *Logical Investigations* that could be called the correlation between an act and its object / content. In *Ideas* this correlation is called noetic-noematic parallelism; later we shall have to discuss it at length.

⁹⁷ Man muss, heiss es, die Phänomene so nehmen, wie sie sich geben, d.i. als dieses fließende Bewussthaben, Meinen, Erscheinen [...] als im Wechsel der oder jener Einstellungen, der oder jener attentionalen Modi sich so oder so wendend und umgestaltend. *PRS*, p. 109 <314>; my italics. I changed the translation (see GTH for *Einstellung, umgestalten*).

again! - see this correlation if we look at the 'flowing life' in a certain way, or in Husserl's terms, if we take a 'phenomenological' attitude:

The consistency or absurdity of the investigations that are here to be made depends entirely on the single-mindedness and *purity of the 'phenomenological' attitude.⁹⁸

§2.6. The stream of life

Husserl's concept of the stream is not theoretical but phenomenological, appealing to direct intuition of inner self-evidence, of mental 'seeing'. It is more of a metaphor, even of a myth expressing some undeniable basic life-experience. The standard English translations are too abstract to convey this flavour. What is translated as 'mental stream', 'the stream of mental processes', or 'experience-stream' is actually *ErLebnis-Ström*, the stream of what is being lived, which is much more than just 'experiencing'. It is the stream of the flowing life [*strömendes Leben*]⁹⁹ which is the origin of every cogito, its 'source'.

But phenomenology does not enjoy this source in solitude: William James with his radical empiricism and Henri Bergson with his concept of participation in *élan vital*¹⁰⁰ are found by this source too. So on the utmost border of Husserl's phenomenology we find the Stream of Life and, so to say, on the opposite side of the stream - Bergson's life-philosophy! Gustav Shpet even made Bergson a prophetic forerunner of Husserl:

The non-philosophical success of Bergson's philosophy is a sign that we have approached [...] a spring of new knowledge. The spring, however, must not only be open, it must be pure. [...] Bergson smashes the old idols, and through his efforts a long, pressing need finds satisfaction. But another satisfaction is needed.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ PRS, p. 109 <314>; the translation is slightly changed.

⁹⁹ See *Ideas*, p. 100 <85>.

¹⁰⁰ 'So presumably it is our participation in the *élan vital* or its operation in us which enables Bergson to base a general philosophical theory on an intuition which, in the first instance, is of duration in man himself.' - see Copleston, 1985, vol. IX, p. 200.

¹⁰¹ Shpet, 1991 <1914>, p. 177; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 171 - 172, 178. The presence of a Bergsonian component in Husserl seems to be a commonplace now - see Schnädelbach, 1984, p. 148. Spiegelberg, 1982, pp. 107, 115. Husserl reportedly admitted himself being a Bergsonian, especially in connection with his doctrine of two 'times', immanent and cosmic - see Boet.

It is Husserl who brings this satisfaction. Shpet interprets Husserl in the context of a Platonic scheme relating phenomena to a logos. Phenomenology reveals to us that the Platonic kingdom of ideas is our kingdom.¹⁰² Taking the 'phenomenological' attitude we can discover, 'see' it in the stream of life:

The unconditional contingency of the stream of life opposes the conventional stability of concepts. [...] Like a shadow something haunts it: unconditional necessity. The changing, the transient, the present-day, in all its different voices calls out to us to recognize [that] its own necessity is *to be this way*. And this alone is enough to attempt to penetrate with a gaze *through* it [...] With our intellectual eye we penetrate through the transient Being of the sensuous gaze to reach Being, although it be eternal and non-transient, to [reach] ideal Being!¹⁰³

Phenomenology should lead us from the immediacy of the stream of life to ideal Being: Being is to be reached from the starting-point of 'the flowing life in its actual presence'.¹⁰⁴ But to reach ideal Being absolutely we should recognize the absolute contingency of the stream of life, otherwise at the initial point of our quest we would not be able to listen to 'the voices of the transient'. We should follow in the tracks of Being itself, ignoring any pre-meditated schemes. The absoluteness of the ideal Being correlates with the absoluteness of the contingency of the stream of life. Husserl's phenomenology uncovers the link between Being which *is*, and life which is becoming. This opposition is taken as the starting point also for different versions of life-philosophy which all maintain the precedence of pre-rational, dynamic life over rational static Being.¹⁰⁵

§2.7. The technique of *epoché* (Husserl)

Could it not be that the stream of mental processes is deficient in principle? An individual consciousness has, of course, its limitations. But to suggest that 'there

1978, p. 163, fn 36.

¹⁰² See Shpet, 1991 <1914>, p. 170. Husserl himself was much less certain about the Platonism of his philosophy. Platonic interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology was typical in Russia (and in Germany as well).

¹⁰³ Shpet, 1991 <1914>, p. 177.

¹⁰⁴ *Ideas*, p. 100 <85>.

¹⁰⁵ See Schnädelbach, 1984, p. 148.

is' some reality *'in itself' which remains for ever unperceived by consciousness in principle would be, in Husserl's words, 'nonsensical'.¹⁰⁶ It is equally absurd to believe that a physical thing retains its Being-in-itself while what appears in the mental stream is but a sign, a representation given *instead* of the thing itself. The absurdity is hidden in that 'instead', as if a three-dimensional thing could be present in no-dimensional consciousness! God himself has no spatial things in his mind.

Rickert attributed to *Subject-oriented *Weltanschauung* the belief that Object-reality exists only *for* the Subject, it is 'mere *appearance', as it were the surface of the world.¹⁰⁷ Though Husserlean phenomenology can be counted as Subject-oriented, he would never accept that solipsist tendency:

In immediately intuitive acts we intuit an 'in itself'; on their apprehendings no mediate apprehendings are built up at a higher level; thus there is no consciousness of anything *for which* the intuited might function as a 'sign' or 'picture'. [...] Perception makes present, seizes upon an it-itself in its presence 'in person'.¹⁰⁸

As we can see here, Husserl does not bother starting a debate with epistemology, nor does he claim he can convince sceptics and relativists. He does not want to be distracted from the construction of his 'philosophy *from below'¹⁰⁹ with problems which might well be unsolvable:

Cognition [...] is infected by confusing unclaritys, by sheer, unresolvable difficulties; and this is especially the case with the transcendence which cognitive *Objects* claim over cognition. [...] These scepticisms can become *obstacles to the practical cultivation of science*. We *exclude* these obstacles [...] by making clear to ourselves and vividly keeping in mind *only the most universal principle of all methods, the principle of the original right [des ursprünglichen Rechtes] of all data* [...].¹¹⁰

This exclusion was more than unusual in an era when the identification of philosophy with epistemology was not uncommon. After the collapse of the great

systems of German idealism in the 19th century, a certain post-traumatic shock was inevitable. Even as late as 1929, Rickert could only repeat what he said in 1902. He complained about the priority given by philosophers to the most 'grey' of all theories: logic and epistemology. Their scrupulous analysis turns the ultimate problems of philosophy into technical problems, 'the levers and screws' of these particular disciplines. The courage required for philosophical synthesis is broken and a period of 'philosophical pusillanimity' has arrived instead. But Rickert cannot see any other way for philosophy. If we want to produce more than mere short-lived romantic fantasies, we have to subdue our striving for synthesis to our concern for the reliability of our knowledge.¹¹¹

For us, epistemology has become a matter of good conscience, and we will not be prepared to listen to anyone who fails to justify his ideas on this basis.¹¹²

Husserl did not fail to justify his ideas on the basis of epistemology. He simply never took it as the basis for his project. He finds the influence of epistemology on philosophy paralysing: 'infected by confusing unclaritys', it only leads to *scepticism and stops us at the very beginning. He is not afraid of calling his position with regard to epistemology 'dogmatic', the only constructive position to take:

The right position, dogmatic in a good sense, that is the prephilosophical sphere of research in which all experiential sciences belong (but not only those sciences), is that position which sets aside with full awareness all scepticism, together with all 'natural philosophy' and 'theory of knowledge', and takes cognitive objectivities [Erkenntnisgegenständlichkeit] where one actually finds them [...].¹¹³

It is in the stream of consciousness that 'one actually finds cognitive objectivities'.

It should be noted that 'dogmatic' is a relative concept: phenomenology is dogmatic with regard to traditional epistemology but with regard to phenomenology it is all 'ordinary' sciences that are dogmatic: phenomenology is supposed to be able to *generate* the whole tree of sciences, allotting them the

¹⁰⁶ See *Ideas*, pp. 99 - 100 <84 - 85>.

¹⁰⁷ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ideas*, p. 93 <79>.

¹⁰⁹ See *PRS*, p. 142 <337>.

¹¹⁰ *Ideas*, p. 48 <47 - 48>; the translation is slightly changed.

¹¹¹ See *Die Grenzen*, pp. 11 - 13.

¹¹² *Die Grenzen*, p. 12.

¹¹³ *Ideas*, p. 47 <46>; the translation is slightly changed. All italics are Husserl's.

*regions of their Objects and giving full clarification of their methods.¹¹⁴ But that concerns only sciences: a historical philosophy of whatever type can never be unfolded in this way because philosophy is not yet a science. Such a neutral position with regard to past philosophy Husserl calls 'philosophical *epoché, abstention:

[it consists in] our completely abstaining [sich enthalten] from any judgement regarding the doctrinal content of any previous philosophy and effecting all our demonstrations within the limits set by this abstention.¹¹⁵

The technique of *epoché* seems at first somewhat controversial. 'The abstention from any judgement' sounds more like a psychological than a methodological device. It remains also unclear what is meant by 'the doctrinal content'. The paradigms, or in Husserl's terms, 'attitudes', employed by philosophy - should they all remain unused? Husserl probably means here the project of building up his rigorous philosophy 'from below'. The process of unfolding this philosophy, as it is demonstrated in *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*, is self-contained: each of its steps depends solely on the previous one. Husserl, as we saw (§2.1), plans an absolutely impersonal philosophy which simply cannot communicate with personal and subjective *Weltanschauung*.

Another use of the technique of abstention shows the evolution of Husserl's views. At an earlier stage it was the transcendent reality that was 'bracketed' or 'suspended', terms which became well known. The neutral stand with regard to the external world, however, was later developed into the *transcendental* phenomenological *epoché which parenthesizes not the 'external' world but the 'natural' world, the correlate of a special *attitude. It is this attitude that undergoes suspension; this time the suspension is not the (psychological) abstention from judgement but the modification of the stream of consciousness through changing the attitude. Much still remains unclear, e.g. Husserl's position with regard to causality, his conception of 'consciousness', or of 'the world', and we shall return to this theme in chapter 4.

¹¹⁴ See *Ideas*, p. 141 - 143 <118 - 119>; cf. *ibid.*, p. 19 <19 - 20>, p. 163 <135>
¹¹⁵ *Ideas*, p. 33 <33>. Italicized in the original.

The important point here is Husserl's escape from the trap of scepticism inherent in the traditional realist / idealist epistemological dilemma, or in Rickertian terms, the dilemma of Subject- and Object-oriented epistemology. Husserl simply ignores the typical idealist epistemology. For him it is phenomenologically evident that the world is not a subjective event in my psyche; on the contrary my psyche is but a part of the world. That would not be true, however, with regard to *pure* consciousness, which is not a part of the world: on the contrary, according to Husserl the world is *constituted by it.¹¹⁶ The realistic (Object-oriented) alternative would posit reality independent of (psychological) consciousness, i.e. an *'in itself'. As we have just seen, Husserl considers this alternative as 'absurd' on the same grounds of phenomenological self-evidence. Scepticism, be it solipsism or the admittance of thing-in-itself, is therefore avoided.

¹¹⁶ *Ideas*, p. 129 - 130 <107>.

3. THE CONTINGENCY OF THE INDIVIDUAL (HUSSERL)

Husserl's project can be considered as the quest for the ideal *norms of culture: they would bring certainty in morality, art, philosophy and religion, which are otherwise drifting without any proper sense of direction. Phenomenology is able to discover the underlying ideal structures of these regions, which would make it possible to refer to *'valid' morality, philosophy, etc.¹ This validity is secured beyond any doubt by mental seeing, which is the foundation of phenomenology. The actual plurality of ethical principles, artistic tastes, philosophical systems, religious beliefs can then be set in opposition to the singularity of their ever valid counterparts. Husserl saw his main task as creating the general methods which would secure the validity of further investigations undertaken by future generations. Amidst the anarchy of individual beliefs and tastes the edifice of valid culture would be constructed step by step, making a home for what now seems to be disjointed and accidental.²

If we put this project in its cultural context, it ceases to look utopian: rather, it follows one of the basic trends of its time. The presumption that the rational treatment of reality is always possible was not entirely destroyed, even by the outburst of irrational destructive forces during the Great War and the revolutions

¹ See *PRS*, <325>. * (asterisk) before a word is a reference to the *Analytical Subject Index*.

² See *PRS*, p. 135 <332>.

which followed. Perhaps it was exactly the absurdity of the surrounding world that made people believe in, and seek, the Logos of phenomena. Did Freud and Jung not follow the same paradigm in their search for the singular structures underlying the plurality of visibly irrational phenomena? Or the artists of the Bauhaus: did they not try to come by calculations and intuition to the only model Chair or to the only perfect Tea Cup?

§3.1. Norms and theory: a pre-phenomenological treatment in *Prolegomena*

Husserl seems to take for granted that the ideal norms, once established beyond any doubt, would then be in force. Perhaps that is why he did not elaborate his views on the ought but concentrated instead on the ideal norms as such and not on the relationship between a norm and a moral person. This is particularly evident in *Prolegomena*, where Husserl traces norms back to *theory*. Norms are linked with theory through the procedure of *grounding, which applies an universal law to a particular fact. The laws in their turn are arranged as a single hierarchy, so making up the hierarchy of all possible sciences. Grounding presupposes, therefore, the established domains of sciences, which would provide the norms for all matters of fact. A syllogism is a typical grounding. Few truths can be accepted just on the ground of some inward immediate evidence. The bulk of sciences emerge as the result of methodical grounding.³

According to Husserl's view, to answer a question 'Which of these soldiers is a good soldier?' we should first put it in a more general context: *what* is a good soldier? A general normative discipline inquires into 'the necessary and sufficient conditions' for what it takes as its basic good, or norm: 'the constitutive content of what is to be esteemed as good or bad'.⁴ This norm is a predicate ('good') defined in relation to a class of objects (soldiers, statues, watches, etc.): all brave soldiers and only such soldiers are good. A practical skill, or 'technology',⁵ emerges when

the general norm is reduced to a particular case: is John Smith a brave soldier? This practical mastery of the valuation of real objects *entirely* exhausts the normative discipline.⁶ What is not covered by this paradigm remains ungrounded and therefore does not belong to a science:

isolated groundings - and loosely piled heaps of such groundings - do not make up science.⁷

'Isolated' stands here for German *einzel*, which in this context means rather *individual* or *singular*, something that stands alone and does not belong to the all-embracing, general context. A good soldier should be brave, so if John Smith is not brave he is not what he should be, no matter if in this particular case he has even made the enemy retreat. Calling him good would have been in conflict with the basic norm of the corresponding normative science. This norm takes precedence over any 'individual' judgements. Individual John Smith with all that happened to him during some particular combat simply cannot be considered by normative sciences which

are as such located *beyond all individual existence*, their generalities are 'strictly conceptual', they have a lawlike character in the strict sense of the word 'law'.⁸

This point of view, which makes individuals invisible in the light of some general norm, could be at best called limited. But Husserl believes that that which is left unseen by normative science is not essential at all. He comments explicitly on the relationship between merely normative and practical ethics:

All the propositions which have to do with making practical realization possible do not affect the sphere of the pure norms of ethical valuation. If these norms, or the theoretical knowledge underlying them, were to fall away, *ethics would vanish altogether. If the former propositions were to drop out, *there would be no possibility of ethical practice* (or no possibility of a technology of ethical conduct).⁹

Or, in other words: I should love you because a man should practise neighbourly

of *Logical Investigations*, see *LI*, passim.

⁶ See *Prolegomena*, p. 87 <B 47>.

⁷ *Prolegomena*, p. 70 <B 25>. As elsewhere, I translate the German *Begründung* as *grounding*, in accordance with GTH and contrary to *LI*, where it is translated as *validation*.

⁸ *Prolegomena*, p. 84 <B 43>.

⁹ *Prolegomena*, p. 89 <B 50>; my italics.

³ See *Prolegomena*, p. 63 <B 15 - 16>.

⁴ See *Prolegomena*, pp. 85 - 86 <B 45 - 46>.

⁵ It was John Findlay who chose to translate German *Kunstlehre* as 'technology' in his translation

love¹⁰.

In the same way as ethical practice is impossible without general norms, those norms themselves should be grounded; they require grounding. The whole system of knowledge is built as a reversed pyramid: each layer is grounded on the previous one in the 'objective' hierarchy of sciences. This hierarchy is introduced through the distinction between normative and theoretical sciences: a normative science deals with the *ought*, with what *shall* or *should* be, while a theoretical science declares simply what *is*:

every normative and likewise every practical discipline rests on one or more theoretical disciplines, inasmuch as its rules must have a theoretical content *separable from the notion of normativity (of the 'shall' or 'should'), whose scientific investigation is the duty of these theoretical disciplines.¹¹

The systematic unity of a normative science is determined by its basic norm.¹² The 'theoretical content' of this norm presupposes some coherent *nexus*¹³ for its grounding. Such nexus does not belong to the normative science in question, but underlies it as its theoretical foundation. An individual value-judgement should therefore be arrived at by the flow of syllogisms springing from the well of theory.

We have already seen that the existential *is* is irrelevant for the normative *should*. Now Husserl makes the normative *should* irrelevant for the *theoretical is*. We discover that a good soldier should be brave, in the same way as we discover that an equilateral triangle should be equiangular:

Every normative proposition of, e.g. the form 'An *A* should be *B*' implies the theoretical proposition 'Only an *A* which is *B* has the properties *C*', in which '*C*' serves to indicate the constitutive content of the standard-setting predicate 'good' [...]. The new proposition is purely theoretical: it contains no trace of the thought of normativity.¹⁴

We might ask if anything is lost in this process of turning an imperative into a theorem linking a condition and the conditioned. Husserl, who equates any 'good'

with a predicate, makes it, rather, a matter of transcription. For him a normative proposition, 'A good soldier should be brave', is equivalent to the theoretical statement, 'Only the soldiers who are brave are good'. As the priority of the general norm made a private John Smith indiscernible from any 'soldier', so a moral imperative, 'A man should practise neighbourly love', is now made indiscernible from a theorem, 'Only those who practise neighbourly love are good'.¹⁵

§3.2. The *Weltproblem* as the problem of the ultimate reduction

The case of 'a brave soldier' can be taken as the paradigm of all the research undertaken by Husserl at the time of *Prolegomena*. Private John Smith can be 'regarded-as' belonging to different 'nexuses', which implies the dynamics of regarding-as / disregarding. In more traditional terms the norm for an individual valuation is sought through [a] the induction from the particular to the general (a soldier, any soldier, not only this one); [b] the deduction from the general law to the valuation in question (John Smith should be brave because a good soldier should be brave). To make the norms absolute, Husserl has to presuppose the absoluteness of the limits of the nexuses, so that any particular valuation comes along the *a priori* established chains of induction and deduction.

A peculiar duality of law comes to light here. Metaphorically speaking, if we call the norms for soldiers a 'common law', then the procedure of grounding is regulated by a 'due process law'. The case of private John Smith is first taken by the 'regional' court of first instance: the *Kunstlehre*, the practical discipline. This court does nothing but turn the private into 'a soldier' and send his case to the court of the next instance, where all 'soldiers' are judged: the corresponding normative discipline. That instance makes a request to the court of the highest instance (theoretical discipline), asking for a formula of 'being-good'. The formula once given, the case travels back along the same way, finally reaching the practical valuation of private John Smith.

¹⁰ See *Prolegomena*, p. 82 <B 41>; cf. Stirner, *Der Einzige*, pp. 292 - 293.

¹¹ *Prolegomena*, p. 82 <B 40>. Separable stands here for German *abtrennbaren*.

¹² See *Prolegomena*, No. 14 - 15, pp. 85 - 87 <B 45 - 48>.

¹³ See *Prolegomena*, p. 62 <B 14 - 15>. I employ Guy Oakes' translation of German *Zusammenhang* as *nexus*; see Rickert, *The Limits*, p. 107, cf. Rickert, *Die Grenzen*, p. 392.

¹⁴ *Prolegomena*, p. 88 <B 48>.

¹⁵ See *Prolegomena*, 16, p. 82, 88 <B 41, 48>. Husserl holds as well that *every* theoretical statement 'permits of a normative transformation' - see *Prolegomena*, p. 171 <B 159>.

The juridical system of these 'courts' cannot ultimately be validated by mere induction and deduction. Theory cannot be taken for 'the court of the highest instance': theory *as such*, any theory whatever, is itself in need of grounding through the *pre-theoretical description of the mental phenomena, phenomenology. In particular, no theory can validate induction and deduction themselves, as the lawful methods. Induction and deduction should therefore give way to what Husserl calls *reductions*.

Reductions have nothing to do with reductionism. Leaving a detailed account for the following sections, Husserl's metaphors might be taken here as a fair approximation, such as 'parenthesizing', 'exclusion' or 'disconnection'¹⁶. Husserl discloses, rather, his training as a mathematician, who separates the components of a formal expression with brackets, so isolating the sub-expressions he is able to deal with.

'Parenthesizing' or 'bracketing' points to a mathematical context. Purity is another Husserlian metaphor which might be called chemical. Husserl's mathematical metaphor, parenthesizing, implies a certain structure able to undergo a disassembly. In this aspect the chemical metaphor is analogous: chemistry deals exactly with de- or re-composition. Chemistry makes a perfect model for Husserl's project. Perhaps that inspired him to compare his phenomenology to philosophical chemistry, which was replacing philosophical *alchemy. The whole project of the new philosophy might be compared then to the development from alchemy to chemistry.¹⁷ Alchemy worked with earth, water, fire, whereas chemistry properly redefined its objects as oxygen, hydrogen, etc. Not surprisingly, Husserl speaks of culture as of a 'precipitate' [Niederschlag]¹⁸ and of consciousness as of 'residuum',¹⁹ in both cases suggesting some process of separation. Both metaphors point to analysis: dissection, separation.

¹⁶ German *Einklammerung* and *Ausschaltung*, see *Ideas*, p. 58 <55>.

¹⁷ See *PRS*, p. 84 <297>. Husserl praised chemical equations as one of the most valuable results of natural science - see *Prolegomena*, p. 133 <B 108>.

¹⁸ Cf. *PRS*, p. 131 <329> where *der Niederschlag* is translated as *residue*.

¹⁹ See e.g. *Ideas*, p. 109 f. <91 f>.

A *reduction is a particular way of regarding and disregarding mental phenomena. The disregarded fragments of the mental stream become 'bracketed', separated. Even if Husserl says the disregarded phenomena are 'annihilated', they are only meant to be isolated and disregarded: 'bracketing', or indeed 'annihilation', does not imply any sort of subjective idealism.

Taken in its positive aspect, a reduction has its 'residue', that what is to be regarded. Husserl often employs for this regarding, for the positive aspect of a reduction, the term **attitude*²⁰, while 'reduction' is used more in the context of 'disregarding'. Phenomena mentally seen in the stream of consciousness in the ordinary 'natural' attitude become reshaped according to the new attitude taken. Different attitudes lead to different 'worlds', or more generally, to different nexuses [*Zusammenhänge*] in which consciousness 'makes its appearance'.²¹

In natural science, e.g. in physics, we can see in action what might have been called²² the *theoretical* reduction. The provisional results of physics come from the realm of perception (apples fall down), then the real nexuses where perception might belong are disregarded (induction: whatever falls always falls down), then the theoretical explanatory principles are developed (the law of gravitation), which bring unity to the whole science of mechanics and make possible deduction: apples fall to the ground because as physical bodies they gravitate to the Earth.

In comparison to that, Husserlian phenomenology starts not with empirical observation but with intuited psychical phenomena, applies to the phenomena several reductions and describes the residue in a non-theoretical way as apodictic insights. Its starting point is **psychological* reduction. Its residue is the flow of psychical phenomena, while 'outer reality' (physical phenomena) is disregarded.²³ **Epoché* is sometimes called a phenomenological reduction which disregards the

²⁰ Thus, eidetic and phenomenological reductions are related to the corresponding attitudes: see e.g. *Ideas*, p. 217 <184>, p. 113 <94>. The 'arithmetical' or 'natural' attitudes, on the contrary, have no corresponding reductions because here the focus is positive: the 'natural world' or the 'arithmetical world'.

²¹ See *Ideas*, p. 172 <143> where *Zusammenhänge* is translated as *contexts*.

²² Husserl does not use this term but he mentions the *theoretical attitude* - see *Ideas*, p. 5 <7>.

²³ The term is used e.g. by Boer, 1978, p. 199, fn 5; Husserl does not use it.

real transcendent Object of an act of consciousness. The 'residue' in this case is the intentional object, the *Gegenstand*.²⁴

This short list of possible meaningful reductions, or attitudes, demonstrates how different the nexuses they bring can be. The theoretical reduction, as I call it, can 'root' isolated individual facts in the theoretical nexus. Phenomenology as **first* philosophy, the first rigorous science which secures the foundation for the whole body of knowledge, is supposed to provide some **ultimate* nexus in which all the other nexuses can be **rooted*.²⁵ The corresponding attitude which introduces this nexus cannot be a mere matter of choice: its ultimacy should be demonstrated beyond doubt. The supreme court of reason should provide the final judgement without any conceivable alternative.

The *Weltproblem* can be now formulated in these terms as the problem of the ultimate reduction and of the corresponding *reductum*. It is *the problem of the only ultimate nexus* in which all Being could be rooted. Husserl calls this ultimate nexus the region of absolute Being. The reduction that has it as its residue is complex: it consists of *the eidetic reduction and the transcendental reduction*.²⁶

§3.3. The eidetic reduction: the key element of pure phenomenology

Although Husserl first uses the term **eidetic reduction* in *Ideas*, he himself retrospectively calls his *Logical Investigations de facto* eidetic.²⁷ But in *Logical Investigations* he employs terms like *ideation*, *the Idea of*, *an ideal essence*, etc. The Greek word *eidos* (*form*) is introduced by him in *Ideas*:

to keep the supremely important *Kantian concept of idea* cleanly separated from the universal concept of (either formal or material) essence decided me to make a terminological change. I therefore use, as a foreign word, the terminologically unspoiled name 'Eidos'; and as a German word, the name

'*Wesen*' ['essence']...²⁸

The main difficulties in understanding Husserl's method of reductions arise from his use of traditional terms in a different, phenomenological, context. Essence, to give one example, is not introduced as a metaphysical construct but as the result of direct mental seeing. Eidetic intuition is one of the keystones of Husserl's phenomenology: essences can be intuited in the stream of consciousness. Without recourse to essences no analyses of the flux of psychical phenomena would have been possible:

what is there in it that we can seize upon, determine, and fix as an Objective [objektiv] unity? [...] The answer, then, is that if phenomena have no *nature*, they still have an *essence*, which can be grasped and adequately determined in an immediate seeing.²⁹

In other words, the thesis that mental phenomena have essences is not a hypothesis waiting for a practical confirmation, nor is it a dogmatic belief of whatever kind; it is not deduced logically by means of a proof, nor is it the conclusion drawn from the analysis of experimental data. Any attempt to come to essences by one of these ways would mean the naturalization of essences and would therefore be a failure: that explains the 'blindness' of the natural sciences with regard to essences. This blindness becomes even more surprising if we notice that natural science actually has recourse to essences; moreover, it would be inconceivable without such a recourse.³⁰

Of course, Husserl's assertion that phenomena 'have' essences does not tell us much about this 'having'. First of all, we shall speak not of the eidetic reduction in general but of the mental processes pertaining to essences; in the language of *Logical Investigations* that would be the acts of ideation.³¹ those acts should be described with phenomenological purity. Phenomenologically speaking, *phenomena which 'have' essences are acts of consciousness and not the objects of those acts*: in the latter case, all acts would necessarily be acts of ideation, which is evident nonsense.

²⁸ *Ideas*, Introduction, p. xxii <6>.

²⁹ *PRS*, p. 110 <314>.

³⁰ See *PRS*, pp. 110 - 111 <315>, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 80 - 81 <295>.

³¹ See *PRS*, p. 111 <315>; cf. e.g.: *Prolegomena*, p. 128 <B 101>, *LI6*, p. 800 <B2 162 - 163>.

²⁴ See Boer, 1978, p. 249. As elsewhere, the capital O is used to discern between the derivatives of the German *Gegenstand* (the English *object*, small o) and *Objekt* (the English *Object*, capital O). In that I follow the standard of *GTH* and *Ideas*.

²⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 171 <141>.

²⁶ See *Ideas*, Introduction, p. xx <4>.

²⁷ See Boer, 1978, pp. 284, 292.

On the one hand, ideation is the vital element of the phenomenological description of acts. On the other, ideation itself is nothing more than acts of ideation, which acts - like all acts - cannot be described phenomenologically without ideation. That is why in *Ideas* Husserl breaks this circle of self-reference, making the eidetic reduction logically precede any phenomenological description, coming before even the 'principle of all principles'.³² His project now develops beyond the point reached in *Logical Investigations*, i.e. pre-theoretical descriptive psychology. He calls this new version of phenomenology 'pure', or 'transcendental'.

Husserl begins his treatise with what he calls the general theory of science.³³ Once again, phenomenology is contrasted with psychology, which is the science of 'matters of facts' (Husserl uses here this English term borrowed from David Hume). Psychology studies phenomena which actually happen in the psyche of real human beings living in time and space.³⁴

In contradiction to that, pure or transcendental phenomenology will become established, not as a science of matters of fact, [Tatsachenwissenschaft] but as a science of essences [Wesenswissenschaft] (as an 'eidetic' science); it will become established as a science which exclusively seeks to ascertain 'cognition of essences' and no 'matters of fact' whatever. The relevant reduction which leads from the psychological phenomena to the pure 'essence' or, in the case of judgemental thinking, from matter-of-fact ('empirical') universality to 'eidetic' universality, is the eidetic reduction.³⁵

Psychological phenomena, to which the eidetic reduction is applied by pure phenomenology, are to be 'purified' through another, transcendental, reduction:

Other reductions, the specifically transcendental ones, 'purify' psychological phenomena from what confers reality on them and, with that, their 'place in the real 'world'. Our phenomenology is to be an eidetic doctrine, not of phenomena that are real, but of phenomena that are transcendentially reduced.³⁶

There is more to come in the following sections about these 'transcendental'

reductions (§4.5). What is important at the moment is the concept of reality Husserl uses here. Instead of the traditional opposition of the real (studied by empirical sciences) and the ideal (studied by *a priori* sciences), he introduces two oppositions: essence versus matter of fact [Tatsache], and real versus unreal, or non-real [Nicht-Reales].³⁷ Understandably, Husserl regrets having to use the term 'real'.³⁸ Taking into account the following more detailed treatment, 'real' in this context, rather, means 'mundane', that which can become *manifested* in consciousness but which is not *inherent* in consciousness or, with regard to pure consciousness, the transcendent versus the transcendental.³⁹ Thus, geography is the factual science of the transcendent; whether a factual science of the transcendental is possible remains unclear; geometry is the eidetic science of the transcendent; *pure phenomenology is the eidetic science of the transcendental*.⁴⁰

§3.4. The eidetic reduction: the consciousness of example

Husserl's typical illustration of the eidetic reduction is the experience of a mathematician who is looking at a geometrical drawing. The data of sensation are related to the object, a some-thing on this page at this particular place and time, a *This-Here given in immediate intuition. That provides the basis for the cluster of contents: what is given immediately is also 'given-as': as a black drawing against a white background, as a figure shifted to the upper right corner of the page, as the line drawn with a pencil. The mathematician, however, relates his thought neither to this object of his act of concrete intuition nor to any of the correlated contents: what he is mentally seeing is not *this* drawing of a triangle, not even *this* triangle, but Triangle-As-Such. This act is founded on the sensual perception but its object is different: the essence Triangle given in the act of *eidetic* intuition.⁴¹

In both cases the same concrete datum appears and the same contents arise with it by means of interpretation, turning This-Here into an object with certain

³² Husserl was aware of the reflective reference of phenomenology to itself - see *Ideas*, pp. 147 - 151 <120 - 122>, esp. p. 150 <122 - 123>.

³³ See *Ideas*, p. 161 <133>.

³⁴ *Ideas*, Introduction, p. xx <3 - 4>.

³⁵ *Ideas*, Introduction, p. xx <4>.

³⁶ *Ideas*, Introduction, p. xx <4>. The term 'eidetic reduction' is used here for the first time

³⁷ See *Ideas*, Introduction, pp. xx - xxi <4>.

³⁸ See *Ideas*, Introduction, pp. xxii <6>.

³⁹ See *Ideas*, p. 171 <141 - 142>.

⁴⁰ See *Ideas*, Introduction, pp. xx - xxi <4 - 5>.

⁴¹ See *LI2*, p. 379 <B1 157>; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 339 - 340 <B1 109>.

properties. But the corresponding acts are essentially different: in the second case the concrete individual (the drawing) becomes an instance of a Species (Triangle), and there emerges what Husserl calls 'a consciousness of example':

the intuition of essence has as its own basis a principal part of intuition of something individual, namely an appearing, something individual being sighted, though not indeed a seizing upon this or any sort of positing as an actuality; certainly, in consequence of that, no intuition of essence is possible without the free possibility of turning one's regard to a 'corresponding' individual and forming a *consciousness of example - just as, conversely, no intuition of something individual is possible without the free possibility of bringing about an ideation and, in it, directing one's regard to the corresponding essence exemplified in what is individually sighted [...] *the two sorts of intuition are essentially different* [...] ⁴²

The dynamic character of the relationship between the regarded (the Eidos, the essential) and the disregarded (the individual) could not be more clear. The two corresponding intuitions presuppose each other; indeed, they are inseparable. There is no value-judgement about the priority of the essential over the individual: what Husserl proclaims here is the freedom to direct one's regard. He wants to bring liberation from the dogmatic denial of eidetic intuition by naturalism⁴³ but he is also fully aware of the individual mode of Being. Eidetic reduction is not a statement about reality. It is a method, a device taken deliberately for a purpose: to build up a science-like, rigorous philosophy.

Since Newton's time the first step of a rigorous science would turn *the* Moon, *this* apple, a leaf on *this* tree into instances of heavy bodies obeying the laws of mechanics. Now Husserl is going to apply the same paradigm to mental processes. It is mental processes that are the subject of Husserl's first philosophy: not the things of nature but the acts of consciousness, which do not necessarily have those things as their objects. Such a first philosophy can now be rightly described as *eidetic psychology* (it used to be **descriptive* psychology at the earlier stage).⁴⁴

The original duality of the individual and eidetic intuition seems to be taken by

Husserl for granted from the beginning. Already at the stage of *Prolegomena* he claims that the nexus of intentional objects-things (*der Zusammenhang der Sachen*) and the nexus of ideal truths (*der Zusammenhang der Wahrheiten*) are inseparable, and truths can be found, intuited, seen 'in things'. The ideal truths in an individual act are intuited through the change in direction of our *reference*. We can 'refer'⁴⁵ datum to either of the two different nexuses: the nexus of empirical individuals and the nexus of ideal universals, essences, in the language of *Ideas*. The free choice of reference changes the act *and its datum*: an individual object becomes a pure essence. In these terms the eidetic reduction can be understood as the change of the nexus of reference.⁴⁶

What turns essences into a nexus is clear: essences belong to a hierarchical structure. Each essence

has its place in a hierarchy of essences, in a hierarchy of *generality* and *specificity*. This series necessarily has two limits which never coincide. Descending, we arrive at the *infimae species* or, as we also say, the *eidetic singularities*; ascending through the specific and generic essences, we arrive at a *highest genus*. Eidetic singularities are essences which necessarily have over them 'more universal' essences as their genera, but do not have under them any particularizations in relation to which they would themselves be species (either proximate species or mediate, higher genera). In like fashion that genus is the highest which has no genus over it.⁴⁷

The question remains about the nexus of things: what makes it a nexus? 'The nexus of things' should be understood in regard to the corresponding acts of consciousness: those positing acts of individual intuition should have something in common. Their psychological data are fluent even within the same act and different in different acts. But in any *intentional* mental process (an act of consciousness) there is by definition the **intention*, the relation of this fluidity to a *self-same something, to the (intentional) object [Gegenstand].⁴⁸ An intentional mental process is the consciousness *of* something. The object, 'the pure X', in its turn is interpreted as the cluster of determinations, 'determining contents', or as

⁴⁵ German verb *meinen* can be translated both as *to mean* and *to refer*.

⁴⁶ See *Prolegomena*, pp. 225 - 226 <B 228>.

⁴⁷ *Ideas*, pp. 24 - 25 <25>. Latin *infimus* is the superlative of *infernus*, situated below.

⁴⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 73 <64>.

⁴² *Ideas*, p. 10 <12>.

⁴³ See *PRS*, pp. 82 - 83 <296>.

⁴⁴ See *Ideas*, pp. 190 <179>; see also Boer, 1978, p. 451.

Husserl prefers to say in *Ideas*, *noemas.⁴⁹ A content is roughly the 'what' of a psychological datum, the 'what' of 'This-Here':

At first 'essence' designated what is to be found in the very own Being of an individuum as the What of an individuum. Any such What can, however, be 'put into an idea'.⁵⁰

The subtle difference between a content and the result of its ideation, the Eidos, is the difference between meaning something as 'a red something' and meaning Redness as such. Any 'This-Here' can be thus subsumed under an essence of the lowest level in the hierarchy of essences (the level of 'eidetic singularities', or 'infimae species'), and any such essence has its ideal sum-total of possible 'This-Heres'.⁵¹

In the primitive language of *Prolegomena* the 'nexus of truths' does turn 'things' into a nexus through, as we can now say, the eidetic reduction. In spite of Husserl's remarkable achievements in the concise description of the relation between the individual and the eidetic, his project remains straightforward: 'the rationalizing of the empirical' through the hierarchy of sciences. It is essences which determine the borders between different sciences, indeed make the hierarchy of sciences.⁵² We shall have a closer look at the link between the hierarchy of essences and the hierarchy of sciences.

§3.5. The eidetic reduction: the distribution of all intuited individual Being

The What of an essence is an essence of a higher level: This here! Being what? Red. Being what? A colour. Being what? A sensuous quality. Etc., etc. There is however an ontological abyss between the first 'what-of' (providing the eidetic singularity) and the following ones (providing each time the essence of the higher level) and it can never be bridged:

the *subsumption* of an individual, of any This-here, under an essence [...]

⁴⁹ See *Ideas*, pp. 311 - 316 <269 - 273>. Cf. *L15*, p. 603 <B1 434> where Husserl distinguishes between content as object and content as the interpretative sense.

⁵⁰ *Ideas*, p. 8 <10>.

⁵¹ See *Ideas*, pp. 24 - 27 <25 - 27>.

⁵² See *Ideas*, pp. 18 - 20 <19 - 20>.

must not be mistaken for the *subordination* of an essence to its higher species or to a genus.⁵³

The tree of knowledge thus becomes a tree diagram of all-embracing classification, of a universal data-base, in modern terms. The task of ontology is to programme once and for all the main branches of the above dialogue, which would allot eternal class-identity to each and every contingent individual.

Husserl's ontology does not study Being *simpliciter*, it studies being-what, the tree diagram of what-ness, the demarcation of the provinces of individual Being. Husserl actually speaks of ontologies *in the plural*, ontologies of '*regions'. Each material region has its regional Eidos providing the necessary material form for all the possible objects of this region. Geometry, to give one example, is the ontology of the region 'spatial form'. Its generic Eidos is the pure essence of space. Physical Nature would be the region of the material essence Any Nature Whatever.⁵⁴

Regional essences (given intuitively by eidetic intuition) find their expression in categories. The category of a region relates a material region to the form of region-as-such. The plurality of regional ontologies allows us to speak about the form of a region, the form of a regional essence, the form of regional ontology, etc. All those forms are *empty* forms which are catalogued by *formal* ontology:

[...] formal ontology contains the forms of all ontologies (scil. all ontologies 'proper', all 'material' ontologies) and prescribes for material ontologies a formal structure common to them all [...]⁵⁵

Formal ontology is the science of the essence Any-Object-Whatever. Its region is formal, its categories are *analytical*: relationship, identity, genus and species, whole and parts, etc.⁵⁶ It is this discipline that is supposed to deal with *Being whatever*. *Being* is a form-giving flexion whose meaning Husserl tries to determine:

We here remember Kant's dictum: *Being is no real predicate*. This dictum refers to Being *qua* existence, or to what Herbert called the Being of

⁵³ *Ideas*, p. 27 <27>.

⁵⁴ See *Ideas*, pp. 18 - 19 <19 - 20>, p. 163 <135>.

⁵⁵ *Ideas*, p. 21 <22>.

⁵⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 21 - 22 <22>.

'absolute position', but it can be taken to be no less applicable to predicative and attributive Being. In any case, it precisely refers to what we are trying to make clear. [...] We are at once saying and maintaining *that Being is absolutely imperceptible*. [...] A meaning like that of the word 'Being' can find no possible objective correlate [...]⁵⁷

Husserl devotes a considerable part of *Investigation VI* to the development of the extended concept of intuition so that Being, though never perceptible, can yet be given in a special categorial intuition, together with other *logical categories* (unity, plurality, totality, number, etc.).⁵⁸

'Being whatever' belongs to the *formal* region of any-object-whatever, and the only kind of unity we could ascribe to it would have been the unity of categorial forms. If we remember that *the* problem of philosophy is the **Weltproblem* (the relationship between Ego and the world), then Husserl understands it as the categorial structuring of 'all that is':

to effect a distribution of all intuited individual being according to regions of being [...]⁵⁹

'All' individual Being is structured with the tree diagram of this distribution.

In Husserl's time chemistry managed to reduce the diversity of the world 'stuff' to some tens of ideal, mutually independent 'elements'.⁶⁰ The essences which order the disordered world of contingent individuals remind one of those chemical elements. Their law-governed combinations generate a whole range of possible 'substances' which, in their turn, are experienced as salty, poisonous, explosive, etc. Anything salty is always related to the absolute elements 'sodium' and 'chlorine' in due proportion. In the same way, any red circle is related to the essence of Redness and to the essence of Roundness.

We can now return to the example at the beginning of this chapter: the case of private John Smith. The 'law of due process' which prescribed his case, to be considered first by a normative science and then by a theoretical one, now gets a

⁵⁷ *LI6*, pp. 780 - 781 <B2 137 - 138>. Attributive and predicative modes of being are related to the corresponding modes of statements: 'this white paper' (attributive) and 'this paper is white' (predicative) - see *ibid.*, pp. 775 - 776 <B2 130 - 131>; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 765 - 767 <B2 122 - 124>.

⁵⁸ See *LI6*, Nos. 45 - 66.

⁵⁹ *Ideas*, p. 32 <32>; italics in the original are disregarded.

⁶⁰ No atomic or sub-atomic structures were yet properly related to the 'elements' at that time.

proper ground. The hierarchy of sciences reflects the hierarchy of essences. Sciences of matters of fact posit actuality, factual individual existence. Experience [Erfahrung] is taken in this case as the ultimate grounding act which cannot be replaced by imagination. Eidetic sciences (e.g. mathematics) posit no factual existence and are not grounded in experience. That is why eidetic sciences do not depend on the experiential sciences. However, the opposite is not true: all experiential sciences depend on eidetic sciences:

in the *first* place, it is beyond question that an experiential science, wherever it brings mediate grounding of judgement, must proceed according to the *formal* principles treated by formal logic. Since, like any other science, an experiential science is directed to objects, it must be universally bound by the laws that belong to the essence of *anything objective whatever*. It thereby enters into a relation with the complex of *formal-ontological* disciplines [...] Moreover, in the *second* place, any matter of fact includes a *material* essential composition; and any eidetic truth belonging to the pure essences comprised in that composition must yield a *law by which the given factual singularity, like any other possible singularity, is bound*.⁶¹

Any judgement about essences (Braveness, Soldier, Goodness) can be converted into an unconditionally valid judgement about single particulars (a good soldier, John Smith) subsumed under those essences. Eidos functions as an absolutely valid **norm* for fact. Husserl's quest for the absolute norms can be accomplished only in the realm of Eidos because an unconditionally valid norm is an *eidos*.⁶²

So much for *the residue* of the eidetic reduction. We shall now turn to the disregarded correlate of the residue: what is the price paid for rationalizing the empirical?

§3.6. The eidetic reduction: the contingency of the individual

If we remember now that Husserl calls his project **first* philosophy, the quest for the **roots* of the all, then the central role of the eidetic reduction sets the limits of this philosophy, determines its resolving power. That which is going to remain disregarded in the result of eidetic (or any other) reduction is supposed to

⁶¹ *Ideas*, pp. 17 - 18 <18>; the translation is slightly changed. The last use of italics is mine.

⁶² See *Ideas*, p. 189 <158>, p. 346 <301>.

be inessential, at least for the rigorous science of philosophy. Husserl is not blindfolded by a dogmatic presupposition: he simply wants to treat the unfathomable stream of consciousness in a comprehensible way:

Herein remain excluded the ultimate 'nuances' which belong to the indeterminable element of the 'flow', although at the same time the *describable typology of the flowing has its 'ideas' which, when intuitively grasped and fixed, render possible absolute knowledge*. Every psychological heading such as perception or will designates a most extensive area of 'consciousness analysis', i.e., of investigations into essences.⁶³

It is this 'describable typology of the flowing' that is the ultimate end of first philosophy, pure phenomenology or eidetic psychology, the three terms expressing the three aspects of the same project. That some 'nuances' would ever remain 'indeterminable in the flow' is easy to believe, given the original inexhaustibility of 'flowing life'.⁶⁴ And of course all 'nuances' which are not *communicable* are also indeterminable according to Husserl. *An eidōs remains self-same regardless of both the flow and the plurality of mental life, i.e. the plurality of empirical egos.*

What does it mean that a presentation [Vorstellung], a hope, a wish, is *the same* at different times or with regard to different persons? Nansen (who travelled over Greenland) and Husserl (who had never been to it) might have both imagined 'Greenland's icy wastes'. Evidently, those mental images, *Vorstellungen*, would differ to a great extent. But the residue of the eidetic reduction of both acts, their so called **intentional essence*,⁶⁵ is the same:

Talk about the same presentation, judgement etc. points to no individual sameness [individuelle Identität] of acts, as if my consciousness were in some way conjoined with someone else's. It also means no relation of perfect likeness, of indiscernibility as regards inner constituents, as if the

one act merely duplicated the other. [...] Two presentations are *in essence the same*, if exactly the same statements, and no others, can be made on the basis of either regarding the presented thing [...] Let us now be quite clear that *the intentional essence does not exhaust the act phenomenologically*.⁶⁶

We shall remember this last remark: it shows the direction of Husserl's efforts when he tried to make his description of mental processes complete. In *Ideas* he already mentions a phenomenological axiology and theory of practice which would make possible the description of valuing and practical consciousness.⁶⁷

The **self-sameness* of an *eidōs* should not be set in opposition to the flow of the stream of consciousness, which is never self-same. An *eidōs* of the lowest level, in Husserl's terms, a *concretum*, can include this immanent fluidity. Husserl believes such *concreta* are hard to fix conceptually. Let us take the fantasy of the icy wastes of Greenland as an example. This mental process can be related to its essence at the lowest level (a *concretum*), which belongs to the genus 'physical thing-fantasy'. It is proper to any mental process of this genus to represent a physical thing-fantasy precisely with its **adumbrations*, with obscurity and clarity of its 'sides', with its flow in the stream of mental processes.⁶⁸ Then what is it that is disregarded? Husserl explains:

It is peculiar to consciousness of whatever sort that it fluctuates in flowing away in various dimensions in such a manner that there can be no speaking of a conceptually exact fixing of any eidetic *concreta* or of any of their immediately constitutive moments. [...] Phenomenology *only drops the individuation* but elevates the whole essential content, in the fullness of its concretion, into eidetic consciousness and takes it as an ideally identical essence which, like any other essence, could be singularized not only *hic et nunc* but also in countless examples.⁶⁹

One of the immediate effects of this 'dropping' is that no *human* individual is discernible after eidetic reduction. Indeed, a human life has its particular history and its particular circumstances, taken biologically, historically and personally. It is singular, or we may say, unique. This individuation once dropped, the *eidōs*

⁶³ *PRS*, pp. 111 - 112 <315 - 316>; my italics.

⁶⁴ See *Ideas*, p. 100 <85>.

⁶⁵ See *LIS*, p. 590 <B1 417 - 418>. The intentional essence of an act is not the essence of the object of the act but is related to both (A) 'the matter' of the act (the precise way in which the object is meant: as the Pope, as the bishop of Rome, etc.) and (B), 'the quality' of the act (how the object is intended by the ego: presented, judged, asked, doubted, etc.) - see *ibid.* pp. 586 - 590 <B1 411 - 416>. The intentional essence of an act is the essence of its quality and matter combined. In *Ideas* Husserl developed this quality / matter opposition into the doctrine of *noesis* and **noema* - see *Ideas*, pp. 203 - 243 <171 - 208>.

⁶⁶ *LIS*, p. 591 <B1 418 - 419>. Italics from the original. Cf. *ibid.*, *Investigation I*, p. 285 <B1 44>, p. 329 <B1 99>.

⁶⁷ See *Ideas*, p. 282 <244>.

⁶⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 168 <139 - 140>. The situation is different for the essences of higher levels: they are 'accessible to rigid differentiation' and 'strict conceptual formulation' - see *ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ideas*, p. 168 <139 - 140>. My italics.

'human life' becomes anonymous, disembodied and ahistorical: everyone who was born and died, a singular human life, can be but an example, a singularization. Everything that is valid with regard to its *eidos* is valid with regard to all possible singularizations:

[...] the same real something considered with respect to its own essence could just as well be at any other place and have any other shape, could also be changing, though it is in fact unchanging, or could be changing other than in the manner in which it is changing in fact. Individual existence of every sort is, quite universally speaking, *'contingent' [zufällig]. [...] *Everything belonging to the essence of the individuum another individuum can have too* [...] ⁷⁰

We can read the italicized sentence as the charter of equal rights of all individuals subsumed under the same *eidos*: humans and pigs because they are both the singularizations of the *eidos* Animals; embryos and adults because they are subsumed under the same *eidos* Humans, etc. The political function of the consciousness of example is not at all surprising: the recourse to essences creates the 'same' framework of reference, makes it possible to come to the 'same' view, disregarding the plurality of the concrete life-contexts and declaring them contingent. The political equivalent of contingency would be privacy, political irrelevance. In this aspect the eidetic reduction might be safely called *the ideological reduction* and the whole project of first philosophy should rather have been called *the first ideology*.

§3.7. The eidetic reduction: the limits of Husserlian first philosophy

Husserlian eidetic reduction refers not to a couple of essences reflecting the political interest of today but to the single hierarchy of sciences, which would take generations scrupulously to build up: such scruples are unknown to political thinking. 'Contingent' in the Husserlian context means simply 'inaccessible to science of whatever kind'. But what remains beyond the scope of rationalizing the empirical is indeed private in political terms:

Here is my friend Hans and I call him 'Hans'. He is no doubt individually

determined, he is always at a particular point in space and time. If these determinations were, however, concurrently meant, the name 'Hans' would change its meaning with every step that my friend takes, on every occasion that I address him by name. Such a thing can scarcely be maintained, nor would one care to take refuge in saying that a proper name is really general. For the peculiar universality in respect of the varied times, positions, situations of the same individual thing differs in form from the specific universality of the thing's attribute or of the generic Idea 'any thing whatever'. ⁷¹

If in Germany under the Nazis Hans happens to be a Jew, then a consciousness of example would turn him into an example of the *eidos* Jew. On the contrary, a consciousness of the individual would present him as Hans. The Nazis complained that Germans on the whole accepted the racial theory and its results concerning the Jewish race but each German interceded for a couple of Jews whom he had known from experience were not bad like other Jews. In this situation of fundamental options one might expect some guidance from the philosophy that claimed to discover the roots of Being.

Husserl, however, is unable to say whether the consciousness of example is to be preferred in all cases: he only proclaims the freedom of mental regard, meaning actually the freedom of the recourse to essences. ⁷² It seems that the case of my Jewish friend Hans should travel all the way along the hierarchy of sciences, like the case of private John Smith. That we now call them regional ontologies does not change much: the case should be elevated into eidetic consciousness; if the verdict of this consciousness reads 'dead Jews and only such Jews are good', that would be the insurmountable norm for Hans. The only motion Husserl might suggest would be the revision of the validity of such a conclusion within eidetic consciousness. A critique of racial theory could only be a thorough investigation of its theoretical validity, a reference to the *valid* law, philosophy and religion; to reach this validity might take *generations* of research. ⁷³ In the meantime, waiting for the ideal norms to come, the power of a

⁷¹ *LI2*, p. 380 <B1 158 - 159>. I have slightly changed the translation in accordance with GTH, taking *universal* to stand for *allgemein* and *any thing whatever* for *Ding überhaupt*.

⁷² See *Ideas*, p. 10 <12>.

⁷³ See *PRS*, pp. 126 <325>, 135 <332>.

⁷⁰ *Ideas*, pp. 7 - 8 <8 - 9>.

temporal solution is delegated to a *Weltanschauung*, to 'practical natures', to a non-theoretical sphere:

In the actuality of life, of course, the separation [of theory from practice] is not entirely sharp; precisely at a time when practical motives are making such a powerful upsurge, even a theoretical nature will be capable of giving in to the force of such motives more thoroughly than its theoretical vocation would permit. *Here, however, particularly for the philosophy of our time, lies a great danger.*⁷⁴

It is actual life itself, *die Lebenswirklichkeit*, that is the prime threat to a theoretical nature, i.e. to the consciousness of example. Those who would not live in hope of a final eidetic solution can easily prefer a final solution dictated by the upsurge of life. It would be therefore a gross misunderstanding to consider Husserlian philosophy as a starry-eyed idealism.

However, it is undeniable that his first philosophy cannot answer meaningful questions: how can it happen that life does not always obey the eidetic laws immaculate in their purity? Why can its upsurge be more powerful than the theoretical vocation? Why could some practical natures like Lenin declare theoretical natures redundant and cleanse Russia of them altogether (§7.3)? And why were two other practical natures of the later period, Hitler and Stalin, so unanimous in exterminating Husserl's pupils: Gustav Shpet in Russia, Edith Stein in Germany? For a philosophy which starts with eidetic reduction these questions remain unarticulated for ever.

Perhaps pure phenomenology can stop *bellum omnium contra omnes*⁷⁵ within science by elevating its problems into eidetic consciousness. But the battle cry of any war: *my country, right or wrong* - how can *that* be elevated? For the consciousness of example the very Being of my country is contingent, this is but a country, a singularization of the genus 'country'. Husserl is, of course, fully aware of these 'fluctuating meanings' of our expressions:

Every expression, in fact, that includes a *personal pronoun* lacks an objective sense. The word 'I' names a different person from case to case.

⁷⁴ PRS, p. 137 <334>; my italics.

⁷⁵ See *Prolegomena*, pp. 53 <B 4>.

thus always acquiring a new meaning.⁷⁶

All the Subject-bound determinations like *this, here, now, yesterday*, etc. (etc. itself!) have but fluctuating meanings. Shall we accept that it is always possible to replace a subjective expression by an objective one? That would be the same as saying the power of reason is unlimited.⁷⁷ Husserl expresses his doubt:

We are infinitely removed from this ideal. [...] Strike out the essentially occasional expressions from one's language, try to describe any subjective experience in unambiguous, objectively valid fashion: such an attempt is always plainly vain.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, the phenomenological approach makes the consciousness of example possible even in that case. We should only remember that Husserl builds up eidetic psychology. The *eidos* he worked with is not the *eidos* of an object but the *eidos* of a (subjective) act, which can be apprehended in reflective ideation, i.e. when the act itself is the object of the new act.⁷⁹

'My husband was killed in action in 1914'; 'Mrs. John Smith's husband was killed in action in 1914': in reflective ideation both acts of meaning are the same. It is the eidetic reduction, the consciousness of example, that makes them indiscernible.

The personal, the historical, the mortal are to be subsumed under the ahistorical, the impersonal, the immortal. That is indeed the essence of Husserlian first philosophy. Our *place in the world should be deduced from what cannot have a place in a world:

Other reductions, the specifically transcendental ones, 'purify' psychological phenomena from what confers on them reality and, with that, their place in the real 'world'.⁸⁰

We shall follow these reductions in the next chapter.

⁷⁶ LII, p. 315 <B1 82>. I have slightly changed the translation.

⁷⁷ See LII, p. 321 <B1 90>.

⁷⁸ LII, p. 322 <B1 91>.

⁷⁹ See LII, p. 332 - 333 <B1 103 - 104>.

⁸⁰ *Ideas*, Introduction, p. xx <4>.

4. CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD BY PURE CONSCIOUSNESS (HUSSERL)

Rickert saw the task of philosophy as working out a conception of the world that would make clear our *place in the world whole [Weltganzen]. This ultimate part-whole relationship between the Ego and the world is *the* problem of philosophy.¹ Indeed, all Object-oriented² philosophies make the Ego dependent on the all-embracing framework of causality. On the contrary, Subject-oriented types of *Weltanschauung* would make causality dependent on the Ego. In this context the relationship between the Ego and the world can be expressed in terms of dependency (§5.2).

William James considered the whole-part relationship of dependency as the basis for the classification of philosophical systems. Rationalism and empiricism, or monism and pluralism, can be discerned by a simple structural property. Rationalism (Hegel is explicitly singled out here) is built up from above, from *the whole of wholes*:

¹ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 2. * (asterisk) before a word is a reference to the *Analytical Subject Index*.

² As elsewhere, the capital O is used to discern between the derivatives of the German *Gegenstand* (the English *object*, small o) and *Objekt* (the English *Object*, capital O). In that, I follow the standard of *GTH*.

The absolute is a rationalist conception. Rationalism goes from wholes to parts, and always *assumes wholes to be self-sufficient* [sic!].³

In such a universe all individuals are deduced from universals, i.e. subsist in the corresponding wholes, which in their turn subsist in the whole of wholes.

This rationalist thinking leads inevitably to monism, i.e. to the elimination of any other-ness from its view. Taking Hegelianism as a model, James demonstrates the projection of the logical onto the ontological: each part has its other and that makes it 'untrue'; the self-sufficient whole has no 'other' at all, as it is its own other, therefore 'true':

The absolute is true because it and it only has no external environment, and has attained to being its own other.⁴

James notes elsewhere that the independence of a part 'would be to the Absolute as fatal as a cholera-germ'.⁵

Husserl also talks about 'absolute Being', as we shall see later. Is Husserlian 'absolute Being' equivalent to the Rickertian 'world whole' (§5.2), the solution of the **Weltproblem*? What is the mode of relationship between the Ego and the world?

Due to Husserlian reductions we can already say much about his solution. Any *causality is entirely excluded from his first philosophy which is an eidetic study of acts of consciousness and not a science of the matters of fact.⁶ The relationship between the Ego and the world should be now understood as an eidetic relationship between the eidetic residues of the Ego and of the world. But how do the Ego and the world share the same, now eidetic and not causal, framework? In *eidetic consciousness* is the Ego dependent on the world or vice versa?

To describe the situation in these terms of dependency Husserl suggests a new reduction, the *transcendental* one, which has as its residue the region of absolutely independent Being. This pure consciousness generates, or 'constitutes'.

³ *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 60, my italics; cf. *ibid.*, p. 48 - 49.

⁴ *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 53.

⁵ *Pragmatism*, p. 78.

⁶ *Ideas*, Introduction, p. xx <4>.

all the typology of mental phenomena, in this sense, the whole 'world'. That is the solution of the *Weltproblem* by pure phenomenology.

The analysis of this solution will therefore be our purpose in the following sections.

§4.1. The self-sufficiency of Being: a phenomenological transcription

Husserl developed the first version of his *mereology*, the theory of parts and wholes, in his earliest period,⁷ borrowing considerably from Brentano and Stumpf. It underlies all his works of that period.

In the course of his essay on formal ontology Husserl sets up formal definitions and theorems which, taken in themselves, are partly trivial, partly wrong.⁸ But under the surface of this formalism Husserl's main concern is easily discernible. He wants to find 'in things themselves'⁹ some absolute dividing lines for their correct disassembling. A proper demarcation of sciences (ontological *'regions') would be one of the first applications of this theory.

Separability is traced to the self-sufficiency [Selbständigkeit] of objects against their context.¹⁰ Husserl starts instead with non-self-sufficiency, the *inseparability* of an object from its context. A phenomenological transcription should relate it to a mode of regarding the stream of consciousness. Does it mean that the separation of a non-self-sufficient object is *unthinkable*, that the object can be never thought of apart from a certain context? Husserl explains:

An attribute, a form of association and the like, cannot be *thought of* as self-existent, as isolated from all else, as being all that exists: this only can happen with 'thinglike' contents. [...] Differences such as this, that one object - we again choose the wider term, which includes the content of

⁷ Under the title of *The Pure Theory of Wholes and Parts* - see *LI3*, Introduction, p. 435 <B1 226>. As Husserl himself put it, at the time of publication of his *Logical Investigations* he did not have the courage to use the term *ontology*, as it might have carried metaphysical connotations and so led to misunderstanding - see *Ideas*, p. 22 <23>.

⁸ See criticism in Bell, 1990, pp. 97 - 101.

⁹ See *LI*, Introduction to volume two, p. 252 <B1 6>.

¹⁰ See *LI3*, p. 443 <B1 236>.

intuitive experience - can be 'in and for itself', while another can only have being in, or be attached to, some other object, are no mere contingencies of our subjective thinking. They are real differences, grounded in the pure essence of things, which, since they obtain, and since we know of them, prompt us to say that a thought which oversteps them is impossible, i.e. a judgement deviating from them is wrong. *What cannot be thought cannot be, what cannot be cannot be thought [...]*¹¹.

A self-sufficient (and so separable) part is called a piece [Stück], a *concrete part, whereas a part which is not self-sufficient is called a moment [Moment], an abstract, immanent part.¹²

Husserl's usual example is a colour: it is not a part of a (spatio-temporal) object, it is a moment of the object's. But when we leave the field of spatio-temporal things, the recourse to the 'pure essence' may become crucial: a pope seems to be a concrete part of the whole Church, but the essence, papacy, can be only a moment of Roman Catholicism, so *as a pope*, by his essence, he is an abstract moment.¹³

Husserl considers any object whatever, or any content of consciousness. Every content has some environment, its embracing context. A non-self-sufficient part, an abstract moment, remains abstract, or non-self-sufficient, in relation to any embracing context: a moment can never be taken apart from 'its' context, no matter if we extend this context or not. That means moments and pieces are ontologically separate: no moment can become a piece, and no piece can become a moment.¹⁴ Moments are the indices of unity; pieces, on the contrary, suggest a certain heterogeneity.

There is no explanation for this peculiar dualism of the abstract and the concrete. The task of phenomenology is not to explain but mentally to see. However, the result is hardly surprising: what can never be conceived apart from

a context remains dependent on that context forever. 'Never' and 'forever', of course, create problems which are solved through recourse to essences. Husserl even mentions *predestination: the essence of a moment *predestines* it to partial Being [Teil-sein].¹⁵

In the course of analysis it is often self-sufficiency that should be demonstrated. The proof of self-sufficiency follows the same paradigm of phenomenological correlation between what can be thought and what can be:

Isolability means only that we can keep some content constant in the idea [in der Vorstellung] despite boundless variation - variation that is free, though not excluded by a law rooted in the content's *essence* - of the contents associated with it, and, in general, given with it. This means that it is unaffected by the elimination [Aufhebung] of any chosen arrangement of co-given [mitgegeben] content whatsoever.¹⁶

Such a method seems to be taken directly from a manual of differential calculus which deals exactly with functional dependence: a function does not depend on one of its variables when the corresponding partial derivative is zero, i.e. no change of the variable can bring a change of the function. We can certainly note a lack of philosophical sophistication here, especially in the concept of *boundless variation*: even the mental seeing of the content's essence can hardly be equated with the overview of all the possible variations of the corresponding contents. Another question mark comes with the mention of law: it seems to contradict the principle of all principles, which ascribes priority to the immediately given.

In the case of self-sufficiency it is possible to absolve a content from the influence of any context. As an element of the stream of consciousness, a detachable piece is therefore context-free.¹⁷ In other words we can claim an object's self-sufficiency if it is possible to eliminate the context of the object. Keeping in mind Husserl's mathematical metaphor, we can say we *parenthesize*

¹¹ *LI3*, p. 445 - 446 <B1 238 - 239>; the last use of italics is mine.

¹² See *LI3*, p. 467 <B1 266 - 267>. The distinction between moments and pieces plays an important role also in Bakhtin who uses this terminology extensively. see e.g. *A&H/2*, p. 139 (Russian *momenty i chasty*).

¹³ That recalls Augustine's words: with you I am *a* Christian, for you I am *your* bishop. A Christian is a concrete part of a diocese; the diocesan bishop is an abstract moment of it.

¹⁴ See *LI3*, p. 468 <B1 267 - 268>.

¹⁵ See *LI3*, pp. 446 - 447 <B1 240 - 241>.

¹⁶ *LI3*, p. 443 <B1 235 - 236>; I have slightly changed the translation.

¹⁷ See *LI3*, p. 481 <B1 283 - 284>.

the context of a self-sufficient object¹⁸: the proper parts, pieces, can be 'taken out' of their context for further consideration. The lines of separation are found in 'things' (which are mentally regarded in the stream of consciousness) and not invented by us. A phenomenologist does not split the world: he disassembles it according to his intuitive grasp, puzzling out an inverted jigsaw.

It would be short-sighted to trace such a project back to Bolzano or Leibniz. The real prototype of this tree of ultimate distribution is to be found in the archaic myths about the World Tree, with a mandala as its graphic expression. Structuralism is the direct descendant of this philosophy.¹⁹ Roman Jakobson was a student of Shpet's, and his structuralism can be seen as a development of 'static phenomenology'

It was in Husserl's work [*LI, Investigation III, On the theory of wholes and parts*] that Jakobson found the first systematic formulation of the general laws that are operative for a structural unit.²⁰

Husserl describes how to find in the stream of consciousness the evidence for this mandala-like organization of Being. The same flux of Being, which gives rise to the nihilism and anti-rationalism of life-philosophy, turns to be the array of ideal forms of Being.

Can we in any way refer to the originary stage of this process as 'Being as such' or as 'the world whole'? No ultimate whole is mentioned in the essay on wholes and parts. One might have expected it to be mentioned, for example as an object of possible controversy, as something similar to the set of all sets in abstract set theory, perhaps as a nonsensical concept. But we find silence instead.

We can also ask a parallel question. Ontology, even if formal, is to be able to say something about *Being*. True, the whole essay on formal ontology treats the problem of dependent or independent Being. But the principle 'what cannot be

thought cannot be, what cannot be cannot be thought'²¹ actually does not prevent us from thinking also of 'just all in all', 'all that is'. On this point Husserl is very clear and now we shall follow his reflections.

§4.2. The Kantian context

Husserl's formal ontology (§3.5) demonstrates certain allusions to Kant. It is not by accident that Husserl uses Kantian terminology: he wishes to make explicit his 'basic affinity' to Kant, sometimes not without the ambition to surpass Kant's critique of reason.²²

The Kantian context excludes any givenness of 'all in all'. The ideal of reason, the archetype of all things, is primordial Being. The concept of such Being is the concept of God, which can be related to no given object. We have no right to combine the idea of primordial Being with an individual Being: it only gives rise to illusions.²³ Ultimate Being is the regulative principle of reason and not a predicate which might be attributed to things:²⁴ in Husserl's terms no regional category (neither a *region) might be allotted to it. Kant thus transforms *Being* into the endless but rational process of approximating to it through *Beings*. The world whole exists only in the series of appearances, which can never be completely given [gegeben] but only *set as a* *task [aufgegeben].²⁵

The last concept was widely used in Neo-Kantianism. This is how Rickert describes the ultimate whole in terms of the opposition *gegeben-aufgegeben*: the world whole [Wirklichkeitsganzen]

is only conceived as always sought though never attained, as never given

²¹ See *LI3*, p. 445 - 446 <B1 238 - 239>

²² See *Ideas*, p. 31 <31>, p. 142 <119>; see esp. *LI6*, pp. 833 - 834, *LI3*, p. 459 <B1 256>, Note 1.

²³ See *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 492 - 493, 517 / A 578 - 581, 619 / B 607 - 608, 647.

²⁴ "Being" is obviously not a real predicate [...] not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing' - see *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 504 / A 598 / B 626; both Husserl and Rickert make this dictum of Kant the starting-point of their reflections on *Being*: cf. *LI6*, p. 780 <B2 137> and *Zwei Wege*, p. 177.

²⁵ See *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 448 / A 505 / B 533; pp. 443 - 444 / A 498 / B 526.

¹⁸ Parenthesizing can thus be given an ontological interpretation though Husserl himself does not do it in *The Logical Investigations*.

¹⁹ See Hollenstein, 1977.

²⁰ Hollenstein, 1976, p. 2.

though always set as a task [...]26

According to the *principle of all principles, *Wirklichkeitsganzen* could only be the whole of the stream of mental processes. But it can never be seen as a whole:

And my whole stream of mental processes [*Erlebnisstrom*] is, finally, a unity of mental processes which, of essential necessity, cannot be seized upon completely in a perceiving which 'swims along with it'.27

If this seizing upon (*Wahrnehmungserfassen*, perceptual grasp) is impossible, then how can we assert the unity of the stream? Would it not contradict the principle of all principles? Husserl is completely aware of this difficulty. He postpones the detailed analysis of the unity of the stream for the future;28 for the time being all he has to say is a reference to Kant:

In the continuous progression from seizing-upon to seizing-upon, in a certain way, I said, we now seize upon the *stream of mental processes as a unity*. We do not seize upon it as we do a single mental process but rather in the manner of an *idea in the Kantian sense*. It is not something posited or affirmed by chance; it is instead an absolutely indubitable givenness.29

This givenness is, however, of a different sort than the givenness of a single mental process within the stream. The reference to Kant makes one think the stream remains the limit concept in Husserl's phenomenology: Kant actually defines any transcendental idea as 'the concept of a maximum'30 which can never be given *in concreto*:

The absolute whole of all appearances - we might thus say - *is only an idea*, since we can never represent it in an image, it remains a *problem* to which there is no solution.31

Husserl presumes that in this case it is still possible mentally to 'see' the

Kantian idea without the adequate determination of its content.32 The unity Husserl ascribes to the whole of the stream is the unity of a form, which is grasped in reflection. The leading paradigm is the idea of infinity: we cannot immediately grasp infinity as a whole, but we can clearly 'see' the idea of it.33 That gives rise to more Kantian connotations and brings us to the conclusion that the unity of the stream is the Kantian unity of understanding34.

But such employment of Kantian apparatus seems to remain poorly integrated into the edifice of Husserl's phenomenology. Kant's context excludes any mental 'seeing' of ideas. To establish it phenomenologically, Husserl would have had to describe an attitude of such mental seeing. But he left this problem for the future, which dissatisfied even the proponents of phenomenology, who asked: how do we mentally see an idea, or how does it exist?35

In Kant's words, ideas

are not arbitrarily invented; they are imposed by the very nature of reason itself, and therefore stand in necessary relation to the whole employment of understanding.36

The oneness of the stream is the oneness of understanding. We have come to the same result as in the above analysis of Being (§3.5). *Being* is an analytic category grasped, as Husserl believes, by special *categorial intuition*. The wholeness of the stream is a Kantian idea with a not quite clear mode of givenness.

Kantian weaponry contains and neutralizes any threat of a from-above approach, of an Absolute. If any ultimateness might be found in Husserl's phenomenology it would not be the all-embracing whole.

26 *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 15.

27 *Ideas*, p. 97 <82>.

28 See *Ideas*, p. 196 <165>.

29 *Ideas*, p. 197 <166>. In Kant's words: 'I understand by idea a necessary concept of reason to which no corresponding object can be given in sense-experience' - *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 318 / A 137 / B 383. It should be noted that Husserl refers to the stream of pure consciousness, the residue after the phenomenological reduction (§4.5)

30 *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 319 / A 327 / B 384.

31 *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 319 / A 328 / B 384; cf. *ibid* pp. 492 - 493 / A 578 - 580 B 606 - 608.

32 See *Ideas*, p. 197 - 198 <166 - 167>.

33 'The stream of mental processes is an infinite unity, and the *stream-form* is a form which necessarily comprises all mental processes pertaining to a pure Ego [...]' *Ideas*, p. 196 <165>.

34 See *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 318 / A 326 / B 383.

35 Shpet pointed out that Husserl had to describe how mentally to see not only such ideas but also the impossibility of their sensuous fulfilment - see Shpet, 1991 <1914>, p. 133.

36 *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 319 / A 327 / B 384.

§4.3. Absolute Being as absolutely self-sufficient Being

If we remember the Husserlian metaphor of phenomenology as philosophical chemistry then the impossibility of any concept of the world-as-a-whole becomes natural. It was precisely *alchemy that tried to find the philosopher's stone which could produce the whole range of metals. By contrast, a chemist is looking for a number of independent simple elements to generate the variety of all possible substances. The analytical paradigm of Husserl's phenomenology suggests that ultimateness is to be connected with self-sufficiency.

On the static, phenomeno-*Logical* end of Husserl's project we find only the ultimate nature of understanding with the corresponding Kantian context. We are left with the ideal essences governed by ideal laws. *Logically speaking, essences and laws precede part-whole relationships.* It is the laws of essences which make a content a whole, unable to exist without any of its parts. Husserl actually maintains that any whole-part relation is accessible for categorial intuition alone, i.e. as a categorial, ideal relationship³⁷, (and not for 'simple', immediate intuition).

According to Husserl's definition, *a whole is non-self-sufficient in relation to all its parts.*³⁸ If we remember James' characterisation of absolutist rationalism as always proceeding from self-sufficient wholes to non-self-sufficient parts, we can say Husserl's philosophy represents just the opposite case. Husserl is not looking for the ultimate whole: he is seeking for ultimate, completely self-sufficient, parts. That rules out an absolute whole on which anything at all would have been dependent. In James' words, the independence of a part is like a 'cholera-germ' to the Hegelian Absolute.³⁹

Indeed, what Husserl calls absolute is a completely self-sufficient object.⁴⁰

³⁷ See *LI6*, p. 794 <B2 155>.

³⁸ See *LI3*, p. 475 <B1 275 - 276>. That, of course, does not exclude the case of mutual non-self-sufficiency: some, or even all, parts of a whole can depend on it as well.

³⁹ Hegel did not find much favour with Husserl, who believed romantic philosophy in general was the 'falsification' [Verfälschung] of the ideal of genuinely scientific philosophy - see *PRS*, p. 77 <292>.

⁴⁰ See *LI3*, p. 468 - 469 <B1 267 - 268>; cf. *Ideas*, p. 29 <29>.

The Being of such an object does not depend on the 'mercy' [Gnade] of something else.⁴¹ This absoluteness has nothing to do with some divine Absolute of theology, a point Husserl does not forget to make clear.⁴² What comes to mind, rather, is the reduction of a mathematical formula to one with fewer independent variables.

To separate those two modes of Being, Husserl suggests a special method: the experiment of annihilation. It is a mental experiment within the As-If paradigm.⁴³ The attempt to eliminate mentally the context of a content would bring us to a conclusion about the self-sufficiency of the content. Namely, a self-sufficient thing

can be presented by itself - this means it would be what it is even if everything outside it were annihilated. [...] We can imagine [vorstellen] it as existing by itself alone, and *beyond it nothing else.⁴⁴

A world, consisting just of sodium, is conceivable; a world, consisting just of a pope, is not.

According to the *principle of all principles, this disparity between dependent and independent Being should be justified by recourse to the stream of consciousness. Its contents must be seen mentally as radically different according to their essential 'destiny': some are *predestined to be self-sufficient, while others are not. We shall now follow Husserl as he attempts to detect and annihilate all non-self-sufficient contents in the stream of consciousness, trying to demarcate the region of absolute Being.

§4.4. Two modes of givenness: adumbrated and absolute

It is at this key point that Husserl made one of his most important discoveries: *the Being of some-thing transcendent cannot be absolute.* It is given in the stream

⁴¹ *LI3*, p. 445 <B1 238>.

⁴² See *Ideas*, p. 134 <111>.

⁴³ The use of the As-If paradigm is not untypical of Husserl - cf. e.g. *Prolegomena*, p. 208 - 209 <B 207 - 208>. Husserl was acquainted with Hans Vaihinger, the author of *The Philosophy of*

As-If - see Boer, 1978, p. 227. I am not in a position to enter into more detail here.

⁴⁴ *LI3*, p. 445 <B1 238>, my italics; cf. *ibid.*, No 11, pp. 456 - 457 <B1 253>.

of consciousness as a string of appearances which we identify as the 'same thing'. This series cannot end unless the thing is exterminated. Any closed cluster of appearances would be inadequate in relation to a 'living' thing. Husserl takes, for the sake of simplicity, a physical thing which

can exist without being perceived [...] and it can exist without changing. The perception itself, however, is what it is in the continuous flux of consciousness and is itself a continuous flux: the perceptual Now continually changes into the enduring consciousness of the Just-Past and simultaneously a new Now lights up, etc.⁴⁵

The sameness of a thing is maintained by the consciousness which synthetically unites memory and new perception.⁴⁶ This ongoing process can come to a crisis when the reconciling of a new Now with the Just-Past is impossible within the identity of the thing already accepted. Then we talk about illusions and hallucinations, discoveries and scientific revolutions. The perceived thing, as well as all its pieces and moments, transcends the perception:

[it] appears only *inadequately* in a closed appearance. Essentially tied up with this is the fact that *no* rational positing which *rests upon this sort of inadequately presentive appearance* can be '*ultimately valid*' ['*endgültig*']; 'insurmountable'; and that no <rational positing> is equivalent [...] to the positing simpliciter: 'The physical thing is actual [wirklich]'; it is only equivalent to the positing: 'it is actual' - assuming that the further course of experience does not bring forth 'stronger rational motives' which show the original positing as a positing to be 'cancelled out' in the broader context.⁴⁷

Leaving aside for a moment all the finesses of Husserl's theorems, we can simply conclude: 'that' which is appearing cannot but depend on *future appearances*; or, *in the stream of consciousness the Being of something transcendent can never be absolute*.

In other terms, a transcendent something cannot be completely context-independent: its future appearances could lead to a re-synthesising which might involve its current context. Arresting this context, pregnant with the thing's future, would leave us with but the aborted embryo of the thing which is otherwise given

⁴⁵ *Ideas*, p. 87 <74>; the translation is slightly changed.
⁴⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 87 <74 - 75>.
⁴⁷ *Ideas*, p. 331 <286 - 287>; cf. *ibid.*, p. 109 - 110 <91>.

to us 'in person' and which we can intuit 'in itself'⁴⁸.

Though all contingent individual Being is distributed according to regional essences, transcendent things remain open, living and able to change their 'regional identity'. As William James would have said, in Husserl's universe things always have the other: environment, context, future.⁴⁹

But how can we recognize a transcendent something in the stream of consciousness? Husserl introduces here the concept of '*adumbrations' [Abschattung], appealing directly to intuition. Looking at a three-dimensional non-transparent object (a table), we experience partial perceptions of it, in a continuous series. A box can be turned and tilted and inspected from different sides but it still remains the same box.⁵⁰ The adumbration is a peculiar mode of givenness through continuous perceptual multiplicities.⁵¹ A thing appears constantly *as a different Being*.⁵²

And now we can formulate the basic dichotomy of Being, which is correlated to the evident difference between the two modes of givenness. The transcendent is always given one-sidedly, 'in adumbrations'. This is an ideal law of the same universal validity as $2+1=3$: no god could change it:⁵³

We perceive the physical thing by virtue of its being 'adumbrated' [...] *A mental process is not adumbrated*. It is neither an accident of the own peculiar sense [Eigensinn] of the physical thing nor a contingency of 'our human condition' [...]⁵⁴

The perception of a mental process is the seeing of something given 'absolutely',

⁴⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 93 <79>.

⁴⁹ Cf. James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, p. 145: 'Everything you can think of, however vast or inclusive, has on the pluralistic view a genuinely "external" environment of some sort or amount. Things are "with" one another in many ways, but nothing includes everything or dominates over everything. The word "and" trails along after every sentence.'

⁵⁰ See *L15*, p. 565 <B1 382>.

⁵¹ See *Ideas*, p. 88 <75>.

⁵² See *PRS*, p. 105 <311>.

⁵³ See *Ideas*, p. 94 - 95 <80 - 81>.

⁵⁴ *Ideas*, p. 90 - 91 <77>.

i.e. not through perceptual multiplicity.⁵⁵

§4.5. Detachment

Having discovered that the difference between those two modes of givenness, (or of Being), is so radical, Husserl cannot avoid the problem we discussed above:

[...] if the material world stands in contrast to all consciousness, and to the own-essentiality [Eigenwesenheit] of consciousness, as 'something alien' *['Fremde'], the 'otherness' [das 'Anderssein'], then how can consciousness become involved with it - with the material world and consequently with the whole world other than consciousness? [...] Nevertheless, consciousness and physicalness are a combined [verbundenen] whole [...] and, at the highest level, combined into the real unity of the whole world. Can the unity of a whole exist otherwise than by virtue of its parts, and must the latter not have some sort of community of essence [Wesensgemeinschaft] instead of being heterogeneous of essential necessity?⁵⁶

There is a history of Husserl's attempts to answer this question, the painful period of doubts and uncertainty.⁵⁷ His initial answer was very much in line with the positivism of his teacher Brentano: consciousness is a part of the world whole, of the world 'in itself' [Welt an sich], and it is submitted to the same natural laws:

the ego and its conscious contents also pertain to the world.⁵⁸

But then how can ideal logical laws be reconciled with causal natural laws? Even our actual thinking does not in fact conform to its ideals - as if ideals were some sort of natural force.⁵⁹ If the world's course is determined by natural causes, then what is the meaning of ideal norms? Husserl explained it through the example of a (mechanical) computer. It is a mechanical device functioning according to the laws of physics. But on the other hand it is a logical device following arithmetical instead of mechanical laws.

[...] our own thought-machine might very well function similarly, except that the real course of one kind of thought would always have to be recognized as correct by the insight brought forward in another. This latter

⁵⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 95 - 96 <81>.

⁵⁶ *Ideas*, p. 81 - 82 <70>.

⁵⁷ See Boer, 1978, pp. 199, 232.

⁵⁸ *Prolegomena*, p. 143 <B 121>.

⁵⁹ See *Prolegomena*, p. 208 <B 207>.

thinking could be the product of the same or other thought-machines, but ideal valuation [Bewertung] and causal explanation would none the less remain disparate.⁶⁰

This gulf between normative and causal regulation is 'never-to-be-bridged'.⁶¹

In *Ideas* the obscurity of such a philosophical position becomes evident. On the static, (phenomeno)-Logical side of his project Husserl plans the final objective partition of Being. But on the dynamic, *Phenomeno*-(logical) side, when taking phenomena 'as they give themselves',⁶² Husserl acquires undeniable evidence of the impossibility of any final version of transcendent reality.⁶³ The real-time process of communications with the surrounding world is always open, which undermines any project of building the World Tree of Being.

Modernising Husserl's computer paradigm, we can say: if consciousness is like a computer, it works within a communication network, like one used in a travel agency. If at any given moment we look into the computer, hoping it will disclose the ideal laws of its logical operations, we will observe the flow of units of information: *Madrid, Mr. John Smith, 25/06/2006, 2.15PM...* We can draw of course some law-like conclusions such as 'Madrid appears more often together with those DD/MM/YY where MM is between 05 and 09'. But it does not bring us a truth about the pure laws of computer operations as such, like $0+0=0$. For that the natural solution would be to switch off, to disconnect, all the channels of communication and to clear the memory of all the information that came by them. The computer then returns to the original condition which it had just after its manufacture, when it was equally able to be equipped for word-processing or for fingerprints analysis or indeed for making flight reservations.

Taking this as a heuristic model, we can understand now the direction of Husserl's thought. He is speaking about a new type of reduction and uses a wide

⁶⁰ *Prolegomena*, pp. 103 - 104 <B 68>. I have slightly changed the translation.

⁶¹ *Prolegomena*, p. 104 <B 68>.

⁶² See *PRS*, p. 109 <314>.

⁶³ Husserl's successors split those two sides of Husserl's original project: structuralism amplified its statics while Heidegger's ontology accentuated its dynamics (see e.g. Kohák, 1978, p. 192). On phenomenology and structuralism, see Hollenstein, 1977.

range of terms like *Ausschaltung* (disconnecting, in modern use also *switching off*, turning off a machine), bracketing [*Einklammerung*], phenomenological reductions (in the plural), or universal *epoché*.⁶⁴ The terminological disarray can cause confusion about this new type of reduction: what is the difference between it and other reductions we mentioned before, especially, eidetic reduction or the technique of *epoché*?

The phenomenological transcription of this reduction should correlate it to the stream of consciousness: some of the mental processes are to be ignored, disregarded, excluded from consideration. Roughly speaking, *Madrid* is to go while the system of machine instructions, like $0+0=0$, may stay. Husserl suggests the exclusion of all adumbrated Being, of all the mental processes with perceptual multiplicity. Even after individual mental processes are elevated to eidetic consciousness, i.e. undergo the eidetic reduction, perceptual multiplicity still belongs to their *essence*. 'A physical thing-phantasy' is an Eidos which could be exemplified in countless examples in a concrete consciousness. *The* phenomenological reduction, or transcendental *epoché*, excludes all such mental processes which are already reduced eidetically.

We have now come to the famous mental experiment of the annihilation of the world, with its non-trivial conclusion. The stream of life will survive this annihilation, namely *pure* consciousness is the survivor, the 'residue':

For an annihilation of the world means, correlatively, nothing else but that in each stream of mental processes (the full stream - the total stream, taken as endless in both directions, which comprises the mental process of an Ego), certain ordered concatenations of experience [...] would be excluded. Consequently, no real Being, no Being which is presented and legitimated in consciousness by appearances, is necessary to the Being of consciousness itself (in the broadest sense, the stream of mental processes).⁶⁵

Husserl claims here precisely that the immanent Being of consciousness is *absolute*. It can be conceived as existing alone and *'beyond it nothing else'.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ See *Ideas*, p. 58 <55>, pp. 60 - 61 <56>; see also GTH for *ausschalten* and *Ausschaltung*.

⁶⁵ *Ideas*, p. 110 <91 - 92>.

⁶⁶ See *LI3*, p. 445 <B1 238>.

The mental processes related to it constitute a *concrete self-sufficient part of the stream of consciousness, the *ultimate* part, we might have said. The result of the experiment of annihilation shows clearly that no appearances need necessarily be present in the mental stream: it could well be the stream of absolute givenness, of self-givenness. In other words,

[...] we shall draw the inferences concerning the essential *detachableness* [*Ablösbarkeit*] of the whole natural world from the domain of consciousness, of the sphere pertaining to mental processes [...]⁶⁷

This detachableness is not symmetrical: the natural world around us cannot be considered without consciousness, as if already completed. Consciousness, on the contrary, is conceivable without the natural world.

§4.6. The philosophy of apart-hood

Being as consciousness and Being as reality are essentially different. It is the most cardinal diversity of all the diversities among modes of Being.⁶⁸ Husserl describes the special phenomenological *attitude of regarding the mental stream, the attitude which 'opens up' consciousness for its further 'vivisection'.⁶⁹ If this attitude is taken, regarding the mental stream gives onto the 'absolute' Being, on which the contingent Being of the surrounding world 'depends'. But this 'absoluteness' and this 'dependency' are the correlates of the attitude taken: a different, 'natural', attitude causes a reversion, so returning consciousness to the natural world as a part of it.⁷⁰

A client in a travel agency may think he has not got one of the plane's 300 places because of the summer rush. From 'within' the computer the corresponding situation might have looked like $300-300=0$: the string 'no places available' is displayed by the programme in the course of data processing each time after the 300th reservation has been made and a place more is required. The client takes the

⁶⁷ *Ideas*, p. 103 - 104 <87>; my italics.

⁶⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 89 - 90 <76 - 77>.

⁶⁹ It was Husserl's assistant Fink who called Husserl's undertaking a 'gigantic vivisection of consciousness' - see Boer, 1978, p. 127.

⁷⁰ See *Ideas*, No. 27.

naive, natural, attitude; while the attitude of a computer programmer, who traces the computer's operations from within the computer, may be compared to the phenomenological attitude: the message is displayed because actually $300-300=0$, the absolute truth which no god could ever change.

The natural attitude is the proper attitude of many disciplines such as sciences. But this attitude would be utterly wrong in philosophy, which demands a phenomenological attitude for the project of the distribution of all Being. Husserl wishes to make it utopian in the literal sense of the word: to ground it beyond the borders of the natural world. He discovers the area where such a World Tree can safely grow. Its borders are set by progressive exclusion.

The suspension of the natural attitude affects a wide area of objectivities: all sciences with their content, all sorts of cultural formations, aesthetic and practical values, law, religion, etc.⁷¹ All mental processes pertaining to them are now excluded:

[...] in contrast to the natural theoretical attitude, the correlate of which is the world, a new *attitude must in fact be possible, which in spite of the exclusion of this psychophysical universe of Nature, leaves us something: the whole field of absolute consciousness. Instead, then, of living naively in experience and theoretically exploring what is experienced, [...] we put all those positings 'out of action' ['ausser Aktion'], we do not *'participate in them' ['wir machen sie nicht mit']; we direct our seizing and theoretically inquiring regard to pure consciousness in its own absolute Being. That, then, is what is left as the sought-for 'phenomenological residuum', though we have 'excluded' the whole world with all physical things, living Beings, and humans, ourselves included.⁷²

But the phenomenological attitude is now further radicalized:

To avail ourselves of nothing but what we can make essentially evident by observing consciousness itself in its pure immanence.⁷³

All 'transcendencies' should be now disregarded: the absolute and transcendent God of theology and the transcendency of the eidetic, including pure

logic and mathematics.⁷⁴ None of the 'transcendent' essences, like 'psyche' or 'person' or 'human being', are left.⁷⁵ However, the residue of this reduction is not empty: it retains the *pure* Ego⁷⁶ and 'immanent essences':

On the one hand, essences of formations belonging to consciousness itself; on the other, essences of individual affairs transcendent to consciousness, thus the essences of those individual affairs which only become 'manifested' in formations belonging to consciousness, which become 'constituted' in the manner peculiar to consciousness by virtue of sensuous appearances.⁷⁷

Pure consciousness cannot exercise causation upon the transcendent world, neither can the transcendent world affect it. It is only in this sense that all the transcendencies are constituted within this 'self-contained complex of Being'. It remains absolutely closed: there is no communication between it and 'something' else.⁷⁸ We can say that pure consciousness knows no other, it 'has nothing to do with it', *es macht es nicht mit*.

§4.7. The world: the unity of sense bestowed by the absolute consciousness

The radical discernment between absolute Being as consciousness and phenomenal Being as manifested *in* consciousness⁷⁹ is not symmetrical. Pure consciousness is absolutely self-sufficient while the reality of the whole world

lacks self-sufficiency in virtue of its essence [...] Reality is not in itself something absolute which becomes tied secondarily to something else; rather in the absolute sense it is nothing at all; it has no 'absolute essence' whatever; it has the essentiality of something which of necessity, is *only* intentional, *only* an object of consciousness [...] ⁸⁰

From the psychological standpoint, human consciousness living in the world is

⁷⁴ See *Ideas*, pp. 133 - 137 <110 - 113>.

⁷⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 137 <114>.

⁷⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 132 - 133 <109 - 110> where Husserl calls the pure Ego 'a transcendency within immanency'.

⁷⁷ *Ideas*, p. 140 <116 - 117>.

⁷⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 112 <93>.

⁷⁹ See *Ideas*, p. 171 <141>.

⁸⁰ *Ideas*, p. 113 <94>.

⁷¹ See *Ideas*, p. 131 - 132 <108>.

⁷² See *Ideas*, p. 113 <94>.

⁷³ *Ideas*, p. 136 <113>.

merely receptive. In *Prolegomena* Husserl leaves psychologism behind but retains the same paradigm in regard of ideal truths: they are not produced by acts of consciousness here and now, instead they are *meant*.⁸¹ In the Russia of that period Husserl's phenomenological approach, even if poorly understood at times, thus fell under the suspicion of suppressing creativity: no truth is created by us but only seen by intuition, which is not at all a creative act.⁸²

The situation radically changed after Husserl discovered the phenomenological attitude and pure consciousness as its correlate. It is pure consciousness that is absolutely active and the world, indeed, all transcendencies, are *constituted [konstituieren] by it.⁸³ The heuristic model in this case would be a generative grammar, the set of rules which is able to generate all the grammatically correct statements of the language. The dualism of grammar and statements provides an analogy for the dualism of pure consciousness and what is manifested in it (objectivity of all kinds). This likeness fails, however, when we remember one more stratum in the stream of mental processes: non-intentive sensuous data like pleasure, pain, itches, colour-Data, touch-Data, etc. The relationship between the sensuous ('formless *stuff') and the intentive ('stuffless form') belongs to the universal structures of pure consciousness. Stuff-Data present themselves as the stuff for sense-bestowing, which forms them into intentive mental processes. consciousness of:⁸⁴

What forms the stuff into intentive mental processes and what brings in that which is specific to *intentionality is precisely the same thing as what gives the locution, consciousness, its specific sense: precisely according to which consciousness *eo ipso* indicates something of which it is consciousness.⁸⁵

Husserl introduces for this form-giving factor the term *noetic moment*. of *noesis*. These moments relate a mental process to *nous* in the broadest sense. as

⁸¹ See *Prolegomena*, p. 151 <B 132>.

⁸² See Nutschidze, 1913, p. 141.

⁸³ See e.g. *Ideas*, p. 124 <102>, p. 140 <116 - 117>.

⁸⁴ See *Ideas*, p. 203 - 205 <172 - 173>. 'Intentive' means exactly that a mental process is consciousness of something - see *ibid.*, p. 200 <168>.

⁸⁵ *Ideas*, p. 205 <174>.

both norm-giving or sense-bestowing.⁸⁶ The problem of 'noetic-phenomenological analysis' is, therefore, the rationalisation of the irrational.⁸⁷ Husserl calls such problems 'functional':

the greatest problems of all are the *functional problems*, or those of the '*constitution of consciousness-objectivities*'. <These problems> concern the way in which noeses, e.g., with respect to Nature, by animating stuff and combining it into manifold-unitary continua and syntheses bring about consciousness of something [...] ⁸⁸

Mental processes, therefore, are to be studied now from the point of view of their function in making a 'synthetical unity': how different mental processes relate to the *same* something which is not immanent.⁸⁹ Husserl demonstrates the impressive shrewdness of his analysis when he refuses to understand the most obvious: 'consciousness of something'; for him it is *an enigma*.⁹⁰ Indeed, how can the flow of mental life which is never self-same relate to any *self-sameness? Husserl describes how consciousness operates at the 'pre-objective' level, continuously re-constituting the unity of reference to 'the same' Object in its *leibhafter Selbstheit*, in '*propria persona*'.⁹¹ The concept of constitution makes it now easy to understand the radical reshaping of mental phenomena by a change of attitude.

Each intentive mental process is indeed consciousness of something. But on the other hand it is always related to the pure Ego, the source of all spontaneity. A mental process has, therefore, two sides:

the purely subjective moments of the mode of consciousness and, so to speak, the rest of the content of the mental process turned away from the Ego. As a consequence, there is a certain extraordinary important two-sidedness in the essence of the sphere of mental processes, of which we can also say that in mental processes there is to be distinguished a subjectively

⁸⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 205 <174>.

⁸⁷ See *Ideas*, p. 207 <175>, p. 208 <176>.

⁸⁸ *Ideas*, p. 207 <176>. Consciousness-objectivities stands here for the German Bewusstseinsgegenständlichkeiten.

⁸⁹ See *Ideas*, p. 208 <176 - 177>.

⁹⁰ See *Ideas*, p. 212 <180>.

⁹¹ See *LIS*, p. 542 <B1 355>.

oriented [subjektiv-orientierte] side and an *Objectively oriented* [objektiv-orientierte] side [...]⁹²

The two-sidedness within mental processes reminds one of the duality of Object- and Subject-oriented types of *Weltanschauung*, described by Rickert (§5.2). This analogy goes much further than the similarity of wording. Husserl is demonstrating now how the two types of *Weltanschauung* can emerge: they reflect the duality within any intensive mental process.

Husserl designates the two sides as noesis (subjectively oriented) and noema (objectively oriented) and the corresponding modes of analysis: the study of pure subjectivity and the study of the constitution of Objectivity *for* the subjectivity. The great Either/Or of *Weltanschauung*, was, in Rickert's opinion, the expression of the **Weltproblem*. The main difficulty in reconciling the two types of *Weltanschauung* was causality versus will. Pure consciousness is exempted from the nexus of natural **causality* and within the region of pure consciousness subject- or Object-oriented descriptions are parallel: we can concentrate either on constituting (noesis) or on the constituted correlate (noematic content, **noema*).

If we remember that noesis brings sense-bestowal, so to say, 'makes sense' of the **stuff-stratum* of phenomenological Being, then it is but natural to refer to the 'productions' [Leistungen] as to 'sense'. Noema is, however, more than sense because noesis is more than mere sense-bestowal. Husserl distinguishes between the noematic core and other strata of full noema. The noematic core is indeed the 'objective sense' [gegenständlichen Sinn], or the object, of an intensive process.⁹³ The peripheral strata are the noematic correlates of the modalities of judgement and of emotional and volitional attitudes.⁹⁴

Husserl starts here the most elaborate analysis of consciousness as the analysis of its noetic-noematic structures, the phenomenology of reason. But that falls beyond the framework of this essay. In our perspective the result of Husserl's work could be best expressed in his own words:

⁹² *Ideas*, p. 191 <161>.

⁹³ See *Ideas*, pp. 213 - 214 <181>, pp. 217 - 218 <185>, pp. 221 - 222 <189>.

⁹⁴ See *Ideas*, Nos. 94 - 95.

[...] the world itself has its whole being as a certain 'sense' which presupposes absolute consciousness as the field where sense is bestowed [...] and] this field, the sphere of Being of absolute origins, is accessible to insightful inquiry [...]⁹⁵

The world is eidetically dependent on pure consciousness.

It would, however, be a grave mistake to label Husserl's pure phenomenology as solipsism.⁹⁶ Husserl's life-long concern was to defeat scepticism and relativism, firmly to ground science on some unshakeable foundation and to heal philosophy of its addiction to personal wisdom and profundity, which had confined it to the margins of the rapidly growing body of knowledge. The **Protagorean thesis* had to be refuted: man is not the measure of all things, 'things' do have the measure of their own and man has no say in it. Pure consciousness is this absolute measure, no matter what is to be measured.

Husserl's objective is *the demarcation* of the proper area for *first philosophy*: pure phenomenology

must claim to be **'first' philosophy* and to offer the means for carrying out every possible critique of reason [...]⁹⁷

Pure phenomenology is the starting-kit for the unfolding of any form of rational knowledge. It gives access to the complex of absolute Being, uncovers the Being of the absolute origins, the only ultimate nexus in which all Being could be rooted:

The realm of transcendental consciousness as the realm of what is, in a determined sense, 'absolute' being, has been provided for us by phenomenological reduction. It is the primal category of all Being (or, in our terminology, the primal region), the one in which all other regions of Being are rooted.⁹⁸

In this way the ideal norms could be discovered which would at last make our art,

⁹⁵ *Ideas*, pp. 129 - 130 <107>.

⁹⁶ Husserl himself warns against the interpretation of his philosophy as subjective idealism - see *Ideas*, p. 129 - 130 <106 - 107>.

⁹⁷ *Ideas*, p. 148 <121>.

⁹⁸ *Ideas*, p. 171 <141>, the translation is slightly changed; cf. *ibid.*, p. 129 - 130 <107>, *PRS*, p. 146 <340> where Husserl speaks of *rizomata panton*, the roots of the all.

law, philosophy and religion *valid [gültig].⁹⁹

The roots of Being are discovered in non-participating, impersonal, pure consciousness closed in on itself. A pure phenomenologist is a partitioner, not a participant. Were it not so close to *apartheid* with its negative political connotations, *apart-hood* would be a suitable term for Husserl's philosophy.

An alternative approach which promised to overcome that *apart-hood* and yet to solve the problem of normativity was developed by the philosophy of values.

5. REASON SENSITIVE TO VALUE (RICKERT)

Lotze's doctrine of values (§1.1) raised many new and often difficult questions. The concept of value was but contextually defined and therefore loaded with undesirable connotations from both everyday life and popular piety.¹ The objectivity of values remained an open question: apart from a metaphysical presupposition, values seemed to emerge in individual experience, together with human valuations. The value / valuation opposition could lead only to the duplication of the classical problems of the objectivity of cognition. The concept of thing-in-itself proved to be controversial enough; now value-in-itself had to be dealt with.

On the other hand, in his conception of value Lotze included enjoyment, which was a psychological and irrational factor. Again, that did not promise much of a theory. Finally, the dualism of values and the value-irrelevant mechanical universe brought up the difficult problem of sense and non-sense with regard to the existent. The Lotzean conception of values seemed to lead to a dead end and ran the risk of being completely forgotten by the following generation. That did not happen, however: on the contrary, between the 1880s and the 1930s value theory produced an avalanche of works.² The man who made values a

¹ In 1920 Wiederholm complained that the central concept of a 'value-philosophical movement' had not been yet sufficiently clarified (see Werkmeister, 1970, p. 314).

² In 1935 Heidegger, whose doctoral thesis was once supervised by Rickert, believed that about

⁹⁹ See PRS, <325>, cf. p. 126 of the English translation, where the mention of religion is omitted.

fundamental theme of philosophy was Nietzsche.³

§5.1. The revaluation of values and the quest for the axiological *a priori*

The Lotzean philosophy of values referred to the valuable as the ultimate substrate of the all, a system of meaning which made possible the communion between macrocosm and microcosm. In Nietzsche's hands, value became the concept of a crisis, indeed of a catastrophe. Retelling Nietzsche in Lotzean language, we can say the stream of Living Love, which appeared within the limits of a consciousness as the valuable, ceased: its source, God, was now dead. Removing entirely the theistic element from Lotze's doctrine of values, we immediately come to Nietzsche's basic ideas on values. What was left of idealism in Lotze is now to be radically deconstructed.

If no God at all were ever possible, then there was some origin to refer to, like the brain which excreted thought. Nietzsche, however, says God was killed, which means the destruction of the world: not its material destruction but the destruction of values. Yet again, in accordance with Lotzean metaphysics, the world divested of its values becomes meaningless and foreign, as Nietzsche puts it:

Is there yet any up and down? Do we not err through an infinite naught? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night, and more night, coming on all the while? [...] The most holy and powerful that the earth has yet owned, it has bled to death under our knives - who will wipe this blood off us?⁴

In the Lotzean universe, values could not be questioned: they were given by God to be turned into reality and the only question possible was how best to do it. God alone could bring values to the void. Now, after the death of God, the only one who could do it is man, who does it in his own way, in a radically different

one thousand writings on the concept of value had been published. 'All this calls itself philosophy' - exclaims Heidegger (see Schnädelbach, 1984, p. 190).

³ See Werkmeister, 1970, pp. 9 - 15.

⁴ *Gay Science*, 125 as quoted by Kaufmann, 1950, p. 81.

way. The testimony to the death of God is *the revaluation of values*, the recurrent theme of Nietzsche's writings.⁵ This revaluation is to put an end to the dominion of the false values which emerged as the result of the revaluation of the ancient 'noble' values. The historical embodiment of this original fall in valuation is the Biblical tradition:

It was the Jews who, with awe-inspiring consistency dared to invert the aristocratic value-equation (good = noble = powerful = beautiful = happy = beloved of God) [...] saying 'the wretched alone are the good; the poor, impotent, lowly alone are the good [...] blessedness is for them alone - and you, the powerful and noble, are on the contrary the evil [...] One knows *who* inherited this Jewish revaluation [...] With the Jews there begins *the slave revolt in morality*: that revolt which has a history of two thousand years behind it and which we no longer see because it - has been victorious.⁶

Nietzsche's *revaluation* is least of all a well balanced reflection on the system of values; rather, it shows a certain affinity with Marxism: the world enslaved by a dark power and the liberation from this slavery brought by the reversal of the established hierarchical order. A 'new' philosopher in this context looks more like a terrorist who should stab the governing values⁷ and clear the way for the future. To reevaluate and invert the existing values brought by Christianity is the negative part of the project; its positive part is the creation of the conditions for the final stage of homo-genesis: the genesis of the superhuman. Its main condition is

a *revaluation of values under whose new pressure and hammer a conscience would be steeled, a heart turned to bronze, in order to endure the weight of such responsibility.⁸

The new philosophers are expected to become commanders and legislators, their task is to *create* values,⁹ to find

the solution of the *problem of value*, the determination of the *order of rank*

⁵ See Kaufmann, 1950, pp. 90 - 91.

⁶ *Genealogy of Morals*, I, 7.

⁷ See *Beyond Good and Evil*, 212, where Nietzsche says the philosophers should apply the knife 'vivisectionally to the chest of the very virtues of our time'.

⁸ *Beyond Good and Evil*, 203.

⁹ See *Beyond Good and Evil*, 211; cf. *ibid.*, 260 where value-creating is the sign of a noble type of man.

among values.¹⁰

Nietzsche's view of Christianity as the stronghold of false values could not be accepted by the German academic community. Sacrificial love is at the centre of the Lotzean doctrine of values.¹¹ Greek learning, the Roman law and the Christian religion represented the basic values to be recognized by any cultivated person, i.e. by anybody who had received a formation, **Bildung*.¹² Nietzsche's attack on these virtues put a question mark over the very existence of the established social world.

A philosophical duel between Nietzsche and the academic philosophers was hardly possible. In their opinion he was nothing more than a talented layman and not a qualified philosopher.¹³ Rickert invented the concept of life-philosophy and put Nietzsche under that umbrella together with James, Bergson, Simmel, Dilthey. As the constitutive element of life-philosophy Rickert chose 'the valuative metaphysics of life' [Wert-Metaphysik des Lebens].¹⁴ Thus, Nietzsche proclaimed the value of *life* as the prime value:

If we wished to postulate a goal adequate to life, it could not coincide with any category of conscious life; it would, rather, have to explain all of them as a means to itself.¹⁵

Rickert held the opposite view (§7.1): the value of life depends on the values of culture.

Nevertheless, Nietzsche's ideal of a *new* philosopher, who moulds the future of the world by creating and dispensing values, proved to be very attractive to the academic philosophers. The values to be dispensed, however, could not be created at will, not even by a superman's will to power. The academics would seek instead the values which were not dependent on any will and therefore could

¹⁰ *Genealogy of Morals*, I, 17, Note.

¹¹ The only thing that is really good is that Living Love that wills the blessed-ness of others. *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 721 <3 615>.

¹² See Ringer, 1969, pp. 367 - 384; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 81 - 126, 315 - 351.

¹³ See Ringer, 1969, pp. 281, 308.

¹⁴ See *Die Philosophie des Lebens*, pp. 24 - 26.

¹⁵ *The Will to Power*, 707.

never be revaluated: these had to be dispensed to the world in the name of truth. In other words, the *axiological *a priori* should be found. The Ego and the world would be reunited by a set of absolute values, which belong neither to the Ego nor to the world. The *world problem would thus be solved.

The experts on humanity would protect the future of the world from various dilettanti whose claim to a revaluation would be then reduced to empty pretension. Husserl's project, to give one example, is the search for absolute values: the task of his rigorous philosophy is to discover such values as would determine the world of tomorrow:

Science [Wissenschaft] is a title standing for absolute, timeless values. Every such value, once discovered, belongs thereafter to the stock of values [Wertschatz] of *all* succeeding humanity and evidently determines likewise the material content of the idea of culture, wisdom, *Weltanschauung*, as well as *Weltanschauung* philosophy.¹⁶

The concept of *absolute value*¹⁷ is found also at the centre of Rickert's epistemology. We shall now analyse Rickert's theory in detail.

We begin with his ideal of philosophy.

§5.2. Philosophy as the science of the ultimate whole

Rickert criticises naturalism as much as Husserl does but in a different style. Husserl criticised his opponents for lack of rigour; Rickert points to their lack of inclusiveness. Husserl's main case study is psychologism, the naturalisation of logics. For Rickert such a case would be the naturalisation of history. He demonstrates the absurdity of the method used by natural sciences with regard to historical sciences:

historical research as natural science is intrinsically impossible, a logically contradictory task.¹⁸

The meaning of Rickert's criticism becomes clear when he comes to the

¹⁶ *PRS*, p. 136 <333>; the translation is slightly changed. The discovery of the ideal *norms is the related topic in Husserl: see *PRS*, p. 126 <325>, pp. 140 - 141 <336>.

¹⁷ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 228.

¹⁸ *Die Grenzen*, p. 21.

naturalistic interpretation of ethics. A *single particular* in this case would be a moral individual. If universal ethical norms are to be deduced from 'nature'¹⁹ then the individual has to subordinate himself to the moral law just as an instance of a genus is subordinated to the concept of that genus. [...Such ethics] in the end would have destroyed the meaning of personal life and the meaning of life in general.²⁰

Husserl's concern was the validity of norms: naturalism, he argued, was unable to make norms unquestionable.²¹ Rickert criticises the un-human character of naturalism: naturalism is unable to make life meaningful, no matter how rigorously its norms are set.

It is not just naturalism: all *theoretical* philosophy works exclusively with universal generic concepts [Gattungsbegriffe]. In practical philosophy the limited character of this method becomes evident.²² To secure the certitude of its results theoretical philosophy attempts to be non-human. If it oversteps its limits and pretends to be practical philosophy as well, it can become in-human.

The questions philosophy is trying to answer are *ultimate: philosophy should reach what is *the most important* for all of us;²³

the universal conceptions of the world and of life [Welt- und Lebensauffassungen] - ultimately philosophy has to do only with such universal problems.²⁴

At all times this is the ultimate end of philosophy: the panorama embracing the world and life.²⁵ Philosophy is striving for the *Weltanschauung* which would make clear our place in the world whole [Weltganzen].²⁶

This ultimate, part-whole relationship is *the* problem of philosophy, or, as Rickert himself puts it,

¹⁹ See *Die Grenzen*, p. 714.

²⁰ *Die Grenzen*, p. 715.

²¹ See *PRS*, p. 73 <290>.

²² See *Die Grenzen*, p. 710.

²³ See *Die Grenzen*, p. 7.

²⁴ *Die Grenzen*, p. 10.

²⁵ See *Die Grenzen*, p. 14.

²⁶ *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 2.

The *world problem lies therefore in the relationship between the Ego and the world.²⁷

Neutral terms like **place* or *relationship* cannot conceal the principal purpose of philosophy as Rickert sees it:

Speaking of '*Weltanschauung*', what do we actually mean? [...] Through the understanding of the world we would also like to get to know, as they say, 'the sense' of our life, the meaning of our Ego in the world. [...] Our questioning sense and meaning is ultimately our quest for guidance and purpose, for our attitude to the world, for our will and action. Where do we actually proceed? What is the end of this factual existence? What ought we to do? [...] It would be inappropriate arbitrariness to keep such questions out of philosophy. Even if nobody ever had raised these questions, philosophy would finally have to do it. Philosophy should take in all serious questions which other disciplines will not answer.²⁸

Our place in the world is not a point in the static universe: it is rather our role, our part in the world whole. A solution to the *world problem, a particular *Weltanschauung*, would be therefore a conception of this part-whole relationship, a 'concept of the world' [Weltbegriff]²⁹ which would make human life meaningful and purposeful. There are different strategies for coming to such a world-concept and Rickert will analyse their ability to fulfil the task of philosophy.

The great Either/Or of *Weltanschauung* which Rickert mentioned in *Die Grenzen* takes a more general form in his *Logos* essay.³⁰ Object-oriented philosophy attempts to include the Subject into the Object world [Objektwelt], to turn it into one Object among many. Subject-oriented philosophy tends to proceed from some all-embracing 'world Subject' [Weltsubjekt] and find all Objects 'in' it.³¹ *Objektwelt* and *Weltsubjekt* are therefore the two world concepts which offer two solutions to the *Weltproblem*. Rickert, however, finds both solutions unsatisfactory.

An Object-oriented *Weltanschauung* considers the Subject/Object opposition

²⁷ *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 2.

²⁸ *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 6.

²⁹ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, pp. 1 - 2.

³⁰ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 2.

³¹ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 2.

as one between psychical and physical Being. However, psychical Being can be made an Object: psychology successfully articulates mental life as a complex of psychical processes. Thus our inner universe becomes integrated into the all-embracing framework of *causality. Each and every process, psychical or physical, occurs in time and space and is linked to other processes by cause-and-effect relationships.³²

Such a world-view is not necessarily naturalistic, i.e. identifying reality with 'nature'. Causality is not exhausted by the laws of natural sciences: history has its special type of causality. Or, indeed, religion: an Object-oriented *Weltanschauung* by no means implies atheism. Pantheism or pan-psychism are easily integrated into the framework of the *Objektwelt*.³³

Nevertheless, any Subject-oriented *Weltanschauung* would reject even this sublime vision of the divine universe. What is alive cannot be like an automatic world machine. We are turned into automata, which leaves us no room for personal spontaneous activity. Cause and effect link our psychical processes so that the freedom of will becomes an irrelevant concept. It is not only the god of theism who is left beyond the nexus of causality. Much of my life, the most intimate core of my personality, my ability to create and destroy at will, is not admitted, either, to an *Objektwelt* which pretends to be all-embracing.³⁴

A Subject-oriented *Weltanschauung* considers the world as the world deed [Welt als Tat].³⁵ Actuality is activity. It is by the Subject's activity that Objects come to be: their Being is dependent on the Subject: causality is a form of the cognizing Subject: therefore causally determined Object-reality is extant only for the Subject. Object-reality is mere 'appearance', as it were the exterior of the world.³⁶

Rickert finds this position very vulnerable and conducive to inconsistency.

Subject-oriented *Weltanschauung* enters here into conflict with particular sciences which are necessarily Object-oriented. The results of special sciences, articulated in the nexus of *causality, are either ignored altogether as inessential, or causality is subordinated to a will or to a purpose. The unity of the *Weltanschauung* is destroyed.³⁷

Both branches of *Weltanschauung* not only failed in meeting their own demands but they failed to offer what a *Weltanschauung* is expected to work out: the sense and purpose of our life in the world. 'The world' of those world-views is not complete, nor do they give us very much of a 'view'.

An Object-oriented *Weltanschauung* is particularly deficient in this regard, it cannot in reality give our life any sense. The world as pure actuality of Objects is absolutely senseless. [...] We would never be able to grasp how in the world of pure Object-ness the awareness even of its senselessness comes to occur.³⁸

All attempts to make sense of the *Objektwelt* through e.g. a pantheistic interpretation, are hopeless. Such an interpretation has no ground in the *Objektwelt*, which remains ever the same, whether we accept pantheism or not. It only leads to the deifying of Objects.³⁹

Subject-oriented *Weltanschauung* leaves room for sense and purpose but it cannot tell us what is the sense of the world and how to define the purpose of our life. The world as the world Deed is no more comprehensible than the nexus of causality. Even if the world is actuated by a will to a purpose, why should we strive for it? Why should the purpose of the world Subject be of any value or interest to us? The deed of the *Weltsubjekt* might be as foreign to us as the *Objektwelt*.⁴⁰

An all-embracing world Ego can be as valueless and good-for-nothing as any human, all too human, Subject. That is why a Subject-oriented *Weltanschauung* can tell us about the sense of life no more than an Object-

³² See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 3.

³³ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, pp. 3 - 4.

³⁴ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 5.

³⁵ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 7.

³⁶ *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 4.

³⁷ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 9.

³⁸ *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, pp. 7 - 8.

³⁹ *Objektvergottung*. See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 8.

⁴⁰ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, pp. 9 - 10.

oriented *Weltanschauung*.⁴¹

Weltanschauung is to overcome the foreignness of the world, to open for us the world which is flesh from our flesh and spirit from our spirit. *Weltanschauung* should reveal to us our intimate relationship with this world and teach us to understand it. Foreignness must give way to an intimacy with the world, our real homeland where we can live and create.⁴²

§5.3. Transcendental psychology: reason sensitive to value

In his first book⁴³ Rickert combines value theory with another state-of-the-art philosophical discipline. The flight from metaphysics led many back to Kant and even beyond Kant⁴⁴ in their analysis of the logical presuppositions of any knowledge:

Eduard Zeller, the renowned historian of Greek philosophy, gave expression to this attitude of thought in his Heidelberg Address of the year 1862, 'On the meaning and importance of *Erkenntnis-Theorie*'. The introduction of this term forms a kind of landmark in the history of German philosophy, which has since largely moved in the indicated direction. The term has been translated into English by the word 'Epistemology'; a general theory of knowledge, of its principles and limits.⁴⁵

Rickert formulates the main problem of epistemology. According to the naive view of cognition, Being is opposed to consciousness, which cognizes Being by representations [Vorstellungen]. Kant himself could not change this paradigm and introduced thing-in-itself, which stood opposed to consciousness. Is this opposition inherent in any epistemology?⁴⁶ That which does not belong to the cognizing Subject and which cognition should conform with to be 'Objective' is called by Rickert *the object of cognition* [der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis]. The

main problem of epistemology then reads as follows:

what is the *object of cognition and from where does cognition acquire its Objectivity?⁴⁷

Rickert simply paraphrases the question Kant asked, the question that he answered by his *Critique of Pure Reason*.⁴⁸ Asking it again, Rickert actually puts a question mark over Kant's solution: the ambition of his book is no less than the revision of Kantianism.

Rickert concentrates on the difference between representation [Vorstellung] and judgement [Urteil]. Representations in themselves cannot be true or false: they are *Objects* given in the consciousness of the cognizing *Subject*.⁴⁹ Cognition is essentially the process of affirmation or negation: it ends up with the verdict *true or false*.⁵⁰

As truth is possible not in simple representations but only in judgements, so the concept of cognition is inseparable from the concept of judgement.⁵¹

It is our **participation* that makes the difference between a representation and a judgement. The relation of the Subject to a content of his consciousness could be value-neutral, indifferent, *teilnahmslos*, or on the contrary, this relation could include our interest, a valuation, in which case our will and our feelings are involved so that we can speak of participation by the living, real Subject of cognition. Rickert is very clear that the psychological side of the judgement is not his concern:

We only investigate the *kind* of psychical processes to which the complete judgement belongs, if we discern at all the state of our impartial consideration from the state of our *participation (or, more cautiously, of

⁴⁷ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 1. As elsewhere (§1.8), the capital O is used to discern between the derivatives of the German *Gegenstand* (the English *object*, small o) and *Objekt* (the English *Object*, capital O).

⁴⁸ In a letter to Herz in 1772 Kant asked a question about the relation of knowledge to its object [Gegenstand]: in what does it consist and on what does it rest? It was Windelband who popularized this 'cardinal' question in *History of Philosophy* (see *A History of Philosophy*, p. 538 <423>).

⁴⁹ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, §4. I translate *Vorstellung* as *representation* following Kemp Smith's translation of *Critique of Pure Reason*; see also GTH.

⁵⁰ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*,

⁵¹ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp.

⁴¹ *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 10.

⁴² See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 7.

⁴³ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*.

⁴⁴ 'Back to Kant' had been the slogan of neo-Kantian movement since the 1860s; another motto belongs to Windelband: to understand Kant is to go beyond him (as quoted by Ringer, 1969, p. 311).

⁴⁵ Merz, 1914, vol. 3, pp. 71 - 72.

⁴⁶ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 2.

oriented *Weltanschauung*.⁴¹

Weltanschauung is to overcome the foreignness of the world, to open for us the world which is flesh from our flesh and spirit from our spirit. *Weltanschauung* should reveal to us our intimate relationship with this world and teach us to understand it. Foreignness must give way to an intimacy with the world, our real homeland where we can live and create.⁴²

§5.3. Transcendental psychology: reason sensitive to value

In his first book⁴³ Rickert combines value theory with another state-of-the-art philosophical discipline. The flight from metaphysics led many back to Kant and even beyond Kant⁴⁴ in their analysis of the logical presuppositions of any knowledge:

Eduard Zeller, the renowned historian of Greek philosophy, gave expression to this attitude of thought in his Heidelberg Address of the year 1862, 'On the meaning and importance of *Erkenntnis-Theorie*'. The introduction of this term forms a kind of landmark in the history of German philosophy, which has since largely moved in the indicated direction. The term has been translated into English by the word 'Epistemology'; a general theory of knowledge, of its principles and limits.⁴⁵

Rickert formulates the main problem of epistemology. According to the naive view of cognition, Being is opposed to consciousness, which cognizes Being by representations [*Vorstellungen*]. Kant himself could not change this paradigm and introduced thing-in-itself, which stood opposed to consciousness. Is this opposition inherent in any epistemology?⁴⁶ That which does not belong to the cognizing Subject and which cognition should conform with to be 'Objective' is called by Rickert *the object of cognition* [*der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*]. The

⁴¹ *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 10.

⁴² See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 7.

⁴³ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*.

⁴⁴ 'Back to Kant' had been the slogan of neo-Kantian movement since the 1860s; another motto belongs to Windelband: to understand Kant is to go beyond him (as quoted by Ringer, 1969, p. 311).

⁴⁵ Merz, 1914, vol. 3, pp. 71 - 72.

⁴⁶ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 2.

main problem of epistemology then reads as follows:

what is the *object of cognition and from where does cognition acquire its Objectivity?⁴⁷

Rickert simply paraphrases the question Kant asked, the question that he answered by his *Critique of Pure Reason*.⁴⁸ Asking it again, Rickert actually puts a question mark over Kant's solution: the ambition of his book is no less than the revision of Kantianism.

Rickert concentrates on the difference between representation [*Vorstellung*] and judgement [*Urteil*]. Representations in themselves cannot be true or false: they are *Objects* given in the consciousness of the cognizing *Subject*.⁴⁹ Cognition is essentially the process of affirmation or negation: it ends up with the verdict *true or false*.⁵⁰

As truth is possible not in simple representations but only in judgements, so the concept of cognition is inseparable from the concept of judgement.⁵¹

It is our **participation* that makes the difference between a representation and a judgement. The relation of the Subject to a content of his consciousness could be value-neutral, indifferent, *teilnahmslos*, or on the contrary, this relation could include our interest, a valuation, in which case our will and our feelings are involved so that we can speak of participation by the living, real Subject of cognition. Rickert is very clear that the psychological side of the judgement is not his concern:

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⁴⁷ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 1. As elsewhere (§1.8), the capital O is used to discern between the derivatives of the German *Gegenstand* (the English *object*, small o) and *Objekt* (the English *Object*, capital O).

⁴⁸ In a letter to Herz in 1772 Kant asked a question about the relation of knowledge to its object [*Gegenstand*]: in what does it consist and on what does it rest? It was Windelband who popularized this 'cardinal' question in his *History of Philosophy* (see *A History of Philosophy*, p. 538 <423>).

⁴⁹ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 83 - 84. I translate *Vorstellung* as *representation* following Kemp Smith's translation of *Critique of Pure Reason*; see also GTH.

⁵⁰ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 103.

⁵¹ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 102 - 103.

what seems to be our participation) when the content of our consciousness is *valuable* for us.⁵²

If will and sentiments are involved, our relation to the object includes an either-or which is absent in a simple presentation. *This either-or is the index of our relation to a value*: an important contribution by Rickert to the philosophy of value.⁵³ If something simply 'is', this 'is' cannot but be recognized, as, for example, by sensations. The situation is different if something can be good or bad, beautiful or ugly, useful or harmful: then the freedom to utter such a verdict belongs to us and the concepts we use for the valuation necessarily form binary oppositions. In a later work Rickert would distinguish between valuative and existential concepts [*Wertbegriffe / Seinsbegriffe]: a valuative concept always has a counterpart with the opposite meaning.⁵⁴

A judgement which could be true or false includes, therefore, the relation to a value. It has a practical element of rejection or approval. That is true with regard to any judgement, as well as with regard to cognition in general, as it consists of judgements. Strange as it may sound,

Cognition is therefore a process, determined by sentiments which are regarded psychologically always as liking or disliking.⁵⁵

§5.4. Transcendental psychology: the feeling of evidence

Rickert does not use Lotzean concepts (§1.1) of **Gemüth* or **Bildung*. *Macrocosm* in all its fullness, which was the objective of Lotzean metaphysics, is reduced here to the minimal construct required by Rickert's epistemology. But Rickert keeps the basic Lotzean paradigm intact, only interpreting it in an epistemological context.

Indeed, Lotze also speaks about the importance of the *emotional-volitional

sphere. The difference between disinterested understanding and the reason sensitive to value⁵⁶ is absolutely crucial for cognition because cognition is piloted by values: we long to know what is valuable in and for itself.⁵⁷ Cognition means the entrance of the factual into a consciousness which *enjoys* it, and brings with it the enjoyment of understanding.⁵⁸

Rickert introduces an *emotional-volitional element into the *theoretical* Subject, the Subject of theoretical cognition.⁵⁹ He should now demonstrate how the fleeting emotions of our encounter with the valuable could be related to extra-temporal knowledge. Lotze used the metaphor of precipitation (which was later borrowed by Husserl): *Bildung* is the precipitate of the flow of life.⁶⁰ This metaphor does not offer much: it simply describes life-experience as essentially heterogeneous, consisting of fleeting and lasting components. Rickert, whose purpose is to discover the object of cognition, i.e. what is logically prior to any cognition, cannot be satisfied with such a metaphor. Cognition, Rickert says, is guided by a feeling; but that feeling is different from other feelings: it is *the feeling of truth* [Wahrheitsgefühl].⁶¹

To describe that difference Rickert gives the feeling of truth a *noetic* interpretation. We experience enjoyment when the impulse for cognition is satisfied and remains dormant: such a feeling we call *certitude* [Gewissheit]. Certitude is but the psychological aspect of noetic evidence [Evidenz]; it is the *feeling of evidence*. The feeling of evidence accompanies a judgement and, unlike other emotions, makes it extra-temporally valid and thus independent from the flow of our feelings. The feeling of evidence is experienced also as the *belief* [der

⁵⁶ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 1, pp. 242 - 244 <1 272 - 274>.

⁵⁷ See *Metaphysik*, 1841, p. 13.

⁵⁸ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, pp. 160 - 161 <3 37 - 38>.

⁵⁹ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 103.

⁶⁰ Cf. PRS, p. <329> where Husserl also speaks about *der Niederschlag der im Ablauf des Leben* which is essentially *Bildung*.

⁶¹ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 110.

⁵² *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 105. My italics.

⁵³ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 105; cf. *Zwei Wege*, p. 182; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 203 - 206. Rickert mentions Windelband, whose ideas he developed: see *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 92 - 93.

⁵⁴ See *Zwei Wege*, p. 204.

⁵⁵ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 106.

Glaube] in the extratemporal validity of the judgement.⁶² Moreover, with this feeling

we experience something on which we are dependent. At the same time as I wish to judge, I feel myself *bound* with the feeling of evidence to which I assent, i.e. I cannot affirm or negate arbitrarily.⁶³

The feeling of evidence, which is certitude with regard to the process of cognition, and which is a belief with regard to the extra-temporal, acquires one more aspect. With regard to the judging Subject it is an imperative, *the ought*:

what guides my judgement, and therefore my cognition, is the immediate feeling that I *ought* to judge so and not otherwise.⁶⁴

It is possible now to answer the question which Rickert asked in the beginning of his book: what is the object of cognition:

If we would call that with which cognition conforms, its object, then this object of cognition can only be the ought which is acknowledged in judgement.⁶⁵

How do values come into this concept? It seems that Rickert merely reformulates the basic Lotzean identification: the ought-to-be *is* the valuable, and Lotze even speaks about 'the ought-to-be values' [sollenden Werte].⁶⁶ If the ought is the imperative, then a value is *the what* of this imperative, *that* which I ought to acknowledge. The relation between the two remains, however, somewhat unclear because with regard to judgements the ought, the value and the truth are equivalent.⁶⁷ A judgement becomes true not because of its correspondence to 'the reality' but only if it acknowledges the ought / the value.

Rickert's concern here is different: the refutation of the correspondence theory of truth. As this objective is more or less achieved, he has to answer the question about the Objectivity of his object of cognition: does the whole conception not

rest on a feeling and a belief? How could they be more than moments of an individual existence?⁶⁸

[...] Is it possible to *doubt* that the ought, which we acknowledge in a judgement, has meaning beyond the content of consciousness and independent of the cognizing Subject, i.e. the transcendent meaning which ought necessarily to be acknowledged?⁶⁹

§5.5. The transcendental argument

Rickert did not develop any new methods in epistemology as, to give one example, Husserl did. He constantly repeats the same pattern of 'proof'. This is how Rickert tries to prove the transcendence of the ought which is present in any judgement:

An answer to that could be given only if we investigate whether the denial of this ought could be carried through or if it leads to a contradiction, so that the denial nullifies itself. We have no other criterion to establish the prerequisites of cognition.⁷⁰

This archaic type of argument was invented by Kant: the transcendental argument.⁷¹ Guy Oakes describes this, in his words, Rickert's principal tool of philosophical reasoning:

[...] the tactics of a transcendental argument depend upon establishing an indispensability condition. The move from premise to conclusion is made by showing that the condition stated in the conclusion is indispensable to a practice in which we in fact engage. Given the existence of the practice, the conclusion is undeniable.⁷²

It is evident that we can always doubt the transcendence of the existent. Any judgement concerning transcendent Being can be construed into a judgement about a content of the consciousness: *the sun is shining* is equivalent to *I see the sun shining*. With regard to the latter form of the judgement, the epistemological

⁶² See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 111 - 112.

⁶³ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 112.

⁶⁴ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 115.

⁶⁵ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 122; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 164 - 165.

⁶⁶ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 346 <3 230>.

⁶⁷ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 116 - 117.

⁶⁸ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 126 - 127.

⁶⁹ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 128.

⁷⁰ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 128.

⁷¹ See Oakes, 1988, pp. 108 - 110 and footnotes 35 - 37 with the bibliography on this problem.

⁷² Oakes, 1988, p. 109.

always reach fulfilling perception: this does not mean that each step, each individual identification that we call a fulfilment, need contain perception as its fulfilling act. The relative manner in which we speak of 'more or less direct' and of 'self' indicates the main point: that the synthesis of fulfilment involves an *inequality in value* among its related members. [...] Each such ascending series, however, points to, or actualises as its final member, an *ideal limit* to all increase, thus setting an insurpassable goal: *the goal of absolute knowledge, of the adequate self-presentation of the Object of knowledge*.⁹⁸

Another criticism came from Rickert's mentor, Windelband. He warned that the axiological theories of truth could lead to pragmatism.⁹⁹ Indeed, in his later works Rickert abandons the idea of a closed system of universally valid values and develops a more relaxed style, openly accepting the unfinished character of all philosophising. Writing on the system of values, he classifies them according to a purely Protagorean principle: those which can be fulfilled within the span of a human life and those which cannot. That is very far from the transcendent, self-sufficient values which do not ask for whom they are valid.¹⁰⁰ A certain affinity with pragmatism is difficult to deny. Perhaps that is why Rickert concentrates on the criticism of life philosophy, proclaiming the priority of culture over life (§7.1).

⁹⁸ *LI6*, p. 720 <B2 65>. I have slightly changed the translation.

⁹⁹ See *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 174.

¹⁰⁰ See *Zwei Wege*, p. 210.

7. THE WORLD IN RUINS: THE SUPRA-INDIVIDUAL AGAINST THE INDIVIDUAL

Two projects of philosophy, philosophy as rigorous science (Husserl) and philosophy as the doctrine of the world whole (Rickert), shared the same ambition to be the philosophy of the All. But Rickert and Husserl moved in opposite directions. Rickert suggested starting with the axiological analysis of culture, then applying the results to an analysis of human acts. Husserl started with the analysis of acts of consciousness and hoped to come to the cultural ideal: *valid [gültig] art, law, philosophy and religion.¹

In the last resort it is culture which provides the Ego with the interpretation of the world: this is how the *Weltproblem* is solved. The problem of cultural values is, therefore, prior to the problem of orientation in the world's whole.² The difference between Husserl and Rickert in this respect is the difference of method. Whereas the former suggested coming to 'valid' values by rigorous phenomenological analysis, the latter promised to extract 'transcendent' values by using the Kantian transcendent argument. Reality gravitates to values, and the task of philosophy is to discover the law of that gravitation.

Needless to say, the discovery of absolute cultural ideals, no matter whether

¹ See *PRS*, p. <325>.

² See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 19.

they are axiological or phenomenological, never happened. Political developments in Europe were revealing more and more permanent conflicts which were splitting society into groups without a common world-view, both on the international and national level. The First World War made any belief in universal synthesis impossible. That was perhaps the reason for the sudden collapse of Neo-Kantianism in the 1920s. The analogous development in the field of phenomenology would be Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. This monumental treatise, though dedicated to Husserl, effectively ruined the basic tenets of his phenomenology, starting from the ideal of rigorous science.

The Great War and the revolutions in Russia and in Germany were nothing less than an immense, pan-European cultural fiasco. The reality revealed by the War did not gravitate to the values of culture. Rickert spoke in the name of those who created that culture. Now it became clear that their project could not continue. European culture had failed in providing orientation 'in the world's whole'. On the contrary, the shock of mass graves, poisonous gas and other atrocities of war induced a feeling of disorientation all over Europe.

Before the War it was possible to suggest how the course of the world could be amended; now, that world was shipwrecked. Many were convinced that the catastrophe was self-inflicted by the evils of the pre-War world; with much pain it had to be accepted that what was lost was lost for ever. That situation brought about the whole spectrum of what might well be called the 'Robinsonade' literature: how to live after the catastrophe. As Osip Mandelstam put it in 1922:

We appear as colonizers to this new age, which is vast and stiff-necked. To Europeanize and humanize the twentieth century, to provide it with teleological warmth - this is the task of those emigrants who survived the shipwreck of the nineteenth century and were cast by the will of fate upon the shores of a new historical continent.³

The central problem of the 'Robinsonade' literature was often formulated as the relationship between culture and life, which had now to be reconsidered in the

³ Mandelstam, 1979a <1922>, p. 144; the translation is amended.

light of the fierce resistance faced by the colonizers of the new historical continent.

§7.1. Life should perform duty for culture

In 1912 Rickert published an essay describing what later would become the main ideological paradigm in Nazi Germany. Rickert called this philosophy *biologism*. According to it, all cultural valuations should be made in regard to the only value: vitality. More vital ethnic groups are of higher value than their less vital neighbours. The value of an individual depends on his contribution to the vitality of his lineage: those who hold back are of negative value. Works of art can also be diagnosed as healthy or sick. Rickert even discerned the central role of some Nietzschean ideas (§5.1) which were taken out of their original context, made banal and turned into a caricature of Nietzsche's philosophy.⁴

The key-word of biologism was *life*.⁵ Leaving aside now the prophetic criticism of this fashionable philosophy by Rickert, let us turn to the section of his essay where he tries to answer positively a meaningful question:

We now ask whether life, as mere life, has a value or something else confers its value on it; and whether life in general can be considered as the highest good and its value as the measure of all other goods.⁶

There is no easy answer to this question. We cannot even say what we mean by 'life': certainly not the 'life' studied by scientific biology. Nor is 'life' all that we *erleben*, 'live through' in experience: our experience includes also the non-living. To build up an axiology on the value-concept *[Wertbegriff] of life, we should have been able to discern between what is alive and what is not. Then we could take 'the alive' [Das Lebendige] as the praxiological *ought*.⁷

Rickert gets rather lost trying to define 'life'. It is clear that to be alive is not always better than to be dead: here his arguments might contribute to the

⁴ See *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, pp. 133 - 142.

⁵ See *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, p. 134.

⁶ *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, p. 151.

⁷ See *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, pp. 151 - 152.

euthanasia debate of today.⁸ It is no less clear, however, that 'life' often gets a more profound interpretation, as in life philosophy, *Lebensphilosophie*.

Rickert considered the refutation of life philosophy as one of his most important tasks. He created the object of his criticism rather than finding it in reality. *Lebensphilosophie* was not a school of philosophy, not even a coherent conceptual framework. Those whom Rickert mentions in regard to life philosophy do not seem to have anything in common: James and Simmel, Nietzsche and Dilthey, Mach and Poincaré, social Darwinists and the dilettanti of the post-war period, preaching the *völkisch* conservative ideology of anti-Semitism and anti-modernity.⁹

Thus in his essay, trying to consider under the same heading social hygiene and philosophy proper, Rickert finds no better conceptual umbrella than 'life'.¹⁰ But 'life' cannot even have a single meaning. In social hygiene, biological life is opposed to biological death. In life philosophy, on the contrary, the same word can be used with almost mystical connotations. To give one example, Georg Lukács says 'life' can be described only negatively, a remark which appears just a few pages before Rickert's essay in the same issue of *Logos*!¹¹

Fritz Ringer explains this equation of vulgar social Darwinism with profound philosophical insights in the case of life philosophy:

to the *mandarins [§1.2], this equation made sense. They had to insist that an idealistic *Weltanschauung* could be logically founded upon an idealistic *Wissenschaft*. They could not tolerate the separation of learning from life. It did not matter to them whether divorce proceedings were initiated by a *Wissenschaft* grown modest and sceptical through positivism, or by an irrationalism grown arrogant in its defence of life. They had to maintain that their wisdom was both well-founded and inaccessible to the man in the street.¹²

Rickert protests energetically against one particular ambition of life

philosophy: it tries to build up its axiology extracting values not from historical culture (as Rickert suggested) but from 'life itself'. Certainly, life (in whatever sense) is the precondition of all other goods/values. 'Life' is therefore the only valid value, the source of all other values. Here, life philosophy threatens the central thesis of Rickert's philosophy: all values are related to *cultural* goods, they are essentially *cultural values.¹³ Proclaiming the independence of life from culture, life philosophy brings what Ringer calls 'the separation of learning from life'. And indeed, Rickert is not going to tolerate it: he argues that *culture is the opposite of life*. To become valuable in itself, to acquire an unconditionally valid value, life should be turned into its opposite, culture:

In other words, to attach to life some goods with values in their own right, life should be to a certain degree 'deadened'.¹⁴

If we now define the ideal 'man in the street' as one that 'merely' lives, who is nothing more than 'just' alive, then Ringer's diagnosis could not be more relevant in the case of Rickert. 'Mere' life is senseless.¹⁵ All sense-bestowing comes from culture, which is essentially not life. The man in the street is but a recipient of values which alone could equip him with sense and purpose. A philosopher, on the other hand, is the expert on values. The process of sense-bestowing can be seen therefore as the cultivation of the man in the street by the academics:

Not only does culture perform no duties for *life but, on the contrary, it is life that performs duty for culture. Therefore it does not matter whether culture is more or less vital; what does matter is which value is actualized through its vitality.¹⁶

Such a view implied a warning to the mandarin community: should life escape from the grip of culture, it would become purely biological and hence anti-cultural. In other words, as long as life is in the grip of culture, the central position of the cultural elite is secured. In 1912 Rickert could not see anything that might have changed that situation. That one day life might refuse to perform its duty for

⁸ See *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, pp. 152 - 153.

⁹ See Ringer, 1969, pp. 334 - 338.

¹⁰ See *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, p. 134.

¹¹ See Lukács, 1912, p. 80.

¹² Ringer, 1969, p. 339.

¹³ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 17.

¹⁴ *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, p. 154.

¹⁵ See *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, p. 154.

¹⁶ *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, p. 165.

culture seemed to be something entirely apocalyptic.

§7.2. The Helots of the Dorians: on the threshold of the Dark Age

In Russia the apocalyptic tone was strongly felt as early as in the mid-1900s. Culture, which was the product and milieu of the Russian intellectual community, showed undeniable signs of its coming end. In 1915 Berdyaev published a detailed study of the conflict between creativity and culture. Culture represents a threat to creativity. Artistic creation remains for ever within the sphere of 'symbolic values': no new Being comes through it, it is 'ideal and not real', it is confined to culture. As any cult giving but the symbolic expression of the ultimate mystery is the failure of communion with God, so *cult-ure* is the failure of human creativity. 'Cultural values' come instead of new Being.¹⁷

Viewed, as it were, from the final point of the world process, cultural values block the way to it. But taken within history, they are 'sacred and any nihilism towards them is godless'. Culture shall be 'lived through', left behind and transformed into 'theourgy'.¹⁸ The failure of culture is a blessed failure, leading to a new supra-cultural epoch which is neither pre-cultural, nor non-cultural. The creativity of the new era of the Spirit shall trans-substantiate culture into the utmost life of the genuine Cosmos. In theourgy word becomes flesh, art becomes power. It re-directs creative energy from the creation of cultural values to the creation of a new life of beauty.¹⁹

If we leave out the then fashionable stylization which turns Berdyaev's book into an apocalypse, his point is clear. Being is more than culture, and bringing forth new Being is more than the embodiment of cultural values. We cannot and we should not submit to what we ourselves have created. Culture is an expression of the creative powers of Being as much as it is an obstacle to them.

¹⁷ See Berdyaev, 1985 <1915>, pp. 262, 275, 35, 262 - 263; most of the book is given up to the analysis of those 'failures' in the fields of philosophy, art, social life, etc.

¹⁸ *Theourgy* is an effort to create a radically different 'heaven and earth' by way of collaboration between God and humankind. See Berdyaev, 1985 <1915>, p. 160.

¹⁹ See Berdyaev, 1985 <1915>, pp. 285, 359 - 360, 283.

Berdyaev's view implies that from time to time such a culture, which hinders rather than stimulates creativity, should be uprooted. Berdyaev calls this reaction to the overgrowth of culture 'barbarity'. In 1917, just six days after the October Revolution in St. Petersburg, Berdyaev delivered a public lecture on the subject of *Futurism, a then fashionable artistic movement which seemed 'barbaric' to many. Berdyaev describes the life cycle of culture which should pass periodically through 'barbaric' periods of revitalization:

Culture eventually separates itself from its source of life and Being and at its climax it contraposes itself to life and Being. There comes the period of the late culture of decadence, which is the most refined and beautiful culture. [...Then] the barbarity of spirit and the barbarity of flesh and blood, which derive their strength from the deepest dark springs of Being and assimilate juices from the dark roots of all life, from the abyss which is not yet illuminated and transformed by culture, will, like a mighty flood, overwhelm human culture when it comes to the point of decline and exhaustion. Christianity would have seemed barbarity to the cultured people of Antiquity when decline was already in the air.²⁰

Berdyaev, agreeing on the barbaric character of Futurism, did not think it might become the life-giving injection of vitality into the ailing body of culture: Futurism came not from the abyss of life but from its surface.²¹ It was, so to say, not barbaric enough. Genuinely life-giving barbarity was yet to come.

And it did. Writing seven years later about the crisis, now in its full force, Berdyaev developed the main thesis of his lecture. The crisis is merely the inevitable phase in the procession of the cosmic cycle. Now it is at its shadow period: the cosmic night has come, the new Dark Ages. Berdyaev could not see any role for academic philosophy in a new Middle Ages which would be marked, rather, by the return of the Church to the centre of life.²²

Berdyaev was not alone in proclaiming the advent of the Dark Ages. On the eve of the October Revolution a small circle of Greek scholars gathered in St. Petersburg just a few days before Berdyaev's lecture. Unlike Berdyaev they did

²⁰ Berdyaev, 1918, pp. 24 - 25.

²¹ See Berdyaev, 1918, p. 26.

²² See Berdyaev, 1924, pp. 8 - 10, 45.

not have to wait for the 'barbarity to come', because they saw it coming. When Mikhail Bakhtin's brother, Nikolaj, was delivering his lecture 'The Coming of the Dark Ages', gunfire could already be heard in the streets:

St. Petersburg Russia - to which we all belong, soul and body, and at whose agony we are now assisting - is, on the surface, only a brilliant local variety of the European Civilization, just as the so-called Mycenaean civilization was the mainland variety of the Cretan.²³

What Berdyaev described as the barbarity-decadence cycle was manifest in an episode from ancient history. Nikolaj Bakhtin referred to the fall of Mycenaean civilization in the 2nd millennium BC. It was *Dorians, the highlanders, who ruined it. They spoke the same language but remained untouched by the refinement of Mycenaean culture: they escaped from its lure to their mountains. Did it not provide a meaningful parallel to Russian history? The Westernized culture of the Russian elite, of the 'Myceneans' of Russia, was nothing more than a surface layer. It never penetrated deep into the 'Scythian' soul, which was now liberating itself from foreign elements.²⁴

Some Myceneans fled from the Dorian invasion and left the country for Crete, others became enslaved by the invaders. After the Dark Age, which lasted several centuries, Helots, the descendants of these enslaved Myceneans, developed a new culture which contributed to the emergence of the true Greek culture in all its greatness. Nikolaj Bakhtin's dilemma is simple. Either to take the role of Helots: to stay in Russia, to be swallowed by the rising tide of barbarity, to work patiently for the future, or to flee from the coming Dark Age:

Now it has come. You hear them moving in the streets? They are asserting the rights of the Scythian soul which we have betrayed. Now, on the threshold of the Dark Age, examine your allegiances and see which is stronger. For divided allegiance is no longer possible. Shall we stay here, Helots of the Dorians, waiting for the new world to arise (and remember, we shall have long to wait)? Or shall we sail to our spiritual home, to Crete (for our Crete is yet powerful and our Knossos [The capital of Crete] still

²³ Bakhtin (Nikolaj), 1963, p. 43.

²⁴ See Bakhtin (Nikolaj), 1963, pp. 43 - 44.

stands)?²⁵

The Bakhtin brothers parted and never met again. Nikolaj 'sailed for Crete', i.e. joined the White Guards in the Civil War, emigrated and ended his life in Birmingham as a professor of linguistics and a member of the Communist Party.

Mikhail Bakhtin joined 'the Helots of the Dorians'. In 1918 he moved from St. Petersburg to Nevel, a little town which used to be a popular resort before the War. The city of St. Petersburg was collapsing: there was no food left, no fuel for heating, no steady access to electricity and water, no protection from bandits.²⁶ In Nevel Bakhtin took part in different cultural projects, like e.g. the stage direction of Sophocle's *Oedipus at Colonus* in the open air with a cast of 500! He gave popular lectures on Leonardo, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Blok, Vyacheslav Ivanov, on Christianity and socialism, on French literature of the 18th century and on Russian symbolist poetry. He also travelled with the Nevel symphony orchestra to introduce concerts to audiences which probably had never heard classical music before.²⁷

The following fragment from 1921 confirms his 'Helotean' programme. Bakhtin is writing to Matvej Kagan who, after his studies at the best universities of Germany, met nothing but misunderstanding and even hostility in Russia. Bakhtin is trying to encourage him:

With regard to a Russian provincial university you are too demanding. [...] All Russian provincial universities without exception are adventures. That is absolutely inevitable because there are not enough genuine academics even for the universities in the capitals [Moscow and St. Petersburg]. In former times the positions at the provincial universities were held by the officials who had some 'civil' but no scholarly distinctions [...] and they were intolerant and malevolent. A kind of academic milieu could be found only in the capitals, but now even the capitals have nothing.²⁸ [...] But of course,

²⁵ Bakhtin (Nikolaj), 1963, pp. 43 - 44. 'Helots' stands here for the Russian 'raby', slaves. According to modern research, Crete fell long before Mycenaean civilization. Bakhtin could not know that.

²⁶ Lossky remembers that the temperature in his apartment was 3 C: see Lossky, 1968, p. 206. Lenin himself, with his government, left the city for Moscow.

²⁷ See Bocharov, 1993, pp. 84 - 85, 89; Clark and Holquist, p. 44.

²⁸ In his sociological analysis of Russia in 1918 - 1921, Pitirim Sorokin, himself a professor of sociology at the university of St. Petersburg, estimates the mortality rate among professors as

*this situation in Russia should change sooner or later, and, I hope, not without your participation; for the time being one should be patient. [...] Can you find in Russia nowadays anything that would not be an adventure? [...] Let us begin with an adventure, just to turn it eventually into something more solid and fundamental. Such gradual conversion and transformation of an adventure is undoubtedly possible.*²⁹

This telling fragment shows structural parallels with Nikolaj Bakhtin's speech in 1917. The layer of the elite ('Cretan') culture was always thin in Russia, confined to the capitals and never reaching the provinces ('the mountains'). Now that all the universities have become provincial ('barbaric'), an adventure is the paradigm of new life ('Dark Age'), but a group of committed intellectuals ('Helots') can eventually, in Berdyaev's words, cultivate this abyss which is not yet illuminated and transformed by culture.

In 1918 - 1924 Bakhtin's hopes for the future were not at all groundless. He was actively involved in lecturing and teaching, often for very simple audiences.³⁰ At that time political correctness reached a level its modern adepts could only dream about: the personages of classical literature (including even Christ of the Gospels!) were brought to 'literary courts' which had to reach a verdict 'guilty' or 'not guilty'. Bakhtin always took the part of the defence in these trials and normally won them.³¹

In spite of poor conditions, intellectual life in the early 1920s remained incredibly intense. Given the limited possibilities for publication, intellectual exchanges took the form of public or semi-public meetings: philosophical

having grown six times in 1918 - 1920. The loss of life among the university graduates was six to seven times higher than the average. Hunger and poor conditions were the main contributing factors. The Bolshevik government had to introduce a special food ration for academics. By 1922 the number of graduates from high and secondary schools fell respectively by 70 and 60 percent compared to 1917, according to the official statistics disclosed by Lunacharsky (the minister of education). See Sorokin, 1923, pp. 11, 73, 75, 77.

²⁹ Bakhtin's letter from March 1921 - see *Pamyat'*, 4 (1981), Paris, pp. 258 - 259.

³⁰ See *Pamyat'*, 4 (1981), Paris, pp. 273 - 274, 277; Mirkina, 1993, pp. 66 - 69; Clark and Holquist, 1984, pp. 38 - 49.

³¹ See Mirkina, 1993, p. 66.

'academies',³² societies,³³ circles (like Bakhtin's circles in Nevel and Vitebsk) were founded. In 1921 the Philosophical Society of St. Petersburg resumed its activities; the first issues of its journal *Mysl'* [Thought] were published in early 1922. Boris Yakovenko, the Russian co-editor of *Logos*, even declared (from Berlin) that Bolshevism was essentially the quest for freedom, which would lead to the unprecedented blossoming of a new philosophy of freedom.³⁴ It seemed the Helots were gradually regaining their cultural leadership.

§7.3. Life devours culture

By 1920 the isolation of Russia from the West was broken and books and magazines from abroad appeared in the country after a three-year break. At the end of 1921 Oswald Spengler's 'The Decline of the West' reached Moscow.³⁵ The following year a group of Russian philosophers published their reflections on Spengler's book. They could hardly have imagined what their rather ordinary publication would bring in its train.

Lenin read it in March 1922 and ordered the GPU (the early version of KGB) to pay attention to this 'White Guardist' book. In June the GPU deputy chief reported to the Politburo about 'anti-Soviet groupings' among the intelligentsia. The resolution: dissidents from the Party line of thought should be deprived of their homeland. The lists for deportation were submitted to Lenin, who personally took up the case.³⁶ In autumn 1922 he told Stalin:

Several *hundred* such gentlemen should be deported from the country without mercy. We'll cleanse Russia once and for all. Arrest several

³² In Moscow (1918-1921) and Petersburg: see e.g. Steppun, 1990, vol. 2, pp. 272-273.

³³ Philosophical societies were founded e.g. in Kiev, Kostroma, Rostov, Saratov - see *Mysl'*, 3 (1922), p. 187, Yakovenko, 1925, p. 205.

³⁴ See Yakovenko, 1921, p. 55; a few years later Yakovenko reconsidered his position: see Editorial, 1925, pp. 16 - 18.

³⁵ Fedor Steppun described how he held it in his hands 'with the feelings of a cave-dweller who by miracle can see the morning light coming through a narrow cleft' - Steppun, 1990, vol. 2, p. 276.

³⁶ See Volkogonov, 1994, pp. 75, 197 - 198, 358 - 359, 362.

hundred even without giving any reason: you may leave, gentlemen.³⁷

The lists of the deportees, edited by Lenin, had among its sub-headings: the professors of the University of Moscow, the professors of the Agricultural Academy of Moscow, the professors of the Institute of Railway Engineers (Moscow), the professors of the Archeological Institute (Moscow), anti-Soviet agronomists, physicians, engineers, writers. The anti-Soviet intelligentsia of St. Petersburg was singled out in a special list. The Philosophical Society of St. Petersburg was closed together with its journal, *Mysl'* [Thought]; the same happened to other magazines and publishing houses which were considered harmful. In autumn 1922 the first groups of deportees left the country.³⁸

To Gorky, who protested (from abroad) against the persecution of the intelligentsia, Lenin replied in a letter (15 September 1922) which put a question mark over their long friendship:

The intellectual forces of the workers and peasants are growing and getting stronger in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie and their accomplices, the intellectuals, the lackeys of capital, who think they're the brains of the nation. *In fact they're not its brains, they're its shit.*³⁹

Strange as it might sound, Lenin's attitude was not inconsistent with the Neo-Kantian philosophy of culture. Indeed, according to Rickert, to become culture life has to be 'deadened' (§7.1). The same could be reformulated from 'life's' side: to regain its vitality, 'life' has to 'deadene' culture, or following Lenin's metaphor, 'life' has to consume 'culture', then to digest and evacuate it. The life-consuming culture, whether Mycenaean or Petersburgian, can only result in its own destruction.

The country devoured its 'brain' because this 'brain' had failed to respond to the country's wants. Just as Nikolaj Bakhtin put it in his emotional speech:

The Westernized elite [the 'Myceneans'] who created the St. Petersburg civilization were not the whole of the Russian people either. But our younger brothers who escaped the sway of the West were not in far-off

mountains [as the Dorians were]. They were here, near us, in our villages, factories and slums. Silently they watched us while we were shaping the dazzling world of forms and ideas - a world incomprehensible and hostile to them. They watched us, and waited for their chance.⁴⁰

Culture which reduces 'life' to a biological phenomenon fails to recognize the dignity of a living person. We find a hint of that already in Lotze. Speaking about the Hegelian concept of history, he says the disregard of the individual gives *us* a stone instead of bread; this 'us', however, is far from any claim to universality, as he immediately mentions in all honesty 'very many' who adhere to the primacy of the Idea with 'enthusiastic exaltation'.⁴¹ 'We' prefer bread, 'very many' would be happy with stones. How can we demonstrate that 'their' valuation is 'wrong'? Shall we not identify those who prefer stones with stones?

Lotze is very far from any snobbery in this aspect. Indeed, in a sense he accepts the demand of materialism to 'speak for everybody or die': the ideas which are understandable only by a few erudite people have no impact on real life. Therefore they have no binding force.⁴² A half-century later the situation of the mandarin community was much more insecure, and Windelband actually identified those who are left uninvolved in **Bildung*, with the **mechanical* universe:

Fichte's saying that the sort of philosophy a man chooses depends upon the sort of man he is is verified here in the fact that whoever is content to be an outcome of general states and conditions, and is guided by these in his conduct of life, differs fundamentally from the man who is convinced that his feeling of personality is something special, and is determined to stamp this personality upon the circumstances.⁴³

Windelband does not hesitate to say that the great majority of people would satisfy this definition: their *Bildung*, the transition from individuality to personality, as he puts it, has not yet started and they remain under the powers of

³⁷ Quoted in Volkogonov, 1994, pp. 197 - 198.

³⁸ See Volkogonov, 1994, p. 359.

³⁹ Quoted in Volkogonov, 1994, p. 361. My italics.

⁴⁰ Bakhtin (Nikolaj), 1963, pp. 43 - 44.

⁴¹ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 159 <3 36>.

⁴² See *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 538 <3 424>.

⁴³ *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 65.

the purely biological mechanism of existence (§8.2).⁴⁴

The same dualism of the mechanical and the value-relevant can be discovered in the international community: Germany, a supra-personality, and 'the West', England and France, the systems of social mechanics devoid of any individuality. At the time of the Great War the German mandarins contributed to it with their own, 'cultural', war. Windelband also took part in that propaganda campaign to the great disappointment of his Russian pupils, who never stained themselves with any anti-German rhetoric. The mandarins considered the rest of the world as an impersonal biological system still awaiting cultivation.⁴⁵

The aftermath of the War and Revolution seemed to confirm that view. Pitirim Sorokin, participant in and researcher of, the Bolshevik Revolution, called the effect of starvation on social behaviour 'the biologization': man strips himself of the 'costume' of cultural behaviour and remains 'naked'. Life is driven then by animal instincts, not by cultural values.⁴⁶

§7.4. The incarnation of culture: chaos, ascent and descent

By 1923 *all* the philosophers who taught at the University of St. Petersburg were expelled or had died. All Bakhtin's mentors and lecturers had left the Russian scene. Among their Moscow colleagues there were two notable exceptions, Florensky and Shpet, who were executed later in the course of Stalin's purges. In the same year (1923) all the works by the 'idealist' philosophers (Plato, Kant, Nietzsche, Vladimir Solovyev, etc.) were removed from public libraries.⁴⁷

The Dark Age was going to last longer than Bakhtin might have expected. He and his circle did not manage to turn 'the adventure' into 'something more solid and fundamental'. It was the Bolsheviks who did it first. One by one, 'Helots of

⁴⁴ See *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 281.

⁴⁵ See Ringer, 1969, pp. 183 - 186, 342; see also Yakovenko, 1916.

⁴⁶ See Sorokin, 1923, p. 60. Sorokin reports the cases of cannibalism (*ibid.*, p. 68). In 1918 - 1919 in Petersburg armed robbery increased 285 times, murders 16 times, juvenile crime 74 times (*ibid.*, p. 63). Ration coupons were the most common object of theft (*ibid.*).

⁴⁷ See Rosenthal, 1994, p. 7.

the Dorians' (§7.2) were becoming just 'Dorians'. The first of them was Kagan, whom Bakhtin so enthusiastically invited to work for change in his letters from 1921.

In 1922 Kagan gave up philosophy for a position in a state economic council. As he explained it later, he took the first job that could introduce him - both financially and socially - into 'the order of common life'.⁴⁸ His correspondence with Bakhtin stopped and they did not meet for 15 years. Bakhtin returned from Vitebsk to St. Petersburg in 1923. His programmatic article was to be published in the only journal which remained relatively independent under the patronage of Gorky, who then lived in Italy. But the journal was closed by the authorities as 'the most reactionary'. From now on, all literature in the country would be taken under ideological control.⁴⁹

Other members of Bakhtin's circle thought of themselves as the last pagan philosophers living in the new Christian era,⁵⁰ a motive popular already on the eve of the Revolution, as we saw in Berdyaev (§7.2). Another version of this metaphor, 'Helots of the Dorians', was not forgotten either: in the mid-1920s it had substantial influence on the writings of Konstantin Vaginov, a member of Bakhtin's circle.⁵¹

Nikolaj Bakhtin did not explain why the same historical paradigm had recurred again and again for 4,000 years. If life and culture ever remain mutually contingent, then Sorokin's 'body-costume' model of their relationship could well be the metaphor of the never-ending reincarnation of culture. Mikhail Bakhtin would blame that model for all the cataclysms of modern history. He is not unaware of the empirical accuracy of such a view but he proposes to break this vicious circle. 'Helots of the Dorians' are not to cultivate the reincarnation of the culture which would be sooner or later killed by its servants for its lordliness.

⁴⁸ See *Pamyat'*, 4 (1981), Paris, pp. 251, 275.

⁴⁹ See Bocharov, 1993, p. 75.

⁵⁰ See Clark and Holquist, 1984, p. 119.

⁵¹ See Anemone, 1985, pp. 170 - 171.

Their mission is different - to unite the two disjointed worlds through incarnation:

One ought to humble oneself to [the point of] personal participation and responsibility.⁵²

The possible allusion to the incarnation hymn in Phil 2. 6 - 8 is further reinforced in Bakhtin's lecture on Vyacheslav Ivanov, given in the mid-1920s in Leningrad (St. Petersburg). Since his student years Bakhtin had known Ivanov, a famous symbolist poet and writer, and he admired his works.⁵³ Speaking about Ivanov's aesthetics, Bakhtin gives the following interpretation of his ascent-descent theory:

If ascent is not followed by descent it is fruitless because it is other-worldly. [...] An artist descends and his descent is first and foremost for the sake of beings who have never ascended and remain on the lower levels of consciousness. [...] This is the descent to the human weakness of others, the descent to those who have never ascended. That is why descent is always humane and democratic. [...] Chaos is matter, ascent is the ecstasy of insight, descent is the capability to turn what is given [in insight] into the consciousness of others.⁵⁴

Bakhtin's lecture on Ivanov was his last lecture in Leningrad. In 1929 he was sentenced to 10 years in prison for his 'non-official' lecturing to the young on the idealist philosophers. Waiting for his trial, he wrote two politically correct articles on Tolstoy; both were published.⁵⁵

Shortly before his death in 1975 Bakhtin gave an interview to Sergey Bocharov. He recollected the mid-1920s with a certain air of tragedy, even if, in Bocharov's words, 'without any shadow on his face and rather cheerfully':

[Bakhtin:] The overall disintegration was in full flow then, the contempt for moral principles reigned, all that seemed to be ridiculous, all that seemed to have collapsed. [Bocharov:] Also to you? [Bakhtin:] Also to me. We

⁵² PhP, p. 121.

⁵³ On the lecture, see Mirkina, 1993, pp. 64, 68 - 69; on Bakhtin and Ivanov, see *Interview. Chelovek*, 6 / 146, 156; Clark and Holquist, 1984, pp. 26 - 27.

⁵⁴ *Lectures* (Mirkina), pp. 375 - 376.

⁵⁵ See *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 1993, 31 (4 August), p. 6. After two telegrams from Gorky and an article on Bakhtin's book by Lunacharsky (the minister of education and veteran Bolshevik), this sentence was changed to five years of internal exile - see *ibid.*; see also Bocharov, 1993, pp. 75, 78, 85, Mirkina, 1993, p. 69.

betrayed everything - the motherland, *culture*. [Bocharov:] How could you not betray? [Bakhtin:] To perish instead. I began then writing an article 'About those who have not perished'. Not a scholarly article. Of course, I did not finish it and of course I destroyed it later.⁵⁶

But in the late 1910s - early 1920s that had not yet happened. Culture was not at all betrayed. The ecstasy of insight reigned within Bakhtin's circle ('strong tea and overnight discussions'),⁵⁷ chaos ('the adventure') reigned in the country which had devoured its brain, and it remained only to descend to those who had never ascended. Indeed, was there any alternative?

In 1919 Bakhtin published his first article where he tried to answer that question.

§7.5. A poet and a crowd: individualism versus supra-individualism

Bakhtin's first published work (1919) is a two-page essay on a seemingly traditional Russian problem: a poet and the people.⁵⁸

In the Russian culture of the late 18th - early 19th century 'a poet' was the symbol of the sacred, the minister of the divine mysteries, who stood close to a prophet or a priest. A certain parallelism and even rivalry existed in this aspect between the established Orthodox religion and poetry. The language of which the Church traditionally claimed to have a monopoly, was used by the poets at will, not uncommonly in contexts which in the opinion of the Church hierarchy were profane or sacrilegious.

Poets in their turn pointed to the poetic character of Biblical texts to prove their monopoly on the comprehension of the Divine mysteries. Indeed, the power of an ordained priest is impersonal and comes with his office in the Church, whereas a

⁵⁶ Bocharov, 1993, p. 83; my italics. To get published, Bakhtin had to adjust his works to the Party line quoting Lenin and Stalin. There is also an opinion that Bakhtin let his friends equip his works with the ideological rhetoric and publish them under their names - see *ibid.*, the whole article; for more about this "authorship dispute" see Hirschkop, 1999, pp. 126-140.

⁵⁷ From a letter by Voloshinov, a member of Bakhtin's circle - see *Pamyat'*, 4 (1981), Paris, p. 278.

⁵⁸ See *A&R*, pp. 5 - 6.

poet receives his talent as a personal gift directly from God. Poetic *inspiration* is nothing less than the *revelation of the Spirit*, no matter if the meaning of those concepts fell outside Orthodox limits. A poet ought to resist any pressure from the Crowd which is constantly trying to use him for a purpose. It is the power of poetic inspiration alone that a poet should recognize.⁵⁹ Pushkin provides here a rich variety of illustrations both through his poetry and his biography. Thus, in the centre of Bakhtin's article we find lines from Pushkin's poem *Poet and the Crowd*.

The poem is a dialogue between the 'Poet' and 'Plebeians'. The Plebeians can see no utility in the Poet's song and demand from him instead a moral lesson. The Poet refuses to have anything to do with the Plebeians: they are 'nonsensical people', 'slaves of their needs', 'profane', 'mindless slaves' whose wickedness and aggression are to be met not with a moral lesson but with 'whips, prisons, axes'. He explains his vocation to the Plebeians:⁶⁰

Not for the *fretful cares of everyday life*,
Not for the pursuit of profit, not for warfare
Are we born - but for *inspiration*,
For *sweet sounds and for prayers*.⁶¹

Bakhtin takes such an attitude for the subject of his polemics. The choice seems strange. The year is 1919, the place is Nevel near Vitebsk, the Civil War is at its climax: 'whips, prisons, axes' are now in the hands of 'Plebeians', whilst 'Poets' are concerned with their sheer survival, with the *fretful cares of everyday life*. However, there were good reasons to recollect Pushkin's verse. The rest of this section is given over to the reconstruction of the context to which Bakhtin's essay actually belongs.

It was Vyacheslav Ivanov who made the opposition of the Poet and the Crowd the recurring theme of his popular essays, referring several times to the same lines by Pushkin:⁶²

⁵⁹ See Zhivov, 1981, pp. 56 - 91; Lotman, 1981, pp. 92 - 96.
⁶⁰ See Pushkin, 1976, pp. 66 - 67.

⁶¹ Translated by Liapunov. The fragments quoted by Bakhtin are italicised.
⁶² See e.g. Ivanov, 1994 <1904 - 1910>, pp. 81, 139, 184, 190, 223, 225.

The gods 'inspire' the messenger of their revelations to the people; through him the people send their prayers to the gods; the 'sweet sounds' are the sounds of poetic language, 'the language of gods'. This dispute goes on not between the admirer of abstract otherworldly beauty and the people devoted to practical life, who understand nothing except utility, but between the 'hierophant' and the crowd, which can no longer understand 'the language of gods' [...] The crowd that demands from the poet that he speaks the language of the earth, has lost or forgotten its religion and is now left with utilitarian morality alone.⁶³

The *leitmotiv* of Ivanov's essays is the surpassing of individualism. The separation of the poet from the people (who without their poet become in their turn nothing but a crowd, a mob) should not, therefore, be more than just a phase: the era of their new union is approaching when the poet will draw his poetic images from the Psyche of his people and the people's soul will recognize them as their own.⁶⁴ The opposition of collectivism and individualism finds its final solution in supra-individualism: an individual joins the choir, where all individuality is lost. The organizing principle of the people's soul is 'all-people's art' which in its turn should have the form of a Dionysian festivity as Nietzsche described it. The poet and the crowd become one orgiastic body.⁶⁵ Thus, Ivanov's quotations from Pushkin turn to be the allusions to Nietzsche.

From the 1890s Nietzsche had been probably the most influential Western thinker in Russia. His influence spread over the whole Russian cultural spectrum, both before and after the Bolshevik revolution, possibly up to the end of the Communist era in the 1990s, even if during the Soviet period that influence remained anonymous. Even if many elements of Nietzsche's message were largely ignored, the aesthetic aspect of his philosophy was popularised, assimilated and further developed.⁶⁶

Ivanov's interpretation of Pushkin's lines became the subject of debate with another Russian philosopher, Lev Shestov. In 1916 Shestov delivered a lecture in

⁶³ Ivanov, 1994 <1910>, p. 184.

⁶⁴ Ivanov, 1994 <1904>, p. 141.

⁶⁵ Ivanov, 1994 <1906>, p. 50.

⁶⁶ See Rosenthal, 1986; Rosenthal, 1994.

the Religious-Philosophical Society of St. Petersburg, which Mikhail Bakhtin, a member of that Society, might have attended. Shestov, in his own words, 'stood up for Pushkin' and dismissed Ivanov's Dionysianism as a belief instead of a philosophy. Shestov rejected the very idea of taking immediate ecstatic contemplation for the basis of philosophy; that, he claimed, left no room for personal freedom, just as it was in the pseudo-religious Russian version of Marxism.⁶⁷

According to Ivanov's Dionysianism, the unity of culture and life is provided by communal ecstasy, by supra-individualism. In 1919, when Bakhtin published his first article, there was much more to say about it. Although Ivanov himself did not approve of Bolshevism, yet the interpretation of the Revolution as of a Dionysian festivity was not uncommon in artistic circles.⁶⁸ In fact it was a popular theme in Russia, as a student of Russian intellectual history would know too well:

In the 1890s, when the interpretation of Nietzsche as philosopher of individualism was strongest in Russia, his admirers realized the twofold nature of the Dionysian principle - liberation of the instincts and transcendence of self. [...] The Revolution of 1905 inspired an explicitly sociological interpretation of the Dionysian principle. Symbolists emphasized loss of self in communal ecstasy as the means to demolish artificial social barriers and foster the new sense of voluntary unity essential to a free society. Nietzschean Marxists wanted to promote proletarian unity and militancy by means of ritual, theatre and myth. [...] The mass festivals, pageants, and people's theatres of the early Soviet period reflect the continued influence of the Dionysian models of cultural creation, as, in different ways, did the mass meetings and civic rituals of mature Soviet society.⁶⁹

In the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, Berdyaev's project of *theourgy*, of turning art into a power which would be able to transform the world, seemed to become reality.⁷⁰ Theourgy was to replace the old, impotent art. The artists were

⁶⁷ See Shestov, 1993 <1923>, vol. 1, pp. 249 - 250, 255.

⁶⁸ See Barzakh, 1995, p. 36.

⁶⁹ Rosenthal, 1986, p. 40.

⁷⁰ See Berdyaev, 1985 <1915>, p. 283.

taking on themselves the mission of creating the world for tomorrow by creating new art, the revolutionary art. The artistic community considered itself as the avant-garde of humankind to come.

The role of Russian avant-garde art in Bolshevik Russia falls definitely beyond the limits of the present work. It is enough here to point to the jobs given by the Bolshevik government (even if for a short period) to several prominent avant-garde artists. Wassily Kandinsky was responsible for theatre and film in the 'Commissariat' (Ministry) of Enlightenment.⁷¹ The Control Board of the same Commissariat included also Kazimir Malevich.⁷² Marc Chagall, who preferred to stay in his native town of Vitebsk, was made the Commissar (the Minister) of Fine Arts for the whole province of Vitebsk, which included Nevel, where Bakhtin lived from 1918 to 1920.⁷³

Chagall began publishing a periodical, 'Revolutionary Art'. For the first issue he wrote a programmatic article called, quite predictably, 'Art and Revolution'. The universal revolution requires new art which is totally dissociated from the escapist 'art for art's sake':⁷⁴

[That new art] is not art for proletarians. Nor is it the art of proletarians. It is the art of artists-proletarians. An artist-proletarian [...] leads the crowd.⁷⁵

Yet again the problem 'the artist and the crowd' comes to the fore.

The practical programme follows: 400 students have been enrolled in the newly opened People's Art College, art exhibitions are planned for the coming year, a museum of modern art is under way, ancient churches and other monuments are taken under protection while the new monuments are not forgotten either - Vitebsk is given a statue of Karl Marx, whereas the minor

⁷¹ Kandinsky was also responsible for equipping and opening new museums, of which 22 were created under his direction between 1919 and 1921 alone! See Becks-Malorny, 1994, pp. 119 - 120.

⁷² Malevich was also a member of the Moscow city council ('soviet'). See Malevich, 1995, p. 20.

⁷³ See Clark and Holquist, 1984, p. 47.

⁷⁴ See Chagall, 1919, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Chagall, 1919, p. 3.

towns, Nevel included, would get Marx's busts.⁷⁶

'Art and revolution' was by no means a theme introduced by the Bolshevik Revolution. To give one example, 'Art and Revolution' was the title of a 1849 essay by Richard Wagner, whose popularity in Russia was enormous. In 1918 there was a timely republication of the Russian translation of that essay. Wagner bitterly criticised contemporary art calling it 'handicraft', the marketed product of 'journeymen', not the work of true artists. For millennia artists have been oppressed by the ruling classes. It is only a global Revolution that can give birth to a new humankind, the 'artistic' humankind, so that, liberated from the power of money, everybody will be a true artist!⁷⁷

Did Wagner's prophecy not come true in Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution? Aleksandr Blok put at stake his reputation as a great poet and writer when he published his 1919 essay *The End of Humanism*:

[...] in the whirl of spiritual, political, social revolutions, all having their cosmic correlates, a new [process of] selection is going on, new man is being formed; man as a humane animal, as a social animal, as a moral animal, is now being rebuilt into an *artist*, using here Wagner's language. [...] The movement of humane civilization has been changed to a new movement [... in which] a new type of person, a new breed of humans, is taking shape; the purpose of the movement is neither ethical, nor political, nor humane man, but *man-artist*; he alone would be able *passionately to live and act* in the new era of turbulence and storm [...]⁷⁸

The Darwinian natural selection which has led to Homo Sapiens is now followed by the next phase of cosmic evolution: a 'revolutionary' selection which would produce a new human race, the artistic humankind, in Wagner's words. According to Wagner, the artist of the future is the 'folk' and the work of art of that collective artist is *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the totality of artistic creation.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ *Revolutsionnoe iskusstvo* (Vitebsk), No. 1 (1919), pp. 8 - 10. The People's Art College in Vitebsk was opened in the same year (1919) as the Bauhaus in Weimar.

⁷⁷ See Wagner, 1993 <1849>, pp. 48, 56, 58.

⁷⁸ Blok, 1962, pp. 114 - 115.

⁷⁹ Wagner further developed this idea in his book *Art-Work of the Future*: see Wagner, 1993 <1849>, pp. 197, 205. On Wagner's immense popularity in Russia and on the influence of his fundamental concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, see Gofman, 1996, p. 31.

No wonder that Marc Chagall excluded the artistic products of single individuals from the art of the coming universal Revolution.⁸⁰ 'Streets are our brushes, squares are our palettes' - these poetic lines by Mayakovsky became the programme of the new art that should transfigure the universe. The artistic community of Vitebsk was also called to a crusade to win the final victory over life:

Art should come out onto the streets: [...] the moment is right to take over life.⁸¹

Sergey Eisenstein, who passed through Vitebsk by train, described that conquest in full flow:

This town is particularly odd. The red brick of the main streets is covered here with white paint. Green circles, orange squares and blue rectangles swarm over this white background. This is Vitebsk 1920. K.S. Malevich's brush has travelled over its brick walls. [...] Orange circles, red squares, green trapeziums of the town's brief impact stay before one's eyes.⁸²

The artist should strive for unity with the masses - either in Dionysian ecstasy (Ivanov - Nietzsche), or through ultimate Revolution (Blok - Wagner). Chagall's idea of an artistic 'Bolshevik', the leader of the crowd, or Malevich's emphasis on the universally valid impersonal 'constructions and laws', which are merely exemplified by an individual artist,⁸³ are but variations of the same motif. In all cases, theurgy, creation of future humankind, is the task of the collective supra-artist, whatever philosophical articulation it might be given. The precondition of theurgy is the ascent from the individual to the supra-individual.

It is this belief in supra-individualism which set the tone of the avant-garde

⁸⁰ See Chagall, 1919, p. 2.

⁸¹ Puni, 1919, pp. 6 - 7.

⁸² Eisenstein, 1982 <1963>, p. 332. In fact it was not Malevich alone but the whole local community of artists who participated in making the murals. They included also Chagall's motives like green horses and flying Jews painted right on the roofs (see Clark and Holquist, p. 47). In Nevel, which was well connected to Vitebsk, the programme of total wall painting was proclaimed by above mentioned Matvej Kagan, a closest friend of Bakhtin's! (See *ibid.* p. 44).

⁸³ See e.g. Malevich, 1995, p. 229.

art.⁸⁴ With his first essay Bakhtin brought into that Dionysian choir an astonishingly dissonant note.

§7.6. *Art and responsibility: a manifesto for personal wholeness*

The problem which Bakhtin addresses in his essay is the oneness of the human person. Pushkin's lines are interpreted not as the indication of split between a poet and the crowd, but as the evidence of split within a person.

An artist and a human being are associated in the same person naively and, for the most, mechanically. For a while a human being retreats from the '*fretful cares of everyday life*' into, as it were, another world of '*inspiration, sweet sounds and prayers*'. [...] When someone enters the domain of art, he cannot be in the domain of life, and vice versa. Between them there is no unity and inner interpenetration pertaining to the oneness of a person.⁸⁵

Bakhtin does not 'stand for' Pushkin against the Crowd, as Shestov did, nor does he stand on the side of the supra-individual Dionysian Crowd-Choir, as Ivanov did. He, so to say, stands on the side of Pushkin against Pushkin: a poet and a living man should not simply coexist indifferently, sharing nothing but the name. Why shouldn't they?

Bakhtin's argument is two-fold: from consequences and from premises. If a person is split into aesthetical and practical elements, culture could not be united into a whole:

Three regions of human culture: science, art, life, become one only in a person who unites them by his or her own oneness. This nexus, however, could be mechanical, external. Unfortunately, that is often the case.⁸⁶ 'Life', as the context suggests, stands here for the world of the practical, which is of course a region of culture. The most challenging note is the total disregard of the Neo-Kantian *Kulturphilosophie*: did it not discover the transcendental unity of culture? Indeed, Windelband claims that culture is nothing other than the totality of the products of human consciousness, which in its turn follows the laws of

⁸⁴ On the close parallels between Russia and Germany in this respect, see Antonova and Merkert, 1996, pp. 97 - 124.

⁸⁵ *A&R*, p. 5.

⁸⁶ *A&R*, p. 5.

'consciousness-as-such', *Bewusstsein überhaupt*.⁸⁷

By culture we understand in the end nothing else than the totality of all that human consciousness worked out by rational determination of the given; transcendental philosophy begins with Kant's thesis: what is routinely taken as given as soon as it presents some universally valid experience is actually *synthesized* according to the laws of 'consciousness as such', according to the ultimate, objectively valid forms of reason.⁸⁸

Windelband easily agrees, however, that the whole variety of cultural forms could be embraced neither by a single empirical consciousness, nor even by one particular culture.⁸⁹

Bakhtin, on the contrary, believes that the unity of culture cannot be achieved otherwise than in an empirical consciousness: art and life should become one not in consciousness-as-such but 'in me'.⁹⁰ Moreover, Bakhtin refuses to accept the matter-of-fact fragmentation of culture. In his view it has to be overcome:

What is the result? Taking no responsibility for life, art is too daring, too self-assured, too elevated, as it goes at a pace which life, of course, cannot keep. '*How can we, says life, art is over there; here, down to earth, we are busy with everyday trivialities.*'⁹¹

Is it a criticism of avant-garde art? The expression of Helots' guilt towards the Dorians? A text which is so brief does not leave much room for speculation.

However, one remarkable detail reappears throughout the text. Bakhtin does not consider the problem 'a poet versus the crowd of non-poets'. His analysis concerns an individual human being, for Bakhtin speaks from the first person: *I, my, me*. At the same time he allows a certain ambiguity of expression, as in the above fragment: the split between 'poet' and 'non-poet' within one person appears

⁸⁷ See *Kulturphilosophie*, p. 191.

⁸⁸ Denn unter Kultur verstehen wir schliesslich doch nichts anderes, als die Gesamtheit dessen, was das menschliche Bewusstsein vermöge seiner vernünftigen Bestimmtheit aus dem Gegeben herausarbeitet: und den Springpunkt der Transzendentalphilosophie bildete Kants Einsicht, dass schon in dem, was wir als gegeben hinzunehmen gewöhnt sind, sobald es als allgemeingültige Erfahrung sich darstellt, eine Synthesis nach den Gesetzen des 'Bewusstsein überhaupt', nach übergreifenden, sachlich gültigen Vernunftformen vorliegt. *Kulturphilosophie*, p. 191; my italics.

⁸⁹ See *Kulturphilosophie*, pp. 194 - 195.

⁹⁰ See *A&R*, p. 6. For Bakhtin's final verdict on the transcendental unity of culture, see *PhP*, p. 104.

⁹¹ *A&R*, p. 5.

to be relevant universally and not just for artists. It seems that, among Bakhtin's premises, we find a certain, three-fold structure of personality, with its 'elements' corresponding to science, art and practice.

The principle of their unity is the starting point of Bakhtin's argument: escape from the world of '*fretful cares of everyday life*' into the world of '*inspiration, sweet sounds and prayers*' is possible because of the separation of these two worlds within one person. It is the genuine wholeness of a person that is missing. Bakhtin actually begins his essay with a brief excursion into a theory of wholes and parts:

A whole is called mechanical if its elements are connected only in an external nexus in space and time and are not permeated with the inner unity of sense. [Taken] in themselves, parts of such a whole are alien to each other, even if they adjoin and are adjacent to each other.⁹²

The implication is that a person may not be a merely mechanical whole consisting of separate personae. As a matter of fact, that separation is, of course, normal. The demand of wholeness is a *moral imperative*.

Bakhtin's paper is overloaded with imperatives, which makes it sound rather like a manifesto, or, indeed, a sermon. The demand of wholeness is based on the personal **responsibility*, now a purely moral category:

Then what could guarantee the inner nexus of the elements of a person? Nothing but the oneness of responsibility. I ought to answer with my life for everything I have understood and experienced in [the domain of] art, so that this experience and understanding should not remain idle in my life. But responsibility is associated with blame. Not only should life and art take responsibility for each other but also bear the blame for each other. The poet must remember that it is his poetry which bears the guilt for the vulgar prose of [his] life, whereas the man of everyday life ought to know that the fruitlessness of [his] art is due to the lowness of his demands and to the unseriousness of his life's concerns. A person should become responsible through and through: not only should all his moments adjoin in his life-sequence but they should also interpenetrate, sharing the one blame and responsibility.⁹³

'Responsibility' and 'blame' appear here in a strange context: it is not one

⁹² A&R, p. 5.

⁹³ A&R, pp. 5 - 6.

person who is responsible to another, but the aspects of one personality are in moral relations with each other. The unity of a person is provided by the *oneness* of responsibility: it is only responsibility and blame that all the elements, or 'moments', of a person have in common. At first glance *responsibility* definitely looks like a formal category which, having different contents for different personae, nevertheless brings the whole to a unity which, it seems, cannot be called otherwise than *formal*. But that is not true: in whatever inner context, responsibility is always 'mine', pertaining to the same 'me', who is more than just 'a poet' or 'a practical person'. The moment of unity, creating one nexus of my different aspects, is 'I', 'myself'.⁹⁴

Bakhtin's first essay is not a dissertation. His basic concepts, like 'oneness of my responsibility' or 'oneness of sense', remain unarticulated. Nobody, of course, would expect a full-size philosophical argument to be found in an essay of 500 words. In fact, it is amazing how much Bakhtin was able to say on just one page. We might say without exaggeration that the ensuing philosophical texts develop the themes already present in his first essay.

In 1920 Bakhtin was already working at a major philosophical project.

⁹⁴ The hierarchy of different 'Me' under the same 'I' is of course a well known construct of William James' psychology. See *Psychology: Briefer Course*, pp. 159 ff.

8. FIRST PHILOSOPHY AS PHILOSOPHY OF INDIVIDUAL *POSTUPOK*

In 1920 Bakhtin moved to Vitebsk.¹ A few months later a local newspaper reported: 'M.M. Bakhtin continues working at his book on moral philosophy.'² No such 'book' was ever published or, indeed, finished. It is only fragmented drafts of a major philosophical project, written probably between 1919 and 1924, which survived and were posthumously published in the 1970s and 1980s. They pertain to moral philosophy and philosophical aesthetics and use the same, characteristic vocabulary.³ To the same project belongs Bakhtin's article on aesthetics, finished before 1924 (it remained unpublished until

¹ The better supply of food in Vitebsk might be an important factor. See Clark and Holquist, 1984, p. 45. In 1918 - 1922 Vitebsk was a safe haven for St. Petersburg's intelligentsia, who tried to escape from hunger and chaos in their city. For a short period Vitebsk became a first-class cultural centre with conservatoire, a symphony orchestra, a dramatic theatre, an art college, etc. Bakhtin lectured on world literature (in the teachers' college) and on the philosophy of music (in the conservatoire).

² Quoted in *Pamyat'*, 4 (1981), Paris, p. 278.

³ There are three groups of manuscripts: (1) an introduction to the whole work. It was the editor, S.G. Bocharov, who entitled it 'On the philosophy of *postupok*'. The first pages are lost and there are several gaps in the rest of it. (2) The beginning of what is marked by the author as 'Part One' follows that introduction. It makes a starting-point for (3) fragments on authorship entitled (also by the editor) *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, which might be considered as the development of the main lines drafted in the introduction. See Bocharov, 1986, pp. 80 - 81; cf. *idem*, 1993, pp. 85 - 86. See also Bakhtin, 2003.

1975).⁴

The whole project was planned as a four-part treatise on moral philosophy, aesthetics, politics and religion.⁵ Nothing is known about the sections on politics and religion, which were probably never written or perhaps were destroyed because they were too dangerous to keep at the time of Stalin's terror in the 1930s and 1940s.

Compared to Bakhtin's first essay, the scope of this new project is much broader. There is also an obvious shift in Bakhtin's vocabulary. In the 1919 article, 'life' was a 'region' of culture. Personal moral responsibility led to the *mutual* transformation of art and life, their unity within culture.⁶ Now, culture is seen as a possible threat to life. It is the split between culture and life that is to blame for all the evils of modernity. Divorced from life, culture is left to its *immanent forces and becomes destructive.⁷

But what is meant here by 'life' after all? Does Bakhtin endorse life-philosophy? Would it be a Nietzschean variety, considering life as a self-contained process driven by its immanent forces, life as the goal of life? Or, would it be a version of Simmel's metaphysics: the flux of formless life which unceasingly projects itself into the realms of cultural form?⁸ Bakhtin's position is different (§8.5):

To become conscious of life is possible only through concrete responsibility. A life-philosophy can only be a moral philosophy.⁹

Bakhtin thus rejects all the alternatives of considering 'life' in impersonal terms, were it Nietzschean or Simmelian, biological or vitalist. Life is always someone's life, a concrete life with its *concrete* responsibility. In the 1919

⁴ See *PCMF*, pp. 8 - 10, 32 - 33, etc. *A&H* and *PCMF* give a supply of extremely important references to 'first philosophy' and were, therefore, written after a certain version of first philosophy had been drafted (which perhaps, has not survived).

⁵ See *PhP*, p. 122.

⁶ *A&R*, p. 5.

⁷ See *PhP*, pp. 86 - 87.

⁸ See *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, pp. 6, 179 - 180; *Das individuelle Gesetz*, pp. 149 - 150.

⁹ *PhP*, p. 124. To become conscious stands here for the Russian *osoznavat'*, corresponding to the German *bewusst werden*.

essay, moral responsibility opened the way to the unity of a person's life. Now it is the pre-condition of the very consciousness of life. We can see the same paradigm at work: the priority of the moral within a person.

Surprisingly, 'person' became a concept of no importance in Bakhtin's project. Bakhtin introduced instead a new concept: *postupok*, which was supposed to be the cornerstone of a new moral philosophy.¹⁰ In this chapter we shall analyse that key concept of Bakhtin's.

First we have to find what were the disadvantages of founding a moral philosophy on the concept of 'person'.

§8.1. 'Person' under the pressure of the new social atmosphere

In the 1919 essay Bakhtin's main concern is the macrocosmic wholeness of a person. He begins his essay by describing a *mechanical* whole: such a whole is an *external* nexus in space and time, devoid of *internal* unity (of 'sense'). The attribution is easy to make here. The opposition of *external* and *internal* associated with the opposition of *mechanical* versus *valuable*, or *meaningful*, points to the Lotzean *'mechanical universe', a self-sufficient nexus ruled by laws which are valid for all its members.¹¹ Personal wholeness is yet again a Lotzean *leitmotiv*, macrocosm, **Gemüth*.¹² From the outset a 'person' is considered by Bakhtin as a culture-bearer,¹³ which leads us to another Lotzean concept: **Bildung*, the formation of *Gemüth*.¹⁴

The word *Bildung* which came into use in the late eighteenth century,

¹⁰ See *PhP*, pp. 102, 105.

¹¹ See *Metaphysic*, 1884 <1879>, p. 397. The concept was modernised later by Rickert under the name of *Objektwelt* (§5.2): see *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, pp. 2 - 10.

¹² See *Microcosmus*, vol. 1, p. 401 <1 453>. The concept reflects the German religious tradition of the 'inner life' of the soul: see Schnädelbach, 1984, p. 173. Another parallel could be found in the ideal of 'beautiful soul', the *schöne Seele*, in Romanticism: see Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 602.

¹³ In Nevel, during a dispute 'God and Socialism' (1918), Bakhtin, who reportedly 'defended religion', expressed his conviction that in the future the Russian people, the folk, would become 'one hundred times better educated'. The audience greeted this with utter disbelief: see *Pamyat'*, 4 (1981), Paris, pp. 273 - 274.

¹⁴ See *Metaphysik*, 1841, p. 8.

The pressure of the post-War social atmosphere turned individual persons into billiard balls involved in a game with no comprehensible sense. Social life left no possibility for personhood. In post-Revolutionary Russia it was true as in post-War Germany, where a discussion of the role of personality was initiated in 1919 (the year of Bakhtin's first publication) by Max Weber's Munich lecture, *Science as Vocation*.²⁴

§8.2. The idol of personality: Max Weber versus Max Scheler

Weber's methodology of the social sciences may be considered as a development of Rickert's axiology.²⁵ The War and the post-War crisis suggested a parallel to Rickert's failure to come to an **axiological a priori*. Whatever philosophers might think of *ultimate*, universally accepted, cultural values, by 1918 their absence in real life became apparent. In his 1919 lecture Weber pointed to many signs of it. The tradition of *Bildung* was dying with the decline of the German cultural elite, 'the mandarins' with their cultural values. German university life, like German life in general, was becoming progressively 'Americanized'.²⁶

Scholars should not try solving the **ultimate* [letzte] problems of life. He who claims to have the answer to the questions about the meaning of life makes himself a prophet, a saviour, not an intellectually honest scholar: a scholar could only clarify how 'life' can be controlled.²⁷

The fate of our age, with its characteristic rationalization and intellectualization and above all the disenchantment of the world, is that the

was a popular *philosophical* theme in the 1920s. The state of that genre was considered as the index of a social situation. Thus Ortega's analysis of 'the decline of the novel' shows much affinity with Mandelstam's essay: see Ortega, 1968 <1925>, pp. 65, 98. *The Theory of the Novel* by Georg Lukács (1920) also links the genre to the form of society. The aesthetical part of Bakhtin's project ends with the typology of genres of verbal discourse taken in their historical evolution.

²⁴ It looks unlikely that Bakhtin had access to Weber's lecture in 1919 - 1922, though he might have read Weber's earlier works, which were, of course, widely known in Russia.

²⁵ See Burger, 1987; Oakes, 1988.

²⁶ See *Science as a Vocation*, p. 5 <5>.

²⁷ See *Science as a Vocation*, pp. 24 - 27 <29 - 33>; cf. Ringer, 1969, pp. 352 - 366.

ultimate, most sublime values have withdrawn from public life, either into the transcendental realm of mystical life or into the brotherhood of immediate, personal relationships between individuals.²⁸

Without universally recognized ultimate values, wholeness was possible neither in personal life nor in politics. A person as an harmonious microcosm formed by *Bildung*: how could such an ideal be credible after the Great War? Was that war not a manifestation of an irreconcilable conflict between values, a 'war of gods'?

Says Weber:

[...] different **gods* struggle with each other and will do for all time. [...] Just as Hellenic man sacrificed on this occasion to Aphrodite and on another to Apollo, and above all as everybody sacrificed to the gods of his city - things are the same today, but disenchanted and divested of the mythical, but inwardly genuine, flexibility of those customs. And destiny, certainly not 'science', prevails over these gods.²⁹

Both modern science and modern art, Weber claims, leave no room for personalities, only for professionals, even if 'personality' and 'personal experience' [*Erleben*] remain the most popular idols of the street. It is science alone that determines what a scientist should do, as much as art determines an artist's work. To intervene and change the course of science or art is not humanly possible unless one claims to be a messiah, a saviour, a prophet: any of these titles would invalidate the status of a professional. One's **life* stands in service to one's professional vocation, or if we recall Rickert's words, life serves culture (§7.1). In this case, an *individual* life is submitted to one cultural value, a god. Personal wholeness, which was a self-evident imperative in Bakhtin's 1919 essay, could no longer be taken seriously in the post-War world.³⁰

Why did Weber reduce 'personality' and 'experience' to nothing but popular idols? What about Max Scheler and his monumental treatise on phenomenological ethics, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*? Scheler himself added to its second 1921 edition a subtitle: *A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. Why was that

²⁸ *Science as a Vocation*, p. 30 <36>.

²⁹ *Science as a Vocation*, p. 22 <27>.

³⁰ See *Science as a Vocation*, pp. 11 - 13 <13 - 16>.

attempt largely ignored by Max Weber, and indeed, by Bakhtin, who might be familiar with Scheler's works?³¹

It is rather hard to believe that in talking about the two idols of 'personality' and 'experience' Weber did not have Scheler in mind.³²

Both [personality and experience, *Erleben*] are closely linked, and the idea prevails that the latter [experience] amounts to the former [personality] and belongs to it.³³

Indeed, Scheler defines person as a self-sufficient totality indifferent to the opposition *I-Thou*. God could be rightly called a person. To a person pertains an ideal value-essence which could be perceived by inner intuition, by 'experiencing life', *Erleben des Lebens*, just as Weber says in the above fragment. A person-value [Personwert] is higher than all values of things, organizations and community. The system of universally valid pure types of value-persons and their ranks is, quite naturally, the outcome of Scheler's 'personalism'.³⁴ It seems now that Max Weber meant precisely those 'value-persons' when he declared that the *ultimate* values had withdrawn from public life and now belonged exclusively to mystical life or to immediate personal relationships between individuals.³⁵

Weber's harsh words about the idol of personality become understandable if we descend from the realm of self-sufficient person-essences to the nether world

³¹ Reviews of Scheler's works were published in Russian: see e.g. *Logos* (Moscow), vol. 4 (1914), book 1-1, p. 160; *Mysl'*, 1, 1922, p. 174. N. Lossky, a university lecturer of Bakhtin's, wrote on Scheler's philosophy: see Lossky, 1914, pp. 194, 197-198, 200; see also Scheler, 1973 <1913>, p. xxi. Scheler is mentioned by Bakhtin in 1929 (*Der Formalismus in der Ethik und Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*: see *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Work*, p. 78). In the publications by Bakhtin's circle Scheler's other works are mentioned, *Phenomenologie und Theorie der Sympathiegefühle und Vom Ewigen in Menschen*: see Voloshinov, 1983 <1927>, pp. 20, 25; see also Medvedev, 1978 <1928>, p. 5. Retrospectively Bakhtin used to mention Scheler among his favourite philosophers (Mikhail Epshtein, oral communication).

³² In fact Scheler responded quite angrily to Weber's Munich speech: see Scheler, 1989 <1922>, pp. 87 - 91. He might have been deeply hurt because he himself considered his philosophy as directed precisely against the 'idols', false world-views, assimilated by classes and groups: see Frisby, 1992, pp. 56 - 57.

³³ *Science as a Vocation*, p. 11 <13>. Weber means that both "personality" and "experience" are closely linked, and the prevailing opinion is that "experience" makes up "personality" and belongs to it.

³⁴ See Scheler, 1973 <1913>, pp. xxiv, 197 - 199, 389 - 390, 482, 503 - 504 <16, 213, 400, 487, 507 - 508>.

³⁵ See *Science as a Vocation*, p. 30 <36>.

of finite persons; there 'personality' would immediately turn into a class concept, as the following fragment from Windelband demonstrates:

The great majority, who seem to be there merely for the propagation of the race, have only a potential personality. We respect them legally and morally, but in them we see only the beginning of the transition from individuality to personality.³⁶

This is the pre-War credo of German *mandarins: the cosmic process of evolution is now at the stage of progressive personalization and they are the first fruit of that process, its future in the present, as much as they are its driving force. In the post-War world such a credo was possible only as *Credo, quia absurdum*. The pre-War mandarins' self-aggrandisement turned into nostalgia, bitterness and powerlessness.

According to Scheler's ethical personalism, life *simpliciter* has a value only insofar as spiritual values exist. Moreover, all possible values are founded in the value of an infinitely personified spirit.³⁷ What could provide the mediation between spirit and life?

The individual person, though a central category in Scheler's philosophy, is so robbed of active characteristics [...] that it is insufficient to fulfil this mediatory role. [...] Society [...] is also incapable of fulfilling this mediatory role. [...] Elsewhere, society is seen as being composed of helpless elites and unruly masses. The masses threaten the preservation of the aristocratic order of values whilst the elites are unable to regenerate themselves to face the challenge from below. In 1925 Scheler speaks again of 'our age of the disunity and of masses who are no longer controllable' [...] This elites-masses dichotomy again expresses Scheler's own 'powerlessness of the mind' thesis and, at a more concrete level, parallels the abstract *Geist-Leben* dichotomy.³⁸

A philosophy which begins by elevating 'person' to the head of the absolute spiritual hierarchy cannot but end by an attempt to make the unruly masses recognize this hierarchy by accepting their status of not-yet-persons versus the

³⁶ *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 281. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 65 quoted above (§7.3).

³⁷ See Scheler, 1973 <1913>, pp. 96 - 97 <116>. We saw a variation of this thesis in Rickert: life is the servant of culture (§7.1).

³⁸ Frisby, 1992, p. 33.

elite, the more 'spiritual', more 'personal', persons.³⁹

I do not know if Bakhtin was familiar with the debate on personality which arose from Max Weber's lecture. However, he could easily observe the same conflicting tendencies at work in Russia. Thus, Berdyaev, writing in the immediate aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution, considers it the triumph of the physical over the spiritual and cultural. He blames Leo Tolstoy for his Buddhist-like tendency to depersonalization, which is especially dangerous in Russia where⁴⁰

personality has not been properly developed and is not aware of itself. [...] In the name of a happy, animal existence he [Tolstoy] rejected personality, together with any supra-personal value. Truly, personality and a supra-personal value are inseparable. A personality exists solely because of its supra-personal valuable content, it belongs to a hierarchical world with qualitative differentiation.⁴¹

Berdyaev echoes Windelband by claiming that Russian people do not yet have a developed personality. The agreement between Berdyaev and Scheler seems also to be complete: 'person' is a reference to a spiritual hierarchy.⁴²

'Person' was a concept which belonged to the ideology of the receding class. The very word 'person' was an index of a political position. To give one example, Lossky (a professor of Bakhtin's) remembers his speech at a political meeting in 1917, where he said:

one may severely condemn the capitalist exploitation of labour by capital, but doing that, it is of course necessary to respect a capitalist as a person. I thought [Lossky continues to remember] this thesis had so good an ethical ground that it was impossible to doubt it. But just opposite me, in the first row, a young, well-dressed lady, belonging obviously to the intelligentsia, was sneering at me and my thesis. It was clear that fanatical

³⁹ Indeed, when a student of Scheler, under the name of Pope John-Paul II, got for the first (and, it is to be hoped, last) time in history a chance to apply ethical personalism to reality, the repressive potential of that doctrine became apparent.

⁴⁰ See Berdyaev, 1918b, p. 101.

⁴¹ Berdyaev, 1918b, pp. 97 - 98. Berdyaev, of course, also called his philosophy 'personalism'; in the 1930s in Paris he influenced Emmanuel Mounier and the ensuing movement of 'Catholic' personalism: see Copleston, 1985, vol. IX, pp. 311 - 312.

⁴² The elements of Weber's line could be found in Shpet and his circle: see Shpet, 1922, pp. 30 - 37.

revolutionaries were people from a different planet, with whom we did not have a common language.⁴³

A philosopher who finds it impossible to communicate even within his own class of intelligentsia: is it not just one more illustration of Weber's 'polytheism of values'?

To take 'person' for the foundation of a philosophy would therefore amount to taking sides in the ongoing socio-political conflict. We might only *speculate* if that was an extra-philosophical reason for Bakhtin's choice. What could be *demonstrated* is the *philosophical* reason for Bakhtin's option.

This reason will become clear after we discuss Bakhtin's alternative: *postupok*, the key concept of his project.

§8.3. *Postupok*: a structured fragment of life in its wholeness and concreteness

In both Bakhtin and Husserl the word 'act' appears in the context of descriptive psychology, together with the other, originally psychological, terms: experience, content, attitude.⁴⁴ As Husserl himself had to leave the term *act* as too contaminated by some undesirable (psychological) connotations, Bakhtin has to use for his concept of 'act' another word: *postupok* (*postupki* in the plural).⁴⁵ His philosophy is first and foremost the philosophy of *postupok*.⁴⁶ *Postupok* is a structured fragment of life in its wholeness and concreteness.

Russian word '*akt*' (act) sounds abstract, foreign and official. *Postupok* is a much more everyday word stemming from 'step'.⁴⁷ Neutral 'act' turns into 'the step taken'. It has now dynamic overtones of moving onward, of stepping up. In the philosophical context *postupok* normally stands for the German *Handlung*, or

⁴³ Lossky, 1968, pp. 201 - 202. My emphasis.

⁴⁴ See e.g. *LIS*, p. 536 - 537 <B1 347 - 348> where Husserl explains how he uses the concepts of psychology.

⁴⁵ The Russian *postupok* (poh-'stuh-pok), plural: *postupki* (poh-'stuhp-kih).

⁴⁶ See *PhP*, p. 103.

⁴⁷ *Postupok* is related to *postup* - step, tread.

Handeln.⁴⁸

The most telling example is found in Rickert's *Die Grenzen*. Speaking about the ought, he underlines that the moral ought is different from the theoretical or aesthetical ought. The moral ought is the imperative for our acting in the real world:

From the ethical point of view, taken in a more narrow sense, it is *only* that can be judged as moral or immoral. However, if a *postupok* [*Handlung*] one ought to do is taken in its whole, the question about the value of its outcome cannot be avoided.⁴⁹

In epistemology or in transcendental psychology⁵⁰ Rickert uses the German *Akt* (and the Russian translations employ respectively the Russian *akt*). *Handlung*, *postupok*, has an entirely different cluster of connotations: the wholeness of *postupok* and its belonging to the actual world come to the foreground.

The same distinction between *act of consciousness*, and *Handlung*, *postupok*, is kept by Husserl. His analysis of acts, or mental processes, should be complemented by 'formal axiology and a theory of practice'⁵¹ which would deal with

a totally new dimension of sense; with it no new determining parts of mere 'things' are constituted, but instead *values of things*, value-qualities, or concrete Objects with values [*Werteobjektitäten*]: beauty and ugliness, goodness and badness; the use-Object, the art work, the machine, the book, the action [*postupok*, *Handlung*], the deed [*Tat*], and so forth.⁵²

Handlung is always used with regard to the emotional and volitional spheres.⁵³ *Handlung* is essentially value-relevant, unlike *Akt* which, in the context of Husserl's project, refers to the most original level of consciousness, where 'mere

⁴⁸ See e.g. the Russian translations of Simmel's works, *Die Wahrheit und das Individuum* and *Das individuelle Gesetz*. *Handlung* is of course an important term in Fichte and Hegel, but that falls beyond the limits of the present study.

⁴⁹ *Die Grenzen*, pp. 736 - 737; Rickert's italics. Cf. the Russian translation (Rickert, 1903, p. 609) where the Russian word *postupok* is actually used.

⁵⁰ See e.g. *Zwei Wege*.

⁵¹ See *Ideas*, p. 351 <305>.

⁵² *Ideas*, p. 277 <239 - 240>. Similar contexts can be found elsewhere in Husserl: see *Ideas*, p. 54 <50>, p. 76 <66>.

⁵³ See *Ideas*, p. 231 <197>; cf. *ibid.*, p. 54 <50>, p. 76 <66>, p. 190 <160>, etc.

things' are constituted. Max Scheler also makes a sharp distinction between *Akt* and *Handlung*: the former belongs to the inner sphere whilst the latter is externalized.⁵⁴ It is clear now why Dorion Cairns, the expert on the English translations of Husserl, warned against translating *Handlung* or *Handeln* as *act*.⁵⁵ Nor would 'action' make a good translation of the Bakhtinian '*postupok*', as Bakhtin distinguishes not only between act and *postupok*, but also between action (or, deed), and *postupok*.⁵⁶

According to Husserl, all thinking takes place in acts.⁵⁷ Bakhtin might say all life takes place in what he called, instead of 'acts', *postupki*. Life is indeed divided into *postupki* which are much more complex than mental processes in Husserl's sense. One's whole life is such a complex *postupok*.⁵⁸

My every thought with its content is my individually responsible *postupok*, one of [many] *postupki* which make up the total of the only⁵⁹ life I have, life as an ongoing *postupok* in process. For my entire life could be considered as a complex *postupok*: I am in the process of *postupok* regarding my entire life, each single act and experience of mine is a moment of my life-*postupok*.⁶⁰

A mental process, an act of consciousness, is but one aspect of Bakhtin's concept of *postupok*. The Bakhtinian 'acts', *postupki*, are practical, they are the quanta of life, not the quanta only of consciousness. *Postupok* 'takes place'⁶¹ in

⁵⁴ See Scheler, 1973 <1913>, pp. 121 ff <141 ff>.

⁵⁵ See GTH for *Handlung* and *Handeln*.

⁵⁶ The Russian *akt* (act) and *dejstvie* (deed). See e.g. *PhP*, p. 95, where an act of aesthetic seeing is taken 'as a *postupok*'; cf. *ibid.*, p. 90, where the difference between '*postupok*' and the psychological 'act' is underlined; see also *ibid.*, p. 123, where Bakhtin discerns between an action (*dejstvie*) and i t s (the action's) *postupok*.

⁵⁷ *LIS*, p. 598 <B1 427>.

⁵⁸ See *PhP*, p. 83.

⁵⁹ Only stands here for the Russian adjective *edinstvennyj*, which is more or less equivalent to the German *einzig*. I chose to translate it as *only* and not as *unique* because the latter brings connotations of comparability which are undesirable in the Bakhtinian context. My *only friend* is not the same as my *unique friend*; if my name is John Smith, it is hardly *unique* though it is my *only* name, and so on. Besides, *unique* has a different Russian equivalent, *unikal'nyj*, stemming from the same Latin root, which Bakhtin does not use.

⁶⁰ *PhP*, p. 83. Experience stands here for the Russian *perezzhivanie*, equivalent to the German *Erlebnis*.

⁶¹ Bakhtin says *postupok svershaetsya*. The Russian reflexive verb *svershat'sya* can be also

the actual world and cannot be reduced to a purely mental phenomenon.

At several points Bakhtin gives lists of examples of *postupok*. In all those catalogues we find such classical 'inner' acts as thoughts and feelings, which in terms of the Husserlian phenomenology are 'acts of consciousness', or 'mental processes' (*Erlebnisse*). But among the examples of *postupok* we find also outward 'manifestations': deeds, movements, gestures. On the other hand, such an elusive psychical state as a *mood*⁶² can be also counted as a *postupok*.⁶³

Another heuristic clue to the concept of *postupok* can be found in Georg Simmel. *Postupok*, *Handlung*, arises, in Simmel's words, as a wave of life.⁶⁴ Life is the source of *postupok* which streams towards life's exterior. Simmel uses here the opposition of *interior-exterior*:

The whole question is how the [moral] norm should be determined: on the ground of life *postupok* comes from, or on the ground of content, life's ideal exterior, *postupok* heads for.⁶⁵

Simmel answers this question by a kind of vitalistic monism, reminiscent of materialistic monism: life's exterior and life's interior are but its two forms, two arms of the one stream of life.⁶⁶

Postupok, which Simmel considered as 'a wave' in the stream of life, is described similarly by Bakhtin, who sometimes says *postupok* is flowing,⁶⁷ a Russian verb normally designating the movement of a river, of a stream, as well as movement of time, proceeding of a historical event, etc. To live means to be in the process of *postupok*.

Life-philosophy combines semi-theoretical and semi-aesthetical terms, and Bakhtin rejects this approach, as his criticism of Bergson clearly demonstrates:

translated as *to be done, to be accomplished, to be fulfilled* as well as *to occur, to happen, to proceed*. See e.g. *PhP*, pp. 96, 105, 124.

⁶² The Russian *nastroenie*.

⁶³ See *PhP*, pp. 109, 115, 124; *PCMF*, p. 37.

⁶⁴ See *Das individuelle Gesetz*, p. 133.

⁶⁵ *Das individuelle Gesetz*, p. 155.

⁶⁶ See *Das individuelle Gesetz*, pp. 149, 153, 156.

⁶⁷ The Russian *protekaet*, see e.g. *PhP*, p. 124. There is a corresponding German expression, *fließenden Handlung* (see Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, p. <57>).

life-philosophy has failed to articulate its method, which remains an eclectic mixture of heterogeneous elements.⁶⁸ It is not semi-mystical 'Life' that is active in my *postupok*: the centre of my activeness is myself. Says Bakhtin:

Living man, from within himself, takes an active attitude in the world; [accompanied] by his consciousness, his life at each its moment is *postupok* in process: I live, I am in the process of my *postupok* by my deed, word, thought, feeling; I live, by my *postupok* I am in [the process of] becoming.⁶⁹

To be counted as a *postupok*, a fragment of life has to have certain constitutive elements which form a structure. Bakhtin gives that structure the Kantian term 'architectonics'.⁷⁰ In the following chapters we shall describe the constitutive elements of *postupok* and analyse its architectonics.

§8.4. Individual *postupok* as the basis for a first philosophy

Bakhtin follows Rickert in assuming that the task of a philosophy is 'the world problem', the formation of the universal concepts of the world and of life [*Welt- und Lebensauffassung*]. Philosophy should provide guidance for our *postupok* [*Handeln*].⁷¹ It should point us to our place in the world. According to Rickert, the conception of the world is constituted by a philosophy within a certain value-context. Values, in their turn, are extracted by philosophy from historical culture:

The problem of *cultural values is prior to the world problem [...] ⁷² Philosophy can be therefore only a philosophy of culture.

Bakhtin agrees that such a philosophy has developed many elegant and powerful methods and has been undeniably successful in solving many important and complex problems. But those problems are but *particular* problems and perhaps the success of this fragmentary, though intense, research made us forget

⁶⁸ See *PhP*, pp. 91 - 92.

⁶⁹ *A&H*, p. 121. *I am in the process of my postupok with regard to...* stands for the Russian verb *postupaet* with the following object in the instrumental case.

⁷⁰ See *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 653 / B 860; cf. *A&H*(2), p. 139.

⁷¹ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 2.

⁷² *Vor dem Weltproblem steht das Wertproblem der Kultur [...] - Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 19.

about philosophy proper, which ought to resolve 'ultimate' problems.⁷³

As we saw, Max Weber denied categorically that an intellectually honest scholar might solve, or indeed, consider such problems, thus leaving them to messiahs, prophets, saviours. Bakhtin, on the contrary, diagnoses contemporary philosophy as infertile just because it does not attempt to solve ultimate problems.⁷⁴

it seems that a philosophy which ought to resolve the ultimate problems [...] rather misses the point. Though its theses have certain validity, they cannot determine *postupok* and the world in which *postupok*, only once, responsibly, actually takes place.⁷⁵

'Determining' would be another way of defining the task of philosophy: a philosophy determines its 'world' by a conception, by 'theses'.⁷⁶

The problem of the relation of the Ego to the world whole, **Weltproblem*, thus turns into the problem of the 'determination' of a *postupok* in regard to the world whole which is also to be co-determined. That is the ultimate problem of philosophy. If we remember that life is a complex *postupok*, the traditional problem of the meaning of life comes to the fore. Philosophy should be able to tell me *how I ought to live my life here and now*, the ultimate question rejected by Max Weber as improper for a scholar. In Bakhtin's terms it is a question of 'my' ought-to-be *postupok*.

By *postupok* Bakhtin understands an individual *postupok*, an historical individual. As we remember, Rickert's analysis of concept formation discovers in any general concept a blind spot, the neglect of the individual (§5.8), which makes it impossible to articulate the ought in terms of a universally valid law:

[... whereas] the law is always a universal concept, any action [*Handlung*, the Russian *postupok*] - hence the acknowledgement of any ought - is, on

⁷³ See PhP, p. 96.

⁷⁴ See PhP, p. 95.

⁷⁵ PhP, p. 96.

⁷⁶ Cf. the use of that term by Husserl: 'Nothing can be without being thus or thus determined, and that it is and that it is thus and thus determined is the self-subsistent truth [Wahrheit an sich], which is the necessary correlate of the self-subsistent Being [Sein an sich].' *Prolegomena*, p. 225 - 226 <B 228>.

the contrary, an individual act.⁷⁷

That provides the starting-point for the unfolding of Bakhtin's conception of the ought. His first assumption is that the ought cannot be an imperative with a definite content but without a definite address. On the contrary, the ought is always the ought for this concrete, living person under concrete circumstances and at a concrete moment of his life. The ought concerns 'my' *postupok*, which is an historical individual:

The ought is nothing else but the category of individual *postupok* and even more, the category of individuality itself, of the only-ness of *postupok*, of its indispensability, of its irreplaceability, of its only [such] urgency, of its historicity.⁷⁸

Rickert defines **individuality* as what is unique [einzig] and different from anything else (§6.3).⁷⁹ *Einzig* makes the perfect equivalent of the Bakhtinian *edinstvennyj*, the only one, related to *only-ness* in the above fragment; a more detailed description by Rickert makes the other aspects of affinity manifest:

every corporeal or mental process just as we experience it is an individual, i.e. it occurs *only once* at this determinate point in time and space, it is different from *all other* corporeal or mental being, it *never recurs*, so that once destroyed it is lost for ever.⁸⁰

In Bakhtin's terms it is impossible to substitute or to replace⁸¹ an individual *postupok*, because it is different from the rest of Being; as a variation on the theme of only-ness we find Bakhtin's indication that *postupok* takes place only once,⁸² which is almost a quotation from Rickert. Bakhtin's first philosophy - as moral philosophy - grows out of Rickertian context: it is the science of the individual, **Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*, the genuine science of reality as Rickert and Simmel understood it.

⁷⁷ *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 240 - 241. My emphasis.

⁷⁸ PhP, p. 100.

⁷⁹ See *Die Grenzen*, p. 237.

⁸⁰ *Die Grenzen*, pp. 236 - 237. My italics.

⁸¹ Russian *nezamenimost' i nezamestimost'* (see the above quotation from Bakhtin, where this pair translated as *indispensability* and *irreplaceability*).

⁸² Russian *edinozhdy svershaetsya*: see PhP, p. 96; cf. also *ibid.*, pp. 83, 87.

The Rickertian context is detected also at a deeper level as the link between the individual and the historical. Rickert identifies the historical and the individual so that the historical is nothing less than the empirical reality.⁸³ Bakhtin methodically links individuality and historicity: *postupok* is an 'historical individually-responsible act', it is characterized by its 'concrete historicity and individuality', it is related to 'historical and individual activity'.⁸⁴ Bakhtin even uses the composite adjective 'historical-individual'.⁸⁵ In Rickert's terms, *postupok* is an indivisible individual, an in-dividual (§6.3), as it is related to a value: values control and guide *postupok* beyond the given.⁸⁶

We find ourselves in the province of Rickertian transcendent axiology, with value-guided acts which proceed in the actual world and guiding values which do not belong to the sphere of the existent. In Rickert that dualism is presupposed from the beginning. In Bakhtin, however, the guiding values cannot be found in what is already existent, given on hand. As we shall see (§12.3), Bakhtin develops a different conception of value, rejecting the possibility of the *axiological *a priori*.

The ultimate problem of philosophy is the problem of orientation of an individual life-*postupok*.⁸⁷ The context of that orientation should be called ultimate, as the 'ordinary' means of orientation, such as provided by an established social order, proved to be unreliable in a world lying in ruins.

Bakhtin returned to the theme of *ultimate problems in his 1929 book on Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky's characters are exempted from all social links, they communicate as just 'human beings', as it were outside time and space, 'in infinity'.⁸⁸ They have to 'orient themselves' in the world as such.⁸⁹ This process

⁸³ See *Die Grenzen*, pp. 336, 342.

⁸⁴ See *PhP*, pp. 88, 103, 101.

⁸⁵ See *PhP*, pp. 83, 84, 86, etc..

⁸⁶ See *A&H*, p. 122.

⁸⁷ See *PhP*, pp. 96, 102, 104, 112, 116, 120, 121, 122.

⁸⁸ *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Work*, p. 100 / 177.

⁸⁹ *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Work*, p. 241 / 281.

of orientation starts from nothing, apart from any established milieu:

A person, as it were, senses himself *in the world as a whole*, without any intervening stages, apart from any social collective to which he might belong. And the communion of this 'I' with another and others takes place directly on the territory of *ultimate questions*, by-passing all intermediate and more familiar forms.⁹⁰

That was written in the aftermath of the social catastrophe which destroyed all the 'familiar forms' of social life, so making everyone live 'in the world as a whole', 'on the territory of ultimate questions'. Orientation became life-and-death necessity.⁹¹ What was needed was a philosophy of *ultimate questions*: a first philosophy; in Bakhtin's opinion,

such a philosophy does not exist, and the ways leading to it are, as if it were, forgotten.⁹²

Bakhtin responds to that need. Several times he explicitly calls his project *first philosophy, each time defining some aspect of that project.⁹³ Thus, he is convinced that the main category of first philosophy should be *postupok*:

[...] it is only towards *postupok* that first philosophy can orient itself.⁹⁴

Which philosophy would stand closest to this ideal? Positivism and pragmatism, neo-Kantianism and life-philosophy, philosophy of culture and ethics - all contemporary philosophy is found wanting. The only exception is made for *historical materialism*!⁹⁵ In spite of the sheer 'inconsistency of its method', it remains attractive because

constructing its world, it tries to give *place to a determinate, historically concrete, actual *postupok*; in its world a striving consciousness in the process of *postupok* may orient itself.⁹⁶

Indeed, was it not Marx and Engels who made a call to descend

⁹⁰ *Problems of Dostoevsky's Creative Work*, p. 240 - 241 / 281; my italics.

⁹¹ This theme was by no means monopolised by Russian culture: in the West in the aftermath of the Great War the culture of the so called 'lost generation' gives a perfect expression of it.

⁹² *PhP*, p. 96.

⁹³ See *PhP*, pp. 96, 100, 102, 105.

⁹⁴ *PhP*, p. 102.

⁹⁵ See *PhP*, p. 96.

⁹⁶ *PhP*, p. 96. *Place* [the Russian *mesto*] is an important category of Bakhtin's.

from the realm of speculation into the realm of reality, from what people fancy to what they actually are, from what they imagine to how they act and are bound to act in definite circumstances.⁹⁷

Historical materialism is a philosophy of *postupok* because it sets a task in history and claims itself to be the instrument for fulfilling that task. The ultimate questions: *what shall we do? how should we live?*, meaning *what shall we do here and now?*, are then answered, even if the answer is philosophically inconsistent, as Bakhtin maintains:

Here we may leave aside the question about the inconsistencies of method employed by *historical materialism for its exit from the most abstract theoretical world to the living world of the responsible, historical deed-*postupok*; it is the fact of that exit which is important for us: the forcefulness of historical materialism and the reason for its success are due to that fact.⁹⁸

The concept of *postupok* allows us to turn the ultimate questions of a finite human individual, lost in the stormy waters of history, into the central problem of philosophy. The 'first' philosophy which Bakhtin intends to build up could be compared in that respect to *first aid*, aid in solving the most urgent and immediate problems of the post-War world.

Using an approach analogous to that of historical materialism, Bakhtin's philosophy of *postupok* will assert the unity of thought and action as well as a definite conception of history. Indeed, which of pre-War philosophical trends was able to predict the European catastrophe? Did Husserl not prophesy about coming of the 'great age'? Did Shpet not proclaim the beginning of a great epoch (§1.4)?⁹⁹ Historical materialism, on the contrary, proved to be right in predicting a social catastrophe. Bakhtin's project must needs diagnose and suggest a remedy for the contemporary world.

⁹⁷ *The German Ideology*, pp. 245 - 246; my emphasis. Although the complete, original text of *The German Ideology* was first published in German only in 1932, large fragments of its major part, *Saint Max*, were translated into Russian, published in 1913 and re-published in 1919 (see *Bibliography, Primary Sources*). The quotation is taken from one of those fragments. On *German Ideology* see also ch. 13.

⁹⁸ *PhP*, as quoted in Russian in the commentary to the English translation, p. 91 (in the first Russian edition this fragment was removed by the Soviet censorship).

⁹⁹ See *PRS*, p. 145 <340>; *Shpet*, 1991 <1914>, pp. 179 - 180.

We shall see now how the concept of *postupok* allows him to do it.

§8.5. *Postupok* as Objectivation: the context of *Lebensphilosophie*

As we saw, in Rickert's terms, the great Either/Or of *Weltanschauung* (§5.2) is the option for a Subject-oriented or an Object-oriented alternative. The concept of *postupok* links both alternatives. Indeed, according to a Subject-oriented *Weltanschauung*, actuality is activity:

There are no dead things but only living *postupki* [lebendige Handlungen].¹⁰⁰

Bakhtinian *postupok* is also 'alive': we live in our *postupki* and our *postupki* are living.¹⁰¹ Looking at *postupok*'s life, there are several main classes of *postupok*, like thought-*postupok*, feeling-*postupok*, word-*postupok*, deed-*postupok*.¹⁰²

On the other hand, looking at its outcome, a *postupok* is related to 'cultural regions', to an *Objektwelt*. Thinking ends up with a thought, feeling with an emotion, doing with the deed done. The product of thinking, feeling, doing, becomes present in consciousness through categories: cognitive, ethical, practical-technical. Those categories come from, and point to, their corresponding cultural 'regions': science, art, history, etc.¹⁰³ The product of *postupok* thus becomes 'Newton's laws', 'my joy of meeting you', 'a meal cooked', etc. and enters one of the autonomous cultural contexts.

That would be especially evident in case of cultural creation properly speaking. Such *postupki* fall into three large groups: a *postupok* of cognition creates nature, an ethical *postupok* (personal life-*postupok*, political *postupok*, social *postupok*) creates social humankind, a *postupok* of aesthetical activity creates the unity of two worlds (of nature and social humankind).¹⁰⁴ Sometimes Bakhtin calls them 'activities': theoretical thinking (including theoretical philosophy), historical

¹⁰⁰ *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 5.

¹⁰¹ See *PhP*, pp. 88, 102, 108; *A&H*, p. 125.

¹⁰² See e.g. *A&H*, p. 87.

¹⁰³ See *A&H*, p. 87; *PhP*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁴ See *PCMF*, pp. 22, 30; *A&H*, pp. 121 - 122.

description, and aesthetical intuition.¹⁰⁵

The accomplished cultural product is separated from the process of cultural 'activity' which created it, and thus becomes exempted from the flow of life. Bakhtin says the product is 'Objectivated'.¹⁰⁶ The life-process of cultural production and its final result belong to separate universes:

Two worlds confront each other, absolutely disconnected and mutually impervious: the world of culture and the world of life, the only world where we create, cognize, contemplate, where we live and die; the world where the act of our activity is Objectified, and the world where, for once, this act actually proceeds, takes place. The act of our activity, of our experiencing, is Janus-faced: it faces the Objective oneness of a cultural region and the never-repeatable only-ness of life as it is being experienced.¹⁰⁷

This fragment demonstrates a very characteristic combination of terms belonging partly to life-philosophy: 'life', 'experiencing' (corresponding to the German *erleben*), partly to the philosophy of culture ('cultural region'). The language (and indeed, the concepts) point to Georg Simmel.

Simmel refuses to define 'life' otherwise than describing what it 'does'. Life is cosmic matter-of-fact, *kosmische Tatsache*. Life in itself is formless, but it unceasingly expresses and realizes itself in certain cultural forms. Those ideal forms are also life's products but they belong to what Simmel calls 'life-exterior' [*Ausserhalb des Lebens*]. When the existing form of manifestation become unable to express life, new forms of expression are produced by life itself:¹⁰⁸

[...] life constantly struggles against its own products, which have become fixed and do not move along with it. This process manifests itself as the displacement of an old form by a new one. [...] It marks the deep contradiction between life's eternal flux and the objective validity and authenticity of the forms through which it proceeds.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ The first two make the familiar Rickertian opposition between theoretical science and history: reality in view of the universal and history as reality in view of the individual. See *Die Grenzen*, p. 355.

¹⁰⁶ From the Russian *ob'ektivirovat'*. See *PhP*, pp. 82, 92 - 93.

¹⁰⁷ *PhP*, pp. 82 - 83.

¹⁰⁸ See *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 31 <5 - 6>; *The Conflict in Modern Culture*, pp. 11 - 12; *Das individuelle Gesetz*, pp. 155 - 156; see also Weingartner, 1960, p. 71.

¹⁰⁹ *The Conflict in Modern Culture*, p. 12.

Of course, if we substitute here 'matter' for 'life', the Marxian subtext becomes evident. Indeed, Simmel actually recognizes the priority of Marx:

This characteristic of cultural process was first noted in *economic change. The economic forces of every epoch develop forms of production which are appropriate to their nature. [...] In time, through gradual explosive revolutions, they [the economic forces] burst the oppressive bonds of their respective forms and replaced them with more appropriate modes of productions.¹¹⁰

Simmel calls the process of cultural production 'Objectivation'.¹¹¹ Through Objectivation a product of subjective life enters the independent Cosmos of the Objective spirit/mind (religious, moral, artistic, technical, legal, etc.).¹¹² Simmel finds in the edifice of culture a fissure [*ein Spalt*], which leads to a paradoxical situation, indeed, to the tragedy of culture.¹¹³ The central point of Simmel's argument is the relation between the subjective individual development (subjective culture) and the *Objective cultural values: they are in prime opposition and it is their synthesis that creates culture, the synthesis of the subjective soul and the Objective mental product.

For his starting point Simmel takes the opposition between the soul's life and the soul's 'products' [*Erzeugnissen*]:

[...] the deep estrangement, or even animosity, between the processes of the soul's life and creation, and their contents and products. To the soul, creative in whatever sense, with its vibrating, restless, endlessly developing life, stands opposed its fixed and ideally unchanging product, with the uncanny retroactive effect which arrests and indeed rigidifies this liveliness.

¹¹⁰ *The Conflict in Modern Culture*, p. 12.

¹¹¹ The German *Objektivwerden*, *Objektivierung*; see e.g. *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, pp. 31, 32, 42 <5, 7, 20>. By Objectivation Simmel means mostly Objectivation of the subjective spirit / mind; another typical expression here would be *objektivierten Geist*, Objectivated spirit / mind (see *ibid.*, p. 31 <6> and *passim*). Simmel mentions also *objektivierten Kulturinhalte*, 'Objectified cultural contents', (see *ibid.*, p. 31 <6>) which is a reference to his general philosophical / sociological framework with its opposition of content and form (see Weingartner, 1960, p. 21 - 41). In *The Philosophy of Money* (e.g. p. 453 <627>) Simmel uses also another (Marxian) term for the same concept: *Vergegenständlichung*, objectification.

¹¹² See *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 31 <5>; there is a misprint in the English translation: instead of 'the products of objective life' it should read 'the products of subjective life'. Simmel adopts here Hegelian terminology: see Weingartner, 1960, p. 72.

¹¹³ See *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 39 <15>.

Frequently it appears as if the creative movement of the soul had died in its own product.¹¹⁴

The movement of the soul' here has but all the traits of Lotzean **Bildung*: the passage of the soul from incompleteness to completeness.¹¹⁵

In his analysis of *postupok* Bakhtin follows Simmel's paradigm. Like Simmel, Bakhtin discerns between the subjective process of *postupok* and its Objective product.¹¹⁶ Bakhtin describes act as Janus-faced: it faces both an Objective cultural region and the never-repeatable flow of the act's life.¹¹⁷ The cultural realm is the region of *self-sameness, of validity-in-itself, which contrasts with the endless flow of Being-event:

The aspect of content and sense, detached from the event, remains self-identical [...]¹¹⁸

Here Bakhtin is so close to Simmel that he even uses his peculiar expression 'to die in its own product'. Writing about the Kantian categorical imperative, Bakhtin discovers in it the common pattern of excluding individual and historical actuality of *postupok*:

Here we can see the full analogy with the structure of the autonomous world of culture. Will-*postupok* creates the law and submits itself to it, i.e. will - as individual will - dies in its product.¹¹⁹

According to Simmel, the tragedy of culture is the tragedy of the alienation of cultural products. Culture, taken in its Objective dimension as the world of cultural products, has a dynamic of its own. It is driven by immanent forces which can never be controlled by human means:

Each Objective spirit, in the narrow sense, has a logic of its own. Once certain themes of law, of art, of morals have been created - even if they have been created by the most individual and innermost spontaneity - we let

¹¹⁴ *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 31 <5 - 6>; the translation is slightly changed.

¹¹⁵ See *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 46 <25>.

¹¹⁶ See e.g. *PhP*, pp. 97, 103.

¹¹⁷ See *PhP*, p. 83.

¹¹⁸ *PhP*, p. 129; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 82, 88, 114. Husserl defined ideal being in the same way as the self-identical element of many acts of consciousness: see *LII*, p. 329 <BI 99>.

¹¹⁹ *PhP*, p. 101; my italics. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 94, where Bakhtin mentions 'act falling away into its product'.

them out of our hands to unfold in individual formations. Although we generate them, they must follow the guide-lines of their own inner necessity, which is no more concerned with our individuality than are physical forces and their laws.¹²⁰

Writing after the War, Bakhtin puts a much stronger accent on the destructive effect of the alienated, immanent forces of Objective culture, which he holds responsible for the terrifying reality of the European catastrophe:

Torn away from the cognitive act, its content falls under its own *immanent law, so that the act is further progressing, as if by its own will. As soon as we have entered such an act, i.e. have committed the act of abstraction, we fall ourselves under its autonomous law, or, to be exact, we can no more be found in this act as active, responsible individuals. [...] Thus weapons are perfected according to their own inner law, and as a result, they develop from what initially was a means of reasonable defence into a terrifying, deadly, and destructive force. Everything purely technical, dissociated from the only oneness, given up to the immanent law of its development, is a threat to life - from time to time it can burst into the only oneness of life as an irresponsible, horrifying destructive force.¹²¹

In a parallel fragment Simmel points to the conflict between our particular interests and the direction of our integral development. A particular interest, like self-defence or a need, gives rise to a development which we cannot control because it is driven by a logic of its own.¹²²

Simmel does not predict the historical course of the tragedy of culture: he seems to believe that this tragedy is metaphysically unavoidable.¹²³ By *tragedy* Simmel understands a situation such as

when the destructive forces directed against some Being spring forth from the deepest levels of this very Being; or when its destruction has been initiated in itself, and forms the logical development of the very structure by which a Being has built its own positive form.¹²⁴

Simmel's cultural cosmos is, properly speaking, no cosmos at all. Although each

¹²⁰ *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 39 <15 - 16>; the translation is slightly changed.

¹²¹ *PhP*, pp. 86 - 87.

¹²² See *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 39 <15 - 16>. 'Need or self-defence' [Not oder Abwehr] are omitted in the English translation.

¹²³ See *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 42 <20>.

¹²⁴ *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 43 <21>.

of its elements follows its own immanent logic, no logic rules the whole of culture, which is destined to pass through crises. Culture is ever pregnant with its self-destruction and we have no means of changing its fatal course.

Bakhtin does not share that fatalistic attitude. He *blames* culture for causing the pan-European crisis. The crisis is not at all metaphysical: it is induced by contemporary culture because it is *theoretical and theorized*. Saying that the world of life and the world of culture are totally separated from each other, Bakhtin means the world of that culture: unlike the world of historical materialism, it has no room for *postupok*:

the world of contemporary philosophy, the theoretical and theorized world of culture, is in a sense actual, it has its validity, but it is no less clear that this world is not the only world in which one lives and in which one's responsible *postupok* takes place, and these two worlds have no communication between them [...]¹²⁵

That situation was analysed in much detail by Simmel. We have to remember that the relation between 'life' and 'culture', taken in its social aspect, turns into the relation between producers and recipients. The constantly increasing division of labour in capitalist society makes social transactions impersonal, so that they cease to be directly reciprocal. That is the manifestation of the global process of Objectivation [Objektivationsprozess]:¹²⁶

[...] the cultural content becomes an increasingly conscious *objective mind* [objektivierter Geist] in relation not only to recipients but also to producers. To the extent to which Objectivation [Objektivierung] increases [...] the cultural growth of the individual can lag considerably behind the cultural growth of tangible as well as functional and intellectual Objects [Ding].¹²⁷

Simmel's analysis gives a clue to the understanding of a very strange thesis of Bakhtin's. The latter insists many times on the total separateness of the worlds of culture and life. It seems to be simply not true. Indeed, a cultural product is born in the world of life: in that sense there is a connection between culture and life. It would be more accurate to say (as Simmel does) that the world of life is

¹²⁵ PhP, p. 96.

¹²⁶ See *The Philosophy of Money*, pp. 456 - 457, 463 <632 - 634, 643>.

¹²⁷ *The Philosophy of Money*, pp. 463 <643>; the translation is slightly changed.

connected to the world of culture but that this connection is *not reciprocal*. No communication in the *opposite* direction, from Objective culture to an individual life, is possible because a fragment of flowing life, a *postupok*, being lived in all its immediacy, is correlated to no cultural product. As soon as the product is finished, its umbilical cord is severed and the connection between the cultural Object and the flow of individual life is lost.

The world of life therefore creates the wealth of 'theoretical and theorized' culture, which might be relevant for further cultural production but which is totally irrelevant for one's life, for a life-*postupok*. An individual life produces a cultural product of such a kind that it has no effect on the individual life. A finite individual, living in history, finds himself in Objective culture solely as a biological or economic Being who produces in order to survive.

In opposition to Simmel, Bakhtin does not accept this situation as the inherent trait of the highest stage of cultural development but considers it rather as the clear sign of a wrong development which has led to theorized culture, far too narrow in its scope. In a picturesque fragment Bakhtin describes the relationship between *postupok* and culture as unjust exploitation:

As theory has broken away from *postupok* and is now developing according to its own inner, immanent law, *postupok*, having released theory from itself, begins to undergo a degradation. All the energies of responsible fulfilling [of *postupok*] go to an autonomous realm of culture; left without these energies, *postupok* falls to the level of elementary biological and economic motivation and loses all its ideal moments: that is precisely the state of civilization. The whole wealth of culture is given over to serving the biological act. Theory leaves *postupok* to dull Being, sucks from it all the moments of ideality into its [the theory's] own autonomous, self-contained realm, it impoverishes *postupok*. Here rises the fervour of Tolstoyanism and every cultural nihilism. [...] The extraordinary complexity of the product and the elementary simplicity of the motive. We have evoked the ghost of Objective culture, but we are not able to conjure it away.¹²⁸

'The ghost of Objective culture' points to Simmel's *objektiver Geist*,¹²⁹ which

¹²⁸ PhP, p. 123.

¹²⁹ See *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 39 <15 - 16>. There are good reasons for tracing the term back to Hegel, which might also explain the affinity between Simmel and Marx: see Weingartner, 1960, p. 83, fn 206.

is used by Bakhtin only as a metaphor: the Russian *prizrak* (spectre, spook) can never stand for the philosophical 'spirit' or 'mind'. Bakhtin thus excludes even a shadow of metaphysics, which colours the Simmelian context. This substitution of *spectre* for *spirit* might also point to some subtle polemics with the contemporaries. The Russian version of Marx's 1848 *Communist Manifesto* begins exactly with the *Spectre / Spook of Communism*, wandering across Europe. Bakhtin, however, gives the priority to another 'spectre' whom 'we' ourselves evoked. In other words, the European catastrophe, especially in its Russian version, should not be ascribed so much to the activity of the spectre of Communism as to our helplessness before the self-destructive tendencies of Objective culture, o u r culture.

The split of *postupok* leads to a cultural nihilism. Bakhtin's remark about the source of that nihilism merely re-formulates a thesis of Simmel's: if *Objectivated cultural values are disregarded, we have the type of a religious fanatic; if the subjective cultural element is ignored, we come to a fanatic of a particular profession.¹³⁰ It should be remembered here that Tolstoyanism, as we saw, was blamed by Berdyaev for the Russian Revolution! Bakhtin yet again finds the origin of the crisis in fatalist subjection to immanent cultural forces and not in the deficiency of certain popular ideologies.

In the above fragment another allusion is apparent. Describing how 'culture' sponges on *postupok*, how it grows richer by 'impoverishing' *postupok*, how it leaves *postupok* to 'elementary' biological existence, Bakhtin reproduces the structure of Marxian social criticism: the upper classes growing richer by sponging on the proletariat and pushing it to the limit of survival. It is significant that Bakhtin applies that paradigm to *postupok*, to a fragment of someone's life, and not to society! Just as in his 1919 essay, the fatal split is found within a finite individual. The class war is therefore replaced by a universal existential conflict which finds its expression in the social crisis.

Bakhtin describes that crisis by a reference to Marxism.

¹³⁰ See *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, pp. 30, 37 <4, 12>.

§8.6. *Postupok* as production: the Marxian context

Bakhtin's approach to the post-War crisis is more constructive than that of other authors. The crisis is not something extraneous which suddenly happened to us, like a cosmic transformation, as Berdyaev held (§7.2). Nor is it merely 'a new distribution of Man's total energy between the cerebral cortex and the rest of the organism', as Max Scheler believed.¹³¹ The world is in crisis solely because the crisis is re-created in each and every quantum of life, *postupok*. What is wrong is not merely the way we think of life but the way we live it, our *postupok*.

Bakhtin describes the historical situation, combining his concept of *postupok* with a Simmelian analysis of Objectivation; by doing that he, to a certain extent, follows Marx. Indeed, the analysis of Objective culture, given by Simmel, merely expanded the limits of the Hegelian-Marxian theory of alienation, as Simmel himself admitted:

The 'fetishism' which Marx assigned to *economic commodities represents only a special case of this general fate of the contents of culture.¹³²

The detailed treatment of this problem was given by Simmel in his *Philosophy of Money* (first published in 1902). The divorce of the product from the labourer, the superior power of Objective culture over the culture of individuals, helplessness and self-alienation which are the conditions of human existence in the capitalist society - all those phenomena are thoroughly analysed in their relation to the money economy. Expanding the Marxian analysis of economical value on the sphere of culture, Simmel demonstrates how cultural values are set by the mechanism of exchange and thus become alienated from the values of an individual.¹³³ Cultural crises are therefore as little predictable as economic crises are; even less can they be avoided.

For Bakhtin the contemporary crisis is much more than a merely cultural crisis:

The contemporary crisis is basically the crisis of contemporary *postupok*.

¹³¹ See Frisby, 1992, p. 32.

¹³² *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 42 <20>.

¹³³ See *The Philosophy of Money*, chapter 1, esp. pp. 79 - 90 <55 - 73>; chapter 6, pp. 429 - 512 <591 - 716>.

An abyss arose between the motive and the product of *postupok*. Therefore the product, torn from its ontological roots, also drooped. Money could be the motive of the *postupok* which builds up a system of morality. Economic materialism is right with regard to the present moment, though not because the motives of *postupok* have got inside its product: on the contrary, the product, in the respect of its validity, is isolated from the *postupok* and its actual motives.¹³⁴

Even if we leave 'the ontological *roots' for the next chapters, the fragment still sounds somewhat enigmatic. The term 'economic materialism' was normally used by Bakhtin's contemporaries for the Marxian doctrine¹³⁵ on the priority of the economic substructure over ideological superstructures.¹³⁶ By saying that economical materialism is right, what does Bakhtin actually mean?

Bakhtin gives Marxism the credit 'with regard to the present moment'. According to Marxism, however, there is the essential difference of 'the present moment' in Bolshevik Russia in comparison to the 'capitalist' world. Is Marxism 'right' with regard to Russia, where the Marxist prediction of the proletarian revolution became true? Or is it right in its critique of capitalism? Bakhtin himself characterises the 'present moment' by the 'abyss' between the product of a *postupok* (e.g. the system of morality) and its motive (money). Economic materialism is therefore certainly right in pointing to the separation of the motive of an individual *postupok* from its product.

Is it not so that alienation is finally overcome by the proletarian revolution in Russia? Marx and Engels ascribed alienation to the certain 'relations of production' which imply, among others, the money economy and the political state.¹³⁷ It is the communist proletariat who

[...] revolutionise society and put the relations of production and the form of intercourse on a new basis - i.e., on themselves as new people, on their new mode of life [...]¹³⁸

¹³⁴ *PhP*, p. 123.

¹³⁵ See e.g. Frank, 1922, p. 52.

¹³⁶ See e.g. *The German Ideology*, p. 245.

¹³⁷ See *The German Ideology*, p. 203.

¹³⁸ *The German Ideology*, p. 214.

It is private property which causes alienation. The 'new mode of life' excludes not only money (which is, after all, but a form of private property) but abolishes the very phenomenon of labour! Under the capitalist mode of production the relations between individuals become independent of individuals: within communist society they become 'free manifestations' of their lives so that¹³⁹

the basis of the whole opposition between work and enjoyment disappears.¹⁴⁰

To have money as the motive of producing a system of morality would be then absolutely impossible.

In Bakhtin's view it has not happened yet: money still could be the motive of producing a system of morality. Communism, which the Bolshevik government tried to introduce by abolishing the money economy, led to a mere replacement of the economic motive by a purely biological one. As Lossky remembers, his motive for delivering a course in *idealistic* philosophy in 1920 was indeed the fee: one loaf of brown bread per lecture. In his words, it was 'more precious than gold'.¹⁴¹ By 1922 the market economy was allowed to co-exist with the state-run sector and money income began replacing ration coupons. Bakhtin therefore seems to reject the claim that the Bolshevik revolution put an end to alienation: the motive of a *postupok* has not reached its product.

Here we can yet again draw a parallel between Bakhtin and Simmel. The accent on money as the motive of *postupok*, even if it is a *postupok* of philosophising, is also one of the fundamental theses in Simmel's *Philosophy of Money*: the substitution of means for the ends.¹⁴²

It is worth of noting that Simmel, though fully recognizing the significance of Marxian philosophy, remained one of the most ardent critics of historical

¹³⁹ See *The German Ideology*, pp. 203, 205, 230 - 231.

¹⁴⁰ *The German Ideology*, p. 218.

¹⁴¹ See Lossky, 1968, p. 209. The context implies the idealistic character of the course as Lossky at that time never stopped crusading against materialism, which eventually led to his removal from a teaching position at the University of St. Petersburg: see *ibid.*, pp. 210 - 212.

¹⁴² See *The Philosophy of Money*, ch. 3, esp. pp. 228 - 238 <292 - 307>.

materialism.¹⁴³ He focused his criticism on the Marxian methodology, which, as Simmel believed, was inconsistent:

As the *content* of the meaning of history, historical materialism has selected material interests - a choice that is, in a certain sense, utterly unidealistic. But historical materialism fails to recognize that even material interests motivate history only as mental values. This is an obstacle to the recognition that the idea is the form of history. Historical materialism is disposed to conceive this form in a realistic fashion too, a conception that is inconsistent with the actual content of the theory.¹⁴⁴

Bakhtin, as we saw (§8.4), also criticises *historical materialism for its methodological error: the confusion of what *ought* to be ('mental values' in the above quotation from Simmel) with what *is* ('material interests'). With regard to that methodological defect Bakhtin even makes a parallel between historical materialism and theosophy and anthroposophy.¹⁴⁵ Simmel draws the same parallel between Marxism and occultism, as both tend to refer to the activity of immanent material forces.¹⁴⁶

In other words, Bakhtin appreciates historical materialism (§8.4) as a philosophy of *postupok*; he also endorses the theory of alienation by Marx / Simmel. At the same time he finds historical materialism philosophically inconsistent.

Such a position was far from unusual.¹⁴⁷ Among the known Russian

¹⁴³ See *The Problems of the Philosophy of History*, pp. 185 - 200 <402 - 417>.

¹⁴⁴ *The Problems of the Philosophy of History*, pp. 199 - 200 <417>.

¹⁴⁵ See *PhP*, as quoted in Russian in the commentary to the English translation, p. 91 (in the first Russian edition this fragment was removed by the Soviet censorship).

¹⁴⁶ See *The Problems of the Philosophy of History*, p. 192 <408>.

¹⁴⁷ Little is known about Bakhtin's political views. Retrospectively he characterised himself as 'absolutely apolitical' at that time: see *Interview, Chelovek*, 5/93, p. 140. His circle in Nevel included, for one example, Kagan, a Neo-Kantian with a Bolshevik past, who happened to have hidden Stalin from the law in times past! Another important clue is VOLFILA (Petersburg, 1919 - 1924), an apolitical pro-socialist association of intelligentsia, where the members of Bakhtin's circles lectured and whose sessions he himself attended. See Clark and Holquist, 1984, pp. 42, 125 - 126; *Interview, Chelovek*, 6 / 147 - 148. In the eyes of many, VOLFILA was a symbol of opportunism: thus Lossky refused to become a member of VOLFILA, and Berdyaev broke his friendship with Ivanov, who became a member: see Lossky, 1968, p. 209; Berdyaev, 1949, p. 252. The most telling is the list of Bakhtin's lectures in Vitebsk. He lectured at the Party high school and at the local regiment of the Red Army: see Konkin and Konkina, 1993, p. 63.

philosophers, e.g. Berdyaev, Lossky or Steppun, socialism was commonly accepted.¹⁴⁸ All three recognized the value of Marxism as social criticism.¹⁴⁹ The element which they rejected absolutely was materialism. Berdyaev, Lossky and Steppun, among many, campaigned *against* materialism. It was a challenge not only to Bolshevik ideology, which was formally materialistic, but also to the prevalent attitude of angry masses who, as Lossky put it, 'fiercely hated religion'.¹⁵⁰ Steppun described the ideological struggle of 1918 - 1922 as a conflict between two eschatologies. One eschatology proclaimed the beginning of history, another, its end.¹⁵¹

It was not a purely Russian phenomenon. In the early 1920s Max Scheler analysed the formal modes of thought in different social classes. Materialism and an optimistic view of the future, combined with a pessimistic view of the past, belonged to the lower class, whereas inherent in the upper class were spiritualism and a pessimistic view of the future, combined with an optimistic view of the past.¹⁵²

The attitude to materialism became *Either/Or* in the class conflict. That is why Lenin in his 1922 article *On the Importance of Militant Materialism* summoned the public to 'unmask and persecute' the bourgeois professors of philosophy, those 'lackeys with diplomas' in the service of 'clerical idiocy'.¹⁵³ Lenin completely excluded any possibility of ignoring the confrontation between materialism and non-materialism, calling such a position

a ridiculous and utterly reactionary claim to rise above materialistic and

¹⁴⁸ Ethical socialism, ('revisionism') was related to Marburg school of Neo-Kantianism: see Willey, 1978, esp. pp. 102 - 130.

¹⁴⁹ See Berdyaev, 1949, pp. 248 - 249, 252, 257 - 259; Lossky, 1968, pp. 201 - 202, 208 - 209; Steppun, 1990, vol. 2, pp. 90, 219 - 220, 358, 418 - 419.

¹⁵⁰ See Lossky, 1968, p. 209. After one such lecture Steppun barely escaped being attacked by the audience: see Steppun, 1990, pp. 283 - 284. See also Berdyaev, 1949, pp. 257 - 259; Lossky, 1968, p. 212. Many other names could be mentioned here, e.g. Vvedensky, Il'in, Frank.

¹⁵¹ See Steppun, 1990, vol. 2, pp. 203 - 204.

¹⁵² See Frisby, 1992, p. 55.

¹⁵³ The article ended with a complaint that the working class had not yet exercised its newly won power for deporting from Soviet Russia those 'advocates of (spiritual) serfdom' (see Lenin, 1922, pp. 6, 12). Lenin's complaint, as we know (§7.3), was not ignored.

idealistic 'extremes'.¹⁵⁴

Bakhtin's project represents precisely such a 'ridiculous and utterly reactionary claim'. To him, the distinction between materialism and idealism is irrelevant:

Idealism is the phenomenology of self-experiencing, but not of experiencing the Other; the naturalistic conception of consciousness and of man in the world is the phenomenology of the Other. Of course, we do not touch the philosophical validity of these conceptions; instead we are concerned only with the phenomenological experience that lies at their base; these conceptions are indeed brought about by the theoretical treatment of that experience.¹⁵⁵

That we 'do not touch' the validity either of idealism or of naturalism ('materialism' in a parallel fragment) is not different from Husserlian 'abstention', *Enthaltung*. The level of phenomenological analysis is pre-theoretical and, therefore, pre-philosophical with regard to existing philosophies, which are the products of theoretical treatment, belonging to Objective culture, 'theoretical and theorized'. Has that culture not already led to the stalemate of alienation?

Bakhtin interprets the traditional philosophical opposition phenomenologically, reconciling and unifying the opposites by a 'third' force. He formulates here, in almost Husserlian terms, his neutral position with regard to past philosophy: philosophical **epoché*.¹⁵⁶ A new philosophy for a new world is bound to be free from the old partiality, just as phenomenology tries to be.

However, there seems to be a contradiction. Bakhtin wants to build up a concept of the world which would allow room for *historically concrete*, actual *postupok*, just as historical materialism does. But what could be further away from that ideal than Husserlian phenomenology, which disconnects matters of fact, like history, and disregards an individual fact in general?

How could the concept of individual *postupok* be integrated into the phenomenological context?

¹⁵⁴ Lenin, 1922, p. 8.

¹⁵⁵ A&H, p. 97. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 37. *Experiencing* stands here for the Russian *perezzhivanie* (the German *Erlebnis*), while *experience* stands for the Russian *opyt* (the German *Erfahrung*).

¹⁵⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 33 <33>.

9. FIRST PHILOSOPHY AS MORAL PHENOMENOLOGY

Several times Bakhtin explicitly calls his philosophising a 'phenomenological description'.¹ But only at one point he gives a clue of what he understands by phenomenology. Thus, although he believes that the methodology of aesthetics should be entirely independent of psychology, an exception should be made for

psychological description, phenomenology [...]²

Construing psychological **description* and phenomenology is by no means incidental. Psychological description, as we remember, is not psychology proper: it is the term which Brentano and Husserl used originally for phenomenology.

The role of phenomenology in Bakhtin's project is far from marginal. In fact, phenomenology belongs to the core of his 'first philosophy'. We have been already told that first philosophy needs must be oriented towards *postupok*. Now Bakhtin says **first philosophy could be nothing but phenomenology:*

first philosophy [...] could not construct general concepts, statements or laws concerning this world [of *postupok*] (a theoretical and abstract pureness of *postupok*) but could only be a description, phenomenology of this world of *postupok*.³

¹ See A&H, pp. 91, 96, 163.

² A&H, p. 56.

³ PhP, p. 105. On Bakhtin's characterization of his philosophy as description see also: *ibid.*, p. 127; A&H(2), p. 138.

Here, phenomenology and description seem again to be synonymous.

The central idea of the phenomenological movement was indeed description: of 'psychic phenomena' (Brentano), of 'psychical functions' (Stumpf), of 'acts of consciousness', or 'intentional processes of experience' (Husserl), and so on.

Thus, Brentano's pioneering work applies psychological description to moral acts considered as 'psychic phenomena'. The constitutive element of those phenomena is intentionality, the relation to an object. A physical phenomenon (a sound wave) has no such relation in comparison to the corresponding psychic phenomenon (hearing a sound).⁴

Husserl, who developed the concept of *intentionality far beyond the original limits of the Brentanian 'descriptive psychology', considered intentionality as 'the principal theme of phenomenology'. Consciousness is always consciousness of something; this 'something' is the object of the act of consciousness, which act is called also the intensive mental process.⁵

With Bakhtin it is *postupok* that might be taken as the counterpart of intensive mental process, *Erlebnis*. The latter concept, however, excludes any idea of *activity, even mental activity,⁶ while *postupok* is a structured fragment of one's life lived in history (§8.3). Bakhtin considers historical-individual activity as one of *postupok*'s constitutive moments (§8.4).⁷

In order to broaden the framework of the Husserlian project, Bakhtin undertakes a reform of phenomenological method.

§9.1. *Postupok* as intentional process

We begin by demonstrating a certain affinity between the Husserlian *intentional mental processes* [*intentionale Erlebnisse*] and the Bakhtinian *postupki*. Husserl

⁴ See Brentano, 1969 <1889>, No. 19, p. 14. Husserl called this work 'brilliant' [geniale] and expressed his indebtedness to Brentano in this regard: see *Ideas*, No. 139, p. 335 fn 9 <290>.

⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 205 <174>, pp. 199 - 200 <167 - 169>.

⁶ See *LI5*, p. 563 <B1 379>.

⁷ See *PhP*, pp. 86, 101.

considered intentionality as the *principal* theme of phenomenology.⁸ What would be its equivalent with regard to *postupok*? Has *postupok* any 'intention', any 'relation to an object'?

Bakhtin sometimes uses the very term 'intention'⁹ but that is not typical for him. More often he prefers circumlocutions. Thus, the Russian equivalent of the German *Erlebnis* is *perezhivanie* (I will translate it as *mental life-process*). Husserl was neither the first nor the only one who used the term *Erlebnis*. It was probably Dilthey who first made that concept important in his life-philosophy. Nevertheless, Husserl was the first to use it as the prime phenomenological concept designating an *intentional* mental process.¹⁰ Bakhtin uses that term in the quite Husserlian sense: a mental life-process, *perezhivanie*,

is the *relation* to [its] object and sense; apart from this relation it does not exist for itself.¹¹

It sounds almost like a paraphrase of Husserl who says:

The intensive mental process [*Erlebnis*] [...] has 'relation to something objective' ['Beziehung auf Gegenständliches'] but one also says that it is 'consciousness of something' [...]¹²

Bakhtin describes the relation between a mental life-process and its

objects, goals and values to which my mental life-process was directed and which conferred sense on it and with which the life-process was filled.¹³

More clues pointing to the Husserlian context could be found here. The combination of 'objects, goals and values' corresponds in Husserl to the different dimensions of 'sense', which include 'concrete values and practical objectivities'.¹⁴

⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 73 <64>; p. 199 <168>.

⁹ The Russian *intentsiya*: see e.g. *PCMF*, pp. 14, 15, 48.

¹⁰ See e.g. Spiegelberg, 1982, pp. 280, 744; Schnädelbach, 1984, p. 124; Weber, *Science as a Vocation*, p. 11 <13>; cf. Rickert, *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, pp. 21 - 22.

¹¹ *A&H*, p. 101. My italics.

¹² *Ideas*, p. 310 <268>. Cf. *Ideas*, p. 308 <266>: 'The phenomenological problem of the relation of consciousness to an objectivity has primarily its noematic side. The "noema" in itself has an objective relation and, more particularly, by virtue of its own "sense". My emphasis.

¹³ *A&H*, p. 100.

¹⁴ See *Ideas*, p. 277 <239 - 240> and p. 354 <308>. Similar contexts can be found elsewhere in

We notice also the peculiar duality of signitive ('sense-conferring') and intuitive ('fulfilling', *erfüllende*) intentions,¹⁵ and lastly, the intentionality designated as 'directedness'.¹⁶

We have, of course, to ask if a mental life-process is also a *postupok* and vice versa. A mental life-process of experiencing may have the structure of a *postupok*. On the other hand, a *postupok* presupposes a consciousness for which the process of that *postupok* is a mental life-process. We shall say more about this in the next section. At the moment it is enough to indicate that 'directedness' is normally used by Bakhtin with regard to *postupok*: *postupok is directed to its object*¹⁷ so that

[...] my thought-*postupok* is determined solely by the object-validities this thought is directed to [...] The *postupok* of aesthetical creation also has to do solely with the object-validities the aesthetical activity is directed to [...]¹⁸

We can ignore the strange expression 'object-validities', taking it merely as 'objects'; later (§9.3) we shall return to the exact meaning of these words.

The equivalent of *intentionality is the *directedness*¹⁹ of *postupok*. Yet again, the parallel with Husserl could not be more obvious, as it was he who first interpreted intentionality as directedness [*Richtung*]²⁰ of the act, and not as 'mental inexistence' of the object, as Brentano had thought earlier:

It is only in Husserl's thought that the term 'intentional' acquired the meaning of directedness toward an object rather than that of the object's immanence in consciousness.²¹

Directedness of my *postupok* is my directedness, my life's directedness.²² Our life is directed 'forward', to what is oncoming. It is never at rest, it never coincides with its been-ness but is unceasingly reaching beyond itself. As we saw

Husserl: see *ibid.*, p. 54 <50>, p. 76 <66>.

¹⁵ See e.g. *LI6*, p. 694 <B2 32>.

¹⁶ See *LI5*, pp. 587 - 588 <B1 412 - 413>.

¹⁷ The Russian *napravlennost na predmet*.

¹⁸ *A&H*, p. 122.

¹⁹ The Russian *napravlennost*.

²⁰ See e.g. *LI5*, pp. 587 - 588 <B1 412 - 413>.

²¹ Spiegelberg, 1982, p. 97.

²² The Russian *zhiznennaya napravlennost*: see e.g. *A&H*, pp. 63, 74, 81, 86.

(§2.2), Husserl described the stream of consciousness in a similar way, as the stream of life: 'I look at the flowing life in its actual present...' ²³

One of the main principles of Husserlian phenomenology is the correlation between the directedness and the object of the act. The object of the act does not pre-exist the act as if the act would simply point to it by the intention / directedness. The intentional object of the act is the object of the act's intention; vice versa the intention is the directedness to the object. Both aspects are inseparable. It is *intentionality that makes consciousness 'consciousness of something' in the process of *'constitution'.²⁴

In the same way 'my' life's directedness is also correlated to its object:

From within myself, in the sense-context and *value-context of my life, an object [*predmet*, *Gegenstand*] is opposite me as the object of my life's directedness (cognitive-ethical and practical directedness) [...] ²⁵

One's life's directedness is far from merely fixing on something pre-given. Just as in Husserlian phenomenology, the object of our *postupok* is indeed constituted by our interpretation of the given from within our value-context. The 'visage' (literally 'the face') of the object, as Bakhtin calls it, is made up by our relation to it:

That which we, in life, in cognition, in *postupok*, call a determined object, gets its determinedness, its *visage, only by our relation to it: it is our relation that determines the object and its structure, and never otherwise [...] ²⁶

§9.2. Sense-directedness and sense-content

'My directedness' is also characterized by Bakhtin as object-directedness and sense-directedness.²⁷ We have already considered object-directedness. Sense-

²³ See *A&H*, p. 17. Cf. *Ideas*, p. 100 <85>.

²⁴ See *Ideas*, p. 129 - 130 <107>.

²⁵ *A&H*, p. 87. 'Value-context' points to the Rickertian *Werthgesichtspunkt*, a 'value-perspective': see *Die Grenzen*, p. 354.

²⁶ *A&H*, p. 8. 'Visage' stands here for the Russian *lik*, the archaic form of *litso*, face, used especially in regard of the representation of the face on icons.

²⁷ The Russian *predmetnaya, smyslovaya napravlennost*: see e.g. *A&H*, pp. 74, 81, 86.

³² *Ideas*, pp. 228 <194>, 228 <194>; cf. *ibid.*, Introduction, p. xxi <4>.

³⁵ The Russian *smyslovoe soderzhanie*, literally, sensal content which could be also understood as the 'content' of sense in the act (*postupok*). In the corresponding adjective *soderzhatel'noe*, literally, contentual-sensal, sense and content change places, partly because otherwise it would perhaps sound too strange even in Bakhtinian Russian, partly because in complex Russian adjective the last component normally bears more emphasis and the emphasis on contentual is not what Bakhtin wants here.

When I am working on a theorem, I am directed to its sense [...]³⁶
 More generally, Bakhtin speaks of any act-activity which has its sense-content, or its 'sense-aspect', literally a 'sense-side'.³⁷

We can see at this point that the Bakhtinian concept of sense-content is virtually the same as that used by Husserl and Rickert. If we define phenomenology as the study of intensive mental processes, then a phenomenology of *postupok* is viable: *postupok* may be considered as an intentional process directed to (or related to) its object and sense.

Structural similarity between Husserlian phenomenology and the Bakhtinian philosophy of *postupok* becomes apparent if we return to the starting-point of Husserl's argument.

§9.3. Validity as belonging to a nexus: the Lotzean paradigm

As Husserl remembered, the first impulse for the project of phenomenology came from his study of Lotze:

his [Lotze's] brilliant interpretation of Plato's doctrine of Ideas gave me my first big insight and was a *determining factor in all further studies*. Lotze spoke already of truths in themselves, and so the idea suggested itself of transferring all the mathematical and a major part of the traditionally logical [world] into the realm of the ideal.³⁸

Lotze interprets Platonic ideas as universal concepts [Allgemeinbegriffe].³⁹ However, he denies that the world of ideas-concepts is the reflection of the world of things. The world of concepts is an ordered system ruled by universal *logical* (and not causal) laws. We could create an entirely novel 'thing' and these laws would be still applicable to its concept. On the other hand, we can arbitrarily compare things, bring them into new relations or even form at will innumerable

³⁶ See *PhP*, p. 90.

³⁷ See *PhP*, p. 82.

³⁸ *Introduction to the Logical Investigations*, p. 36 <129> (my italics); the translation has been slightly changed. Both Windelband and Rickert mention this re-interpretation as an important discovery: see Windelband, *Kulturphilosophie*, p. 190; Rickert, *Die Grenzen*, p. 97; Boer, 1978, p. 264, fn 24.

³⁹ See *Logic*, vol. 2, p. 202 <507>.

new concepts:

in our thinking the concepts may be multiplied indefinitely without any increase in the existent [das Seiende].⁴⁰

Concepts are also independent in another sense: of the process of their being thought. In a later work of Lotze's he gives such a description of the independence of thoughts from thinking that indeed might have been a quotation from Husserl:

Now Ideas [Vorstellungen], in so far as they are present in our minds, possess reality in the sense of an Event [Ereignis], - they *occur* [geschehen] in us: for as utterances of an activity of presentation they are never a Being at rest but a continual Becoming [Werden]; their content, on the other hand, insofar as we regard it in abstraction from the mental activity which we direct to it, can no longer be said to occur, though neither again does it exist as things exist; we can only say that it possesses *Validity* [er gilt].⁴¹

Validity [Gelten, Geltung] is an ultimate and underivable conception, like *Being* or *Becoming*, which cannot be further reduced or constructed from other conceptions. Lotze made *Geltung* one of his key concepts.⁴²

What is valid neither exists nor is becoming. Validity is entirely independent of any existence / Becoming:

[validity] is the *validity of truths as such, apart from the question whether they can be established in relation to any object in the external world, as its mode of *Being*, or not [...]⁴³

We can discover the same paradigm in Rickertian epistemology when he claims the independence (transcendence) of the object of thinking from the actual event, or act, of thinking. The theory of cognition should investigate *what* the transcendent is, and *how* it becomes immanent, or enters our thinking.⁴⁴

Husserl acknowledged that the concept of truths valid in themselves helped

⁴⁰ Die Begriffe unseres Denkens lassen sich vielmehr ins Unendliche vermehren, ohne das zugleich durch diese Vermehrung das Seiende zunimmt. *Microcosmus*, <3 209>; cf. English translation: vol. 2, p. 327.

⁴¹ *Logic*, vol. 2, p. 209 <512>; the translation has been slightly changed.

⁴² See *Logic*, vol. 2, pp. 209 - 210 <512 - 513>. Lotzean *validity* was employed by many as one of the key concepts of logic. 'The word "to be valid" [gelten], which occurs in ordinary language but received at the hands of Lotze a special meaning, has become of great importance in recent logic.' Windelband, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, p. 182.

⁴³ *Logic*, vol. 2, p. 210 <513>.

⁴⁴ See *Zwei Wege*, pp. 170 - 171.

him to see the difference between logical judgement and psychological judgement.⁴⁵ The independence of an *event* of thinking from the *thought* pertaining to that event is a crucial element here. Another constitutive element of that Lotzean paradigm comes when Lotze notices that any logical judgement, by the very fact of being a logical statement, refers to all other logical statements. Lotze separates thought-events from thought-contents because thought-contents form a self-sufficient *nexus*. The validity of any logical judgement is the validity *with regard to a totality*:

[...] it is not just innumerable Ideas but an articulated whole of which they are all members [...]⁴⁶

Husserl almost paraphrases this statement: a truth

is not [hanging] somewhere in the void, but it is a validity unit [Geltungseinheit] in the timeless realm of Ideas.⁴⁷

Positing a 'realm' still has some aftertaste of Lotzean metaphysics. The link between a single judgement and the totality of possible judgements finds further expression in the Husserlian concept of the *ideal nexus*:

Science is, in the first place, an anthropological unity: it is a unity of acts of thinking, of thought-dispositions, as well as of certain external arrangements pertinent thereto. What makes this whole anthropological, and what especially makes it psychological, are not here our concern. We are rather interested in what makes science science, which is certainly not its psychology, *nor any real nexus into which acts of thought are fitted*, but a certain Objective [objektiv] or *ideal *nexus* which gives these acts a unitary objective relation [die gegenständliche Beziehung], and in such unitary relation, an ideal validity.⁴⁸

The 'objective relation' is the relation to the intentional object, in other words, the intention of the act. The validity of the cognitive act is guaranteed by its reference to the ideal nexus. If such a reference is possible, then the act has the

⁴⁵ See Boer, 1978, p. 275. Husserl praises Lotze's 'great logical work, rich as it is in original thoughts' (*Prolegomena*, p. 218 <B 219>).

⁴⁶ [...] es nicht nur unzählige Ideen gebe, sondern alle zusammen ein gegliedertes Ganze bilden [...] *Logic*, vol. 2, p. 221 <522>; I have changed the translation.

⁴⁷ Sie ist nicht 'irgendwo im Leeren', sondern ist eine Geltungseinheit im unzeitlichen Reiche der Ideen. *Prolegomena*, p. 149 <B 130>. I changed the translation.

⁴⁸ *Prolegomena*, p. 225 <B 227 - 228>; my italics. The translation has been changed according to GTH.

ideal correlate which is called 'truth'. Intentional objects form a unity, a nexus, and so do the truths which are 'truths in themselves'.⁴⁹ The original context for the concept of validity is therefore logic and mathematics, where truths are truths in themselves and as such do not depend on 'the matters of fact'.

Husserl extends this original context so that it includes e.g. the universal laws of physics, like the law of gravitation: can we speak of the eternal validity of that law, i.e. was it valid in itself even before its discovery by Newton? The question provided the demarcation line between psychologism and anti-psychologism.

We find a direct repercussion of this theme in Bakhtin, who simply repeats Husserl's argument against Sigwart's psychologism:⁵⁰

The *validity of a theoretical proposition retains its absolute independence whether the proposition is cognized by someone or not. The Newtonian laws were valid in themselves even before their discovery by Newton and it was not that discovery which for the first time made them valid [...]⁵¹

In Bakhtin's vocabulary *validity* is used mostly in a much more general sense. He speaks about theoretical, aesthetical, social validity,⁵² he discerns between universal and individual validity,⁵³ an absurdity from the point of view of Husserl's *rigorous philosophy*. He often mentions *valuative* validity, which is not at all the validity of values, as Rickert understood it.⁵⁴ *Validity* appears in a variety of contexts, and it is not easy to give it a definite meaning.

Bakhtin begins with validity in itself, in the theoretical sphere. In this particular area there seems to be a complete agreement between Husserl and Bakhtin as they develop the same Lotzean paradigm: the independence of an *event* of judging from the *judgement* and the reference of a logical judgement to the nexus of all logical statements.

⁴⁹ *Prolegomena*, pp. 226 - 227 <B 229 - 230>.

⁵⁰ See *Prolegomena*, p. 148 <B 128 - 129>. Cf. also Rickert, *Zwei Wege*, p. 196, where Rickert actually slightly rephrases Husserl's text.

⁵¹ *PhP*, pp. 88 - 89; on the validity in itself see also *ibid.*, pp. 84, 101, 106, 114.

⁵² See *PhP*, p. 85.

⁵³ See *PhP*, pp. 101, 117.

⁵⁴ See e.g. *PhP*, p. 137; *A&H*, pp. 96, 118.

Thus, according to Bakhtin, truth is autonomous and completely self-determined. Its determination does not depend on other contexts e.g. immediate practical interests. The validity of truth is self-sufficient, absolute and eternal.⁵⁵

There is the one world of science, the one actuality of cognition, apart from which nothing can become cognitively valid; this actuality of cognition is not completed but [remains] always open. Anything that 'is' for cognition is determined by cognition itself, and the task [of cognition] is to determine it in all its aspects [...]⁵⁶

It sounds rather controversial: if by the 'cognitively valid' we understand 'correct' or 'true' scientific judgements, then how could their validity last and survive the cataclysms in 'the one world of science' where truths are endlessly re-determined? And what is cognition: the historical phenomenon or some 'ideal' nexus as Husserl described it?⁵⁷ It reminds one of the classical question of Kantianism: what is the object of cognition (§5.3), or, with what should cognition conform in order to justify its validity?

Bakhtin believes the process of cognition should conform only with itself. The nexus of human history is entirely excluded. Not only history but any region of factualness, like psychology or biography, is contingent within the context of cognition and remains outside its limits.⁵⁸ Moreover, in the context of cognition there is no single 'opera', no 'works of science':

[...] the act of cognition conforms only with the work of cognition, which the act finds already done [...] moreover: a separate cognitive act and its expression in the separate individual scientific composition, in the aspect of their separateness and singleness, are not valid from the point of view of cognition itself: *in the world of cognition there are no separate acts and separate compositions.*⁵⁹

Here, Bakhtin demonstrates his full agreement with Husserl. The leitmotif of Husserlian phenomenology is the opposition of the factual ('matters of fact') and of the eidetic. The consciousness of factualness posits individual existence which

⁵⁵ See *PhP*, pp. 82, 88.

⁵⁶ *PCMF*, p. 28.

⁵⁷ See *Prolegomena*, p. 225 <B 227 - 228>.

⁵⁸ See *PCMF*, p. 27.

⁵⁹ *PCMF*, p. 28.

remains contingent. For the eidetic consciousness all factualness is contingent and has no eidetic validity.⁶⁰ It seems that Bakhtin presupposes the eidetic reduction as the constitutive moment of the cognitive context.

The sense-content of a *postupok* is always related to a context.⁶¹ The contexts corresponding to cultural *postupki* are called cultural 'regions', sometimes 'worlds', so that a unit of sense-content, finding its *place in such a 'region', becomes *valid*: a theorem becomes a part of mathematics, a painting becomes a work of art and so on:

[...] the side of its [the act's] sense-content makes a claim to its full and final self-determinedness in the oneness of this or that sense-region: science, art, history [...]⁶²

The 'self-determinedness' points to the *immanent forces operative in these cultural regions, the theme we encountered in the previous sections (§8.5). The determination which is 'full and final' implies the self-sameness of the sense-content, which thus becomes exempted from the flow of history. Indeed, the sense-content of an act of utterance is a concept. The sense-content of an act of judging is a universally valid judgement, that is to say, this sense-content is a moment of some theoretical unity.⁶³

To assert that a statement is true is *to relate it to some theoretical unity*, and by no means is that unity the only historical unity of my life.⁶⁴

The relation to a theoretical unity is here no different from what Husserl called 'the relation to the ideal nexus'.⁶⁵

§9.4. Validity of *postupok*: the ought

Validity can be expressed in relational terms, as it always refers to a system of

⁶⁰ See *Prolegomena*, p. 154 <B 136>; *Ideas*, p. 7 <8 - 9>; *ibid.*, p. 15 <16>; Cf. *PRS*, p. 112 <316>; *Prolegomena*, p. 185 <B 178>; *Ideas*, Introduction, p. xx <4>; *ibid.*, pp. 10 - 11 <12>.

⁶¹ See *PhP*, p. 89.

⁶² *PhP*, p. 82.

⁶³ See *PhP*, pp. 105, 83, 84.

⁶⁴ *PhP*, p. 84.

⁶⁵ See *Prolegomena*, p. 225 <B 227 - 228>.

relations, a context. Bakhtin also uses here a parallel term: *a unity*.⁶⁶ A *context is a unity in the sense that its elements are related to each other but remain unrelated to the context's exterior. To belong to a context means to be related to its elements, or in Bakhtin's terms, to have a *place, or a position, within that context. Something is valid in regard to a context if it can be put into that context, i.e. if it can enter the context's immanent system of relations, 'to find its place' in that context. Place is an important category of Bakhtin's.

We can remember now that Bakhtin praised *historical materialism precisely for 'giving place' in its 'world' to a concrete *postupok* performed in real history (§8.4).⁶⁷ Historical materialism provides a context to which such a *postupok* can belong. By belonging to a context, *postupok* becomes *valid with regard to that context. In fact, the very concept of *postupok* already presupposes a context which bestows validity; otherwise we would have not a *postupok* but a technical action or a biological act.⁶⁸

Of course, as an intentional process, any *postupok* is always directed to a validity, to a member of a nexus; moreover, that nexus completely determines *postupki* of certain kinds by providing the goals and values which govern those *postupki* and give them their sense. Thus, a *postupok* of cultural creation which adds its product to a cultural context, to an 'object-world', only 'substantiates'⁶⁹ a corresponding validity to which it is directed.⁷⁰

However, the same act / action can be considered in a different context, which

⁶⁶ See PhP, pp. 84, 133.

⁶⁷ The Russian *dat' mesto*: see PhP, p. 96.

⁶⁸ See PhP, p. 123.

⁶⁹ The Russian *osushchestvlyat'*. In its everyday use that Russian word means *to succeed in doing, to achieve, to make a dream, a plan, etc. actual or real*. Its stem is equivalent to the Latin *substantia*, related to both *Being* and *essence*. The verb could be largely translated as *bringing into Being*. It is parallel to the German *verwirklichen*. Thus, in the Russian translation of Simmel's *Das individuelle Gesetz Lebensverwirklichung* is rendered as *osushchestvlenie zhizni* (see *Logos* (Moscow), vol. 4 (1914), book 2, p. 216). The alternative English translation for *osushchestvlyat'* would be *actualise*.

⁷⁰ See A&H, pp. 121 - 122.

turns it into a new *postupok*. Theatre provides a wealth of examples.⁷¹ A character in a play performs on stage his *postupki*, which are 'valid' or not, 'right' or 'wrong', in the context of that play. The actor's *postupok* (acting) is governed by aesthetic values which are not present in the value-context of the character; the character is the product of this *postupok* and belongs to the context of aesthetical 'validities'. That *postupok* is valid aesthetically if it substantiates aesthetical values, i.e. if acting is 'good', no matter if the character is a villain. That context can be further changed into the context of the actor's life. In that context it is possible to ask if the fact of acting is proper for the actor as a living person, if it is 'valid', yet again, in a new sense.

Thus, one could ask if Hamlet was right in paying so high price for the triumph of justice, theatre critics would discuss the quality of the stage performance, and the actor himself might wonder if he was right in taking that role instead of a part in a soap opera which would have made it easier for him to pay the school fee for his children. The *postupok* arising in the latter context cannot be reduced to a mere *postupok* of cultural creation and it is not determined solely with aesthetical validities. The same phenomenon, a man saying and doing something, which happens once at a certain time in a certain place, can be considered as three different *postupki*, depending on the choice of a validity context.

It would be equally true with regard to thought-*postupki*. The same object, valid with regard to the nexus of science, can become the sense-content of a different *postupki*. A nuclear physicist living in Germany under Hitler, a colleague of his in the USA during the same period, or yet another colleague in Hiroshima in 1946: all of them might think of the same valid theorem while performing different thought-*postupki*. In the same way, in the aftermath of the Great War, Bakhtin mentions the difference between developing weapons for reasonable defence, or as a means of aggression: this difference is ignored by the *immanent forces of technical progress.⁷²

⁷¹ See PhP, p. 95; cf. A&H, pp. 63 - 71.

⁷² See PhP, pp. 86 - 87.

Is it possible to have a single approach to the validity of *postupok*? Max Weber answered in the negative: indeed, the very question is unworthy of a scholar, who should stand apart from any 'polytheism of values'. In other words, an individual *postupok* is valid if its sense-content is valid within the context of Objective culture, with its *immanent forces. Bakhtin considers this paradigm as the epitome of the contemporary crisis:

[...] whatever is Objectively valid in my *postupok* is included to the cultural region where the product of my *postupok* belongs.⁷³

In case of a cognitive thought-*postupok*, Bakhtin gives a more detailed description:

As my *postupok*, this my thought is a whole: its sense-content as well as the fact of its occurrence in my actual consciousness [...] i.e. all concrete historicity of its process, both those moments, sense-moment and historical-individual (factual) moment, are one and inseparable if my thought is estimated as my responsible *postupok*. However, it is possible to abstract from a thought [just] one moment, its sense-content, that is, to consider the thought as a universally valid judgement. To that sense-side the thought's individual-historical side (its author, its timing, its circumstances, the moral unity of its author's life) is absolutely irrelevant, [because] as a universally valid judgement, the thought is related to a theoretical unity and its place in that unity determines its validity altogether exhaustively.⁷⁴

Bakhtin finds this paradigm of 'fatal theoretism'⁷⁵ (§11.1) present in the leading philosophical tendencies of the period: phenomenology and Neo-Kantianism.

§9.5. The category of the ought in Husserl and Rickert

The above quoted fragment closely follows the above-mentioned (§9.3) text from Husserl's *Prolegomena*:⁷⁶ whatever real *nexus acts of thought might belong to, that nexus is irrelevant for the ideal validity of science, including the most rigorous science, pure phenomenology, first philosophy.

Husserl gives a very telling example of it. Discussing the concept of

⁷³ *PhP*, p. 123.

⁷⁴ *PhP*, p. 83.

⁷⁵ See *PhP*, p. 102.

⁷⁶ See *Prolegomena*, p. 225 <B 227 - 228>.

intentional essence, he compares two presentations of the 'icy wastes of Greenland', by Nansen and by Husserl himself. Nansen faced death in the midst of those icy wastes whereas Husserl only read about it. Nonetheless, the actual acts of consciousness, referring to these 'icy wastes', are considered by Husserlian phenomenology as the same if their intentional essence is the same, no matter whose consciousness it is: Nansen's or Husserl's.⁷⁷

Husserl adds immediately that the actual acts of consciousness are not the same. Phenomenology is able to discern the difference but this difference is not relevant for pure phenomenology, which is nothing more than the *typology* of mental processes. The difference between the presentation of Greenland by Nansen and by Husserl is the difference between the individuals, not between the *types* of mental processes.

Of course, as we saw (§4.7), every intensive mental process is two-sided: it has a subjectively oriented side, noesis, along with its objectively oriented side, noema. But because the phenomenological reductions exclude the world with all empirical subjectivity, noesis is 'turned towards' the pure Ego and has no connection to an individual *postupok* in actual history.⁷⁸ Thus, a judgement (noema) is truly the product of judging (noesis) but that judging pertains not to historical, or 'cosmic', but to 'phenomenological', time and to the pure Ego, a 'judging Being', not to a concrete living consciousness.⁷⁹

In the region of pure consciousness the correlation of subjective noesis and objective noema is complete. It is precisely the phenomenological reductions, disregarding the individual, which allow Husserl to make irrelevant the difference between the subjective and the objective moments of an act of consciousness, or between an act's process and its product:

⁷⁷ See *L15*, p. 590 <B1 417 - 418>. The intentional essence of an act is the essence of its 'matter' (i.e. the 'what' of its object) and the essence of its 'quality' (how the object is intended by the ego: presented, judged, etc.).

⁷⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 203 - 205 <172 - 173>, p. 191 <161>, p. 207 <176>, p. 133 <109 - 110>.

⁷⁹ 'Judging Beings', 'mathematical angels', and other 'Beings' make frequent appearance in Husserl: see e.g. *Prolegomena*, pp. 159, 163 <B 142 - 143, 149>, *Introduction to volume two*, p. 262 <B1 18>.

Thus the eidetic law, confirmed in every case, states that there can be no noetic moment without a *noematic moment specifically belonging to it.⁸⁰

The *a priori* conditions of truth (noematically speaking) are correlative to the conditions of the certainty of reason (noetically speaking). The validity of judging implies, and is implied by, the validity of judgement. In a draft of a general theory of validity Husserl tries to extend that parallelism to the spheres of axiology and praxeology.⁸¹

Something similar holds for the synthesizings and their noematic correlates belonging to the emotional and conative acts, thus for their kinds of synthetical 'posita', the systematic theory of forms of which must serve again as the substratum for the structure of the *formal theory of validity*. Actually implicit precisely on the pure synthetical forms of these spheres (as, e.g., in the connections of ends and means) are conditions of the possibility of axiological and practical 'truth'.⁸²

The hope is to substitute the mere social acceptedness [Gelten] of the *norms with their absolute validity [Gültigkeit],⁸³ thus coming to the 'valid' religion, art, philosophy.

The 'double-facedness' of an intensive mental process having both noetic and noematic sides has a close parallel in Bakhtin, who calls a *postupok* 'Janus-faced', with its two 'faces', or 'sides': its historical-individual side and its sense-content side.⁸⁴ However, those two sides are not at all correlative. The validity of sense-content is completely determined by its place in a cultural region.⁸⁵ Does the validity of the product make my whole *postupok* valid, including its factual-historical side?

The answer is obviously negative. Validity of a *postupok* could be only its validity with regard to a context, 'a plan', to which *the whole of postupok* should belong:

⁸⁰ *Ideas*, p. 226 <193>.

⁸¹ See *Ideas*, p. 351 <305>.

⁸² *Ideas*, pp. 351 - 352 <305 - 306>; my italics.

⁸³ See *PRS*, p. 125 <325>.

⁸⁴ See *PhP*, pp. 82, 83, 86, 92, 101, 102, 105, 107, 111, 125, 129, 135.

⁸⁵ See *PhP*, pp. 82, 84.

An act should acquire a single plan of reflection regarding both its sides - the act in its sense and in its Being [...] ⁸⁶

Such a 'plan' would necessarily include the immediacy of 'me', the author of *postupok*, of my individual life in actual history. If I cannot belong to a context, all the validity with regard to it remains validity-in-itself, not validity-for-me. It seems that Bakhtin understands 'belonging' as phenomenologically prime experience. *I am* presupposes a context in which I am. On the other hand, there are contexts in which my life is impossible: I cannot belong to them. Bakhtin uses here a peculiar expression 'there is no me there', sometimes adding 'in principle'.⁸⁷

Indeed, 'there is no me' in the nexus of theoretically valid judgements where the historical individual is disregarded in principle:

In the world which is constructed by theoretical consciousness with no regard to the responsibly individual historical act, I cannot include myself as actual, with my life, I cannot become a moment of that world [...] ⁸⁸

Therefore, even if the cultural product of my *postupok* conforms with the ideal norms of the corresponding region (e.g., a 'true' theoretical judgement), that does not necessarily mean that I, the author of that *postupok*, am right in making such a *postupok* of judging under the circumstances, i.e. that my *postupok* is valid.

For the author of *postupok*, validity appears as an imperative which can be naturally termed *the ought*. It is more than just natural: in fact, Bakhtin associates the ethical in general with the *event of postupok*, not with its cultural product:

It is solely *the event of postupok* (thought-*postupok*, deed-*postupok*, feeling-*postupok*, wish-*postupok*, etc.) which is immediately ethical [...] ⁸⁹

The validity of an individual *postupok*, an historical, individual event, is the ethical (or, moral) validity of *postupok*. My *postupok* is moral in the proper sense of the word when

guided by the ought as such, it immediately values its objects in the

⁸⁶ *PhP*, p. 83.

⁸⁷ The Russian *menya tam net*: see e.g. *PhP*, pp. 86, 88, 94, 96.

⁸⁸ *PhP*, p. 88. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 86 - 87.

⁸⁹ *PCMF*, p. 37.

categories of good and evil (excluding the altogether *technically cultural series of valuations) [...] ⁹⁰

Technical in Bakhtin's use is normally the opposite of *moral*.⁹¹ What is *technically* cultural is morally irrelevant because it is no more than cultural. A valid theorem is technically 'good' but it is confined to its cultural realm and has no direct communion with the immediacy of life. That which is only cultural could not belong to the stream of life but only to Objective culture, to the stock of cultural products already made. On the contrary, Bakhtin insists that the relation of *postupok* to good and evil is immediate, not mediated by culture.⁹²

A valid *postupok* is an ought-to-be *postupok*. According to the Husserlian noetic-noematic parallelism, the norms of valid ('correct') judging are in one-to-one correspondence with the norms of valid ('true') judgements. But that cognitive validity cannot imply the ought-ness of *postupok*. Bakhtin now aims his criticism explicitly at Husserl. *Separable from the theoretical content, the ought remains a foreign, unarticulated element in the Husserlian project. Even if his phenomenology provides absolutely reliable methods of reaching the truth, what shall I have to do with this truth? Says Bakhtin:

The ought does not issue at all from the epistemological definition of truth, this moment is absent in the definition and cannot follow from it; it can only be brought from the outside and tacked on (Husserl).⁹³

Rickertian epistemology is found equally wanting. As we saw (§5.4), Rickert associated any cognitive judgement a question: *is this judgement true or its opposite is true?* That question already implies that only one of the two possible judgements *ought* to be, no matter whether the cognizing Subject acknowledges this ought. In other words, this ought is *transcendent*. A cognitive judgement, therefore, presupposes: the yes-no alternative which Rickert calls *the value*, and

⁹⁰ A&H, p. 123. The concept of values guiding *postupok* (see *ibid.*, p. 122) is parallel to the important Rickertian concept of *den leitenden Werth* - see e.g. *Die Grenzen*, p. 561.

⁹¹ See PhP, p. 84.

⁹² See A&H, p. 121.

⁹³ PhP, p. 85. *Tacked on* stands for the Russian *pristegivaetsya*, a characteristically Bakhtinian word: cf. *ibid.*, p. 99.

the ought, the necessity of the answer. By answering the question (acknowledging the value), an act of cognition conforms to that transcendent ought which is the *object of cognition.⁹⁴ It seems that Rickert 'ethicizes' epistemology by equating the true with the ought-to-be and the valuable:

[...] what is considered as 'true' is ought-to-be and valuable for the Subject of cognition [...] ⁹⁵

Bakhtin, however, remains unimpressed. According to Rickert (§5.3), any cognitive judgement implies the acknowledgement of the transcendent norm, the value of truth.⁹⁶ Being is dependent on the transcendent activity of the judging and valuating Subject. Who is that Subject? Bakhtin cannot help asking:

[...] is that transcendent activity the historical-individual activity of my *postupok* for which I am responsible? Nobody, of course, is going to maintain something like that.⁹⁷

Not even Rickert himself. Taking a living person for that Subject would have led to the plurality of the individual worlds of Being,⁹⁸ which Rickert wishes to avoid by all means:

[...] the concept of the super-individual valuating Subject is also an absolutely necessary *epistemological concept. [...] All cognition is based not only on 'any consciousness whatever' but on the judging consciousness in general, and therefore on some super-individual epistemological Subject evaluating [the value of] truth.⁹⁹

The epistemological Subject is, therefore, nothing more than the *logical* pre-condition of experience. That would be true even in regard to the Neo-Kantian philosophy in general, which considers experience as *synthesized* according to the laws of 'consciousness as such', according to the 'all-embracing, objectively valid

⁹⁴ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 129 - 130.

⁹⁵ *Die Grenzen*, p. 665.

⁹⁶ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 177 - 181, 217.

⁹⁷ PhP, p. 86.

⁹⁸ See *Die Grenzen*, pp. 666 - 669.

⁹⁹ *Die Grenzen*, pp. 669 - 670. Husserl also mentions *Bewusstsein überhaupt* (see e.g. *Prolegomena*, p. 119 <B 88>); the term actually originates with Kant: see *Windelband, A History of Philosophy*, p. 545.

forms of reason', in Windelband's words.¹⁰⁰ The 'activity' of that Subject is exempted from history and can become a factor of it only through a living, actually judging and valuating person. As Bakhtin puts it:

[...] For that transcendent activity a purely theoretical, historically invalid Subject had to be invented, as *consciousness in general*, as *scientific consciousness*, as *epistemological Subject*.¹⁰¹

The Rickertian epistemological ought proves to be imperative for 'consciousness as such'. What has it to do with an individual *postupok*?

An attempt to consider the ought as a highest formal category (Rickert's 'affirmation-negation') is based on a misconception. What the ought can ground is precisely the actual presence of the given judgement just in my consciousness under the given conditions, i.e. the historical concreteness of an individual fact, but not the theoretical truth-in-itself of the judgement. [...] If the ought [of that kind] were a formal moment of judgement, there would have been no split between life and cultural creation [...] which means there would have been some context, the one and only one, where both cognition and life, culture and life, might belong, which, obviously, is not the case.¹⁰²

§9.6. The category of the ought in ethics

Neither phenomenology nor neo-Kantianism has been able to provide a context for the validation of individual *postupok*. Philosophy based on aesthetical intuition, such as Bergson's life-philosophy, also fails to satisfy Bakhtin. 'There is no me' in the world correlative to the aesthetical attitude which equally disregards the historically actual person, the Subject of the aesthetical vision. If to look for my actual cognitive *postupok* in its separated sense-content would be like trying to lift myself up by my own hair, then my attempt to find myself in the product of aesthetical vision can lead only to my lapsing into non-Being, as my *postupok* of aesthetical vision belongs to a wider, non-aesthetical context compared to its purely aesthetical product.¹⁰³

Bakhtin tries, furthermore, 'practical' philosophy, ethical doctrines: after all,

¹⁰⁰ See *Kulturphilosophie*, p. 191.

¹⁰¹ *PhP*, p. 86.

¹⁰² *PhP*, p. 84.

¹⁰³ See *PhP*, pp. 86, 92, 94.

the ought is supposed to belong to their field. The result is equally disappointing. He accepts the traditional division of ethical systems into content-oriented and form-oriented.¹⁰⁴ Form-oriented ethics considers the ought as the category of consciousness, as the form which could be deduced from no content whatever. The Kantian categorical imperative is the paradigm of such ethics. Form-oriented ethics is unable to grasp the individuality of *postupok*: the categorical imperative is universally valid rather than categorical. The neglect of the individual is therefore inherent in Kantian ethics.¹⁰⁵

In this criticism Bakhtin closely follows Georg Simmel. We find in Simmel's essay the same treatment of Kantian ethics. The prototype of the categorical imperative is natural-scientific and juridical law, which makes this ethics indifferent to the individual. In its actual use the categorical imperative becomes a set of norms. On the other hand, it is universally valid and not genuinely categorical. All these points are taken by Bakhtin, who considers the categorical imperative as but a form of enslavement by 'Objective culture, in full agreement with Simmel (§8.5).¹⁰⁶

Content-oriented ethics gives the ought an expression in a set of norms with a certain structure. The content of such a norm is a proposition valid within some scientific discipline, the form of a norm is a law or a commandment. The main task of content-oriented ethics, according to Bakhtin, is the grounding of norms.¹⁰⁷

It is not difficult to see that the draft of ethics in Husserl's *Prolegomena*

¹⁰⁴ The Russian *material'nye i formal'nye* [ethical systems] - *PhP*, p. 98. The Russian adjective *material'nyj* is related to both *materiya* (matter) and *material* (stuff, content) which is parallel to the distinction between *materiell* and *material* in German. The English word *material* corresponds to the German *materiell*, which pertains to matter. However the German adjective *material* pertains not to matter but to content, and is a technical term. [...] Unfortunately there is no adjective form for *content* in English; where we did use *content*, we were often forced to employ circumlocutions' - see Frings and Funk, p. xv. My circumlocution for the Russian *material'naya* [etika] is *content-oriented* [ethics] as Bakhtin himself points to the synonym *soderzhatel'nyj*, i.e. pertaining to content (see *PhP*, p. 98).

¹⁰⁵ See *PhP*, pp. 100 - 102.

¹⁰⁶ See *Das individuelle Gesetz*, pp. 123 - 124, 129 - 130, 148 - 149.

¹⁰⁷ See *PhP*, p. 100.

perfectly fits this definition of content-oriented *ethics (§3.1). The very thesis that each norm requires grounding by a scientific discipline is patently Husserlian. It was he who believed that without theoretical knowledge there would be no possibility of ethical practice.¹⁰⁸ A particular ethical valuation turns an individual case into an instance of some universal imperative, thus referring to the corresponding basic norm [Grundnorm] of the corresponding *normative science*. The basic norm is in turn correlated to some universally valid theoretical thesis, *separable from the notion of normativity, and differs from it only in its grammatical mood: imperative versus predicative.¹⁰⁹ Whether or not John Smith was a good soldier had to be decided by creating a general theory of soldiers.¹¹⁰

Bakhtin finds such philosophy blindfolded. Morality cannot be generated by the subsumption of my *postupok* under an Eidos. *Should* in the proposition 'A good soldier should be brave', is different from *should* in the proposition 'an equilateral triangle should be equiangular'. Bakhtin criticises content-oriented ethics by merely repeating that the theoretical validity of a norm can never imply that 'I ought to accept it. There is, however, a novel element in his criticism, his insistence on the prime character of the moral ought:

Ex cathedra, as a psychologist, a sociologist, a lawyer, I can agree with this or that proposition, but to claim that it thus becomes the norm for my *postupok* means to jump over the main problem. Even the very fact of my assent *ex cathedra* to the validity of a proposition [...] requires something proceeding from me, namely a morally ought-to-be attitude of my consciousness regarding this proposition which is theoretically valid in itself. But precisely that moral attitude of consciousness is unknown to content-oriented ethics, which, as it were, jumps over the problem without seeing it.¹¹¹

Bakhtin's project is now taking its shape. What he intends to build up is genuine moral philosophy taken as the science of origins, as first philosophy

¹⁰⁸ *Prolegomena*, p. 89 <B 50>.

¹⁰⁹ Bakhtin also mentions *basic norms* [osnovnye normy] - see *PhP*, p. 98.

¹¹⁰ See *Prolegomena*, pp. 86 - 87 <B 46>.

¹¹¹ *PhP*, p. 99.

[...] ¹¹²

The grounding of moral, or more generally, cultural, norms, which Husserl intended to undertake, should be based on a philosophy of a different type. It is not Husserl's pure phenomenology, the description of pure consciousness which knows no moral problems.¹¹³ How could this phenomenology, which claims to be *pre-theoretical, free from any presuppositions, self-referential, deserve its name if it is unable to articulate the prime phenomenon of human life: the moral ought?

Bakhtin's doctrine of origins shall be the *moral* phenomenology of *postupok*. This new phenomenology should complete the analysis of the ought which contemporary philosophy had failed to do:

The ought has no definite, and specially theoretical content. Though it [the ought] can descend on anything that has such valid content [...] The ought is a particular category of *postupok* [...] it is a certain *attitude of consciousness with the structure which we shall analyse phenomenologically.¹¹⁴

Phenomenological analysis is now put in a context which is entirely alien to Husserl. The phenomenology which Bakhtin is developing begins not with the *eidetic* attitude, the consciousness of example, but with the *moral* attitude, the ought.

¹¹² *PhP*, p. 100.

¹¹³ See *Ideas*, p. 365 <318>.

¹¹⁴ *PhP*, p. 85; the italics are mine.

10. FIRST PHILOSOPHY AS A TEACHING ABOUT THE ULTIMATE CONTEXT (BEING-EVENT)

Bakhtin's relational approach to moral validity makes it possible to construct a single conceptual framework for seemingly separate philosophical movements of the period, which sought for 'our' place in the *ultimate nexus (context) so that the ultimate questions could be answered. Thus, the *Weltproblem was formulated by Rickert as the problem of 'our place' in the Totality, in the All. Self-inclusion is the crux of that problem, the only problem of philosophy, in Rickert's words. To find an ultimate nexus where any individual *postupok* would belong is to find a solution of the *Weltproblem*.¹

According to Rickert, we ought to connect transcendent values to reality. That is the only way to make human existence meaningful, i.e. to answer the *ultimate questions', such as 'what ought we to do?'² Culture is the nexus which provides the Ego with the interpretation of the world: this is how the *Weltproblem* is solved and the ultimate questions are answered.

However, the ultimacy of that nexus is arguable. We saw that Rickert's attempt to form a *Weltbegriff*, a concept of the world whole, brought to light the

¹ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 2.

² See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 6.

irreducible dualism of transcendental logic and transcendental psychology (§6.6). If the concept of value retains a link to finite human existence, then the ultimate value-context corresponds to a *Weltanschauung*, just one *Weltanschauung* among others. If that link between the valuable and the existent is broken, the concept of value fails to take the individual into account.³ That is why Max Weber excluded any ultimate questions from the sphere of genuine scholarly *Wissenschaft*; he left them to messiahs, if not to charlatans. No ultimate nexus is possible unless it be an individual value-perspective: the ultimate questions could be answered only on the basis of personal convictions and beliefs.

Husserl, on the other hand, builds up his 'first' philosophy, trying to secure the foundation for a universally valid culture. Husserlian *first philosophy is to offer the means for carrying out every possible critique of reason.⁴ In other words, all intuited individual Being is distributed between the *'regions', each having its regional Eidos and its corresponding 'regional' category. The nexus Husserl is seeking is ultimate in the sense that all other nexuses, 'regions', are *'rooted' in it, in one primal region of 'absolute' Being, the realm of transcendental consciousness. The non-necessary correlate to the absolute Being would be 'transcendent' Being. Phenomenology considers the *Weltproblem* as the problem of the relationship between transcendental and transcendent Being.⁵

According to the basic method of phenomenology, the ultimate nexus is the correlate of a certain *'attitude', or the *reductum* of an 'ultimate' reduction. Indeed, different attitudes (and reductions) are none other than different 'contexts' [*Zusammenhänge*] in which consciousness 'makes its appearance'. In these terms the *Weltproblem* is solved by finding the ultimate attitude with its correlate, the region of absolute Being.⁶

The phenomenological attitude includes a 'purification' of mental phenomena

³ *Zwei Wege*, p. 218.

⁴ See *Ideas*, p. 148 <121>.

⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 171 <141>; cf. *ibid.*, p. 129 - 130 <107>. Cf. also *PRS*, p. 146 <340>.

⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 172 <143>.

from their *place in the real world.⁷ The nexus of absolute Being can be called ultimate only if we disregard the historical individual, which Husserlian phenomenology manifestly does (§3.6). After phenomenology has obtained absolutely valid *norms of Reason, their application to concrete reality is left to *Kunstlehre*, to 'practical' people.⁸

All the contexts, where the event of my *postupok* might belong, are rooted neither in Husserlian 'pure consciousness', as it disregards historical individuals in principle, nor in the Rickertian world of historical individuals (§6.5) where the value of my individual *postupok* would be related to its cultural product, not to its event as such.⁹ Does this not amount to a philosophical fiasco? Bakhtin thinks that it does:

[...] the way leading from a [logical] premise to the inference is passed without sin, in holiness, because there is no me along that way; but what about this process of my thinking, so pure and holy from within, entirely justified as a whole - how and where can this process be integrated? Into the psychology of consciousness? Perhaps into the history of the corresponding discipline? Perhaps into my private budget as my fee for the number of lines in which that process has been materialised? Perhaps into my daybook as my occupation from 5 to 6? Into my scholarly duties? But all these possibilities of sense-bestowing, all these contexts, are themselves straying in some vacuum, they themselves are *rooted neither in any oneness nor in only-ness. Contemporary philosophy cannot provide a principle for this integrating and that causes its crisis.¹⁰

Bakhtin actually criticises the cultural paradigm of German mandarins: culture performs no duties for *life; it is life that should perform duty for culture (§7.1).¹¹ In his view, such a philosophy reduces the actually lived life to the waste product of culture:

Postupok is split into its Objective sense-content and subjective process. The first fragment is used for creating the one systemic nexus of culture, magnificent indeed in its rigorous clarity, whereas out of the second

⁷ See *Ideas*, Introduction, p. xx <4>.

⁸ See *Prolegomena*, p. 87 <B 47>; *PRS*, p. 137 <334>.

⁹ See *Die Grenzen*, p. 716.

¹⁰ *PhP*, p. 97; cf. *ibid.*, p. 96.

¹¹ See *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, p. 165.

fragment [...], if it is not thrown out altogether as good for nothing, it is possible, at best, to squeeze and acquire an aesthetical and theoretical something, such as the Bergsonian *durée*, or the one *élan vital* [...] Neither of those two worlds has space for an actual *postupok* to happen responsibly.¹²

Bakhtin does not see that situation in tragic tones. He claims that first philosophy is able to determine a context, where an individual *postupok* would belong as an actual event, together with its sense-content. Bakhtin calls that ultimate context 'Being-event': his first philosophy

is a teaching not about the one cultural creative work but about the one and only Being-event.¹³

Bakhtin systematically uses this, rather strange, locution 'the one and only' (Being-event) to designate the ultimateness ('the *only-ness') of the context in which the ultimate problems find their solution: first philosophy

ought to resolve ultimate problems (that is, philosophy setting the problems in the context of the one and only Being as a whole) [...] ¹⁴

We shall follow Bakhtin in his attempts to determine the ultimate context, Being-event. Bakhtin considers Being-event as a *phenomenological* concept.¹⁵ Quite in line with Husserlian phenomenology, it is described as the correlate of a special attitude which might be called *the attitude of ultimate regard*. Leaving the description of that attitude for the next chapters (§§12.3, 14.3), we shall begin by describing the preliminary conditions which the ultimate context, Being-event, should satisfy in order to provide moral validity for an individual *postupok*. Those conditions make it clear that Being-event cannot be the correlate of either eidetic or phenomenological attitude. In other words, Husserlian phenomenology is unsuitable for the description of Being-event.

§10.1. Being-event: the Kantian story of thalers

The ultimate context for which Bakhtin is searching is supposed to be ultimate

¹² See *PhP*, p. 97.

¹³ *PhP*, p. 96.

¹⁴ *PhP*, p. 96.

¹⁵ See *A&H*, p. 163.

in the sense that the validity of any *postupok*, i.e. the ought pertaining to a *postupok*'s individual event, would be ascertained with regard to that context. In other words, to that context belong all events-*postupki*. That is why the ultimate context needs must be an event itself, an all-embracing event in process. To call such a context *Being-event*¹⁶ is, therefore, quite natural. Bakhtin uses the term synonymously with other terms, such as *event-Being*,¹⁷ *the event of Being*¹⁸, or, in few cases, *the event of the world*.¹⁹ The latter is the loan-translation of the German *Weltgeschehen* which was used by both Windelband and Simmel.²⁰

Windelband mentioned *Weltgeschehen* in 1894 in his famous rectorial address where he first traced the difference between nomothetic (natural science) and idiographic (humanities) disciplines back to the duality of the law and the event:

The law and the event remain as the ultimate, incommensurable entities of our world view.²¹

Windelband, who was a pupil of Lotze's, merely demonstrates here the Lotzean paradigm²² separating events which occur from ideas that are *valid. He supports Lotze's thesis about the mutual self-sufficiency of those two nexuses:

The content of the cosmic process [der Inhalt des Weltgeschehens] cannot be understood as a consequence of its forms. [...] The great philosophical systems [...] may have been able to conceal this breach, but they have not been able to repair it. [...] ²³

In Bakhtin, the breach between 'event' and 'law' finds, of course, its expression in the split of *postupok* into its event and sense-content, especially if we remember that sense-content belongs to a cultural area with the corresponding *immanent

¹⁶ The Russian *bytie-sobytie*. 'Being' (*bytie*) and 'event' (*so-bytie*) have the same stem 'to be' and even rhyme with each other.

¹⁷ The Russian *sobytie-bytie*: see e.g. *PhP*, pp. 82, 94.

¹⁸ The Russian *sobytie bytiya*: see e.g. *PhP*, pp. 86, 91, 114.

¹⁹ The Russian *sobytie mira*: see e.g. *A&H*, pp. 168, 173.

²⁰ See *History and Natural Science*, p. 185 <160>; cf. Simmel, *The Problems of the Philosophy of History*, p. 78 <277>.

²¹ *History and Natural Science*, p. 185 <160>.

²² See *Logic*, vol. 2, p. 209 <512>.

²³ *History and Natural Science*, p. 185 <160>.

law of development (§9.3).²⁴ Bakhtinian 'Being-event' appears in this connection to be *the nexus of events*.

It is difficult to believe that the ultimate context should be the context of all events happening, such as e.g. a sunset on planet Uranus. However, Bakhtin gives a hint of totality by substituting 'Being-event' for 'world-event' [*Weltgeschehen*] which has been already in use by Windelband and others. It looks strange also in another aspect: in the philosophy of the period 'Being' was a controversial concept.

Thus, phenomenology replaces 'Being' as the ultimate category with the category of intentional object, which category implies the act of consciousness and therefore the relationship between the transcendental and the transcendent. The category of intentional object is more primitive than the traditional opposition of 'Being' and 'nothingness'.²⁵ No wonder Husserl can find no 'real'²⁶ objective correlate for the word 'Being': there could be no act of sensuous intuition which has 'Being' as its objective correlate.²⁷ Here Husserl follows Kant with his famous dictum:

'Being' is obviously not a real predicate; that is, it is not a concept of something which could be added to the concept of a thing.²⁸

It seems that this dictum of Kant became the motto of a whole generation: philosophers so very different as James and Rickert, or Brentano and Simmel, all referred to Kant, who, having compared a hundred real thalers to a hundred possible thalers, failed to find any difference of form.²⁹ In Rickert's words, 'Being' is the form of existential judgement.³⁰ That was taken as a warning about

²⁴ See *PhP*, pp. 86 - 87.

²⁵ See Edie, 1987, p. 13.

²⁶ Husserl discerns between *reell* (belonging to the immanent time of mental stream) and *real* (the 'outer' realm of things in space and 'normal' time): see *L15*, p. 576 <B1 397>, fn 1.

²⁷ See *L16*, p. 780 <B2 137>.

²⁸ *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 504 / A 598 / B 626.

²⁹ See James, *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 925; Rickert, *Zwei Wege*, p. 177; Brentano, 1973 <1911>, p. 274; Simmel, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, p. 96; on Kant's dictum, see *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 505 / A 599 / B 627.

³⁰ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 170.

the limits of any ontology which could study only the forms of Being, never reaching the intuited actuality in all its immediacy.

That is why Husserl speaks about 'Being' which is absolutely imperceptible³¹ (§3.5) and Rickert warns that a conceptual form destroys the immediacy of reality³² (§5.7). Any philosophy which has an ambition to go beyond a mere personal view-point can only analyse the cognition of Being. Considered apart from that epistemological context, the concept of Being becomes meaningless and controversial.

The concept of a hundred thalers tells us nothing indeed about their existence. Nevertheless, Kant's thesis cannot be reduced to this negative principle. It has also a positive element. In Kant's words,

My financial position is, however, affected very differently by a hundred real thalers than it is by the mere concept of them (that is, of their possibility). [...] If we attempt to think existence through pure category alone, we cannot specify a single mark distinguishing it from mere possibility. Whatever, therefore, and however much, our concept of an object may contain, *we must go outside it*, if we are to ascribe existence to the object. In the case of objects of the senses, this takes place through their connection with some one of our perceptions, in accordance with empirical laws.³³

The distinction of the actual from the possible is a prime fact of experience but it cannot be articulated by means of concepts alone; we have 'to go outside' them.

We are now prepared to listen to Bakhtin's version of the thalers story.

§10.2. Being-event as lived in experience by a finite, historically actual Subject

Bakhtin begins by addressing the epistemological twist in philosophy, which has led to the purely formal treatment of ontology:

Characteristically, the term *Being, actuality*, has been getting noticeably

³¹ See *L16*, p. 780 <B2 137>.

³² See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, pp. 21 - 22.

³³ *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 505 - 506 / A 599 - 601 / B 627 - 629; my italics.

more lightweight.³⁴

The neologism Bakhtin actually forms here³⁵ introduces his metaphor of heaviness which stands for reality: what is real, actual, emotional-volitional, imperative, is *heavy*.³⁶

Coming now to Kant's story of the thalers, Bakhtin first puts it into its original context. The point of Kant's thesis was to defeat the ontological proof of the existence of God. The crux of Kant's argument is the self-evident difference between the conceivable thalers and the actual ones. It is that difference which refutes ontological proof. Is it not strange, then, to read Kant's argument mostly as the declaration of the sameness of thalers in the aspect of their form? Says Bakhtin:

Kant's classic case against ontological proof, that a hundred of actual thalers are not equal to a hundred of conceivable thalers, has ceased to be convincing; indeed, what is on hand only once in history, in the actuality determined by me in my only [own] way, is incomparably heavier, but having been weighed on the scales of theory, even with the addition of the theoretical declaration of its empirical existence, but with no regard to its historical valutive only-ness, it would hardly appear heavier than what is but conceivable.³⁷

The first impression is that Bakhtin is not saying more than Kant did: the difference between the conceivable and the actual cannot be articulated conceptually. There are, however, essentially new points in Bakhtin's understanding.

Kant never said it was impossible to ascribe existence to *any* object. In the case of a possibly sensible object, he simply suggested connecting its concept with the perceptions in agreement with empirical laws. The fact of empirical existence

³⁴ PhP, p. 87.

³⁵ The Russian *ulegchaetsya*, the derivative of *legkij* which is the antonym to both *heavy* and *difficult*.

³⁶ The Russian *tyazhelyj*: see PhP, pp. 113, 115, 124, 125. There are also moral overtones: the ontologically actual is *heavy* as much as the morally responsible. A responsible *postupok* which is not torn from its ontological *roots has its actual heaviness; the responsibility of an ontologically contingent *postupok*, on the contrary, becomes lightweight and unreal. See PhP, pp. 113, 121.

³⁷ PhP, p. 87.

(e.g. of a planet) would then follow from the data of perception (astronomical observations), which are in harmony with the laws of nature (celestial mechanics).³⁸

For Bakhtin this actuality is not 'heavy' enough. Being, which is known to theoretical science as theoretically actual, is all lightweight. Existence declared by the law of nature, or by any other *theoretical* law, is the existence of a particular instance (a planet) indiscernible from any other instance (an apple) of the same concept (a body), exemplified in accordance with a general law (of gravitation). Being, which is heavy, is *historically* actual. That which is 'heavy' is 'on hand only once in history'. Bakhtin connects such Being to its 'historical, valutive only-ness'.

The opposition of 'heavy' Being and 'lightweight' Being points to the Rickertian opposition of the two modes of concept formation. Indeed, Bakhtin's concept of 'heavy Being' could easily be translated into Rickertian terms. '*Heavy Being*' means *being a historical *in-dividual* (§6.3), which in-dividual is once-occurrent and different from anything else, and it is related to a value within a *value-perspective, possibly within my value-perspective, in the 'actuality determined by me in my only way',³⁹ as Bakhtin says.

Nevertheless, this obvious affinity between Bakhtin and Rickert leaves one puzzled. Rickert, as was mentioned above, maintains that Being is but the *form* of existential judgement.⁴⁰ As a *form*, it belongs to 'consciousness as such', which disregards all individuality. Taking the *content* of 'consciousness as such', we come to another Rickertian concept, 'empirical reality'. Both concepts are interpreted in the epistemological context: 'consciousness as such' stands merely for the consciousness of the *epistemological Subject'.

In Bakhtin's view such a non-actual Subject might be related only to non-actual, 'lightweight', Being which is 'but conceivable'. 'Heavy' Being is correlative

³⁸ See *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 505 - 506 / A 599 - 601 / B 627 - 629.

³⁹ 'Only' stands here for the Russian *edinstvennyj*, which, when used by Bakhtin, means 'the only one which pertains to me'.

⁴⁰ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 170.

to an equally 'heavy' Subject, to a 'living' consciousness, not to 'consciousness as such'. The alternative to 'conceivable' Being is Being which is lived in experience by a finite, historically actual Subject. Bakhtin concludes:

The only, historically actual Being is larger and heavier than the one Being of theoretical science, but this difference of weight, evident for a living consciousness which undergoes mental life-processes of experiencing, is not possible to determine by theoretical categories.⁴¹

For Bakhtin, to 'go outside concepts' and apprehend the difference between real and conceivable thalers means *Erlebnis*, living in experience.

§10.3. Being-event as ongoing incarnation of culture

Bakhtin seems to appeal to the phenomenological *'principle of all principles': the source of all cognition is the pre-conceptual intuition which presents its objects with ultimate evidence.⁴² Husserl describes this original intuition as two-fold. By intuition it is possible to 'see' not only an individual datum, a This-Here, but also to 'see' an essence (§3.4). This two-fold character of intuition is phenomenologically prior even to the principle of all principles, as no intuition of essence is possible without the free possibility of the intuition of a 'corresponding' individual and, conversely, no intuition of something individual is possible without the free possibility of regarding the corresponding essence.⁴³

Husserlian eidetic reduction disregards the intuition of the historical individual. Bakhtin, by contrast, refuses to believe that eidetic intuition and the intuition of the individual belong to the same stratum of mental experience:

To the world, which is lived in experience, nothing abstract or general belongs *directly, as a moment of that world, such as this man, this sky, this tree, but it belongs indirectly: as the sense-content side of the only [such] actual thought, of that book [...]⁴⁴

The difference between direct and indirect moments seems to reflect the Husserlian opposition of **real* and *reell*: direct moments are themselves

⁴¹ *PhP*, p. 87. My emphasis.

⁴² *Ideas*, p. 44 <43 - 44>.

⁴³ See *Ideas*, p. 10 <12>.

⁴⁴ *PhP*, p. 125.

individual events occurring in actual, historical time; an abstract, indirect, moment cannot 'occur' otherwise than becoming the sense-content of an actually occurring act which is directed to it. The *reductum* of eidetic reduction is the flow of the mental stream in isolation from the stream of history. Bakhtin, therefore, breaks away from Husserlian phenomenology. This attitude, which has Being-event as its correlate, cannot include *eidetic reduction, a main instrument of Husserl's.

Bakhtin considers life-processes of experience as historical events. An act has its historical actuality, its Being, which is the same as the once-occurrent process of experiencing related to that act.⁴⁵ Within this process the *real* (historical individuals) comes to the fore while the *reell* (extra-temporal generalities) retires to the background. If we call this Bakhtinian 'world lived in experience' a mental stream, that stream is occurring in historical, not immanent, time. We may say metaphorically that in the ultimate context direct / indirect moments correspond to direct / indirect speech. The 'full members' of the context may 'speak for themselves', perhaps in the name of other, second rank, members.

This should not be understood in the sense that there is a single nexus embracing both individual events and extra-temporal ideality. The nexus of temporal events can never belong to the nexus of extra-temporal ideas. Nonetheless, the nexus of ideas can be *brought into*⁴⁶ the stream of events by a *postupok*:

The extra-temporal validity of the whole theoretical world of truth is entirely contained within the actual historicity of Being-event; contained, of course, in neither space nor time (those are abstract moments) but as an enriching moment. [...] An actual act of cognition, [taken] not from within its product (a universally valid judgement) but as a responsible *postupok*, brings any extra-temporal validity into the only Being-event.⁴⁷

A thought which is not brought into the context of Being-event by a *postupok* of

⁴⁵ See *PhP*, p. 82.

⁴⁶ 'To bring into' stands for the Russian *priobshchat'*, to make one with, to bring into communion with, to join to, to add to, etc. The reflexive form means also 'to receive the Holy Communion'.

⁴⁷ *PhP*, p. 89.

thinking is called 'not incarnated'.⁴⁸

The incarnation of a theoretical truth does not mean compromising its validity-in-itself. Truth is not 'made', as wealth, through marketing, as William James held.⁴⁹ *Pragmatism*, which considers thoughts, ideas, *truths as temporal, is a dead end, in Bakhtin's view. First, a pragmatist interprets immediate reality in biological, economical and other terms. Then, he tries to articulate all theoretical knowledge in those terms, thus reducing and impoverishing it. This mistake is manifest in pragmatism's failure to develop a properly scientific method in philosophy.⁵⁰

We have reached a crucial point of Bakhtin's argument. The alienation of culture from life, of the extra-temporal from the temporal, of the ideal from the real, can be overcome through incarnation by a *postupok* which brings culture into the ultimate event-context.

§10.4. Being-event is created as wealth: financial metaphor

A *postupok*, which brings extra-temporal validity into Being-event, enriches Being-event. Here, Bakhtin demonstrates his *'financial' metaphor at work: the weight of actual, 'heavy', thalers implies their worth.⁵¹

The German *Dasein* is traditionally translated into Russian as 'what-is-on-hand'⁵² with the typical use of this word in accountancy as 'cash in hand'. On the other hand, the Russian verb, to perform a *postupok*, 'to take a step', means also 'to step into', 'to enter', the latter used in accountancy for incoming money. The noun formed from the perfective aspect of this verb means 'entering' in both senses, e.g.

⁴⁸ The Russian *neinkarnirovannaya (mysl')*; with its Latin root, the word is hardly used apart from the context of Western theology. See *PhP*, p. 114.

⁴⁹ See *Pragmatism*, pp. 104, 97, 100.

⁵⁰ See *PhP*, pp. 90, 96.

⁵¹ See *PhP*, pp. 82, 94, 95, 96, 101.

⁵² Russian *nalichnost'*: see e.g. Bobrov, 1898, p. 14. In the Husserlian context the Russian *nalichnost'* corresponds also to the German *Vorhandensein* - see *Ideas*, p. <48>; see GTH for *Vorhandensein*.

'income, revenue'.⁵³

Bakhtin, the son of a banker, who was able to work as a book-keeper during his exile,⁵⁴ might well have had this in mind. My life-*postupok* which enriches the givenness of Being, its 'cash in hand', may be called the 'income' of Being, which increases 'the total' of Being.⁵⁵ Bakhtin actually speaks about 'profitable' actions, using a subtle nuance of the Russian word for *profit*, which means literally 'the surplus of Being'.⁵⁶ For example, my mere thinking about the Other is

a deed which supplements his Being, a deed which is absolutely profitable and new [...] ⁵⁷

It looks as if the book of Being were an account book where the life of each of us could constitute an entry. A *postupok* can enrich Being or it can leave it unchanged.⁵⁸ That suggests strongly the context of the parable of the talents: to live means to take responsibility, and indeed, risks:

life as responsible, risky, and open *postupok* in becoming [...] ⁵⁹

As a historical individual, a *postupok* lives by its *absolute* novelty,⁶⁰ not by the relative novelty of its possible product. The enrichment of Being-event by a *postupok* means that Being-event does not remain self-same.⁶¹ The allusion to the Neo-Kantian / Husserlian, 'categorical', approach to Being is obvious. Being, correlative to the epistemological Subject, is all possible Being which could be synthesized according to the laws of reason, the possible content of the epistemological consciousness. We find a parallel in the Husserlian concept of *constitution: all intentional objects are constituted by pure consciousness

⁵³ The Russian *postuplenie: entry* (of money), *revenue*. See *PhP*, pp. 83, 88; *A&H*, p. 121.

⁵⁴ See Clark and Holquist, 1984, pp. 75, 254, 256 - 257.

⁵⁵ The Russian *zhizn'-postuplenie*, 'life as *postupok* in process', or 'life as an entry': see *PhP*, p. 83.

⁵⁶ Russian *pribyl'* stems from *byt'*, to be.

⁵⁷ *PhP*, p. 113. The same metaphor is used by Berdyaev, who considers cognition as 'a creative act which makes the profit of Being [*pribyl'* *bytiya*]' - see Berdyaev, 1916, pp. 56 - 57.

⁵⁸ On the 'enrichment of being' see *PhP*, p. 93; *A&H*, pp. 105, 119.

⁵⁹ *PhP*, p. 88.

⁶⁰ See *PhP*, p. 88.

⁶¹ See *PhP*, pp. 93, 114.

(§4.7).⁶² In all those cases the totality of possible Being is determined by the forms of reason, which remain ever the same.

Typically, Bakhtin qualifies Being-event by saying it is not equal to itself, not *self-same.⁶³ That reminds us of Windelband's philosophy, with its duality of law and event, or the corresponding duality of Being and Becoming in Rickert:

[...] by 'development' we understand simply events, or Becoming, in opposition to Being, which is at rest or remains [the same].⁶⁴

Being-event is a process of becoming different. Bakhtin expresses this dynamic in many ways. The event-ness⁶⁵ of Being implies the living historicity of Being⁶⁶ as well as its 'movement'.⁶⁷ Being-event is ever in the process of Becoming and passing on,⁶⁸ an ever 'open',⁶⁹ never completed, process.

One might expect Bakhtinian Being-event to be an all-embracing limit-concept importing the Heraclitean flux of all in all. But that is not the case. Being-event is not like a river which no one can step over twice, a constantly changing environment where we have to keep our 'identity'. In fact, we actively create it by our participation.

The whole of Being-event is more like a theatrical improvisation, as opposed to the world-drama with an absolute scenario. There is no fixed scenario to follow: the performance is created extempore by the responsible actors themselves, once and forever, without rehearsal or repetition.

⁶² See *Ideas*, p. 124 <102>, p. 140 <116 - 117>.

⁶³ See *PhP*, pp. 88, 93, 114, 118.

⁶⁴ *Die Grenzen*, p. 438.

⁶⁵ The Russian *sobytiynost'*. The real difficulties with the translation of the whole cluster of meanings generated by 'event' come with the derivatives: within this cluster Bakhtin uses an adjective and another noun formed from this adjective (Russian *sobytiynyj*, *sobytiynost'*). English 'eventful' and 'eventfulness' in their normal usage fail to convey the meanings of those two Bakhtinian words.

⁶⁶ The Russian *istorichnost'*: see *PhP*, p. 87, 88, 89.

⁶⁷ The Russian *sobytiynoe dvizhenie*: see *A&H*, p. 114.

⁶⁸ The Russian *stanovlenie, prekhozhdenie*: see *PhP*, p. 82.

⁶⁹ The Russian *otkrytoe*: see *A&H*, pp. 53, 125.

§10.5. Being-event takes place through my active participation

Phenomenological method, which does not consider objects apart from the corresponding acts of consciousness, leads Bakhtin to understand Being as correlated to an 'activity'.⁷⁰ 'Activity' is a class of individual *postupki* (such as cognitive, aesthetical, ethical, practical). Thus, Bakhtin speaks of theoretical Being which is constructed by 'theoretical consciousness'; psychological Being is the 'abstract' product (and the subject) of psychology;⁷¹ aesthetical Being is the product of aesthetical vision.⁷² Bakhtin mentions also ethical Being correlative to ethical *postupok*.⁷³ We have arrived at the plurality of different 'worlds' of Being. Instead of the Husserlian hierarchy of regions, Bakhtin has the hierarchy of activities, in the sense that their correlates, 'worlds',⁷⁴ have different degrees of 'proximity' to Being-event.⁷⁵

Typically, Bakhtin mentions three major groups: cognitive, ethical and aesthetical 'activities'.⁷⁶ The corresponding theoretical and aesthetical object-worlds are brought into Being-event by a *'responsible' *postupok* and become the moments of that event.⁷⁷ The situation with ethical *postupki* is more ambiguous, as Bakhtin distinguishes between *postupki* which are purely ethical and those which are ethical in general; the latter are political, social and similar *postupki* which create 'social humankind'⁷⁸ and evidently have their corresponding object-worlds.

Can Being-event then be called an object-world, perhaps, the world of a l

⁷⁰ The Russian *deyatel'nost'*.

⁷¹ See *PhP*, pp. 88, 90.

⁷² See *PhP*, pp. 82, 94, 95.

⁷³ See *PCMF*, p. 53.

⁷⁴ See *PhP*, pp. 86, 90.

⁷⁵ See *PhP*, pp. 128, 82, 94, 95.

⁷⁶ See *PCMF*, p. 31.

⁷⁷ See *PhP*, pp. 91, 95.

⁷⁸ See *PCMF*, p. 30.

possible objects, a kind of Rickertian *Objektwelt* (§5.2)?⁷⁹

The answer is negative. Indeed, if we consider Christ's life, to which of the cultural worlds does it belong? Surely, it is not because of a cultural product that the fact of Christ is of any importance:

The world which Christ has left will never again be a world where he has never been to. This world where the event of Christ's life and death has taken place (as facts together with their sense) is not determinable in principle either by theoretical categories, or by the categories of historical knowledge, or by aesthetical intuition; in one case we cognize the abstract sense of a historical event, but lose the fact of this once-occurrent event, in another case we cognize that historical fact but lose its sense, in the third case we have both the fact's Being and its sense as a moment pertaining to the individuation of the fact, but we lose our position with regard to the fact, our ought-to-be participation, i.e. we do not in any case have the fullness of the event as oneness and inter-penetration of the only [such] fact-event-sense-meaning and our participation in it [...]⁸⁰

Bakhtin addresses all the main 'activities' with their corresponding 'worlds'. Nomothetic sciences of law (Windelband⁸¹), 'natural' sciences of the universal (Rickert⁸²), eidetic sciences (Husserl⁸³), all determine their world by theoretical categories which disregard the individual ('lose the fact of the event'). Idiographic sciences of the event (Windelband), or sciences of the individual (Rickert) determine their world by historical description with regard to the individual but that regard is selective and relative to the values accepted by the historian's community, so that no definite interpretation ('sense') of a single fact is possible (§5.6).

Aesthetical activity, including aestheticized philosophy, creates individualised objects, such as 'characters', or 'heroes'. Their fictional, aesthetical, life has its 'sense', which is the hero's (not the author's or the spectator's!) attitude to the

⁷⁹ See *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 2.

⁸⁰ See *PhP*, p. 94.

⁸¹ See *History and Natural Science*, p. 175 <145>.

⁸² See *Die Grenzen*, p. 393..

⁸³ See *Ideas*, p. 27 <27>

(equally fictional) world around him.⁸⁴ However, it is impossible for a living spectator to intervene in the character's fictitious life: a spectator who warns Hamlet about the trap set for him ceases to be a spectator and becomes instead a participant in the play, thus destroying it as an *aesthetical* event. Prince Hamlet and a living spectator cannot belong to the same 'plan' of life: there is nothing that I ought to do in my encounter with a fictional character.⁸⁵

Christ is not a fictional character but a participant in the ongoing event of Being: the fact of his participation in that event makes a difference for me as I am another participant in the same Being-event: my awareness of his participation effects precisely what I ought to do.

We can immediately see here the radical difference between Bakhtin and Husserl. Husserl's main instrument for the analysis of intentionality is the phenomenological attitude which excludes the whole world with all physical things and all living beings beginning with ourselves. All the corresponding positings are put 'out of action', we do not 'participate in them' [wir machen sie nicht mit]⁸⁶ (§4.5). An intensive mental process, considered in the phenomenological attitude, ends with the constitution of its intentional object. In case of a physical thing it means we interpret the sensory data appearing in *adumbrations as 'this physical thing'. The non-intensive data remain the totally irrational 'stuff-stratum' and the intensive process can have no effect on it: actuality as a whole is disconnected.

the actions, which [...] are directed towards an actual change of this [Being]-event, including the Other who is a moment of that event, are purely ethical actions-*postupki*.⁸⁷

It is my active participation in the event of Being which enriches it by the fact of my participation. If two participants should become identical, indistinct from

⁸⁴ See *A&H*, p. 121.

⁸⁵ See *A&H*, p. 71.

⁸⁶ *Ideas*, p. 113 <94>.

⁸⁷ *A&H*, p. 24.

each other, then the event of Being would have been impoverished.⁸⁸

Being-event is, therefore, the correlate of 'purely' ethical *postupki*, moral Being, we might say. It is ongoing interaction between the event's participants. Such an approach is impossible if the phenomenological attitude is taken. Yet again we can see the profound difference between Husserl and Bakhtin. The phenomenology which Bakhtin builds up cannot use phenomenological reduction; in the previous section we saw that eidetic reduction was also found too crude an instrument for Bakhtin's purpose.

The situation reminds one of Einstein's theory of relativity: the Universe has no privileged place for a 'mere' observer. What is being observed depends on what is happening physically to the observer's instruments for measuring time and space, indeed, to the observer himself. In the same way in quantum mechanics an observer cannot simply contemplate quantum phenomena without interfering with them.⁸⁹

If Christ's participation has made Being-event different, then so does my participation. The opposite to my active participation is my **alibi* in Being. My *alibi* means that I do not participate in Being-event, I 'stay outside' of it, *alibi quam* in it.⁹⁰ This option is indeed fundamental: my life can be built on the ground of my alibi or of my non-alibi in Being.⁹¹ The choice of my attitude determines the mode of my Being: it is either my participation in Being-event

⁸⁸ See *PhP*, p. 93.

⁸⁹ Some of American Bakhtinologists hold that Bakhtin, 'of course', could not know about relativity theory. It is, 'of course', rather difficult to believe that he could not. Philosophers of the period were the first to analyse new developments in science. Thus, a turning point in Paul Natorp's thinking came with Einsteinian physics (see Saltzman, 1981, pp. 132 - 133, on the influence of Einstein on the Marburg school in general, see *ibid.*, p. 46). When, by Lenin's order, the publication of a Marxist philosophical monthly began, a considerable part of it was given over to the discussion of the latest achievements in physics: relativity theory (*Pod znamenem marksizma* (Moscow), 1922, No. 9/10) and quantum mechanics (*ibid.*, 1923, Nos. 1, 2/3, 10). Even in Bolshevik Russia in 1917 - 1922 Einstein's theory of relativity was the subject of 25 books, 2000 pages in total! (*ibid.*, 1922, No. 9/10, pp. 181 - 208).

⁹⁰ Bakhtin uses the word *alibi* in the literal sense of its Latin original (*alibi quam in Capitolio* = not in the Capitolium), e.g. 'I am not *alibi* as regards historical humankind' - see *PhP*, p. 117.

⁹¹ See *PhP*, pp. 114 - 115.

where my 'ontological *roots' belong, or my 'rootless' Being apart from Being-event.⁹² My option also changes Being-event because Being-event is 'taking place through me'.⁹³

What does Bakhtin actually mean by *alibi*? How is it possible to live apart from the event of Being?

⁹² See *PhP*, p. 114 - 115.

⁹³ *PhP*, p. 93; Russian *svershaetsya cherez menya*.

11. RESPONSIBILITY AS THE ATTITUDE OF PARTICIPATION IN BEING-EVENT

Being-event is the context where my *postupok* belongs with all its constitutive elements: its historical individual event and its sense-content as the content of my living consciousness. It is only my *postupok* in process which belongs to Being-event just at the moment when my *postupok's* cultural product has not yet been separated from it. I, the author of my *postupok*, am a participant in Being-event.

If my *postupok* belongs to the ultimate context, its moral validity should be phenomenologically evident *from within* my life. Bakhtin's definition of validity makes it possible to speak here of individual validity.¹ This is validity with regard to the context of my life. The constitutive moment of that context is its *centre, 'me', a historically actual person, all other elements of that context are related to me, the centre (§12.3).² What is valid-for-me is bound to enter into a relationship with me. Bakhtin calls this 'individual' validity imperative, concretely determined, actually experienced.³ Therefore, any prime description of Being-event should be made in the first person singular. Husserl

¹ See *PhP*, p. 117.

² See *PhP*, pp. 124, 125, 127.

³ See *PhP*, p. 125. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 114, 122; *A&H*, p. 100.

describes in this way the world correlative to the 'natural attitude', prior to any reductions, before the individual is disregarded.⁴

From within my life-context the moral validity of my *postupok* is seen as the unity of all the *postupok*'s elements: me, living here and now, and the *postupok*'s object, belonging both to a cultural realm and to my living consciousness in the process of my *postupok*. I have **alibi, alibi quam*, in Being-event whenever I disregard living elements of *postupok*: me-the-author and the event of my here-and-now. Phenomenological reductions provide such an *alibi* which is, in Bakhtin's view, perfectly legitimate as a **technical* device.⁵ However, if we assume the phenomenological attitude as the integral moral attitude of life, it becomes the opposite of the attitude which Bakhtin calls 'responsibility' and which might be also called the **attitude of ultimate regard*:

Responsibility of *postupok* means accounting for all its factors: its sense-validity and its factual process in all its concrete historicity and individuality; the responsibility of *postupok* knows a single plan, a single context where this account is possible, so that theoretical validity, historical factuality and emotional-volitional tone appear as the moments of a single decision [...]⁶

The **financial* metaphor (§10.4) is re-emerging here again: leaving one of the factors of the *postupok* out of account would mean a reduction in the profit brought by my *postupok* to the whole of Being. Moral **responsibility* makes my *postupok* **valid* with regard to the ultimate context. In Bakhtin's first essay (§7.6) the unity of a person was provided by the *oneness* of responsibility. Now responsibility is the unity of *postupok* which is provided by its moral validity.

In other words, Bakhtin believes that the ultimate context provides the synthesis of moral freedom and theoretical truth. Would it not lead to compromising both? We begin answering that question by analysing the relation between moral responsibility and theoretical truth. Moral freedom is considered then as the directedness of *postupok* to an ultimate horizon which Bakhtin calls

⁴ See *Ideas*, p. 51 <48>.

⁵ See *PhP*, p. 118.

⁶ *PhP*, p. 103.

'absolute future'. The major part of this chapter will be given to the analysis of this aspect of moral responsibility. The presence of the ultimate element in prime moral experience leads to a special 'fringe' structure of its intentional correlate, Being.

The language Bakhtin uses here is often metaphorical. Our intention is to describe Bakhtin's basic moral *intuition* just in this half-metaphorical language. A certain lack of precision will be redressed in the next chapter, where his intuition will be given proper phenomenological treatment.

§11.1. Sense-content and theoretism

The synthetic concept of responsibility raises certain doubts. What does it mean that the theoretical truth and the historical facts are but 'the moments of a single decision'? Does it not demand, for example, that the theoretical truth should serve the political interest of the day, or that the facts of history should be changed because of emotional reactions from the public? Should the lynch mob take the place of the Kantian 'tribunal of Reason'? On the other hand, as it regards the individual, this concept of responsibility seems to be pregnant with extreme subjectivism.

Bakhtin leaves no doubt about his position:

Least of all does it imply relativism of whatever kind, relativism which denies the autonomy of truth and tries to turn it into something relative and conditioned [...] Our approach completely retains the autonomy of truth, its methodological purity and its self-determinableness; it is on condition of its purity that truth can be responsibly brought into Being-event: truth which is relative within itself is of no avail to life-event.⁷

The immediate effect of such ethics of responsibility would be a criticism of contemporary philosophy, indeed, of contemporary culture as a whole.

It is irresponsible to contaminate theoretical argument with wishful thinking, even if one wishes the whole of the human race to be happy. It is no less irresponsible to take a theoretically proven thesis for the immediate ethical imperative just on the grounds of its theoretical validity. In other words, disregard

⁷ *PhP*, pp. 88 - 89.

of the individual, which is a legitimate theoretical device with a limited range of applications, must not be taken for a *moral* attitude: morally speaking, to disregard the individual is irresponsible. My presence in my *postupok* is a historical individual, an event, permeated with my emotions and will. By disregarding myself I reduce my *postupok* to its alienated cultural product, its sense-content, so that my *postupok* loses its moral character and becomes a technical action driven by the *immanent forces of cultural development. Bakhtin calls this morally impoverishing attitude *theoretism*.⁸

Theoretism is an *attitude which disregards the author of *postupok*. It is an attempt to find myself in the world of the theoretical constructs, to identify the world I live in with the product of theoretical thinking. 'Theoretical' should not be understood here as pertinent only to academic activity. The theoretical world is the alienated product of theoretical thinking, which is necessary within certain limits but which becomes a destructive and irresponsible force beyond those limits (§8.5).

The context in which Bakhtin makes this point is not a debate on the role of theory and theorists in the contemporary world. The debate that was in progress in the Soviet Russia in the early 1920s had nothing to do with those problems. What was actually discussed was the future of man in a new world where the right to private property was abolished for ever:

[...] when man liberates himself from private property he ceases to experience himself as 'I' prior to any other experience. It is the dazzling 'we' that then becomes the centre of his *Weltanschauung*. [...] Then he becomes for the first time a man of history, then he becomes for the first time *man in general, not Pavel Pavlovich or Maria Ivanovna.⁹

The objective of the Revolution was not merely justice and bread for the poor but no less than the radical changing of human consciousness, the purification of consciousness from 'myself'. Lunacharsky, a philosopher himself, formulated it

⁸ The Russian *teoretizm*: see *PhP*, pp. 89, 90, 91, 102.

⁹ From the disputation between A.V. Lunacharskij and Metropolitan A. Vvedenskij 21 September 1925. Quoted in *Na perelome*, 1990, p. 298. My emphasis. On the centrality of 'we' in the culture of the period, see Nikiforov, 1994, pp. 185 - 187.

almost in Husserlian language: the eradication of the prime stratum of mental experience. That was, probably, the kind of 'theoretism' which Bakhtin tried to confront by demonstrating how such a change in the structure of prime experience had already led, and would certainly lead in the future, to submission to inhuman immanent forces, dark and elemental.

'Man in general', *Homo sapiens*, is but a product of cognition, 'the sense-carcass' of a living person.¹⁰ By identifying myself with it, I leave the context of my life where I love and am loved in order to become an instance of some general category:

[One's] loving flesh is declared valid solely as a moment of infinite matter to which we are indifferent, or as an example of *Homo sapiens*, as a representative of one's ethics, or as an embodiment of the abstract element of eternal femininity; what is always valid appears to be a moment of what is possible. Thus, my life becomes a human life in general; in turn, the latter becomes one of the expressions of the life of the world.¹¹

If we remember that validity in regard to the ultimate context is bound to be validity in regard to the context of my life, Bakhtin's idea becomes clear. In the context of my life, as an active participant in Being-event, I am *directly related to other participants and only *indirectly* to extra-temporal concepts which can be brought into flowing life solely by a concrete living consciousness.¹² The context of my life is first and foremost the context of 'heavy' Being, the context of individualised and temporal Beings. 'Man in general' who neither lives nor dies can never belong to that context where we 'live and die', where I belong together with my fellow human beings:

There is no 'man in general' but [instead] here is myself, here is the Other concretely determined as my dear one, as my contemporary (the social humankind), as the actual human beings of the past and of the future (the actual, historical humankind).¹³

The paradigm of theoretism is the substitution of the *sense-content for my

¹⁰ See *PhP*, pp. 117, 129.

¹¹ *PhP*, p. 120.

¹² See *PhP*, p. 125.

¹³ See *PhP*, p. 117.

act-*postupok* in its entirety. The world I live and die in is replaced by the world produced by theoretical consciousness with no regard to me and my *postupok*. Bakhtin finds that paradigm at work in several contemporary doctrines when they try to find a transcription for the historical individual process of 'my' *postupok*.

Thus, *psychologism* suggests considering *postupok* as a psychical process so that it can be incorporated into the system of theoretical thinking. Bakhtin calls this type of theoretism 'crude', or 'pure'¹⁴ as the whole body of theoretical cognition is made dependent here on the single discipline of psychology. Or, as Husserl in his treatment of psychologism called it

[the psychologistic party] first prejudice, that rules for cognition must rest on the psychology of cognition.¹⁵

Were that true, mathematics, for one, would be made into a branch of psychology. Then any mathematical research would necessarily have to refer to some psychological facts, principles, etc. That suggestion would only make a mathematician 'smile', as Husserl puts it.¹⁶

Bakhtin takes for his illustration the same example:

When I am working on a theorem, I am directed to its sense which I responsibly bring into Being [which is already] cognized (it is the genuine goal of science) and neither do I know nor should I know anything about a possible psychological transcription of my actual responsible *postupok* [...]¹⁷

Indeed, responsibility means taking into account the actual historical event of my *postupok*, whereas psychologism ignores it and suggests merely changing the sense-content. Instead of a sense-content belonging to one of many special sciences we can (or, so the psychologistic party believes) take a sense-content from just one such science, psychology. Says Bakhtin:

Psychical Being is the abstract product of theoretical thinking just as the transcendent validity is. Here we make an absurdity even in the purely theoretical aspect: we make the large theoretical world (the world as the

object of all sciences, of all theoretical cognition) into a moment of a small theoretical world (psychic being as the object of psychological cognition).¹⁸

Surprisingly, Bakhtin finds theoretism also in such a seemingly anti-theoretical philosophy as pragmatism:

All attempts to bring the theoretical cognition into once-occurrent life when 'life' is conceptualised in the categories of biology, of economics, or in other categories, i.e. all the attempts of pragmatism, are instances of similar theoretism.¹⁹

We are also told that pragmatism is but a variety of positivism which failed to develop genuinely scientific methods in comparison to neo-Kantianism.²⁰

Bakhtin, yet again, follows Husserl. It was Husserl who considered pragmatism together with positivism under the heading of naturalism.²¹ In connection with his critique of psychologism Husserl gave an exhaustive analysis of the principle of economy of thought which interpreted the mental phenomena precisely from the *'Protagorean', biological and / or economic standpoints, just as Bakhtin mentioned it above.²² Rickert also wrote at length about the peculiar mixture of biological and economic categories in the fashionable 'theories of life' [*Lebenslehren*], pragmatism being one of them.²³

We have already analysed (§9.5.6) Bakhtin's criticism of contemporary moral philosophy, where he demonstrated the *theoretical* core of all major systems of ethics. The concrete and imperative moral ought cannot be deduced from a general theoretical content which is *separable from the ought. The abyss between the sense-content and the process of a moral act remains unbridgeable, as the actual event of the moral act-*postupok* cannot be found within the context of the theoretically valid norms. As we can now put it, all contemporary philosophy is infected with *theoretism* even when it calls itself 'practical' and 'ethical':

¹⁸ *PhP*, p. 90.

¹⁹ See *PhP*, p. 90.

²⁰ See *PhP*, p. 96.

²¹ See *PRS*, p. 81 <296>.

²² See *Prolegomena*, pp. 197 - 211 <B 192 - 210>.

²³ See *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte*, pp. 132 - 140.

¹⁴ See *PhP*, pp. 89, 91.

¹⁵ *Prolegomena*, p. 177 <B 167>.

¹⁶ See *Prolegomena*, p. 178 <B 169>.

¹⁷ *PhP*, p. 90.

[...] practical philosophy, in its main trends, differs from the theoretical philosophy solely in its object but not in its method, not in its way of thinking, i.e. practical philosophy is permeated with theoretism through and through [...] ²⁴

Bakhtin speaks here about the prevalent tendency to theorize, which makes the whole of contemporary culture 'theorized'. Even when philosophy attempts to compensate for this tendency by appealing to the aesthetic vision, it fails to overcome what separates it from actual life, the split between the sense-content and the event of the act. In any act of aesthetical vision the sense-content is of course different from the sense-content of a theoretical judgement.

Theory, to give one example, would provide us with a universal concept of 'the human', such as *Homo sapiens*, whereas art would create instead the Venus of Milos and Anna Karenina. The 'sense-regions' of theoretical cognition and art are built on entirely different principles: in the world of cognition a separate, self-sufficient 'opus' is impossible, as it is bound to conform with the whole nexus of cognition. By contrast, the sense-region of art consists of separate, self-sufficient, individual wholes, each with its own attitude towards actuality. ²⁵

Nevertheless, be it a theorem of mathematics or a sculpture, as the *products* of the corresponding acts each belongs to its nexus, where the event of my actual *postupok* cannot be found, however radical the difference in structure between the two nexuses:

The world of aesthetical vision, which we come to with no regard to the actual subject of that vision, is not the actual world I live in, though its content-side is put into a living Subject. But between that Subject and his life, [which is] the object of aesthetical vision, there is no community in principle, just as there is no community between the Subject and the object in theoretical cognition. In the content of aesthetical vision we cannot find the *act-postupok* of the one who is performing this *act-postupok* of visioning. [...] from within that vision there is no exit to life. ²⁶

To substitute 'life' as the product of aesthetical vision for the concrete life I live would be morally irresponsible.

²⁴ PhP, pp. 97 - 98.

²⁵ See PCMF, pp. 28 - 29.

²⁶ PhP, p. 92.

§11.2. Moral responsibility versus special responsibility

There are interesting parallels between Bakhtin's concept of responsibility and Max Weber's last works. In his essay on science Weber proclaimed the advent of a new *polytheism. The War devastated the whole continent because, in Weber's words, what was a god for some was a devil for others. ²⁷ 'Germany' did not have the same value in the value-perspectives of the Germans and the French: which discipline could determine that value? Says Weber:

I do not know how to decide 'scientifically' [wissenschaftlich] between the *value* of French and German culture. ²⁸

How indeed? Even Husserl, who finds it possible to speak of 'the icy wastes of Greenland' in his phenomenology, can proceed only by disregarding the difference between Nansen and himself thinking of those wastes. Surely, the difference between German and French soldiers, thinking of Germany in the trenches of the Great War, has to be disregarded! ²⁹

The 'new' world, the world *after* the Great War, is also involved in the 'war of gods' and ruled not by science but by *destiny* [Schicksal]. ³⁰

The lofty rationalism of an ethical-methodical conduct of life, which flows out of every religious prophesy, has dethroned this polytheism in favour of 'the One that is necessary'. [...] But today religion lives through its weekdays [*Alltag*, i.e. days which got their names after pagan deities]. The many gods of old, without their magic and therefore *in the form of impersonal forces*, rise up from their graves, strive for power over our lives and begin once more their eternal struggle among themselves. ³¹

We find here approximately the same diagnosis which Bakhtin set out in his work: the dominion of impersonal forces over 'modern' man.

Theory alone, intellectualism, can easily turn commitment to a political cause into a destructive attitude,

that inner state which my late friend, Georg Simmel, used to call 'sterile

²⁷ See *Science as a Vocation*, p. 23 <28>.

²⁸ *Science as a Vocation*, pp. 22 - 23 <100>; the translation has been slightly changed.

²⁹ See *LI5*, p. 590 <B1 417 - 418>.

³⁰ See *Science as a Vocation*, p. 22 <27>.

³¹ *Science as a Vocation*, p. 23 <28>. The translation has been corrected. My italics.

excitement' [sterile Aufgeregtheit], peculiar to a certain type of intellectuals, mostly Russians (though not all of them, it is true), that plays such a great part among our intellectuals in this carnival, embellished with the pompous name of 'revolution'. All this is but an empty, free-floating 'romanticism of the intellectually interesting', devoid of the actual sense of responsibility.³²

Therefore, something extra-theoretical, a 'feeling' of responsibility [Verantwortungsgefühl], has to be added to political commitment, to a passion for one's cause, lest it remain sterile. Weber considers irresponsibility as the capital sin of politicians.

We find in the centre of Weber's essay on politics the irreconcilable opposition of the two directions of moral orientation:

[...] all ethically oriented *postupki* [Handeln] may be subordinated to two irreducibly opposed, entirely different maxims of ethical orientation: either towards responsibility or towards conviction.³³

We are not told very much about either of the 'maxims': the format of a lecture on the problems of modern politics did not leave room for an elaborated theory.

Weber associates with the ethics of conviction the 'absolute' ethics of the Gospel, of the Sermon on the Mount.³⁴ In the ethics of conviction responsibility for the future is not a moral factor to consider. Thus, as a follower of the ethics of conviction, a 'Christian' does what is right and leaves the consequences to God:³⁵

Whenever a *postupok* [Handlung] which issues from pure conviction has bad consequences, he would hold responsible for that not the author of the *postupok* but the world, other people's stupidity, or the will of God who created them. A follower of the ethics of responsibility [...] would say: 'These consequences should be ascribed to my own action'.³⁶

It should be said first that the Weberian paradigm of polytheism, 'the war of *gods', is entirely alien to Bakhtin. Weber is sceptical about any possibility of

³² *Politics as a Vocation*, p. 48 <49 - 50>; the translation has been slightly changed.

³³ The German *Verantwortungsethik* and *Gesinnungsethik*. *Politics as a Vocation*, p. 54 <56>. I have changed the translation.

³⁴ See *Politics as a Vocation*, p. 53 <55>.

³⁵ See *Politics as a Vocation*, p. 55 <56 - 57>, where Weber actually paraphrases Martin Luther.

³⁶ Wenn die Folgen einer aus reiner Gesinnung fließenden Handlung üble sind, so gilt ihm nicht der Handelnde, sondern die Welt dafür verantwortlich, die Dummheit der anderen Menschen oder - der Wille des Gottes, der sie so schuf. Der Verantwortungsethiker [...] wird sagen: diese Folgen werden meinem Tun zugerechnet. *Politics as a Vocation*, p. 55 <57>.

arriving at a universally valid moral ground, especially if it follows from the structure of a mental life-process, *Erlebnis*, as Bakhtin tries to demonstrate. Husserlian phenomenology, which tries to stop *bellum omnium contra omnes* by the analysis of rational consciousness, seems to deserve no credit in the brave new world which, in Weber's view, is ruled not by Reason but by 'destiny', by the 'weekdays' of religion when each new day is devoted to another god.³⁷

[...] what is difficult for modern man, and most difficult for all for the younger generation, is to meet the demands of such *weekdays*. All hunting for experience [Erlebnis] stems from this weakness, for not to be able to look the destiny of the time in the face is a weakness.³⁸

Nonetheless, Weber's scepticism concerning an intellectual solution of ultimate problems is counterbalanced by his hope of overcoming moral relativism by an appeal to our common future for which we should take responsibility. That is why the opposition of the two moral orientations: towards the future (responsibility) and towards the extra-temporal (conviction) has an analogy in Bakhtin: the hierarchy of special and moral responsibility.

The closest parallel to 'ethics of conviction' is, probably, 'theoretism': the disregard of historical and individual aspects of *postupok*, which thus becomes reduced to its sense-content and develops under the impact of *immanent cultural forces. Weber actually mentions the 'diabolical' forces [diabolischen Mächte]: they are at play in any conflict of beliefs which is driven by the ethics of conviction. It is these forces which determine the consequences of a political *postupok* and make it self-destructive. The author of *postupok* remains unaware of the dangerous presence of those forces while his *postupok* actually proceeds under their impact.³⁹ This brings us very close to the Bakhtinian metaphor of *'possession'.

'Possession' is a prime moral phenomenon and we shall return to it in the following chapters (§13.1). It is a Bakhtinian metaphor for *self-alienation*. A

³⁷ See *Prolegomena*, pp. 53 <B 4>; *Ideas*, pp. 129 - 130 <107>; cf. Weber, *Science as a Vocation*, pp. 22 - 23 <27 - 28>.

³⁸ *Science as a Vocation*, p. 23 <28>. The translation has been corrected. My italics.

³⁹ See *Politics as a Vocation*, pp. 61 - 62 <64>.

typical case is the substitution of an 'identity' for 'myself', so that I, the living author of my *postupok*-in-process, reduce myself to a specimen who is but an instance, a representative of a totality.

Thus, we can be possessed by the *immanent forces of culture: then our *postupok* issues not from ourselves but is instead dictated by the dynamics of those cultural forces, so that I substitute me-as-producer for my actual self. That is a symptom of 'modern crisis':

[...] it seems that I am Objective and spiritual only as a poet or a scholar, i.e. only from within the product I have brought forth; it is from within these Objects that my spiritual biography should be built [...] ⁴⁰

We have to remember here that to Bakhtin all the immanent forces of the Objective culture, even the immanent necessity of logical laws, are 'dark and elemental'.⁴¹ If I reduce myself to a 'logician' or a 'poet' or a 'socialist', I become a representative, better, a medium, of the elemental forces reigning within the parallel world of the transcendent. Bakhtin calls those immanent *cultural* forces the 'natural value-forces', thus underlining their affinity with the properly natural forces.⁴²

Bakhtin articulates the same experience which Weber has described in the German context: inhuman, immanent forces determine the outcome of the social process. Politics, which could have awakened moral responsibility, worsens the situation by preaching instead political tribalism:

The actual acknowledgement-affirmation of the whole which I shall represent is my act for which I am personally responsible. If that act is omitted, my responsibility is reduced merely to special responsibility, and I become possessed, whereas my *postupki*, [now] torn from the ontological roots of personal participation, become contingent with regard to the only ultimate only-ness in which they have no roots; nor has the region which specializes my *postupok* any roots. This break-away from the only [ultimate] context, this loss of the only [such] personal participation are

⁴⁰ *PhP*, p. 123; my italics. The capital *O* is used to discern between the derivatives of the Russian *predmet* / German *Gegenstand* (English *object*, small *o*) and the Russian *ob'ekt* / German *Objekt* (English *Object*, capital *O*).

⁴¹ See *PhP*, p. 104.

⁴² The Russian *tsennostno-prirodnye sily*: see *A&H*, p. 154.

particularly common in the case of political responsibility.⁴³

A region 'specializes'⁴⁴ my *postupok*, turning it into acting on behalf of a larger whole. Specialization is a parallel to the Husserlian **consciousness of example*: recourse to the regional Eidos, disregard of the individual. In Bakhtin's use, therefore, *special* is opposite to *responsible*. Thus, Bakhtin finds it typical for politics that '*the responsible* is dissolved in the *special*'.⁴⁵ My responsibility for my *postupok*-as-a-whole is *moral*: to account for all its constituents lest Being-event suffers loss. My responsibility for its sense-content (e.g., its cultural product) is *special*: to relate it to the corresponding cultural region.

[...] it [act-*postupok*] ought to acquire the oneness of its bilateral responsibility both for its content (special responsibility) and for its Being (the moral one), so that the special responsibility should be a moment brought into the one and only moral responsibility. There is no other way to overcome the detrimental immiscibility and impenetrability separating culture and life.⁴⁶

Special responsibility makes the product of my *postupok* valid with regard to a cultural context. An actress is aesthetically responsible for her part in the performance; she would be morally responsible for the fact of her participation in that performance, or, indeed, for being an actress, as it may be problematic in the context of her life. Says Bakhtin:

But in actual life there is the aesthetical responsibility of an actor for his part alongside his overall human responsibility for his decision to act; the latter is his responsible *postupok* and not a *postupok* of a character which he impersonates [...] ⁴⁷

In Bakhtin's terms, the ethics of conviction knows only *special* responsibility: the responsibility for the act's sense-content, were it 'the future of socialism' or 'international pacification', the examples taken by Weber.

In his critique of existing ethical systems Bakhtin says repeatedly that they are

⁴³ See *PhP*, p. 121.

⁴⁴ The Russian *oblast' spetsializiruet*; cf. e.g. *PhP*, p. 123. The Russian *oblast'* stands for the Husserlian *Region* in Shpet's book - see Shpet, 1991 <1914>, passim.

⁴⁵ *PhP*, p. 123.

⁴⁶ *PhP*, p. 83.

⁴⁷ See *PhP*, p. 95.

not able to guide a *postupok* in process, its ongoing event. All ethical systems are oriented towards the evaluation of already *completed* moral acts. The completed acts are precisely those which 'have no future', so that ethical systems, *even if they prescribe calculation of the foreseeable consequences of our acts* (like Utilitarianism, which Bakhtin mentions), still remain inadequate with regard to the once-occurring history with which politics has to deal.⁴⁸

Bakhtin shows much affinity with Weber in his understanding of responsibility as, first and foremost, responsibility for the future.

§11.3. *Pravda* (justness, justice): synthesis of *postupok*

During the Cold War *pravda* became a familiar word in the West, where it stood for the voice of the ideological enemy. It is hardly possible to translate this word into English because it is a symbol that has travelled throughout Russian history, thus accumulating uncountable connotations from different contexts.

To begin with, the derivatives of the Russian stem *prav* cover a vast field which is divided in the English language between *just*, *right*, *correct*, *true*, *innocent*, *due*, *proper*, etc. A very rough approximation for *pravda* would sound like 'the quality or the fact of being both right and just'.

We can come to a more precise idea of *pravda* by analysing the use of the word in the Biblical context. *Pravda* is, first and foremost, the *pravda* of God, *his* 'justice' or 'righteousness', as English translations normally put it. God's *pravda* has strong eschatological connotations: it is God's salvific power to justify which is revealed as the gift of grace.⁴⁹

All those contexts give us the clue to the Bakhtinian concept of *pravda*, which Bakhtin himself never bothered to clarify. The Bakhtinian context provides two seemingly different meanings.

Let us begin with the '*pravda* of *postupok*'. Taken in this sense, '*pravda*' is the end of the synthesis which would unite the sense-content and the actual event of

postupok. Indeed, Bakhtin calls that *pravda* of *postupok* 'synthetical'.⁵⁰ Synthesis means here nothing else than taking into account *all* the moments of *postupok*, the attitude of responsibility. *Pravda* is the objective correlate of responsibility:

[...] from within [itself] *postupok* sees [...] the ultimate context to which it relates both *its sense and its fact*, and in which it attempts responsibly to substantiate the only *pravda* of both its fact and its sense in their concrete unity.⁵¹

Pravda is the result of the synthesis of sense-content, fact-event and emotional-volitional tone, in the *ultimate* context. The responsibility of *postupok* is the direction of the *postupok*'s process to that *pravda*. The traditional tone of ultimacy can be heard here and that makes one ask: is *pravda* a category similar to the Kantian regulative idea, or is it something to achieve here and now, a kind of sum total, an aggregate to build up? Does the Bakhtinian philosophy of *postupok* go any further than Max Weber's recommendation to keep alive the passion for one's 'cause' as much as to keep one's head?⁵² Are we not left here to our own devices when trying to find the compromise between our rigid principles and fluid actuality? Bakhtin gives an unambiguous answer:

Subjectivism and psychologism correlate precisely with (logical) objectivism, where *postupok* is abstractly divided into its Objective sense and its subjective process; [contrary to that] within *postupok* in its wholeness, nothing psychological or subjective could be found [because] in its responsibility *postupok* sets its **pravda* as a task for itself and that *pravda* unites these two moments as well as two other moments: universality (the universally valid) and *individuality (the actual). The one and only *pravda* of *postupok* is given as a task in order to be its [*postupok*'s] synthetic *pravda*.⁵³

For his concept of *pravda* Bakhtin uses here the Russian equivalent of the Kantian term *aufgegeben*, 'given as a *task'.⁵⁴ *Pravda* is, indeed, analogous to

⁵⁰ The Russian *sinteticheskaya*.

⁵¹ *PhP*, pp. 102 - 103.

⁵² See *Politics as a Vocation*, p. 48 <50>.

⁵³ *PhP*, p. 103; my emphasis. Cf. Rickert's characterization of nature as reality in view of the universal [das Allgemeine] and history as reality in view of the particular [das Besondere]: see *Die Grenzen*, p. 355.

⁵⁴ The Russian *zadan*. See *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 448 / A 505 / B 533; pp. 443 - 444 / A 498

⁴⁸ See *PhP*, p. 102; *A&H*, p. 105.

⁴⁹ See Rom 1.17, 3.21 f, 10.3; cf. Is 41.10, 42.6, 21, 45.19, etc.

the Kantian regulative idea. We can also remember here Rickert and his theory of the 'object of cognition' (§5.3), which object is never given as a certain 'something' but instead is always given as a task (§5.7).

The use of the Kantian term, however, does not help much in articulating the concept of *pravda* as moral synthesis. It is clear that according to Bakhtin and in full agreement with the traditional meaning of that symbol, *pravda* is always being sought (by 'pravda-seekers') without ever becoming attainable. Shall we assume, as Rickert does (§6.1), the *irrational* basis of all thinking, which no concepts can grasp?⁵⁵

Pravda refers, indeed, to the ultimate context, where the synthesis of the different moments of *postupok* can be achieved. Bakhtin, however, never calls that ultimacy irrational: in his view rationality and responsibility are linked. Rationality is inseparable from responsibility: irresponsible rationality turns into a destructive elemental force (§8.5), 'the flame of the pure doctrine', as Weber put it, speaking of the ethics of conviction (§11.2).⁵⁶

Nor is there any ground for fears that the one and only synthetical *pravda* of *postupok* is irrational. Taken in its wholeness, *postupok* is more than rational: it is *responsible*. Rationality is but a moment of responsibility [...]⁵⁷

The opposition of *pravda* and truth is transformed by Bakhtin into a more positive relationship: *pravda*, we might say, is the extension of truth beyond the field of the purely rational. Whereas truth is the correlate of the 'act of consciousness', *pravda* is the correlate of the whole *postupok*, which cannot be reduced to an act of consciousness (§8.3). We say a proposition is true / valid if we can refer it to the context of true propositions (science), whereas *pravda* is the reference of my proposition-*postupok* to the ultimate context, which also

/ B 526.

⁵⁵ 'Irrational' means here 'the indifference of the existent to concepts': [...] die Indifferenz des Seienden gegenüber dem Begriff [...] *Die Grenzen*, p. 653. Cf. *Vom Begriff der Philosophie*, p. 21, *Zwei Wege*, p. 223.

⁵⁶ See *Politics as a Vocation*, p. 55 <57>.

⁵⁷ *PhP*, p. 103; my emphasis.

embraces the context of science. The autonomy of truth is, therefore, thoroughly respected: in its fulness the imperative *pravda* contains the abstract truth.⁵⁸

The validity of truth is self-sufficient, absolute and eternal, and this speciality, this essence of truth, is taken into account by a responsible *postupok* of cognition.⁵⁹

§11.4. Spirit: the directedness of my life outward

The word *pravda* disappears completely when Bakhtin undertakes the phenomenological description of consciousness participating in Being-event.⁶⁰ However, it is possible to find the continuation of the same theme, as Bakhtin makes intense use of the concept of *justification*.

In the Biblical tradition *justification* is inseparable from *justice*, *pravda*: God's justice, [*pravda*] is God's salvific power to justify [the Russian *o-pravda-t'*]. In Bakhtin it appears to be the same: *postupok*, which has *justness* (*pravda*) as its task, is said to be striving for *justification*:

We are speaking here of the valuation by a consciousness in the process of *postupok*, about the *postupok* of valuation, which [*postupok*] is *seeking its justification* not in a system, but in the only concrete, never-repeatable actuality.⁶¹

As elsewhere,⁶² 'justification' here is justification in a context, in the *ultimate* context, as the text seems to suggest.

If we remember now that justness, *pravda*, is given as a task, then justification could mean nothing else than *the task achieved*, when the process of striving for the synthesis has already come to an end. This simple consideration is confirmed by Bakhtin's text, where 'justification' comes regularly together with 'completion', the Russian *zavershenie*, which expresses both the end of all change and the state of fulness.⁶³ It points, in this context, to the German *Vollendung*, one of the key

⁵⁸ See *PhP*, pp. 84, 118.

⁵⁹ *PhP*, p. 88 - 89.

⁶⁰ See *A&H*, p. 163.

⁶¹ See *PhP*, p. 137; my italics.

⁶² See *A&H*, p. 31.

⁶³ See e.g. *A&H*, pp. 15, 76, 103, 109. Perhaps Bakhtin was led here by the German:

concepts in Rickert's axiology.

Rickert spells this word as *Voll-Endung*, which highlights the meaning of its two components, *voll* (full) and *Ende* (end). *Vollendung* is so far the fulfilment and the end of striving. The striving for completion underlies any value-guided act: the will of the Subject of the act is *directed* [richtet] to the completion of his *striving* [Streben] to reach a certain *aim* [Ziel]. Rickert speaks here also about the *tendency to completion* [Voll-Endungstendenz], which belongs to the *form* of a value-guided act. In order to come to a system of values, Rickert combines this form with the content, which he considers as an inexhaustible whole consisting of infinitely many finite parts. The striving of a finite Subject, directed to the infinite whole, can never reach completion. If the striving is directed to a finite part, completion is possible.⁶⁴

In the former case we have to consider the endless sequence of development [Entwicklungsreihe] with the corresponding chain of objectives, none of which can fulfil the striving, which is directed to infinity. Rickert finds two examples of such infinite directedness: science [Wissenschaft] and ethical life. The unceasing *tension* [Spannung] is inherent in both ethical and theoretical acts, the tension between the inexhaustibility of the corresponding object-worlds, and the finite limits within which completion is possible. The ethical and theoretical goods [Güter], in which the corresponding values become embodied, are significant only as steps in an endless process, in their relation to the future. Rickert calls such goods the goods of the future [Zukunftsgüter].⁶⁵

Art would be an example on the opposite side. In aesthetical activity, striving is directed to a limited object isolated from the rest of the world. In a completed work of art there is no tension between the limited and the unlimited, so that it never oversteps its own limits. The artist does not try to extend his finished

Rechtfertigung (justification) combines *Recht*, ('justness', 'justice'), and *fertig*: 'finished', 'ready', 'mature'.

⁶⁴ See *Vom System der Werte*, pp. 301 - 302.

⁶⁵ See *Vom System der Werte*, pp. 302 - 303, 312 - 313.

painting beyond the frame, nor would an author populate his finished novel with more and more characters. The corresponding aesthetical goods belong to the ever present, they are exempted from any process of development, thus becoming the goods of the present [Gegenwartsgüter].⁶⁶

There is profound affinity between Rickert and Bakhtin in their understanding of the act-value relationship. It is values that guide act-*postupok* and those values do not belong to the sphere of the existent. Rickert presupposes that dualism from the beginning. In Bakhtin, however, the guiding values cannot be found in what is already existent. *Postupok* is guided by a value, as a teleological process of creating a product.

Cognition and ethical *postupok* create their object from the beginning. Cognition gives the first ever determination for the cognized, thus constantly extending its object-world, nature. Ethical *postupok* creates the social world. In contrast to that, aesthetical activity does not change either the natural or social environment; instead it creates the concrete, intuitive unity of those two worlds.⁶⁷ Compared to cognitive and ethical activities, aesthetical activity is secondary:⁶⁸

[...] side by side with the ethical and the cognitive, aesthetical activity creates its actuality where the actuality correlative to cognition and [ethical] *postupok* is positively accepted and transfigured, which is the distinctive characteristic of the aesthetical.⁶⁹

Cognitive and ethical *postupok* are, therefore, different from aesthetical *postupok* in their directedness. Cognitive directedness never ceases and cognition cannot reach its completion. It remains ever unfinished:

[...] our thought is charged with the energy of extra-temporal and extra-spatial infinity, so that in relation to this energy anything concrete is but contingent; our thought can provide no more than a direction for our vision of the concrete, but this direction is infinite and thus incapable of

⁶⁶ See *Vom System der Werte*, pp. 302 - 303, 308 - 309.

⁶⁷ See *PCMF*, pp. 26 - 27, 30 - 31. Cognition which constantly extends its limits is, of course, one of the important conceptions of the Marburg school. Thus, the Kantian 'thing in itself' became but a 'limiting conception', the 'X' to be determined. See Saltzman, 1981, esp. ch. II.

⁶⁸ See *PCMF*, p. 30.

⁶⁹ *PCMF*, p. 30.

In this fragment the influence of Rickert is obvious even in the terms chosen: the *infinite direction* of cognition which never leads to the *completeness* of the whole.

We find further parallels in Bakhtin's analysis of the ethical *postupok*. Bakhtin sometimes says *postupok* has its 'source', the Russian word meaning both the source of a river and a point of origin in general:⁷¹

[...] the idea of the ethical freedom of *postupok*: it is not-yet-Being, the task with regard to [*postupok's*] objects and aims, which determines *postupok*; its source lies ahead, not behind it, not in what is but in what has not yet been.⁷²

Cognitive-ethical incompleteness is the dynamic element of intentionality, of *postupok's* directedness. We can remember here that Bakhtin calls one's life's directedness 'cognitive-ethical'.⁷³ In its process every 'simple' *postupok* of whatever kind (cognitive, ethical, practical, aesthetical) is being directed to its object and sense. The directedness in this context is different from the directedness of life, which is a complex *postupok*.⁷⁴ Within my life-*postupok* I find unceasing 'cognitive-ethical tension', in full agreement with Rickert's terminology.⁷⁵ Bakhtin calls this tension 'the sense-sequence of life'.⁷⁶

[...] the sense-sequence of my life, i.e. the cognitive-ethical tension of life from within itself, can be neither initiated nor completed. [...] I live: I think, I feel, I perform my *postupok* - in the sense-sequence of my life, not in the possible temporal whole of life-on-hand, which whole could be completed. Such a whole could not determine and organize my thoughts and *postupki* from within myself because they have cognitive and ethical validity (i.e. they are extratemporal). [...] Any completeness - *deus ex machina* with regard to my life-sequence directed to sense-validity.⁷⁷

'Sense-sequence' or 'life-sequence' here might yet again point to Rickert who often

⁷⁰ A&H(2), p. 140.

⁷¹ The Russian *istok*: see PhP, p. 112; cf. A&H, p. 123.

⁷² A&H, p. 123; my emphasis. Source stands here for the Russian *istok*: cf. PhP, p. 112.

⁷³ See A&H, pp. 87, 171, 63.

⁷⁴ See PhP, p. 83.

⁷⁵ The Russian *poznatel'no-eticheskoe napryazhenie* - see A&H, p. 96.

⁷⁶ The Russian *smyslovoj ryad zhizni* - see A&H, p. 96.

⁷⁷ A&H, pp. 95 - 96.

represented development or change as a sequence, a series, *die Reihe*.⁷⁸

My life-sequence is directed from within itself towards sense-validity. I live in the direction outwards, away from life-on-hand, away from my been-ness. My cognitive and ethical activity can never come to a standstill while I live. The tension between the ought-to-be and the existent, or between the known and unknown, cannot be resolved in 'the temporal whole' of my life. Bakhtin calls this orientation of life towards the extratemporal - 'spirit':

[...] *spirit is the cluster of all sense-related validities, of the directednesses of [one's] life, of the acts which proceed from oneself (without disregarding one's 'I').⁷⁹

Spirit is a *phenomenological* concept as it refers to 'me', the *centre (§12.3) from which my *postupok* issues. It is my spirit, the dynamic moment of my life as it is lived in experience within myself. Moreover, this dynamic directedness of the stream of my experiencing is my inner life: in spirit I live.⁸⁰ The objective correlate of that directedness is called the *ultimate sense*.

§11.5. The ultimate sense and responsibility

Bakhtin considers the ultimate context, Being-event, as a *teleological* process whose *sense* is also called 'ultimate'.⁸¹ The ultimate sense is to be sharply distinguished from the *sense-content of a *postupok* (§11.1), the result of cultural interpretation of a datum to which an intentional process is directed. Sense-content might justifiably be called the content of the ultimate sense in an individual *postupok*.

The concept of ultimate sense has a certain parallel in Rickert. He differentiates between the concepts which determine the factual Being [Daseinsbegriffe] of an Object taken by itself, and the concepts which Rickert calls *Leistungsbegriffe*: the latter describe what that Object is with regard to the

⁷⁸ Cf. e.g. *Veränderungsreihe* (*Die Grenzen*, p. 441), *Entwicklungsreihe* (*Vom System der Werte*, p. 303).

⁷⁹ A&H, p. 98.

⁸⁰ See A&H, pp. 74, 97, 98.

⁸¹ See A&H, p. 162. In the next chapter it will be articulated phenomenologically (§12.5).

beyond, not by itself but for its Other. By that *Leistung*, the cluster of the contextual relations we might say, an Object receives its meaning [Bedeutung] or sense [Sinn]. Thus, we may ask about the sense of 'a mental process' while no sense can be given to 'a molecule'.⁸²

Sense, Rickert says, is the opposite of *fact*, of a fragment of factual Being, because sense points *beyond the limits* of that fragment, of a 'mere' fact. Thus the *immanent sense* of a psychological process is the relation of that process to what is beyond the psyche, to a transcendent value. Rickert recalls here his theory of the object of cognition: *Sinn*, sense, is *the answer to a question* which ought to be answered, i.e. which is given as a task one has to complete by answering (§5.5). The question concerns the relation of the object, as it is merely given by itself, to 'something else' which falls beyond the limits of that object.⁸³

In Bakhtin, the *sense of Being-event* is the answer to the ultimate questions. It is a point towards which Being-event is progressing, a point at infinity where all parallels meet, beyond factual Being, beyond Being-on-hand:

Being, which is already on hand, is but the mortal flesh of the sense which lies ahead of the event of Being and which is its *absolute future.⁸⁴

The absolute future is termed also *sensal future*, or *sense-future*, in order to distinguish it from the 'ordinary', temporal future; the sense-future is

not that future which will leave everything in its place, but the future which is, at last, to complete and accomplish, the future which we *contrapose* to the present and to the past as [their] salvation, transfiguration and redemption, that is to say, 'future' not merely as a time-category but as a sense-category, [standing for] the value of what has not yet been, what is not yet predetermined, what is not yet *discredited* by Being, what is not yet contaminated with Being-giveness but remains pure from it, incorruptible and unboundedly ideal, 'ideal' not epistemologically or theoretically but

⁸² See *Urteil und Urteilen*, pp. 233 - 236. Rickert demonstrates here much affinity with, if not dependence on, Brentano and Husserl. The opposition of *Daseinsbegriffe* / *Leistungsbegriffe* is reminiscent of the distinction between the physical and psychical phenomena introduced by Brentano. The latter phenomena have the reference to 'something else', an intention. Husserl, who made *intentionality the principal theme of his phenomenology, used the same word *Leistung* for the description of what the process of noesis 'does' in order to bestow *sense* to the 'stuff-stratum'.

⁸³ See *Urteil und Urteilen*, pp. 239 - 242.

⁸⁴ A&H, p. 117.

practically, as the ought.⁸⁵

The opposition of Being-giveness and Being-event is the opposition between been-ness and yet-to-be but not in the stream of mere temporality. It is not the opposition between the future and the past but the opposition between the inexistent ought-to-be and factual, existent Being. The two become one only within an aesthetical Object:

The reality of the given is *aesthetical* reality [...] ⁸⁶

Being-giveness is, therefore, the correlate of the *aesthetical* attitude which disregards the absolute future with its 'salvation, transfiguration and redemption'. Being-giveness is that-ness of completed Being, it is the context isolated from the absolute future.⁸⁷ Within the context of Being-giveness the absolute future is no longer a concern of mine: I live as if I were a character in a novel, predetermined by the will of the author. Indeed, an aesthetical Object cannot be changed by its Hero, unlike Being-event, which is made different by my participation. Within an aesthetical Object 'there is nothing to be done' because

[...] the actual future is substituted for the *artistic* future, which is always *predetermined* by means of art. In its artistic form an action is experienced outside the momentous time in which the event of the only life I have is occurring.⁸⁸

Being-giveness is a context where the ultimate questions are impossible to ask. My ethical conscience and my epistemological consciousness challenge the stability of common sense and traditional moral norms with the questions: *Is it really so?*, or *Why ought I to do so?* To stop asking these questions would be the same as 'to die spiritually',⁸⁹ to accept that both the world and myself are completed and the only future in view is purely temporal; otherwise, the presence of the ultimate sense invalidates any claim to self-sufficiency:

The sense-future is *hostile to the present and past in the same way as

⁸⁵ A&H, p. 104; my emphases.

⁸⁶ A&H, p. 179. My italics.

⁸⁷ See A&H, p. 159.

⁸⁸ A&H, p. 43; my emphasis.

⁸⁹ A&H, p. 109.

sense is hostile to senselessness, a task is hostile to its as yet incompleteness, the ought is hostile to Being, redemption is hostile to sin.⁹⁰

No such conflict is possible if we consider the world as an aesthetical Object, the alienated product of a form-giving energy, an Author. The presence of that energy cannot be seen within the Object otherwise than as an elemental force which makes me passive with regard to the ultimate sense.⁹¹

I am passively active whenever my action is not conditioned by the pure activity of my *I-for-myself* with regard to sense, but it [the action] is justified by Being-on-hand itself, by nature itself, whenever instead of the spirit, i.e. what is not yet in Being, what is not predetermined, what is mad if seen against Being on hand, [exactly] that Being on hand is elementally active in me.⁹²

It is my spirit, the cognitive-ethical directedness of my life, which, for the sake of the absolute future prefigured from within, negates on principle the self-sufficiency of the given, of all which is already on hand, of all that has been and is completed. In the aesthetical attitude my spirit is effectively neutralised: I am morally passive and live in the spirit of cosmic music.

Ecstatic Dionysian dance is the utmost expression of passive activity⁹³ but there are many ordinary situations where I am morally passive. If I follow a custom, a social tradition, comply with the laws of a state, it implies my voluntary self-alienation and moral passivity. My responsibility becomes but special and I 'sing in a choir' which is all around me. It screens me from Being-event, which remains ever given as a task, as my task as well.⁹⁴ Then the elemental activity of Being-on-hand enters my life as r h y t h m .

§11.6. Rhythm as the loss of responsibility

Bakhtin considers rhythm as a precondition for any collective action where the

⁹⁰ A&H, p. 107. My emphasis.

⁹¹ See A&H, pp. 120, 148.

⁹² A&H, p. 120. My emphasis.

⁹³ See A&H, p. 120.

⁹⁴ See A&H, pp. 42, 106, 149.

individual participants have to coordinate their efforts.⁹⁵ The natural, the social and the aesthetical meet in the phenomenon of rhythm. Rhythm is the constitutive element of Nietzschean Dionysianism. The world as aesthetic phenomenon follows the movement of cosmic music and we live by dancing to that music.⁹⁶ The doctrine of eternal recurrence is also the expression of the rhythmic, musical nature of the world.⁹⁷

If we remember that the spatial equivalent of rhythm is symmetry, we can find a sociological parallel in Simmel. In a short essay on 'sociological aesthetics', Simmel makes symmetry the main aesthetical category: the interdependence of all elements which are contained within a border. Studying the influence of the aesthetic on the social, he considers the design of Campanella's Sun-State and comes to the conclusion that the ideal of socialism is based on aesthetical values, not on the 'needs of the stomach' or ethical considerations only: socialist utopias are always set up according to principles of symmetry.⁹⁸

Another, a much closer parallel, can be found in Osip Mandelstam, a compatriot and contemporary of Bakhtin's. In his 1920 essay he considers rhythm as the constitutive element of collectivism (§8.1):

The new society is held together by solidarity and rhythm. Solidarity means concord of goals. Concord of action in itself is already rhythm. [...] Solidarity and rhythm are the quantity and quality of social energy. The masses have solidarity. Only the collective can have rhythm. [...] History has witnessed two Renaissances: the first Renaissance was in the name of the individual, the second - in the name of the collective.⁹⁹

Rhythm turns a mass into an acting collective. Being-event, on the contrary, is not such a collective. The participants in Being-event form a unity which has its source in the ultimacy of the ongoing process-context. This ultimacy is lived in experience each time a participant exercises his freedom. Rhythm is the antithesis

⁹⁵ See A&H, p. 106.

⁹⁶ See BT, I, 24, 25.

⁹⁷ On eternal recurrence, see e.g. Kaufmann, 1950, pp. 266 - 286.

⁹⁸ *Sociological Aesthetics*, pp. 70, 75.

⁹⁹ Mandelstam, 1979c <1920>, p. 109.

of freedom and the sign of isolation from Being-event:

Freedom of will and activeness are inconsistent with rhythm. Life (a mental life-process, a striving, a *postupok*, a thought) which is lived in experience in the categories of moral freedom and activeness cannot be rhythmicized. Freedom and activeness create rhythm for Being which is not free (ethically) and is passive. [A] creator is free and active, that which is created is not free and is passive.¹⁰⁰

Being-event remains ever open and its sense-future lies ahead of it as 'salvation, transfiguration and redemption'.¹⁰¹ It sounds like an eschatological and utopian element in Bakhtinian philosophy. If we remember that the concept of Being-event has sociological and historical aspects, the affinity with historical materialism also becomes apparent. However, Bakhtin leaves us no chance of reading his philosophy as a dream about the final solution, a blueprint of the ideal society: the ultimate sense of Being-event is never given as an articulated something but remains always given as a *task.¹⁰²

Even if the sense and the ought are prefigured, so that their content is determined by images and concepts, this *determinedness* of the prefiguration immediately recedes to the region of Being, Being-on-hand.¹⁰³

Thus, to identify 'salvation, transfiguration and redemption' with the Marxian proletarian revolution would not be possible. Bakhtin actually thinks that *historical materialism cannot properly distinguish the given from the ever given-as-a-task. In that aspect it is not different from theosophy and anthroposophy.¹⁰⁴ Such criticism was, of course, a commonplace among German socialists, especially in the 'ethical' socialism of the Marburg school. Its political correlate was gradualist, meliorist, non-revolutionary, social democracy in opposition to revolutionary communism.¹⁰⁵

While recognizing economic variables in the study of social history, the

¹⁰⁰ *A&H*, p. 105. My italics.

¹⁰¹ See *A&H*, p. 104.

¹⁰² See *A&H*, pp. 87, 116, 150.

¹⁰³ *A&H*, p. 116; my emphasis.

¹⁰⁴ See *PhP*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁵ See Willey, 1978, pp. 102 - 130, 170 - 178.

neo-Kantians deplored Marx's monism [...] Hegel and Marx had violated Kant's important formal separation of the Is from the Ought. By ignoring Kant's conceptual dualism, Marx allegedly suppressed the efficacy of human will in striving for ethical goals. Marxism was seen as a flat denial of human freedom. To a Kantian this was intolerable.¹⁰⁶

As, indeed, it had to be to Bakhtin. Freedom is the pre-requisite of responsibility: a responsible *postupok* has a purpose which is chosen freely. Disregard of the ultimate sense leads to the loss of responsibility, to the 'rhythmisation' of Being and to the aesthetisation of *postupok*, so that

[...] no purpose is selected, considered, there is no responsibility for a purpose [...] But it is the choice of purpose, the choice of place in the event of Being, that moral activeness is responsible for and, in this regard, it is free.¹⁰⁷

It cannot be emphasized enough that a *postupok* with incomplete, reduced, 'special', responsibility, is not morally wrong. Loss of responsibility is loss of moral relevance: a moral *postupok* ceases to be moral, becoming instead an act of cultural creation, a political event, a traditional ritual, etc. Screened off from the ultimate sense, a *postupok* turns into a morally irrelevant, technical action moved by immanent forces of Being-on-hand:

As its basis *postupok* has its communion with the only only-ness; the responsible is not dissolved in the special (as in politics), otherwise we have not a *postupok* but a technical action.¹⁰⁸

A technical action is, however, non-moral in the sense that it does not enrich Being-event, if we remember the financial metaphor (§10.4). A *technical action 'makes no profit', so that loss of responsibility is a 'financial' loss of Being. In a sense, it is also loss of life: Bakhtin says that such a 'profitless' *postupok* is not alive. A *postupok* lives only by its absolute novelty, by its absolute freedom and its sense-future.¹⁰⁹ A context which has no access to Being-event, such as rhythmicized Being-givenness within a human choir, leaves no room for a living

¹⁰⁶ Willey, 1978, p. 117.

¹⁰⁷ *A&H*, p. 105.

¹⁰⁸ See *PhP*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁹ See *PhP*, p. 88.

[my] *postupok* is alive only in the one and only event of Being, therefore, no *postupok* could complete its own life because it binds life to the open endlessness of the event of Being.¹¹¹

A *postupok* which enriches the event of Being by a quantum of absolute novelty is arhythmic in principle, but only in its process. When that process has come to an end, the *postupok* cannot be counted as alive: it has lost its connection to the ultimate sense and has fallen out into Being-giveness as an aesthetical, completed Object.¹¹² Death is, therefore, the form of aesthetical completion of a person, the termination of a life-postupok. If we assume an aesthetical approach to a living person, his ongoing actual life becomes for us, as it were, redundant.¹¹³

Bakhtin describes the relation of a responsible *postupok* to the ultimate sense, or the position of a participant in Being-event, by the Biblical expression 'before the face'. A responsible *postupok* lives before the face of the sense-future, and my inner life-process of experiencing proceeds before the face of ultimate sense.¹¹⁴ In order to emphasize the opposition of Being-event and Being-giveness, Bakhtin ingeniously employs two Russian words for 'face', one ordinary (*litso*), another archaic (*lik*), the latter used most commonly for icons. The ultimate sense has a living face, whereas Being-on-hand is but an icon, or *visage, of that sense.

It is worth of mentioning that the *lik* / *litso* opposition was extensively used in the contemporary literary tradition of symbolism: *lik* stood for the epiphany of *litso*.¹¹⁵ Thus, Andrey Bely, a theoretician of symbolism, employs *lik* for 'a living image of Logos', which *lik* is at the same time a human image, the emblem of a (Kantian) form. A system of art would end with a system of *liki*, the aesthetical

¹¹⁰ See A&H, p. 43.

¹¹¹ A&H, p. 125.

¹¹² See A&H, p. 105.

¹¹³ See A&H, pp. 95, 115.

¹¹⁴ See A&H, pp. 106 - 107, 109, 139.

¹¹⁵ See e.g. Ivanov, 1994 <1909>, pp. 370 - 372.

forms of the human which are at the same time ethical norms.¹¹⁶

This context suggests strongly that Bakhtin uses the pair *litso* / *lik* to denote the opposition between the already articulated and the as yet unarticulated. As he puts it:

'An uttered thought is a lie' - the *actual* world (with no regard to what may lie ahead of it, to what is given as a task, to what is yet unuttered) is an already uttered, already articulated sense of the event of Being; the world as given on hand is [nothing but] expressed-ness, it is the word which has been already spoken, already sounded.¹¹⁷

Exactly the same metaphor of articulation is used by William James when he explains one of his most popular psychological concepts: the fringe of a mental process.

§11.7. The fringes of Being

The concept of *fringe was developed in connection with 'the stream of thought'. James tries to understand how discrete 'things' can appear in the continuous flow of thought. The first consideration of fringes is therefore related to the continuous-discrete nature of 'thoughts'. Each of those is a sub-process in the flow of consciousness (a hypothetical 'brain process'), each one has its beginning and its end as well as an increase and decrease of 'intensity'. The gradual character of the continuous change of intensity is now contraposed to the character of the objects of thinking. Separate words, for example, are not processes but they follow each other as the discrete train of entities on 'either one or the other' principle. Neither duration nor intensity is relevant here.

Now, James says that the 'image' of a thing (e.g., a word) appears after the underlying *process* has reached its threshold intensity, and disappears from our mental view immediately after the intensity falls below this threshold. The conclusion he makes is the *latent* presence of 'a thing' in the stream of consciousness both before and after our awareness of its presence. The influence

¹¹⁶ See Bely, 1910, p. 79 - 81.

¹¹⁷ A&H, p. 117.

of this latent presence upon the thought is termed 'psychic overtone', 'suffusion', or 'fringe'.¹¹⁸

It is not only words but all the self-same elements of the stream of thought, including visual or tactile 'ideas', that have fringes.¹¹⁹ There are two dimensions in our 'feeling' of fringes: the dim feeling of affinity / discord, and the feeling of tendency. When proceeding with a discourse we sometimes lack a word and try to pin it down, so the fringe reveals itself through the dim feeling of what is befitting and what is not.¹²⁰

On the other hand, any discourse is directed to 'a conclusion', has a definite purpose, a meaning. In that case another dimension of fringes is detected as the vague feeling of tendency, of right and wrong direction. Attending to somebody's discourse, we expect certain words to appear, so the fringe might be described as containing the reserve of possible discourse.¹²¹ Everybody is familiar with his own intention to-say-so-and-so before it results in any articulated form:

And has the reader never asked himself what kind of a mental fact is his *intention of saying a thing* before he said it? It is an entirely definite intention, distinct from all other intentions, an absolutely distinct state of consciousness, therefore; and yet how much of it consists of definite sensorial images, either of words or of things? Hardly anything! Linger, and the words come into the mind; the anticipatory intention, the divination is there no more. But as the words that replace it arrive, it welcomes them successively and calls them right if they agree with it, it rejects them and calls them wrong if they do not. [...] The intention *to-say-so-and-so* is the only name it can receive.¹²²

The Rickertian *tendency to completion* [Voll-Endungstendenz], which belongs to the *form* of a value-guided act,¹²³ may be considered as the philosophical version of this 'intention to-say-so-and-so'.

¹¹⁸ See *The Principles of Psychology*, pp. 245 - 249; cf. *Psychology: Briefer Course*, pp. 149 - 152. The concept of fringes (as James' works in general) was widely known in Russia: see e.g. Lossky, 1902, p. 811; Frank, 1917, pp. 97, 103.

¹¹⁹ See *The Principles of Psychology*, pp. 251, 260.

¹²⁰ See *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 246, 250; cf. *Psychology: Briefer Course*, p. 149.

¹²¹ See *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 253 - 255; cf. *Psychology: Briefer Course*, p. 150.

¹²² *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 245; cf. *Psychology: Briefer Course*, p. 150.

¹²³ See *Vom System der Werte*, p. 301.

Bakhtin applies this concept metaphorically: Being-event is the process of speaking, whereas Being-givenness is the already articulated part of the sentence:

All that *already is* has no justification, it, as it were, dared to become already determined by itself and to remain (stubbornly) in its determinedness amidst the world which is yet lying ahead of itself with regard to its sense, in its justification. It is like a word that wishes to become totally determined within the sentence which is [already] being uttered but is yet unfinished and [even] yet unthought to the end.¹²⁴

The ultimate sense corresponds to the sense of the yet unfinished sentence. Then the full, moral responsibility relates my *postupok* to the ultimate sense and turns my *postupok* into a new word, the next word in this ongoing speech; a technical action, on the contrary, remains but a meaningless sound, a noise.

A *postupok* cannot live within Being-givenness, aesthetical reality. A *postupok* lives, or as Bakhtin often says, 'moves', *in the spirit*, which is the cluster of endless, cognitive-ethical directedness. The orientation of a *postupok* in the whole of Being-event is its orientation with regard to the absolute future, in the same way as a word, when it is being uttered, is oriented towards the end of a yet unfinished phrase. Therefore, *postupok* moves on the borders¹²⁵ of the aesthetical world, between the *used-to-be* and the *yet-to-be*. For this razor-edge Bakhtin also uses a word, which could be translated as '*fringe'!¹²⁶

[...] a responsible *postupok* is shifted to the fringe of the only Being-event actually happening in all its manifoldness. [...] The moment of the absolute novelty, of what has never been and will not recur, is of prime importance here: it is the responsible continuation in the spirit of the whole which was once acknowledged.¹²⁷

I can actively participate only in Being which grows rich, does not remain equal to itself, i.e. when I 'enter' the event of Being and enrich it with a quantum of novelty.¹²⁸ **Pravda* arising from Being-event is the imperative urging me to reach out towards the ultimate fringes of Being where self-

¹²⁴ *A&H*, pp. 116-117.

¹²⁵ The Russian *granitsy*: see *PhP*, p. 125; *A&H*, pp. 119, 159, 179.

¹²⁶ The Russian *kraj* means also 'the outer edge, limit', 'margins'. See *PhP*, pp. 111, 112, 120.

¹²⁷ *PhP*, p. 111.

¹²⁸ See *PhP*, pp. 93, 114.

repetitious Being-givenness is left behind and I stand alone before the face of the absolute future.

§11.8. Fringes of Being and the temporal horizon

The concept of fringe accounts for most of the bridge between Husserl's phenomenology and James' psychology.¹²⁹ It allows us now to compare Bakhtin and Husserl in their treatment of the flow of time. Husserl develops the theme of *horizon*, the context of a single mental process, its 'halo', pregnant with other mental processes.¹³⁰ We have to remember that after the phenomenological reductions no historical or astronomical time is left: Husserl speaks about 'inner', 'phenomenological', or *immanent time, which is not the historical context of an individual life. Each mental process has a three-fold horizon of Now, Before and After, the Now being a form for ever new material:¹³¹

Each Now of the mental process [...] has its *horizon of Before*. But of essential necessity that cannot be an empty Before, an empty form without a sense, a non-sense. Of necessity it has the signification of a past Now which comprises in this form a past something, a past *mental process*. [...] However, every Now of the mental process also has its necessary *horizon of After*, and that is also not an empty horizon; of necessity every Now of the mental process [...] changes into a new Now, and it is of necessity a fulfilled one.¹³²

Husserl's description has a certain rhythmic element: every Now is followed by a new Now without end. The After unceasingly becomes a Now. This 'After' is not the Bakhtinian absolute future but the closest future which is not in conflict with the Now. The fringes of Being-event are traversed with the ultimate sense; the time horizon of a mental process is traversed with the flow of phenomenological time in the pure, self-contained consciousness pertaining to a pure Ego.¹³³ The *'hostility', which, according to Bakhtin, ever remains between

¹²⁹ See Stevens, 1974, pp. 32 - 35, 53 - 57, 129 - 138; Spiegelberg, 1982, pp. 146, 159.

¹³⁰ See *Ideas*, p. 195 <164 - 165>.

¹³¹ See *Ideas*, p. 195 <164>.

¹³² *Ideas*, p. 195 <164 - 165>.

¹³³ See *Ideas*, p. 196 <165>.

the sense-future and the present (§11.5),¹³⁴ cannot even be expressed in the Husserlian framework.

The theme of hostility between the future and the present / past makes it impossible to avoid the question about Bakhtin's relation to *Futurism, especially if we remember his friendship with Kazimir Malevich, who had been formerly one of the founders of the movement.¹³⁵ In Russia Futurism included talented poets and artists, who in many respects defined the future character of Soviet art. Hostility to the past is one of the features of Futurism. The past constitutes a barrier to movement towards the future and, therefore, should be annihilated:

[...] we *constantly betray our past* as soon as it has reached the age of victory, and with unabated fierceness raise again our hammer over the Globe, which begins trembling from our step. [...] How are we to free the rapid express-train of the younger generation from the uninvited and impudent coupling of the goods-train of the elder generation? You old fogeys! You are impeding the onward rush of mankind.¹³⁶

These lines from a Futurist manifesto of 1916 provide a clear example of the drive into the future that stamps the whole of Russian avant-garde art.

In 1920 in Vitebsk Malevich organised a production of the opera 'Victory over the Sun' for the second time (the first performance was in 1913 in St. Petersburg), for which he designed the scenery. Bakhtin could not possibly have avoided hearing about it. The plot is simple: the sun is hunted, captured and imprisoned by the people of the future. Malevich explains:

Its [the opera's] meaning is the overthrow of a major artistic value: the sun [...] The Futurists want to free themselves from this orderedness of the world, from the relationships which our thought sets in it. They want to turn the world into chaos, to break the established values into pieces and to create new values from those pieces [...] Therefore, the sun, which used to be formerly a value, restrains them so that they want to overthrow it.¹³⁷

The creation of new values is, of course, the Nietzschean motive of

¹³⁴ See *A&H*, p. 107.

¹³⁵ See Shatskikh, 1995, pp. 23 - 28. On futurism in Russia, see e.g. Markov, 1968; Douglas, 1980.

¹³⁶ Khlebnikov, 1986 <1916>, pp. 602, 604.

¹³⁷ Quoted in Kruchenykh, 1996, p. 72.

The main themes of the opera are: the revelation of 'new' humanity, the destruction of the world, purposeless and passionless violence, indifference to death. After the sun is captured, the Past is shot by the 'new ones' and a breath of ease is felt in the air. The 'cowardly ones', however, cannot be at ease: they go mad or take their lives because they are afraid to become 'strong and courageous'.¹³⁸

Without entering into further details, let us rely on the opinion of an expert in the field:

[...] a rather remarkable picture of the future emerges from *Victory over the Sun*. [...] We are left with an ambivalent feeling about the new age, uncertain whether to welcome or dread its approach. Only one thing is certain: the Futurists' commitment to the future, *no matter what it may be*. [...] A sad fatalism hangs over the whole vision.¹³⁹

Significantly, the characters often resort to incomprehensible language, using imitative interjections or completely new words with no meaning.

It is clear that Bakhtinian 'fringes of Being', where a *postupok* is a new word in the already begun but yet unfinished sentence, so that the flow of speech continues according to the ultimate sense of the discourse, are directly opposed to this incursion of a destructive and meaningless future into the equally meaningless and empty present. The sense-future, as we saw, is hostile to the present in the same way as sense is hostile to senselessness: that hostility itself is not senseless.¹⁴⁰

Yet the question remains: what is the moral meaning of the hostility to the past and present? Is it my hostility to everything and everyone already existing? What then is the difference between Bakhtin's philosophy and Futurism; Trotsky's idea of 'permanent revolution'? We shall be able to answer that question in the next chapters, after a proper, phenomenological description of *postupok*.

¹³⁸ See Kruchenykh and Matyushin, 1914, p. 17.

¹³⁹ Douglas, 1980, pp. 40 - 41.

¹⁴⁰ See A&H, p. 107.

12. ONLY-NESS AS THE CATEGORY OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

Bakhtin's project can be seen as an odyssey, a story about the adventurous journey in which many worlds have been discovered, some with dangerous traps, others uninhabitable. Thus, in speaking of the theoretical world closed in on itself, Bakhtin's language suggests active deception: that world presents itself as the whole world.¹ His 'first philosophy' actually describes the way leading home, to the only world to which we belong.

The reverberations of this motive can also be found in the image of forcing one's way from the theoretical world, escaping, breaking out:

All attempts *to force a way* from within the theoretical world to actual Being-event are hopeless: from within cognition itself it is impossible to open out the theoretically cognized world to the extent of the only actual world.²

The metaphor of an approach, an access to Being-event, of entering it, finding the exit leading to it, is recurrent in Bakhtin.³ There can be the opposite, 'claustrophobic', situation: no exit leading to Being-event.⁴ The importance of that metaphor should not be underestimated: the very task of philosophy is to find the

¹ See PhP, p. 87.

² PhP, p. 91. My italics. *To force the way* stands here for the Russian *probit'sya*.

³ The Russian *vykhod, podkhod*: see e.g. PhP, pp. 86, 95, 95, 102, 114.

⁴ See PhP, pp. 86, 86, 95.

way leading to actuality. *Historical materialism, as we remember, is praised for its exodus from the self-contained world of theory to the living world to which an individual *postupok* belongs (§8.4).⁵

In less metaphorical terms, in the process of my moral *postupok* I should be able to judge if it is performed, here and now, in the ultimate context, Being-event, thereby becoming my valid, ought-to-be, *postupok*. As was demonstrated in previous chapters, such a *postupok* is necessarily directed to the ultimate sense which pertains to Being-event as a whole, so that a responsible *postupok* becomes an inseparable part, a moment, of that whole.

Bakhtin's project, however, remains unfinished unless he gives a phenomenological description of *the world of postupok*, i.e. the world correlative to a consciousness in the process of the ought-to-be *postupok*. The access from an individual consciousness to Being-event with its ultimate sense should be made evident through phenomenological description.

Is it possible to describe phenomenologically the non-Husserlian elements, such as the individuality of consciousness or the ultimacy of sense? In this chapter we shall examine the categories which Bakhtin employs for phenomenological description.

§12.1. Being-event as a phenomenological concept

As we saw, the core of Husserlian phenomenological description consists of *reductions. The first of them can be called the *psychological reduction: 'reality' is regarded as the flow of intuited *mental phenomena*. 'Outer reality', physical phenomena correlative to empirical sciences of 'matters of fact', or metaphysical concepts which point beyond phenomena, are equally disregarded.⁶

Bakhtin definitely undertakes this reduction:

'The event of Being' is a phenomenological concept: to a living consciousness Being appears as event and a living consciousness

⁵ See *PhP*, PA, p. 91.

⁶ See Boer, 1978, p. 199, fn 5.

actively orients itself and lives in Being as in an event.⁷

Just as Husserlian phenomenological description describes nothing but consciousness, so Bakhtin characterises his work as the phenomenological description of consciousness to which Being 'appears'.⁸

Appearances, mental phenomena, always are what they 'really' are (§2.5). In the mental sphere there is no difference between appearance and Being: phenomena are taken as they 'present' themselves and become reshaped in accordance with the attitude assumed.⁹ Being-event is the **appearance* of Being in the process of experiencing and it is taken for the ultimate reality, with any *beyond excluded.¹⁰ Bakhtin calls the ultimacy of Being-event its *only-ness*¹¹ which naturally expresses this 'no beyond' condition. On the other hand, the only-ness of Being-event refers also to the once-occurrence of the event of Being, thereby making a parallel to the Husserlian *'mental stream'.

Another parallel can be found in Rickert, who also begins with the only-ness of the immediately known:

Epistemological consciousness [...] is, to a certain extent, merely another name for the only Being which we know immediately [...]¹²

The difference with Bakhtin, however, is evident. By 'consciousness' Bakhtin means an individual, finite, concrete, living consciousness, definitely not epistemological consciousness.¹³ Rickert, on the contrary, introduces the concept of *epistemological consciousness in order to avoid solipsism which, in his mind, is inevitable if an individual consciousness becomes the subject matter of epistemology.¹⁴

The danger of epistemological *scepticism arises also in connection with the

⁷ A&H, p. 163. My emphasis.

⁸ See A&H, p. 163.

⁹ See Husserl, *PRS*, pp. 106 - 109 <312 - 314>.

¹⁰ See Husserl, *LI3*, p. 445 <B1 238>.

¹¹ The Russian *edinstvennost*.

¹² *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 29.

¹³ See A&H, p. 79.

¹⁴ See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, p. 57.

Husserlian stream of consciousness which is closed in itself and pertains to an individual Ego.¹⁵ Husserl avoids this trap by phenomenological **epoché*, the 'bracketing' of the transcendent reality. He simply presupposes the independence of the phenomenological analysis from the dilemma of solipsism / realism.¹⁶

The terms 'materialism' and 'naturalism', as used by Bakhtin, are perhaps too broad but they are definite enough to imply an epistemological position, a belief in the independence of spatiotemporal factual being. But that is what Bakhtin, in his words, 'does not touch'. If, on the other hand, we would understand 'idealism' as implying the negation of this naturalistic belief, then, yet again, Bakhtin abstains from judgement about it, as he explicitly states several times.¹⁷ We can assume, therefore, that phenomenological *epoché* is present in Bakhtin's approach. It finds its further expression in the Bakhtinian opposition of **within-without*.

Within, in Bakhtin's use, means *entirely within the limits of a *context*. A closed context is always presupposed: its 'beyond' is disregarded, indeed, bracketed. Thus, 'within the sense-content' of the cognitive act there is no 'exit' into the historical-individual side of the act, to Being-event, to the ought. From 'within cognition' it is impossible to 'open out' the theoretically cognized world to the extent of the only actual world, from 'within aesthetical vision' it is impossible to find an exit into life. By considering the fact of a *postupok* from without, it is put into a cultural realm: physiology, biology, psychology, etc.¹⁸

In the context of cultural production the product is alienated from the once-occurrent process of *postupok*. 'Within the product' means, therefore, 'without the event' of *postupok*. The exit into Being-event is not possible from within the alienated product of my cultural activity. From within that product I myself is no

more than 'a poet', 'a scholar', *homo faber* (§11.2).¹⁹

It is only from within the actual *postupok* [...] that we find the approach to the one and only Being-event in its concrete actuality [...]²⁰

Simmel gives a sociological twist to the opposition *within-without*. When he puts reason outside the cosmic stream of life, he merely makes a semi-metaphysical generalization of his sociological *a priori*: life in society is not *entirely* social. Says Simmel:²¹

[...] although it may be possible to explain the whole content of life [*Lebensinhalt*] completely in terms of social antecedents and interactions, this content must also be considered under the category of individual life, as the individual's experience [*Erlebnis*] [...] The stand-point from which the life of the individual is conceived and structured may be taken from **within* [*innerhalb*] as well as from without [*ausserhalb*] the individual. [...] The individual is contained in sociation [*Vergesellschaftung*] and, at the same time, finds himself confronted by it.²²

The outside of an individual life is, therefore, society, where an individual is determined by the forms of Objective culture, like e.g. the patterns of exchange within the modern money economy which largely disregard the individual's 'inner' life. Taken 'from without', an individual is a fact, a part and product of society (*terminus ad quem*), whereas taken 'from within', his life has its own centre of activity (*terminus ad quo*).²³

A parallel with Bakhtin becomes apparent if we remember that an individual life is one complex *postupok*, the inseparable context of all my acts:

[...] I am in the process of *postupok* regarding my entire life, each single act and mental life-process of mine is a moment of my life-*postupok*.²⁴

Being-event is given to me within that *postupok*, within myself,²⁵ within my life:

¹⁹ See *PhP*, pp. 86, 91, 92, 95, 123.

²⁰ *PhP*, p. 102. My emphasis.

²¹ See *Das individuelle Gesetz*, pp. 141, 150, 156; *Soziologie*, ch. 1, p. 347 <27>.

²² *Soziologie*, ch. 1, p. 350 <28>.

²³ See *Soziologie*, ch. 1, pp. 347, 350 - 351 <26, 28>.

²⁴ *PhP*, p. 83. *Experience* stands here for the Russian *perezhivanie*, equivalent to the German *Erlebnis*.

²⁵ See *A&H*, p. 100.

¹⁵ See *Ideas*, pp. 100 - 101 <85>.

¹⁶ See *LI*, Introduction to volume two, p. 266 <B1 22>.

¹⁷ See *A&H*, p. 97. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 36 - 37.

¹⁸ See *PhP*, pp. 104, 103.

I am entirely *inside* my life and if I could in some way see its *outside*, this outside would have turned at once into a moment of my life within myself [...]²⁶

My life has its social 'outside', which cannot be lived in my *immediate* experience, even if that 'outside' could be considered conceptually.

Bakhtin interprets 'life', the main category of Simmel's *Lebensphilosophie*, phenomenologically: inner life is the outward, cognitive-ethical directedness of one's life-*postupok*. Bakhtin, even if he speaks of a concrete, living consciousness, does not at all mean the consciousness correlative to a *biological substratum: a character in a work of literature is also alive in the sense of his life's outward, cognitive-ethical directedness.²⁷

Empathy, or co-experiencing, is interpreted by Bakhtin also in this phenomenological context. Bakhtin does not forget to dissociate his understanding of empathy from its traditional understanding in psychology. The content of the act of empathy, in his view, is 'ethical':

it is the emotional-volitional attitude, practical or moral, of the other consciousness.²⁸

This primary content can acquire its more special sense from different contexts: philosophical, psychological, practical or aesthetical, and thus become the sense-content of a corresponding *postupok*.²⁹

All questions about the reality of another inner life which we co-experience are left outside the phenomenological brackets:

Phenomenologically speaking, our co-experiencing the inner life of another being is beyond doubt, whatever the unconscious technique of that co-experiencing may be.³⁰

The radical character of that statement becomes clear when we find that it is possible to co-experience the inner life of a cliff! Thus, one may have sympathy

²⁶ A&H, pp. 76 - 77. My emphasis. *Outside* stands here for the Russian *vneshnost'*, which also means *exterior, external (bodily) appearance*, etc.

²⁷ See e.g. A&H, pp. 63, 171.

²⁸ PCMF, p. 38.

²⁹ See PCMF, p. 38.

³⁰ A&H, p. 56.

with the cliff pressed round by other cliffs, or express artistically the cliff's 'soul': its stubbornness, perseverance, self-sufficiency, loneliness, melancholy.³¹ In the same way Husserl makes it very clear that 'mental phenomena' are not empirically observed phenomena in the consciousness of a *human being: any bond with 'animal organisms' is severed.³²

However, we have now reached the point where the affinity between Bakhtin and Husserl disappears.

§12.2. Individual worlds and their architectonics

Husserl begins with entirely disconnected, individual mental streams. Actual memory, perception, the modes of given-ness even of the 'common' objects, cannot but be different for two different Ego-subjects,³³ like for example, the presentations of the 'icy wastes of Greenland', by Nansen (who explored Greenland) and by Husserl, are not the same (§3.7). Nonetheless, they are considered by Husserlian phenomenology as the same because their *intentional essence is the same.³⁴

Husserl's purpose is to bridge the abyss which separates mental streams pertaining to different Egos. Even if the individual worlds of experience are unique, *knowledge* about them is universally valid. The actual relationship of empathy, on the contrary, is not universal and demands immediate contact, which is not impossible, to give one example, with the inhabitants of the planets 'of the remotest stars'.³⁵

[...] nevertheless there exist, *eidetically regarded*, essential possibilities of effecting a mutual understanding, and therefore possibilities also that the worlds of experience separated in fact become joined by a concatenation of

³¹ See A&H, p. 60.

³² See e.g. *Prolegomena*, pp. 159, 163 <B 142 - 143, 149>, *LI, Introduction to volume two*, p. 262 <B1 18>.

³³ See *Ideas*, pp. 55 - 56 <51 - 52>.

³⁴ See *LI5*, p. 590 <B1 417 - 418>.

³⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 108 <90>.

actual experience to make up the one intersubjective world [...]³⁶

The crucial role of *eidetic reduction comes to the fore once again. Husserl's objective is the certainty of knowledge which should not depend on the peculiarities of individual worlds of experience. 'Eidetically regarded', all individual existence is *contingent.³⁷ Disregard of the individual is the necessary correlate of a possibility for mutual understanding. To be a rigorous philosophy, phenomenology has to elevate the streams of actual experiencing to eidetic consciousness; this reduction alone can make possible the one world of the cognizable: what is cognizable by one Ego must be cognizable by any Ego.³⁸ Thus, the partiality of an individual is compensated for and the certainty of knowledge is secured. The method of eidetic reduction was introduced by Husserl for the transition from the phenomena in the individual mental streams (§2.4) to the one world of Objects which have *intersubjective validity*.³⁹

As was already mentioned (§10.5), neither eidetic nor transcendental reduction can be used by Bakhtin for his project. For him, 'consciousness' is an individual, living consciousness which actively orients itself and *participates in Being as in an event.⁴⁰ After eidetic reduction any connection with the historical individual is lost, whereas transcendental phenomenological reduction 'disconnects' consciousness from all transcendency so that the residue, pure consciousness, knows no 'in': any 'in' can mean only 'in consciousness itself'.

If an individual life within, as lived in experiencing, is left untouched by the main phenomenological reductions, then what could be the outcome of phenomenological description?

As has been mentioned (§12.1), Bakhtinian opposition of *within-without* finds certain parallels in Simmel: the conflict between inner subjective life and the outer world of *Objective culture, or a conflict between the individual and the

social. Simmel speaks also about different strata within an individual life, *Persönlichkeitsschichte*. Life as it is lived from within at its deepest level can never be adequately expressed outwardly. That introduces a tragic element: in the process of its articulation life becomes merely more and more estranged from the ultimate core of personality.⁴¹

Bakhtin finds this split traversing *language*. An individual consciousness is, so to say, bi-lingual. Within itself it 'speaks' its own, individual, 'inner', language, and it finds a common social language pre-given 'outside' itself.⁴² The problem of self-Objectivation, which Husserl avoided by eidetic reduction, now becomes relevant. Life's self-expression is an attempt at its socialization, a translation from the inner to the outer language.⁴³

A completely adequate translation is not possible because consciousness has a dimension of articulateness, spreading from non-intentive, isolated and non-cultural 'bare' mental facts to intentive structured processes which necessarily refer a 'bare' datum to a cultural context:

Any feeling which has no sense-bestowing object relapses into the state of a bare fact, isolated and non-cultural, [...] becomes merely a state of psycho-physical organism without any intention which would break the circle of its bare mental Being-at-hand [...]⁴⁴

Being-event in its fullness, as it appears to an individual consciousness, cannot be completely articulated, turned into a cultural entity:

[...] the only only-ness cannot be conceived but can only be lived in experience by participation [...]⁴⁵

Therefore, any description of Being-event from within a life-*postupok* can be only a self-account, inevitably incomplete and purely subjective. Here Bakhtin's

⁴¹ See *Das individuelle Gesetz*, pp. 154 - 155.

⁴² See *A&H*, pp. 17, 27, 30.

⁴³ Voloshinov, a member of Bakhtin's circle, explains the basic Freudian conflict between consciousness and subconsciousness as the conflict between different degrees of verbal articulation corresponding to different strata of consciousness, between 'inner' and 'outer' speech, in particular. See Voloshinov, 1983 <1927>, pp. 40 - 41, 171 - 185.

⁴⁴ *PCMF*, pp. 53, 28, 14. Here Bakhtin echoes Husserl, who says sensations like pain have no intentional object and are the examples of non-acts [Nicht-Akte]. See *LIS*, p. 572 <B1 392>.

⁴⁵ *PhP*, p. 91.

³⁶ *Ideas*, p. 108 <90>. My italics.

³⁷ See *Ideas*, pp. 7 - 8 <8 - 9>.

³⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 108 <90>.

³⁹ See *PRS*, p. 110 <314>.

⁴⁰ See *A&H*, p. 163.

thought takes unexpectedly a very un-Husserlian turn:

An attempt to describe the world of the only life-*postupok* from within *postupok* on the basis of its [*postupok*'s] non-alibi in Being would have been a *self-account in confession, the only [such] individual self-account.⁴⁶

Why could a self-account not be laudatory in its tone? The presupposition about the *penitential* tone of a self-account seems completely unnecessary and ungrounded. We shall see later (§14.1,5) how profound the reasons for that are; at the moment it is enough to mention the absolute future which brings 'salvation, transfiguration and redemption'. A position 'before the face' of the ultimate sense is implied in the above quotation by 'non-alibi in Being': a participant in the event of Being faces the event's sense, which is given as a task.⁴⁷

[...] I have my urgent interest in the outcome of the one and only open event of Being in which I participate.⁴⁸

Before the face of that eschatological future a penitential tone would not be unnatural. First philosophy, however, cannot be just a collection of confessions; its task is

to disclose Being-event as it is known to a responsible *postupok*, not the world created by *postupok* but the world in which *postupok*, responsibly and self-consciously, takes place [...]⁴⁹

Husserl, as we saw (§4.7), considered the world as a certain 'sense' bestowed by absolute consciousness.⁵⁰ The concept of an individual world was first introduced into phenomenology by Max Scheler: to every individual person corresponds an individual world. Correspondence is understood here as *essential* necessity, and 'person' is, as we saw, a self-sufficient totality (§8.2).⁵¹

Against that background Bakhtin's approach is remarkably dynamic. The world is not an essential correlate of 'a person' but a panoramic view which opens from

⁴⁶ PhP, p. 122. 'A self-account in confession' (the Russian *samootechet-ispoved'*) is one of Bakhtin's important categories: see A&H, pp. 121 - 131; cf. PhP, p. 92.

⁴⁷ A&H, pp. 87, 104, 116.

⁴⁸ See A&H, p. 87.

⁴⁹ PhP, p. 105; my emphasis.

⁵⁰ See *Ideas*, pp. 129 - 130 <107>.

⁵¹ See Scheler, 1973 <1913>, pp. 378, 381, 393.

within a *postupok* in process, here and now:

From within my actual participation in Being the world is a panoramic view pertaining to my acting consciousness in the process of *postupok*.⁵²

This panorama is unceasingly changing, as Being appears as an ongoing event to a living consciousness.⁵³ It changes also according to the attitude taken by the participant: in a play a boy who pretends to be a robber assumes the panorama pertaining to a robber.⁵⁴ It is especially evident in case of an 'external' action in the spatial-temporal world:

The world of action is the world of the future prefigured from within [...] the whole panorama which opens from within the acting consciousness loses its stability when it becomes permeated with, and decomposed by, the prefiguration of the future substantiation [of what is prefigured].⁵⁵

Individual worlds are in the state of flux and no description would be possible here in principle. Any such world has its unique, concrete 'architectonic', which is a set of intuitively evident interrelations between its 'parts and moments', given that parts and moments are not abstract entities but historical individuals:⁵⁶

But those concretely individual, unique worlds pertaining each to a consciousness in the process of actual *postupok*, those actual real items which make the total of the one and only Being-event, have common moments, not in the sense of general concepts or laws, but in the sense of the common moments of their concrete architectonics. It is this architectonic of the actual world of *postupok* that moral philosophy has to describe, not an abstract schema but a concrete plan of the world of the one and only [such] *postupok*, the main concrete moments of its construction and their mutual disposition.⁵⁷

A *financial metaphor (§10.4) is yet again employed here: the individual worlds make up the total of Being-event. It has to be added that this metaphor has a

⁵² A&H, p. 87. 'Panoramic view' stands for the Russian *krugozor*, derived from *krug* (a circle) and *zret'* (to see).

⁵³ See A&H, p. 87.

⁵⁴ See A&H, p. 67.

⁵⁵ A&H, p. 42.

⁵⁶ See A&H(2), p. 139. Kant defined an architectonic as 'the art of constructing systems' (*Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 653 / A 832 / B 860). Husserl speaks, rather pejoratively, about the scientists' 'architectonic play' which brings into science an aesthetical element (see *Prolegomena*, p. 62 <B 15>).

⁵⁷ PhP, p. 122.

phenomenological reading: Being-event as it appears to a living consciousness includes other individual worlds. It is quite natural that the others' current panoramic views are not parts of my current purview, but they are still parts of the whole Being-event which are accessible to me by co-experiencing.

First philosophy has, therefore, to describe the common elements, 'the common moments', of these individual worlds. The first moment to be found in all concrete architectonics of individual worlds is *the *centre*: a single moment related to all other moments of an architectonic.

§12.3. The reversal of the attitude of cultural production

The Lotzean doctrine of values highlights the centrality of any personal **Gemüth*; indeed a *Gemüth* turns the valuable (i.e. *truly* real) into the existent.⁵⁸ With regard to any individual the philosophy of values presupposes his unceasing and integral involvement in the process of **Bildung*, i.e. in the realization of values.⁵⁹ Rickertian teleological in-dividual (§6.5) is the transcendental transcription of Lotzean *Gemüth*; the moral duty is, therefore, cultural formation, *Bildung*. The universal ethical imperative is **individuality*. In the world, which is overall individual, I occupy a unique place in that passing moment. My *postupok* ought to be as individual as my unique contribution, which nobody else could have made. The same would be true with regard to my whole life, which ought to be directed towards the fulfilment of my life's individual moral 'task'.⁶⁰

Rickert defines individual (§6.3) as a once-occurrent, unique fragment of the cosmic flux. In-dividual is an individual which is related to a value. It is quite clear that a moral individual can perform his *postupok* only as a teleological in-dividual. Indeed, my contribution can be absolutely unique just because of its

⁵⁸ See *Microcosmus*, <3 425> cf. vol. 2, pp. 539 - 540.

⁵⁹ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 554 <3 441>.

⁶⁰ See *Die Grenzen*, pp. 716 - 717. This theme of a 'task', a vocation [Beruf], has its repercussions in Husserl, Simmel and Max Weber: the moral duty of a unique individual issues from his relation to the cultural values of supra-individual validity: see Husserl, *PRS*, p. 137 <333 - 334>, Simmel, *Individual and Society*, p. 81 <94>, Weber, *Science as a Vocation*, p. 27 <32>.

radical break with commonly accepted values, the doctrine practiced by **Futurism*. The imperative of in-dividuality is, therefore, related to the historical process of cultural production: the purpose of an ought-to-be act is the realization of a value by creating corresponding cultural goods.⁶¹

According to Rickert, the value of theoretical truth is to be pursued for truth's sake, art for art's sake, justice for justice's sake, and so on. Rickert expresses it in a maxim: life should serve culture (§7.1). Taken by itself, the content of a **cultural* value has no morally binding force. But the *pursuit* of a transcendent value simply because it is a value is the ought.⁶² Thus, culture, in its transcendental transcription, is considered as the **ultimate* context, providing moral validity. Says Rickert:

True, no determined content of sense pertaining to the development of the cultural life of the humankind is not, and will never be, known to us. But we do know that this development has a sense. The absolute value of will which is aware of its duty guarantees the utmost certainty of this knowledge because the sense [in question] is the prerequisite of cognition. [...] Any normatively universal, cultural value is more or less close to absolute values, and therefore, cultural life of any kind, taken in its individuality, has a necessary relation to absolute values.⁶³

How could sense which we cannot know anything about be the prerequisite of cognition? We see here the transcendental argument (§5.5) at work: the condition stated in the conclusion is indispensable to our actual practice.

Rickert gives historical culture the mediatory role between the utterly individual and the utterly supra-individual (transcendent values). I call this paradigm *the attitude of cultural production*. Bakhtin seems to take this attitude in his 1919 essay. Its central category is a *person* (a unique *individual*) who ought to achieve *wholeness* understood as the inner unity of all cultural realms.⁶⁴

Much has been said above (§8.1) about the change in Bakhtin's position when he made the main category of his next project *postupok* and not *person*. The new

⁶¹ See *Die Grenzen*, pp. 715 - 716.

⁶² See *Die Grenzen*, p. 698.

⁶³ *Die Grenzen*, pp. 703 - 704; cf. Windelband, *Kulturphilosophie*, p. 191.

⁶⁴ See *A&R*, pp. 5 - 6.

approach comes with an understanding of the ambiguous role of culture. Culture, the treasure-trove of the values acknowledged by the *mandarin community, is also the dwelling of inhuman, destructive forces, the source of alienation, as Simmel demonstrated, developing Marxian analysis. Bakhtin expresses this problem in the opposition between the event and product of *postupok*, the 'split' of *postupok* (§8.5). The wholeness of *postupok*, which in Bakhtin's terms is moral responsibility, can be achieved only by a radical change of the *attitude of cultural production.

Husserl introduces his phenomenological attitude as the change in the 'natural' attitude of living in the surrounding world which is always 'there for me'. This attitude of daily life is also taken by empirical sciences with their 'naive', unreflective, epistemological position.⁶⁵ The essence of the natural attitude is the general positing of the surrounding world, which has now to be put in phenomenological brackets:⁶⁶

the positing undergoes a modification: while it remains in itself what it is, we, so to speak, 'put it out of action', we 'exclude it', we 'parenthesize it'. It is still there, like the parenthesized in the parentheses, like *the excluded outside the *context of inclusion* [wie das Ausgeschaltete ausserhalb des Zusammenhanges der Schaltung].⁶⁷

As the above quotation demonstrates, Husserlian 'parenthesizing' is the delimitation of the context in which the ensuing analysis would be undertaken. The context pertaining to the natural attitude is divided into two parts and one of them is then disregarded, 'put out of action', so that the remaining part becomes the new context and we stay *within it, in Bakhtin's terms.

The natural attitude might be called the attitude of *epistemological unawareness*. Bakhtin has to deal with the attitude of cultural production which might be called a 'technical' or 'professional' attitude, the attitude of *moral unawareness*. A participant in the ongoing cultural process would take its value

⁶⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 51 <48>, p. 57 <53>.

⁶⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 61 <56>.

⁶⁷ *Ideas*, p. 58 - 59 <54>. My italics.

for granted.⁶⁸ That would not necessarily be true for a participant in Being-event. Bakhtin alters the attitude of cultural production by parenthesizing the socio-cultural *outside* of *postupok*: the nexus of cultural products with the immanent cultural forces governing it. Husserl limits his analysis to consciousness as such, Bakhtin to a living, concrete consciousness in the process of *postupok*.

The first effect of this change is the 'centralization' of the world correlative to a living consciousness. My life within is a context which has a centre, I-for-myself:

I-for-myself is the *centre from which my *postupok* proceeds and from which I actively assert and *acknowledge every value, as this is the only point where I responsibly participate in the only Being, the general staff, the headquarters of the commander-in-chief who is in command of my possibilities and of my oughtness in the event of Being. It is only from my only place that I can be active and ought to be active.⁶⁹

From within the context of my life any moment has a relation to me, its centre. Those relations, called by Bakhtin *event-relations*, pertain to Being which is lived in experience as *event*.⁷⁰ A *cultural value should also enter such an event-relation with myself, the centre, and thereby become 'asserted and acknowledged'.⁷¹

[...] any universally valid value becomes actually valid only in the individual context.⁷²

The alteration of the attitude of cultural production leaves the self-same values of universal validity beyond the context of my life:⁷³

What does it mean that historical humankind takes this or that as a value in its history or culture? - an empty possibility of content, not more. There is some A in Being, which takes some B as a value - does it matter to me? But it does matter if I participate in the only Being in my only way, through my

⁶⁸ See *PhP*, p. 106.

⁶⁹ *PhP*, p. 127.

⁷⁰ The Russian *sobytiynye otnosheniya*. See *PhP*, pp. 106, 127.

⁷¹ *Assert* stands here for the Russian *utverzhdai'* which has *behaupten* as its possible German equivalent. Cf: Das Sein aber muss behauptet, muss richtig erkannt werden. = Being, however, has to be asserted, has to be understood correctly. Cohen, 1972 <1919>, p. 44 <51>. It is worth noticing that the German (an)erkennen can be translated as *acknowledge*, corresponding to the Russian *priznavat'*, which is actually used by Bakhtin in this fragment.

⁷² *PhP*, pp. 108 - 109.

⁷³ See *PhP*, p. 118.

emotional-volitional assertion. If I assert my only place in the one Being of historical humankind, if I do not say *alibi quam* with regard to humankind, if I have an emotional-volitional relation to humankind, then I also enter into an emotional-volitional relation with the values it acknowledges.⁷⁴

We now have to understand whether Bakhtin is not simply following Rickert at that point. Indeed, in the centre of Rickert's epistemology we find precisely 'acknowledgement' [Anerkennung]. Acknowledgement is the *active* relation of the epistemological Subject to a content of consciousness. A content does not simply enter the passive impartial consciousness but it is accompanied by a question which ought to be answered, such as 'is it so or not?' Rickert finds that the ought is not a mental phenomenon pertaining to empirical consciousness, but is inherent in consciousness-as-such and is *logically* prior to Being. The object of cognition is the ought which is *acknowledged* in a judgement (§5.4). More generally, a transcendental value is logically prior to the supra-individual will which *acknowledges* that value as value.⁷⁵

In Bakhtin's terms, Rickert's theory may be re-formulated as following:

Cultural values are values-in-themselves, and a living consciousness should conform to them, assert them for itself [...] This is the way in which a living consciousness becomes cultural and cultural consciousness becomes embodied in a living consciousness.⁷⁶

Bakhtin rejects this doctrine. The acknowledgement of the ought by the epistemological Subject as the *logical* pre-condition of Being cannot be morally binding for me because my ought can be only individual, related to me as a finite, spatial-temporal Subject with only one 'place' in the ultimate context, Being-event.⁷⁷ Those who assume the attitude of cultural production by acknowledging the ought for the ought's sake merely show that they are slaves to the leviathan of culture, no matter how refined and sophisticated that culture might be:

⁷⁴ PhP, p. 117. Here Bakhtin uses the word *alibi* in the literal sense of its Latin original (*alibi quam in Capitolio* = not in the Capitolium).

⁷⁵ See *Zwei Wege*, pp. 216, 213, 227 - 228.

⁷⁶ PhP, p. 108; my italics. *Values-in-themselves* stands for the Russian *samotsennosti*, an unusual word which in the Russian translation of Rickert's *Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte* stood for the German *Eigenwerte*.

⁷⁷ See PhP, p. 100.

At one time man validly asserted all cultural values and now is bound by them. Thus, the power of the people, according to Hobbes, is exercised only once, in the act of renouncing themselves and surrendering themselves to the sovereign; after this people become slaves of their own free decision. Practically, this act of the original decision, the assertion of values, takes place, of course, *beyond the limits of each living consciousness*, which finds cultural values already given, and all the activity of that consciousness is reduced to acknowledging their validity for itself.⁷⁸

The Husserlian phenomenological attitude is the reversal of the natural attitude of daily life for the sake of analysis of consciousness. It is, by contrast to 'natural', a 'special', an 'artificial' attitude. The world which 'naturally' encompasses consciousness becomes, phenomenologically, an unnecessary correlate of it. Bakhtin alters the attitude of cultural production not for the purpose of his research, but rather, in order to liberate an individual moral life from servility to culture. Culture which claims to be the ultimate context, providing moral validity for an individual life, becomes, after the reversal of this 'cultural' attitude, but a moment, an aspect of that life:

All culture as a whole is integrated into the one and only context of life in which [life] I participate.⁷⁹

Bakhtin calls this new attitude 'emotional-volitional tone'.

§12.4. Emotional-volitional tone: the ought-to-be attitude of consciousness

Of Bakhtin's many misleading terms 'emotional-volitional tone' is, probably, the most misleading. It suggests immediately that the world-panorama is tinted with a hue corresponding to the individuality of the observer. That makes emotional-volitional tone a secondary factor added to the primary stuff of experience, quite contrary to Bakhtin's intention. Fortunately, even if Bakhtin does not care much about clarity, a language slip helps us to understand his mind: he calls emotional-volitional tone *a tonality*.⁸⁰ The corresponding Russian word is

⁷⁸ PhP, p. 108; my italics.

⁷⁹ PhP, p. 108.

⁸⁰ The Russian *tonal'nost'*: see PhP, p. 137; A&H, p. 87.

hardly used for the visual arts: the series of visual connotations is then arrested and a musical context comes into play. Indeed, did Bakhtin not lecture in the history and philosophy of *music* in Vitebsk?⁸¹

Emotional-volitional tonality means not a tinge added to my individual world-panorama but its very organization around its keynote, the centre, myself. My emotional-volitional tone is not like my tinted glasses but, rather like my individual tonality in which I am performing my yet unfinished solo. It is an active attitude which constitutes the world-panorama correlative to my *postupok*. What would an object of an intensive mental process 'look' like if such an attitude is taken?

A heuristic cue is provided by Husserl's analysis of intentionality. Any mental intensive process implies sense-bestowing: the **'stuff-stratum'* of phenomenological Being is interpreted by constituting the **noema*, the correlate of an intensive process, *noesis*. *Sense* is the full noematic correlate which consists of the *noematic core* accompanied by other 'characterizations', the *modes of givenness*, such as modalities of judgement like affirmation, negation, doubt, etc.⁸² The noematic core is also called *content* and corresponds to the Bakhtinian **sense-content* which we have analysed in detail (§11.1). Now we shall have a closer look at the modes of givenness.

First of all, we have to discern between sense and object. On the one hand, we refer to 'the same' object, whatever determination we might give it. On the other hand, this 'same' object, the pole of our reference, can be seen in different aspects, 'senses':

[...] there is inherent in each noema a pure object-something as a point of unity and, at the same time, we see how in a noematic respect two sorts of object-concepts are to be distinguished: this pure point of unity, this noematic 'object *simpliciter*', and the 'object in the *How* of its determinations' - including undeterminednesses which for the time being 'remain open' and, in this mode, are co-meant. [...] The

⁸¹ See Konkin and Konkina, 1993, p. 63.

⁸² See *Ideas*, pp. 213 - 214 <181>, pp. 217 - 218 <185>, pp. 221 - 222 <189>, Nos. 94 - 95, pp. 229 - 233 <195 - 199>.

'sense' of which we speak repeatedly is this noematic 'object in the *How*' ['Gegenstand im *Wie*'] [...] ⁸³

An intentional process is so far directed to the pair of the object (*simpliciter*) and its sense; the latter in its turn consists of the 'closed', conceptually determined constituent, and its 'open' complement, yet undetermined, but potentially determinable. Apart from its sense, the object remains the pure, empty X yet to be determined. It is important that 'sense' includes this area of potentially new determinations: intentionality implies, therefore, the possibility of 'growth' of sense, whereas the object *simpliciter* remains the same.⁸⁴

Undeterminednesses, the 'co-meant', with all its degrees of vagueness, forms a 'halo':

[...] what is given at any particular time is usually surrounded by a halo of undetermined determinability, which has its mode of being brought closer 'explicatively' in becoming separated into a number of intendings [*Vorstellungen*]; at first it still may be in the realm of obscurity, but then within the sphere of givenness, until what is intended to comes into the sharply illuminated circle of perfect givenness.⁸⁵

In other words, the 'halo' points to the possibility of new mental processes which are guided by the value of intuitive clarity.⁸⁶

The very signification of the 'empty' object as X clearly implies the task to determine that 'X'. That would mean the expansion of the conceptually determined sense: what is yet undetermined but potentially determinable becomes more fully determined. The multifaceted sense pertaining to the same object X remains coherent:

Through the sense-bearer (as empty X) belonging to the sense and through the possibility of harmonious combination to make sense-unities of any level whatever - a possibility grounded in the essence of the sense - not only does each sense have its 'object' but also different senses relate to the same object

⁸³ *Ideas* pp. 314 - 315 <272>. My emphasis.

⁸⁴ See *Ideas* p. 313 <271>; cf. *ibid.*, p. 77 <66 - 67>.

⁸⁵ *Ideas*, p. 157 <129>.

⁸⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 156 <128>.

The ever remaining undeterminedness of sense in that case is related to the 'further course of experience' which could lead to a revision of what was previously given. The context of a transcendent object remains ever open because the future of that object has yet to come. The sense of something transcendent, therefore, can never be given completely, with some final validity [*endgültig*]: the cluster of contextual relations is impossible to fix as the context itself keeps on expanding. As we saw (§4.4), the whole Husserlian project of demarcating the area of absolute Being had as its main method *the exclusion of the transcendent future* by phenomenological reductions.⁸⁸

The distinction which Husserl makes between the self-same object X, the pole of reference, surrounded by a halo of undeterminedness, and its sense, which can grow in its determinedness, finds a strong parallel in Bakhtin's analysis of a mental process of experiencing [*Erlebnis, perezhivanie*] in the emotional-volitional tone:

This world-event is not the world of Being, of given-ness only, no object, no relation, is given as datum *simpliciter*, as no more than a Being-on-hand, but [it is] always [given] together with a task associated with it: something ought to be done, something is desired. There can be no actual consciousness of an object which is absolutely indifferent, completed through and through, such an object cannot be lived in experience; living it in experience, I thereby fulfil something with regard to it, it thus enters into relation to the task [given together with it] and in the course of that task it begins growing in my relation to it. Pure givenness cannot be lived in experience.⁸⁹

The Husserlian 'halo', the potential for the object's growth, is not an inherent element of any intensive act: perfect givenness, without a halo, an act with a 'non-growing' object, is possible.⁹⁰ Bakhtin, on the contrary, considers the task, co-given with the object and making it grow, as the necessary effect of taking an emotional-volitional attitude. If I assume this attitude, I 'see' all the objects with a

⁸⁷ *Ideas*, p. 315 <272>.

⁸⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 331 <287>.

⁸⁹ *PhP*, pp. 105 - 106.

⁹⁰ See *Ideas*, p. 340 - 341 <296>.

certain 'halo': the-ought-to-be, the desired.

Bakhtin compares the emotional-volitional tone of an object with the intonation of a spoken word:

The spoken word does not merely denote an object but with its *intonation [...] expresses my valuative relation to the object, the desirable and the undesirable in it, and thereby sets it in motion in the direction of its co-given task [...]⁹¹

Intonation, however, does not pertain to a single word, such as a word in a dictionary. It rather gives the word a function in a sentence, in a context. Emotional-volitional tone cannot be, therefore, isolated in its relation to a particular object and separated from the context of a living consciousness:

[Emotional-volitional tone] it is not some general valuation of an object regardless of the only context in which it is given to me, but it expresses all the justness [*pravda*] of the state of affairs as a whole [...]⁹²

The emotional-volitional tone is the expression of **pravda*, which is ever given as a task (§11.3). It does not just carry my individual sentiments concerning the object but relates the whole world of my *postupok* to the ultimate sense, absolute future, makes it present in Being-event:

The [*postupok*'s] responsible [self-]inclusion in the only only-ness of Being-event is the justness [*pravda*] of the state of affairs.⁹³

Entering Being-event means entering the ultimate context where the moral validity of *postupok* is secured:

The *emotional-volitional tone encompassing and permeating the only Being-event is not a passive psychical reaction but a certain, ought-to-be attitude of consciousness, *morally valid and responsibly active*.⁹⁴

How could the ultimate sense be articulated in the limited context of an individual living consciousness? At the moment we can say but very little about its proper phenomenological transcription; later (§14.1) we shall address Bakhtin's answer. It has to be said, however, that the opposition of Being-

⁹¹ See *PhP*, p. 106.

⁹² See *PhP*, p. 109.

⁹³ *PhP*, p. 111.

⁹⁴ *PhP*, p. 109. My italics.

givenness and Being-event is absolutely crucial for the emotional-volitional attitude.

§12.5. Only-ness as the category of mental life in emotional-volitional attitude

If the emotional-volitional attitude is assumed, it regards only those mental life-processes which are oriented away from Being-givenness towards Being-event, indeed, 'shifted towards the fringe' of Being (§11.7). In Husserlian phenomenology it is possible for a relation to the object ('intention') with regard to its undetermined sense, to be emotionally indifferent and volitionally inactive. The Bakhtinian emotional-volitional attitude leaves all such mental processes beyond the limits of phenomenological description: they are *morally irrelevant* phenomena, *'technical actions'.

Thus, a mere presentation of the 'icy wastes of Greenland' (§3.5), a presentation taken apart from any *postupok*, is excluded from the world of *postupok* in process. Without a task co-meant it remains pure given-ness which, as Bakhtin says, is impossible to live in experience: a co-given task is the constitutive moment of the intensive mental process. On the contrary, the same presentation by Nansen in the process of his exploratory journey would belong to the world of his *postupok* and would be given in the emotional-volitional tone: the task of Nansen's exploration would be co-meant with regard to each moment of that presentation.⁹⁵

Still, we can draw here a certain parallel with Bakhtin. Even in Husserlian phenomenology, a presentation of the 'icy wastes of Greenland' could be given, for one example, in the modality of a question, surrounded by the halo of co-meant undeterminedness: 'Greenland' could be an X to be determined. The halo of undeterminedness is pregnant with a teleological process of cognition, with a task of cognition.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ See *LIS*, p. 590 <B1 417 - 418>.

⁹⁶ See *Ideas*, p. 357 <311>.

Bakhtin expands the framework of this paradigm. The task co-given with the object in the emotional-volitional tone is more than the task of cognition: the latter is relevant within the context of cognition, the former concerns the ultimate context, Being-event, moral Being.

Although Bakhtin does not use the term 'halo', the emotional-volitional tone of an object, i.e. the attitude with regard to a single object, can easily be called a 'halo'. There is even a similar metaphor of 'glow'. My emotional-volitional relation to a cultural value, indeed to any abstract moment, makes it, otherwise dark and blind,

[...] glow with the light of actual values.⁹⁷

There is more to say. The Husserlian expression 'halo' came from James, who used it in his criticism of traditional psychology, which claimed that mental images corresponded to perfectly definite things. In James' view, it is the same as to say a river consists of 'barrelfuls and other moulded forms of water'.⁹⁸ James continues:

Every definite image in the mind is steeped and dyed in the free water that flows round it. With it goes the sense of its relations, near and remote, the dying echo of whence it came to us, the dawning sense of whither it is to lead. *The significance, the value, of the image is all in this halo or penumbra that surrounds and escorts it [...]*⁹⁹

Now we can immediately find a parallel in Bakhtin:

The emotional-volitional tone flows round the sense-content of thought in *postupok* and relates it to the only Being-event.¹⁰⁰

As with James's 'halo', the emotional-volitional tone relates the sense-content to a context, for that matter, to the ultimate one. Moreover, Bakhtin holds that the value of the object issues from that halo, the emotional-volitional tone of the object:

Everything I deal with is given to me in the emotional-volitional tone because everything is given to me as a moment of the event in which I

⁹⁷ *PhP*, p. 117; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 126 - 127; *A&H(2)*, p. 139. *Glow* stands for the Russian *zagoratsya*.

⁹⁸ See *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 246.

⁹⁹ *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 246; my italics.

¹⁰⁰ *PhP*, p. 107; my emphasis. *Flow round* stands for the Russian *obtekat'*.

participate. As soon as I think of an object, I enter into the event-relation with it. The object is inseparable from its function in the event where it is correlated to me. But this function of the object in the oneness of the actual event which encompasses us is its [the object's] *actual, asserted value, i.e. its *emotional-volitional tone*.¹⁰¹

Valuation is not considered here as labelling a given object without a value with a pre-given cultural value which I assert in that context. Within my *postupok* there is neither object without a value, nor value without an object: everything is seen in the perspective of the ongoing event of my *postupok*. The emotional-volitional tone actually implies this position within my *postupok* in process, the basis of Bakhtinian phenomenology; it is the moment of my *activeness* in an intensive process,¹⁰² the prime mover of my *postupok*:

[The emotional-volitional tone] is the responsibly conscious *movement* of consciousness, which turns a possibility into the actuality of the completed *postupok*: *postupok*-thought, *postupok*-feeling, *postupok*-desire, etc. [...] A thought, a feeling, a word, a deed [of mine] have the same moment in common in the sense that they are actually taking place; this moment is my active and responsible attitude, emotional-volitional with regard to the circumstances taken as a whole in the context of the one and only, actual life.¹⁰³

The world of *postupok* is not only a panorama but also the object which *postupok* is changing. Objects are not merely on hand all around me, with their values already given; instead the objects are opposite me as the objects of the cognitive-ethical directedness of my life in the open, still risky event of Being, whose sense and value are given but as a task.¹⁰⁴ Within that panorama nothing remains self-same, as Being-event appears precisely as a never-ending, 'open', event in which I participate:

My relation to each object within the panorama is never completed but is given as a task because the event of Being, as a whole, is open; my position should be changing every moment, I cannot wait or rest.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ *PhP*, p. 106.

¹⁰² See *PhP*, p. 109.

¹⁰³ *PhP*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁴ See *A&H*, p. 87.

¹⁰⁵ See *A&H*, p. 87.

If my relation to the objects within my individual world is changing, then their functions are changing from moment to moment and so are their values. The process of *postupok* implies the unceasing revaluation of values within the ongoing event of Being:

The action from within the acting consciousness *negates* on principle the valuative self-sufficiency of all the given, of all which is already on hand, of all that has been and is [now] complete. It [the action] destroys the present [state] of the object for the sake of its future prefigured from within.¹⁰⁶

Moral validity, or the ought, is now related to effecting a change in the world of the status quo, Being-givenness. The Nietzschean motif of the *revaluation of all values (§5.1) is clearly heard in this passage. The already mentioned theme of hostility between *yet-to-be* and *use-to-be* (§11.5) reappears now in connection with the emotional-volitional attitude, at the heart of Bakhtinian phenomenology.

In the previous chapter we discussed this problem in its semi-metaphorical transcription: *postupok* is a new word in the already begun but yet unfinished sentence whose sense is the ultimate sense, the sense-future.¹⁰⁷ We can now easily articulate this thesis in proper, phenomenological terms. James says the meaning of a word *in a sentence* belongs to its *fringe* in the stream of consciousness.¹⁰⁸ It has only to be noticed that in James *'halo' and *'fringe' are synonyms.¹⁰⁹ If we can justifiably call the emotional-volitional tone 'the halo' co-given with a sense-content, then it could be equally called 'the fringe' of sense-content.

My *postupok* is shifted towards the fringe of Being when I assume the emotional-volitional attitude. Then, from within *postupok* in process, all the objects within its panorama have a 'halo', a 'fringe', whereas the 'finished', 'completed' objects completely disappear from the panorama. The emotional-volitional tone sets an object in motion and the object's halo shows its movement

¹⁰⁶ *A&H*, p. 42. My emphasis.

¹⁰⁷ See *A&H*, p. 107.

¹⁰⁸ See *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 255.

¹⁰⁹ See e.g. *The Principles of Psychology*, p. 260.

towards the absolute future.¹¹⁰ Yet again, we have to wait before we can properly describe the presence of the ultimate sense in that halo.

We are prepared now for a very important phenomenological thesis of Bakhtin's.

In the emotional-volitional *attitude it is impossible to live in experience a self-identical object or identical objects because the *emotional-volitional tone, haloing them,

[...] reflects all the individual once-occurrence of the current moment.¹¹¹

Husserlian phenomenology began with a This-Here, with contingent individual Being as such. By assuming a phenomenological attitude Husserl reached a new region of Being: pure consciousness, which he calls, surprisingly, a region of 'individual' Being. In this region of new individuality nothing is contingent. However, the beginning and the end of Husserlian phenomenology have one moment in common. Something individual can be only asserted as 'being-thus', which is different from apodictic, intellectual 'seeing'. In the region of individual Being objects are given with assertoric evidence which makes phenomenological description valid.¹¹²

By disregarding non-moral Being, the emotional-volitional *attitude reaches moral Being-event, which is given with assertoric evidence because it is ultimately individual:

The category of living in experience the actual world-Being as event is the category of *only-ness. To live an object in experience means to have it as actual only-ness, but this only-ness of the object and the world presupposes a correlation with my only-ness.¹¹³

It is not difficult to understand what Bakhtin means phenomenologically: my

¹¹⁰ See *PhP*, p. 106.

¹¹¹ See *PhP*, p. 109.

¹¹² See *Ideas*, p. 7 <8 - 9>; pp. 63 - 64 <58>; p. 330 <285 - 286>.

¹¹³ *PhP*, p. 115. A parallel thesis could be found in Simmel: 'the whole content of life [...] must also be considered under the category of the individual life, as the individual's experience, as something exclusively oriented toward the individual.' [...unter Kategorie des Einzellebens zu betrachten, als Erlebnis des Individuums und völlig auf dieses orientiert.] *Soziologie*, ch. 1, p. 350 <28>.

emotional-volitional attitude simply disregards as morally irrelevant everything disconnected from 'myself', who is the centre of the world of my *postupok*. This centrality of the Ego, quite justifiable as a particular attitude of consciousness, leads, however, to a difficult question when we return from the phenomenological context to the moral context of 'ordinary' life. Does phenomenological Ego-centralism not mean merely moral Ego-centrism? Why does Bakhtin call his moral doctrine an 'ethical solipsism'?¹¹⁴

It seems that he is on very thin ice.

¹¹⁴ See *A&H*, p. 36.

13. THE QUESTIONS TO *DER EINZIGE*

Bakhtin makes *only-ness* the prime category of his project. We cannot avoid, therefore, asking a question about the origin of that category. Indeed, Bakhtin's project had a little known precedent. An attempt to build up a philosophy on the basis of the category of only-ness was made in the mid-19th century by Max Stirner:¹

Historians have never agreed about Stirner's place in the history of philosophy. They have disagreed about whether his place should be a major or a minor one, a central place or a marginal one in the evolution of certain modern moral and social ideas, and they have been far from unanimous in determining to which of the broad currents of European thought his work might with accuracy be said to belong.²

Stirner's philosophy was fiercely criticised, particularly by Marx and Engels. Would Bakhtin's philosophy, based also on the category of only-ness, inherit the shortcomings of Stirner's project? We shall answer that question in the next chapter. Now we shall briefly analyse Stirner's project and its influence in the post-War world.

¹ The pseudonym of Johann Kaspar Schmidt (1806 - 1856). For the biography and bibliography, see Patterson, 1971; Carroll, 1974.

² Patterson, 1971, p. 126.

§13.1. *Der Einzige* and his only-ness

Stirner was a member of 'Die Freien' ('The Free'), a circle of young Berlin intellectuals which was attended, among many, by Engels.³ Bruno Bauer, the central figure of that circle, was also the most outstanding representative of the Young Hegelians movement, which was undertaking a radical revision of Hegel's legacy. After *The Life of Jesus* by David Strauss and *The Essence of Christianity* by Ludwig Feuerbach the break between Hegelianism and Christianity became imminent, and the following development turned Young Hegelians into dangerous opponents of the official ideology.

In 1844 Stirner published his main work, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, a cold and merciless criticism not only of conservative orthodoxy but also of its 'progressive' opposition, which included his former associates and friends.⁴ The tone of his treatise is sarcastic. The refutation of the author's opponents often seems to be his main purpose. That purpose was mainly achieved, judging by the fact that Marx wrote a 400-page essay ('Saint Max', the major part of *German Ideology*) with a paragraph by paragraph response to Stirner!⁵

From the outset Stirner refuses to describe his *a priori*, his basic presuppositions, as a systematic philosopher of the period would have done. His philosophy begins with the *Ich*, the Ego, 'myself':

I for my part start from a presupposition in presupposing *myself* [...]⁶

Stirner describes the Ego, 'my' Ego, with the category of own peculiarity, 'ownness' [Eigenheit].⁷ My peculiar ownness expresses the fact that I am *The*

³ In his letter to Marx of 19 November 1844, Engels characterizes Stirner as 'the most talented, independent and hard-working of the Free.' Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, v. 18, p. 13. The only existing portrait of Stirner is actually a sketch drawn from memory by Engels.

⁴ The censor granted permission for publication because the book was too 'absurd' to be dangerous. It became a sensation and caused a storm of criticism but was soon forgotten as a piece of eccentricity. See Patterson, 1971, pp. 11 - 12.

⁵ There is a widely held opinion that Stirner's book in many aspects influenced the works of Marx. See Patterson, 1971, p. 101 - 125; Carroll, 1974, p. 60 - 86; Kolakowski, 1985, p. 153 - 176. Hook, 1962, pp. 165 - 185.

⁶ *Der Einzige*, p. 150 <167>.

⁷ See *Der Einzige*, p. 171 <188>.

Only One, Der Einzige.⁸ There is no connection with J.G.Fichte: by *Ich* Stirner does not mean the Fichtean absolute Self, *das absolute Ich*.⁹ Nor does he endorse solipsism, ontological or empirical; it is, rather, the fact of 'myself' that he presupposes in all its immediate evidence:

I am not an ego along with other egos, but the sole ego: I am unique [*einzig*, the only one]. Hence my wants too are unique, and my deeds; in short, everything about me is unique. And it is only as this unique I that I take everything for my own, as I set myself to work, and develop myself, only as this.¹⁰

I am the only one not because I own something others could have had as well, such as 'a body', but because my living body is not exchangeable with yours and neither is my mental life. Says Stirner:

I do not count myself as anything special [Besonderes], but as unique [*einzig*]. Doubtless, I have *similarity* with others; yet that holds good only for comparison or reflection; in fact I am incomparable, unique. *My flesh is not their flesh, my mind [Geist] is not their mind*.¹¹

This remark should invalidate the criticism of Stirner made by Max Scheler. The latter claimed that any individualism based on the individuality of a living body would inevitably lead to the loss of individuality because of the common nature of bodily drives.¹² Stirner's suggests nothing of the kind: the body, 'flesh' [Fleisch], is not the body of biological drives but, yet again, something which I can refer to as 'mine', and never as 'yours': even if you are my identical twin, or indeed, a clone, your body can never be mine.

Stirner appeals to the prime inner experience of I-ness which is impossible to deny. It took, of course, sixty years before a direct appeal to inner experience was properly introduced into philosophy by Brentano and Husserl. It took still longer to make a finite individual the main theme of existentialist philosophy. Stirner's

⁸ The existing Russian translations of Stirner's book employ for the German *einzig* the same Russian word [*edinstvennyj*] which Bakhtin uses in his project. I translate *edinstvennyj* as 'the only [one]'. The traditional English translations take 'unique' for Stirner's *einzig*.

⁹ See *Der Einzige*, p. 361 <406>.

¹⁰ *Der Einzige*, p. 361 <406>.

¹¹ *Der Einzige*, p. 138 <153>. My italics.

¹² See Scheler, 1973 <1916>, p. 514.

contemporaries could hardly understand this kind of argument.

Thus, Marx attempts to interpret Stirner's *Der Einzige* in Hegelian terms, or elsewhere he understands Stirner in the sense that all individuals are different, or, he declares that *Der Einzige* is not corporeal but merely a constructed category.¹³ In fact, Stirner simply means that for 'me' the world is divided into 'mine' and 'not mine' and they remain in a state of unceasing opposition. The fundamental character of this opposition was first recognized within the framework of psychology (which was not yet separated from philosophy). As James put it, also mentioning Lotze, a junior contemporary of Stirner's:

One great splitting of the whole universe into two halves is made by each one of us; and for each of us almost all of the interest attaches to one of the halves; but we all draw the line of division between them in a different place. When I say that we call the two halves by the same names, and that those names are 'me' and 'not-me' respectively, it will at once be seen what I mean. [...] Even the trodden worm, as Lotze somewhere says, contrasts his own suffering self with the whole remaining universe, though he have [sic] no clear conception either of himself or of what the universe may be. He is for me a mere part of the world; for him it is I who am the mere part. Each of us dichotomizes the Cosmos in a different place.¹⁴

I 'dichotomize' the Cosmos at a certain point where my living body is and where I live my life, bodily and mental.

In Stirner's book we look in vain for an articulated doctrine about the Ego, person, etc. One of the reasons is that *Der Einzige* has to use the language which bears the marks of a 'Christian' system of values. Any attempt to communicate meets the resistance of the linguistic medium, which is raised and controlled by the impersonal social force of 'Christianity'. That makes *Der Einzige* an outcast who is given no possibility to articulate his only-ness: language is definitely 'not mine' and 'my' peculiar ownness cannot be expressed in the common language which

has settled itself pretty well into the Christian standpoint, and the general consciousness is still too Christian not to shrink in terror from everything

¹³ See *German Ideology*, pp. 192, 266, 284.

¹⁴ *Psychology: Briefer Course*, p. 158.

un-Christian as from something incomplete or evil.¹⁵

'Christian standpoint' is here the broad term for the prevalent cultural paradigm of the period. Though Stirner traces it back to the origins of historical Christianity, he puts under the umbrella of 'Christian standpoint' much of European philosophy - no matter whether atheistic (Feuerbach, in particular), or theistic (Hegel) - as well as the political ideologies of the time, from liberalism to communism.¹⁶

The major part of Stirner's book is devoted to the criticism of that 'Christendom' which meets (and creates) the demand of Mankind ('Christian men') for

a ruling object, that the Subject may be properly [hübsch] *submissive*. I am to bend *beneath* the absolute, I *ought* to.¹⁷

A 'ruling object' (such as God, Nation, State, Family, Liberty, Humanity, Man, etc.)¹⁸ claims to be sacred, it is the object which never can be my own:

Alienness is a criterion of the 'sacred'. In everything sacred there lies something 'uncanny', alien [fremd], such as we are not quite familiar with and at home in. What is sacred to me is *not my own* [...] ¹⁹

A ruling object is defined not by its concrete content, but by the fact that it is exempted from history and belongs to the timeless hierarchy of disembodied essences, ideas, thoughts, concepts, etc. - as the *highest* essence.

Stirner fails to articulate his method properly, resorting instead to sarcasm and word-play, which Marx, in his turn, does not ignore. However, Marx fails to understand Stirner's 'phenomenological' recourse to individual experience. Marx finds it obvious (as it is indeed) that the content of the 'holy' is different for different individuals. In his view, it is, therefore, impossible to speak of something universally 'holy' or 'alien'.

¹⁵ *Der Einzige*, p. 169 <186>.

¹⁶ See *Der Einzige*, p. 15 - 33 <15 - 36> and *passim*.

¹⁷ *Der Einzige*, p. 338 <380>; Stirner actually quotes here *Rom* 1.25: 'They honour and serve the creature more than the Creator'.

¹⁸ See *Der Einzige*, p. 333 <373 - 374>.

¹⁹ *Der Einzige*, p. 37 <40>. The translation is slightly changed.

If we employ Bakhtin's terms, we would immediately see that Stirner describes the situation 'from *within', whereas Marx undertakes his analysis 'from without'. That is why he widely misses Stirner's point. What is sacred to me is neither my own nor anybody's own: the constitutive element of *the alien / the sacred* is that it never pertains to a concrete living individual. Those who claim the sacred for themselves cease to be such individuals by identifying themselves with an alienated essence. They become, so to say, disembodied as no proper relation, 'intercourse', between me and an alienated essence is possible:

If I hold intercourse [Verkehr] with the supreme essence, I am not holding intercourse with myself, and if I hold intercourse with the essence of man, I am not holding intercourse with men. [...] Intercourse resting on essence is an intercourse *with the spectre* [Spuk], not with anything real.²⁰

It is worth noticing that I myself can become a spectre by giving myself unreservedly to something 'sacred': self-alienation is a constant temptation for *Der Einzige*.

The metaphor of a spectre, or ghost, traversing Stirner's book, refers to the whole 'world', of essences, mind, spirit, the 'inverted world' [verkehrte Welt], which dominates the real world.²¹ Stirner calls this dominion 'possession' [Besessenheit], the further development of the 'spectre' metaphor.²² *Possession is the actual situation of a 'cultured', or 'Christian', individual with regard to his culture. As possession by a ghost, in the proper sense, is traditionally thought to be impossible without cooperation from the possessed, this 'cultural' possession also meets a fundamental human demand: a 'heaven of culture [Kultur]', the world of the mind, of ideas, thoughts, concepts, essences. The one who has escaped the timeless immovability of this *fixed* point becomes mad, has 'wheels in his head', falls under the dominion of a fixed idea.²³

Those who are not serious about such a 'calling' are labelled by sch

and clergymen as *egoists*.²⁴ *Egoism* is one of the completely immature individuals' who He tries to liberate this term from the unruliness issuing from absolute accumulated in Christian culture. He considers Stirner's individualism expresses a one's ego.

'Love of Man' is supposed to be the enormous option is between nihilistic and expressed as a general statement about the standard culture is clearly heard in Christian religion, or a secular pseudo-culture.roduction (§12.3) justifies only one formulae 'theology is anthropology' or 'humanism is not love of a concrete individual: me, you, him'. Love of Man

sees in you not you, but the species, not a individual was not necessarily guided by or unique one [the only one], but the world tendency to become bodily man but the *spirit*. [...] He loves that the world tendency to become nothing and wants to know nothing about the reign of the apocalyptic Beast

Love of '*Man in general' appears to be the if that tendency is Germany, which has and the denial of any only-ness.²⁸ In order she has forgotten *Der Einzige*.³⁸ depersonalizing power of 'Love of Man' is a problem, now in the light of his tragic outside themselves 'Alles ausser sich'.²⁹ revolution and the Civil War in Russia,

they no longer love [anything] to a writings and deported from the country egoism / against a 'You' and me.³⁰ ill and decadence of post-War Europe. In What is the es is the of the Idols' he declares 'Moral Idealism' against 'Moral Idealism'. It is the ably become Pharisees or executioners,

ing daring protests, new and old, against Stirner with his anarchical cult of the shocked 'slave morality' [...] Even if such light [...] still, before the face of the cold,

²⁰ *Der Einzige*, p. 289 <323>; my italics.

²¹ See *Der Einzige*, pp. 39 - 40 <43> and *passim*.

²² See *Der Einzige*, p. 45 <49> and *passim*.

²³ See *Ego*, pp. 70 <75>, 63 <67>, 43 <46>.

If we employ Bakhtin's terms, we would immediately see that Stirner describes the situation 'from *within', whereas Marx undertakes his analysis 'from without'. That is why he widely misses Stirner's point. What is sacred to me is neither my own nor anybody's own: the constitutive element of *the alien / the sacred* is that it never pertains to a concrete living individual. Those who claim the sacred for themselves cease to be such individuals by identifying themselves with an alienated essence. They become, so to say, disembodied as no proper relation, 'intercourse', between me and an alienated essence is possible:

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Those who are not serious about such a 'calling' are labelled by schoolmasters

and clergymen as *egoists*.²⁴ *Egoism* is one of the most important Stirnerian terms. He tries to liberate this term from the negative connotations which it has accumulated in Christian culture. He considers egoism as the quest for one's ego.

'Love of Man' is supposed to be the antithesis of egoism. It is normally expressed as a general statement about the worth of man, be it through the Christian religion, or a secular pseudo-religion, such as the Feuerbachian formulae 'theology is anthropology' or 'homo homini Deus est'.²⁵ Love of Man is not love of a concrete individual: me, you, him.²⁶ The adept of the human religion of Man

sees in you not *you*, but the *species*; not Tom or Jim, but Man; not the real or unique one [the only one], but your essence or your concept; not the bodily man but the *spirit*. [...] He loves in you not Tom, of whom he knows nothing and wants to know nothing, but Man.²⁷

Love of *'Man in general' appears to be nothing but the celebration of sameness and the denial of any only-ness.²⁸ In order to keep their independence from the depersonalizing power of 'Love of Man', egoists from the outset reject everything outside themselves [Alles ausser sich]:²⁹

they no longer have [anything] to do with other [people] as *men*, but appear egoistically as *an I* against a You [which is] altogether different from me and in opposition to me.³⁰

What Stirner actually undertakes is the defence of the individual, '*Der Einzige*', against the supra-individual, 'Man'.

We must now consider the magnitude of this problem in the post-War world.

²⁴ See *Der Einzige*, p. 287 <319 - 320>.

²⁵ See *Der Einzige*, pp. 58 - 59 <63>.

²⁶ See *Der Einzige*, p. 77 - 78, 136 - 137 <83 - 84, 150 - 151>.

²⁷ *Der Einzige*, p. 173 <189>.

²⁸ See *Der Einzige*, p. 179 <196>. The transformation of single individuals into 'Man in general' was, of course, part of the Bolshevik project (§11.1): see *Na perelome*, 1990, p. 298.

²⁹ See *Der Einzige*, p. 164 <181>.

³⁰ *Der Einzige*, p. 179 <196>.

²⁰ *Der Einzige*, p. 289 <323>; my italics.

²¹ See *Der Einzige*, pp. 39 - 40 <43> and *passim*.

²² See *Der Einzige*, p. 45 <49> and *passim*.

²³ See *Ego*, pp. 70 <75>, 63 <67>, 43 <46>.

In the post-War world, the alternative: *me, the only one*, versus *Us, the legion*, became the ultimate question. The change of attitude towards Stirner's legacy clearly demonstrates it. Half a century separated the first and the second editions of Stirner's book. Stirner was rediscovered first in connection with Nietzsche, as his precursor,³¹ then as the theorist of political anarchism. It remains unclear if Nietzsche ever read Stirner or if there was any link between Stirner's book and the anarchist movement of the 19th century.³²

All in all, in the eyes of the *mandarin community Stirner's only merit was that he created a contrast background against which Nietzsche's glory shone all the brighter. Simmel neatly summarizes the difference. In his view, Stirner is a sceptic and decadent who refuses to recognize any scale of values. By contrast, Nietzsche tries to stop the decline of humanity by dispensing new values:

For Nietzsche, the subject discerns himself in the advance or decline of humanity and is determined by the value criteria of human evolution. [...] Nietzsche's difference from Stirner gives his doctrine a certain aura of nobility. [...] Nobility denotes the acknowledgement of the individual's objective value. [...] His [Nietzsche's] interpretation of the value of the individual in terms of the development of humanity stems from the sentiment of nobility.³³

In Russia,³⁴ Frank,³⁵ writing his 1909 essay on Stirner and Nietzsche, refers to this fragment (very marginal indeed in Simmel's book!) and turns the contrast into a dualistic opposition of creativity and decline:

Stirner is a nihilist, anarchist and democrat; Nietzsche preaches cultural values, he is an aristocrat and a progressist. [...] Nietzschean individualism, creative and believing, is opposite to the nihilistic individualism of

Stirner.³⁶

It is only 'the dregs of the society or completely immature individuals' who may try turning Stirner's doctrine into life: unruliness issuing from absolute unbelief. Nonetheless, in its moderate form, Stirner's individualism expresses a widely spread mood of nihilism and anarchism which, in Frank's view, represents a great danger for Russia's future. The momentous option is between nihilistic and 'idealistic' individualism.³⁷ The tenor of mandarin culture is clearly heard in Frank's article. The *attitude of cultural production (§12.3) justifies only one kind of individualism: of an individual who turns cultural values into cultural goods.

The radical revaluation of Stirner's significance came suddenly with the Great War, which revealed that the supra-individual was not necessarily guided by cultural, humane values. Thus, Ivanov believes that the world tendency to become an impersonal 'organization' leads necessarily to the reign of the apocalyptic Beast or Hobbes's Leviathan. The embodiment of that tendency is Germany, which has relapsed into the state of an ant-hill because she has forgotten *Der Einzige*.³⁸

In 1924 Frank re-examines the problem, now in the light of his tragic experience, after the horrors of the Revolution and the Civil War in Russia, having been singled out by Lenin for his writings and deported from the country by Lenin's order (§7.3),³⁹ amid the turmoil and decadence of post-War Europe. In an essay with the telling title 'The Fall of the Idols' he declares 'Moral Idealism' one of those 'idols': its worshippers inevitably become Pharisees or executioners, just as Stirner warned.⁴⁰ Says Frank:

Here, one cannot help remembering daring protests, new and old, against the yoke of morals. I remember Stirner with his anarchical cult of the sovereign Ego, Nietzsche who mocked 'slave morality' [...] Even if such amorality is not completely right [...] still, before the face of the cold,

³¹ See Patterson, 1971, pp. 145 - 161.

³² For more on anarchism and Stirner, see Carroll, 1974, pp. 47 - 60; Patterson, 1971, pp. 105, 126 - 144.

³³ *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*, pp. 161 - 162.

³⁴ Stirner's popularity in Russia was much greater than in Germany or France. Between 1906 - 1910 alone, his book went through six different editions in two translations. See Kurchinsky, 1920, p. 3, where extensive bibliography can be found.

³⁵ Semyon Frank (1877 - 1950) was a *Privatdozent* at the University of St. Petersburg during Bakhtin's student years.

³⁶ Frank, S., 1910, pp. 372 - 373.

³⁷ See Frank, S., 1910, pp. 372 - 374.

³⁸ See Ivanov, 1994 <1916>, pp. 97, 100.

³⁹ See Volkogonov, 1994, p. 362.

⁴⁰ See Frank S., 1990 <1924>, pp. 144 - 161.

tyrannical and incomprehensible morality of duty it has for us some unexplainable alluring justness [*pravda*], a fascinating call to spiritual freedom.⁴¹

For some time Stirner's prominence in Russia continued growing. The polemics between Stirner and Marx remained largely unknown until 1913, when the relevant parts of *The German Ideology* were published; a Russian translation followed immediately. As Marxist ideology was gaining momentum (both in Russia and in Germany) Stirner's role as the opponent of Marx became of much ideological importance. In 1918, in the heat of Civil war, the books by both Marx and Stirner were re-published. It has to be remembered that political anarchism was then a formidable rival to the Bolsheviks, which fact turned an essentially philosophical debate between Marx and Stirner into a political one.⁴²

Dostoevsky's centenary in 1921 became another occasion which highlighted Stirner's presence on the Russian cultural scene. Dostoevsky was seen by the anti-Bolshevik intelligentsia as the Christian critic of the Bolshevik's atheistic socialism. Leonid Grossman was probably the first student of Dostoevsky who noticed the influence of Stirner's philosophy on the novelist. It appeared that Dostoevsky's life-long commitment was to the reconciliation of Stirnerian individualism with mystical and evangelical Christianity; both rejected collectivist utopias.⁴³

This connection to the central figure of Russian literature and to the major symbol of anti-Bolshevism was, probably, the decisive factor in the acceptance of Stirner, formerly an 'ideologist of the mob', by the Russian intelligentsia.⁴⁴ A certain bias accompanied this ideological amnesty granted to Stirner.

⁴¹ Frank S., 1990 <1924>, pp. 149 - 150.

⁴² On anarchism in Russia, see e.g. Avrich, 1988, pp. 5 - 125.

⁴³ See Grossman, 1970 <1921>, pp. 96 - 97, 101, 103 - 104. Stirner's influence on Dostoevsky seems to be now a commonly accepted fact: see e.g. Otverzhenyj, 1925, pp. 11 - 24; Frank, J., 1979, pp. 233, 260; Gus, 1971, pp. 79 - 84, 208 - 209, 526 - 527.

⁴⁴ There is biographical evidence that Bakhtin was working at a book on Dostoevsky just in 1922, so that he could hardly have missed Grossman's work. See *Pamyat'* (Paris), 4 (1981), p. 263. In the 1929 edition of his book Grossman is extensively quoted; in the 1963 edition there is a direct reference to Stirner.

In 1922 the organ of the Philosophical Society of St. Petersburg published, as an item in the *Chronicle* section, a brief anonymous article, *Philosophy of Individualism in Contemporary Germany*, with the claim that Neo-Stirnerianism and Neo-Nietzscheanism were flourishing in Europe. We read there that Stirner is the opposite to Marx but no less radical: his teaching gives the pledge of future salvation, as it leads to the theory of society founded on the only undoubted fact: on the 'I' of the individual. Personalist, ego-centred culture is the alternative to American pseudo-individualism. We witness the greening of the new European culture of individualism. The real West is just beginning to wake up. Those enslaved by activism are transformed into persons who are invited to join the pan-European Union of Individualists [*Individualisten-bund*] with its organ, *Der Einzige*.⁴⁵

The picture, very impressive indeed, becomes different if we look through the early issues of *Der Einzige*. Began in 1919, it was supposed to be a magazine of literature and philosophy, close to Bakunin's anarchism and Stirner's individualism. It was also close to *Dadaism*,⁴⁶ a fact not mentioned at all in the Russian review. Nor was it remarked that the main task of the magazine was 'destroying power and authority by ridiculing them'.⁴⁷ That did not leave much place for philosophy proper: the magazine (and the movement) failed to attract any of the known philosophers of the period. It is easy to understand: just look at the cover of the magazine, where the year is not 1919 but 75, counted from the date (1844) of the first edition of Stirner's book!

No wonder: in its *Programme*, *Individualisten-bund* proclaims the end of the era which for two millennia has been essentially non-European. Its non-European character is expressed in the 'dark Christendom' which has sanctioned politics and its dogmas: states, classes, races and parties.⁴⁸ Yet again, the Russian

⁴⁵ See *Mysl'* (St. Petersburg), 3 (1922), pp. 179 - 181.

⁴⁶ Max Ernst, to name just one, was under the influence of Stirner throughout his life; one of his works has the same title as Stirner's book. See Carroll, 1974, p. 57.

⁴⁷ See Geerken, 1980, pp. 344 - 345.

⁴⁸ See DE, 1980 <1921>, p. 51.

review does not mention this openly anti-Christian character of the movement because under the Bolshevik regime Christianity became the symbol of resistance and the beacon of future liberation from atheistic Bolshevism.

One really had to be confined by the Civil War to St. Petersburg to imagine that an obviously marginal and bizarre movement among Berlin's Bohemians was the path to the future. Bakhtin, in Vitebsk, could only rely on his former professor Lossky, the-editor-in-chief of *Mysl'* magazine, which announced the coming of Stirnerian Europe.⁴⁹

That might be an additional factor which made Stirner's presence strongly felt in Bakhtin's project. The central element of Bakhtinian phenomenology: relating everything to 'myself', a 'centralised' world of my experience, is parallel to Stirner's approach. *I relate [beziehe] all to myself*,⁵⁰ says Stirner, *the world in its correlation to me*,⁵¹ says Bakhtin. Even the expression *I, the only one* traverses Bakhtinian texts, his philosophy in the first person singular.⁵²

Bakhtin's critique of alienation is less original: it can be found in many other authors, such as Simmel, to name only one. Bakhtin, however, gives a very specific clue which points to Stirner: the metaphor of **possession*. *Possession*, in Bakhtin's view, is the loss of self, the same meaning as in Stirner. As we shall see later, this metaphor can be properly articulated within the framework of Bakhtinian phenomenology (§14.2).⁵³ To the same context belongs also the Bakhtinian metaphor of *the spectre / ghost of Objective culture* (§8.5):⁵⁴ culture, in Stirner, is precisely the 'heaven', the abode of spectres and ghosts.⁵⁵

This obvious affinity between Bakhtin and Stirner leads, however, to a serious question. Using some key ideas from Stirner, has also Bakhtin inherited the

⁴⁹ The publication of *Mysl'* magazine stopped with the deportation of philosophers in 1922.

⁵⁰ See *Der Einzige*, p. 14 <14>.

⁵¹ See *PhP*, p. 127.

⁵² See e.g. *PhP*, pp. 93, 102, 112 - 115, 117, 136.

⁵³ See *PhP*, pp. 93, 119, 121; *A&H*, pp. 139, 150, 174.

⁵⁴ See *PhP*, p. 123.

⁵⁵ See *Der Einzige*, p. 289 <323>; cf. *ibid.*, pp. 70 <75>, 63 <67>, 43 <46>..

shortcomings of Stirner's philosophy?

§13.3. Three questions to *Der Einzige*

Stirnerian apologia of the individual was by no means a novelty in German philosophy. *Individuum est ineffabile*: was it not the traditional theme of Romantic philosophy, the central principle of the German school of history? (§§1.1; 6.5) The German religious and philosophical tradition of the 'inner life' of the soul, **Gemüth*, desires to transpose all the outer into the inner.⁵⁶

Stirner, however, does not try 'to transpose the outer into the inner' but, rather, to protect the inner from the outer, indeed to reject everything outside one's ownness.⁵⁷ The conflict between the outer and the inner is the conflict between a human creator and his creatures, which struggle to gain independence and even to subdue him:

All predicates of objects are my statements, my judgements, my - creatures. If they want to tear themselves loose from me and be something for themselves, or actually overawe me, then I have [...] to take them back into their nothingness, into me the creator.⁵⁸

My only-ness is under threat not because of a particular doctrine, theory or practice, but because the products of my mind tend to become nobody's products, self-sufficient and independent from me.

That strongly reminds one of Simmel. Indeed, one of the main themes of Simmel's - the 'tragedy of culture', the split between the inner and the outer, between **Objective* and subjective culture, between the producer and the Objectified product - develops and properly articulates Stirner's basic metaphor of creatures, i.e. cultural products, revolting against their creator and enslaving him. Simmel makes use of the Marxian analysis of 'fetishism', which Marx assigned to **economic commodities*.⁵⁹ Marx himself, however, never took back his excoriating and often snobbish criticism of Stirner, though Stirner's analysis of

⁵⁶ See Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 583.

⁵⁷ See *Der Einzige*, p. 164 <181>.

⁵⁸ *Der Einzige*, p. 337 <378>.

⁵⁹ *On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture*, p. 42 <20>.

cultural alienation can be integrated into Marxian doctrine, as Simmel has convincingly demonstrated (§8.5).

Marx had his reasons. One of them was Stirner's denial of any organized social or political project, be it building a nation or class struggle. Although Stirner heralds 'The union of egoists' as the alternative to the existing or projected society, his discussion hardly goes beyond the point of the desirability of such a union. It seems that it comes about by the process of individual self-discovery: those who have become egoists can then find each other, here and now, and enter into genuine 'intercourse'.⁶⁰

Stirner holds that it is only the possessed who 'torment themselves to death' trying to make disembodied, fixed ideas tangible. A possessed person, in a sense, ceases to exist here and now and can relate only to the future.⁶¹ In Stirner's view, therefore, the pursuit of any ideal, vocation, task, is merely possessedness. The only imperative which guides the exodus from the 'inverted world' is the return to oneself by purifying oneself from the power of fixed ideas, spectres and ghosts, and thus becoming an egoist.

In his criticism, Marx, quite understandably, points to the social evils which could never be cured by such an 'egoistic' approach.⁶² The imperative of 'coming to oneself', which deprives history of any significance, is hardly more than escapism:

The unity of sentimentality and bragging is *rebellion*. Directed outwards, against others, it is bragging; directed inwards, as grumbling-in-onself, it is sentimentality. It is the specific expression of the important dissatisfaction of the Philistine. [...] It is, therefore, by no means necessary for rebellion to take the form of an *action* [...] Saint Sancho [M. Stirner], therefore, is satisfied with 'getting' 'holiness' or 'the spirit of alienation' 'out of his head' and accomplishing his ideological appropriation. But [...] he is still confronted by the *actually existing* alien even after he has finished with the halo of the alien.⁶³

⁶⁰ See *Der Einzige*, p. 179 <196> ff.

⁶¹ See *Der Einzige*, pp. 40 <42>, 225 <247>, 328 <368>.

⁶² See e.g. *German Ideology*, pp. 288 - 292 and *passim*.

⁶³ *German Ideology*, p. 300.

Socio-political action is not caused by the fascination of an ideal chosen at will, but by the conflict of material interests within society in the process of historical change. It is private property which alienates one individual from another and the forms of private property are social relations corresponding to a definite stage of production.⁶⁴ The communist movement is motivated, therefore, not by a humanist ideal but by the Objective laws of social development. The materialist concept of history, the core of *historical materialism, was first formulated by Marx and Engels in their response to Stirner. The transformation of the 'early', 'humanist', Marx into the 'later', 'scientific', Marx was, probably, stimulated by the same debate with Stirner.⁶⁵

Marx cannot deny that Stirner is right when he faithfully depicts the perils of *Der Einzige* in the realm of ideals, vocations, utopias and ideologies. However, in Marx's mind, those 'spectres' and 'ghosts' would accompany humankind for a long time ahead:

The all-round realization of the individual will only cease to be conceived as an ideal, a vocation, etc., when the impact of the world which stimulates the real development of the abilities of the individual is under the control of the individuals themselves, as the communists desire.⁶⁶

The disregard of my only-ness for the sake of the universal task of my class is a necessary condition of the communist project as long as it is still in progress, accompanied by ideological 'spectres' and 'ghosts'. We can remember here Max Weber who considered the *polytheism of values' as the hallmark of the post-War Europe (§8.2): indeed, ghosts easily become gods.

Could history be 'mine', the matter of 'my' concern, instead of being a meaningless, alien environment populated by ghosts threatening 'me'? Or, in order to reach what is beyond my life, should I abdicate my only-ness, forget 'mine' and swear my allegiance to those ghosts? That is the first question which should be asked about any 'ego-centred' philosophy of the individual.

⁶⁴ See *German Ideology*, pp. 234 - 235.

⁶⁵ See Patterson, 1971, pp. 104 - 105, 116 - 117; Carroll, 1974, pp. 62 - 66.

⁶⁶ *German Ideology*, p. 292.

who in the 1910s was an ardent adept of anthroposophy, remembered Rudolf Steiner's lectures which had revealed to him the axis: Stirner - Nietzsche - Jesus.⁷⁸

Our third question will, therefore, be concerned with this, 'Christological', projection of an ego-centred philosophy: is there any parallel in Bakhtin's project?

14. MORAL SOLIPSISM AS THE IMPERATIVE OF MY ONLY-NESS: THE CONTRAPOSITION OF 'I' AND 'THE OTHER'

In this chapter we shall see how Bakhtin answers the questions which Stirner has left unanswered. In addition to the category of only-ness Bakhtin now uses the pair of value-categories of experiencing, 'I-for-myself' and 'The Other'. That leads to the valuative duality of the individual world of experience. The affirmation of that duality is morally relevant and leads further to the duality of the ought: with regard to 'Myself' my ought is different from my ought with regard to 'The Other'.

§14.1. 'I-for-myself' as facing the absolute future

Stirner denies that history is a process worthy of any involvement: to the egoist only his history has value.¹ It is not that easy to find proper arguments against this position. The cynicism of a single individual is, to a large degree, justified by the self-inflicted, dehumanizing blindness of those obsessed with divine plans and historical projects.

As we saw (§8.4), Bakhtin's whole project was inspired by *historical materialism. In the debate between Stirner and Marx we can, therefore, expect

⁷⁸ See Bely, 1980, pp. 159, 318, 332. Steiner was, of course, an adept of Stirner's doctrine. The educational principles of Maria Montessori also have many parallels with Stirner. See Carroll, 1974, p. 58.

¹ See *Der Einzige*, p. 365 <411>.

Bakhtin to stand on Marx's side by approving active involvement in the ongoing historical process. Bakhtin's basic term for historical involvement is *'participation' in Being-event. What would be a motive for that participation? Is there any phenomenological evidence for such a motive?

Bakhtin finds this motive not 'outside', as the lure of a moral crusade, but on the phenomenologically prime level of mental life: in my self-experience. Stimer considered self-experience after the purification of self from the alien 'holiness' as 'self-enjoyment'.² Bakhtin, by contrast, describes 'my' mental life as conflict-ridden and conflict-driven. It is not the conflict between a creator of cultural goods and his creatures, as Stirner saw it. It is the conflict between what has been or ever is, and what is yet to come, between my present 'me' and my inability to accept it as my final 'I':

I do not accept my Being-on-hand; I believe madly, beyond words, that I do not coincide with this my inner Being-on-hand. I cannot count myself up totally, saying: 'that is *all* of myself, there is *no me* anywhere else in anything else, I am already complete'.³

This fragment returns us to Bakhtin's *financial metaphor (§10.4), cash-on-hand: Being-on-hand is Being which could be counted up.

My task comes to me not as a slogan or idea, not as a vocation for a certain sphere of activity, but as the presence of infinity within my finite life: the two cannot but be in conflict. It is the conflict of infinity with its ever finite articulation. The metaphor of articulation comes to Bakhtin's help and with it comes the theme of the *ultimate sense (§11.5). My life is like an unfinished phrase in which I am trying to express what has never been expressed:

The whole world insofar as it pretends to coincide with itself, to be at rest with no regard to what may lie ahead, to coincide with its givenness, insofar as Being is self-sufficient, can stand no criticism by [its] sense, the criticism *which is immanent to the world itself*, the criticism of what already is actual, of what already is on hand. 'An uttered thought is a lie' [...] The word already spoken sounds hopeless because it has been already pronounced; the

² See *Der Einzige*, p. 319 <358>.

³ A&H, p. 112.

word spoken is the mortal flesh of sense.⁴

I can experience my temporality only as incompleteness, as 'not all yet', as something not yet final; within me, self-sufficient Being stands up and is counted before the face of sense. The ultimate sense impels my act but never becomes substantiated by any act and always remains a pure demand for my temporality, historicity, limitedness.⁵

Bakhtin explains the conflict between givenness and task using the prime phenomenological category: self-sameness, self-identity. Unlike Husserlian 'ideal meanings', which remain ever self-identical [identische] or self-same [dasselbe],⁶ my 'I-for-myself' cannot coincide with 'myself'. In Husserlian terms, when I attempt to make my 'I' the object of a mental process, I find it to be a totally undetermined 'X'. If we remember that undeterminedness forms 'a halo' of an object (§12.4),⁷ we can say that 'I-for-myself' is nothing else but a halo; the sense-content of the corresponding mental process is empty.⁸ Sense-future, sense given as a task, is radiant, and I am actively conscious of myself only when can I see that light, indeed a halo, instead of a firm 'myself'.⁹

A parallel from Husserl will help us to understand. Husserl treats the empirical self as a possible *Object* of consciousness. He can see no difference between 'me' as an actual human Being and other Objects in the natural world: we perceive the Ego, *das Ich*, just as we perceive an external thing.¹⁰ Husserlian phenomenological reduction, which excludes all such things, reveals a residue, the *pure Ego*, when applied to *das Ich*:

If we retain a pure Ego as a residuum after our phenomenological exclusion of the world and of the empirical subjectivity included in it (and an

⁴ A&H, p. 117. My italics.

⁵ A&H, pp. 107, 108.

⁶ See *LII*, p. 327 <B1 96 - 97>, p. 329 <B1 99>. Cf. *Ideas*, p. 168 <139 - 140> where Husserl calls essences 'ideally identical' [ideal-identische].

⁷ See *Ideas*, p. 157 <129>.

⁸ See A&H, p. 29, where Bakhtin associates self-experience with 'empty vision'.

⁹ See A&H, pp. 105, 133, 150. Cf. *PhP*, p. 104.

¹⁰ See *LII*, p. 551 <B1 362>, *Ideas*, p. 64 <58>.

essentially different pure Ego for each stream of mental processes), then there is presented in the case of that Ego a transcendency of a peculiar kind - one which is not constituted - a *transcendancy within immanency*.¹¹

Of course, the context of an individual human life incarnated in history is excluded here.

There is an aspect in which Husserl and Bakhtin differ considerably. Husserl believes the pure Ego is 'something identical'. Its spontaneity is the expression of the total freedom in choosing its 'regard', or 'grip' of the object. However we do not find any inner dynamics in the pure Ego. It belongs indeed to each mental process, but by itself it does not undergo a process of whatever kind: no Kantian 'idea' or 'task' is associated with the pure Ego.¹²

Bakhtin, by contrast, finds it evident that I-for-myself is never self-identical and given solely as a task.¹³ I-for-myself lives in constant striving for myself. *The transcendancy within immanency* which Husserl could find only in the residuum of phenomenological reduction is the absolutely immediate, prime experience of the living, m o r a l Subject who escapes even the most basal form of reality, a datum:

[...] my true *I-for-myself* is not yet in Being, it lies ahead, given as a task. [...] I do not know the form of given-ness with regard to myself: the form of givenness radically distorts the picture of my inner Being. [...] My determination of myself is given to me (or, rather, given as a task) not in the categories of temporal Being, but in the categories of *not-yet Being*, in the categories of purpose and sense, in the sense-future which is hostile to all Being-on-hand in my past and in my present.¹⁴

My life has the form of an ongoing, endless identity crisis before the face of the ultimate sense:

My awareness that in the most essential [aspects] there is no me yet is the sole organizing principle of my life from within (in my relation to myself). My rightful madness, when I am in principle incoincident with myself [as already] given, is the precondition for the form of my life from-

¹¹ *Ideas*, p. 133 <109 - 110>.

¹² See *Ideas*, p. 132 <109>; pp. 191 <160 - 161>.

¹³ See *A&H*, p. 97.

¹⁴ *A&H*, pp. 108 - 109.

within.¹⁵

Common sense recognizes the vital importance of having 'an identity', be it the identity of 'a German', or 'a Christian', or 'a woman'. Bakhtin holds that 'I-for-myself' can have no identity of that kind without loosing the constitutive moment of non-selfsameness. If I identify myself entirely with what is supposed to be 'a Christian', I cease to be 'I' and become *possessed. Then my *postupok* disregards my 'I', thereby losing its responsibility, and ceases to be moral, thus turning into a *technical action. It is solely my incoincidence with myself which can provide my exit to the open event of Being, the ultimate context where my *postupok* is responsible and morally valid.¹⁶

The very moment of transition, of moving from the past to the [absolute] future [...] is the moment of pure event-ness in me, when I am participating from within myself in the one and only event of Being. It is the moment of risk when the event's outcome is absolutely undetermined [...] It is the moment when Being has to overcome itself for the sake of the Ought, the moment of hostile confrontation between Being and the Ought when *Is* and *Ought* mutually exclude each other [...]¹⁷

The experience of my non-selfsameness can naturally be called reflection. But it is not phenomenological reflection as understood by Husserl: the central element of the phenomenological method.¹⁸ A mental process is withdrawn from its current context in order to become the object of a new mental process. In an act of phenomenological reflection my incoincidence with myself cannot be lived in experience. I can live it only in m o r a l reflection:

[...] it does not abstract from the object and sense which impel the life-process of experience, thus reflecting the given-ness of that experience as unrightful, seeing it against the object which is given as a task. [...] Against given-ness as a task [mere] given-ness is always [seen as] something unrightful, undue; [...] in moral self-reflection the inner given-ness is

¹⁵ See *A&H*, p. 112. My emphasis.

¹⁶ *A&H*, p. 146.

¹⁷ *A&H*, p. 104 - 105.

¹⁸ See *Ideas*, p. 174 <144 - 145> Bakhtin treats phenomenological reflection in Husserlian terms: he even uses the loan translation of the Husserlian expression *erleben Erlebnis*: see *A&H*, p. 100.

perceived only in penitent tones [...] ¹⁹

That explains why my individual *self-account (§12.2) can be only a confession: all the moments of such a self-account are related to the absolute sense-future. ²⁰

Moral reflection which inevitably ends up in penitence would be an easy target for Stirner's sarcasm. He would have definitely called Bakhtin 'a parson'. It seems that Bakhtin actually argues with Stirner. Indeed, we find certain Stirnerian clichés describing 'a possessed' but applied by Bakhtin to 'I-for-myself'. ²¹ Some Bakhtinian expressions, such as 'there is no me yet' or 'my true *I-for-myself* is not yet in Being', seem to be directly borrowed from Stirner, who says, in the name of a *possessed: 'I am not yet I'. ²²

Stirner resolves the conflict between the givenness of Being and the ultimacy of sense in favour of Being-on-hand: *an egoist is already perfect*. ²³ The shrewdness of Marx's criticism is impossible to deny here: indeed, directed outwards, that self-perfection turns into boasting, directed inwards it becomes grumbling-in-oneself. ²⁴ In Bakhtin's opinion, both pride and complacency are pregnant with a tendency to 'run before oneself'. ²⁵ Stirner's example confirms it: the pride of *Der Einzige* is full of messianic hope, and his complacency, 'self-enjoyment', should end with 'thoughtlessness', a trans-like state, as it seems to be. ²⁶

Stirner sneers at the one who rushes 'to catch the spirit', thus 'chasing after himself' without ever attaining his own self. ²⁷ Bakhtin calls this claim to self-perfection spiritual death: to cease to lie ahead of oneself, to become already complete, means to die spiritually. 'Spiritual death' refers here to the Bakhtinian

¹⁹ A&H, pp. 100 - 101. My italics.

²⁰ See A&H, p. 128.

²¹ See A&H, pp. 104 - 105, 108. Cf. *Der Einzige*, p. 37 <40>.

²² Ich noch nicht Ich bin. *Der Einzige*, p. 328 <368>.

²³ See *Der Einzige*, p. 359 <404 - 405>.

²⁴ See *German Ideology*, p. 300. (§13.3)

²⁵ See A&H, pp. 111 - 112.

²⁶ See *Der Einzige*, p. 345 <389>.

²⁷ See *Der Einzige*, p. 328 <368>.

notion of *spirit as the outward (cognitive-ethical) directedness of life (§11.4). ²⁸ The declaration of 'my' completeness not only excludes any creative activity but cuts me off from my future:

Only when I do not screen myself from sense given as a task [...] I keep myself [fast] in my givenness as a task, I am actually guided by myself from my infinitely remote absolute future. ²⁹

If I am separated from my infinitely remote future, I lose my unity and my life becomes a disordered set of self-sufficient fragments. ³⁰

Bakhtin's accent on the absolute future and self-transcendence is not without ambiguity. The phenomenologically universal character of that experience makes one wonder about its social dimension. A society consisting of penitents striving for some unattainable future, be it individual salvation or communism, does not look too inviting. Even if Marx calls Stirner a Philistine not without reason, still, Stirner sounds convincing when he says:

As one stormily pursues one's own self, the never-attained, so one also despises shrewd people's rule to take them as they are, and prefers to take them as they should be [...] ³¹

Indeed, was it not Bakhtin who claimed that an object is always given together with a task? Seen in the light of sense, any object should be better than it already is. ³²

What if such an object turns to be another living being?

§14.2. 'I' and 'The Other' as categories of experiencing

The Stirnerian category of *Eigenheit* signifies not only peculiar ownness but also the sphere of interest and control, indeed, property, *Eigentum*; much of Marx's debate with Stirner is about those, economical and political, issues. ³³

²⁸ See A&H, pp. 108 - 109, 98.

²⁹ A&H, p. 111.

³⁰ See A&H, p. 111.

³¹ See *Der Einzige*, p. 328 <368>.

³² See *PhP*, pp. 105 - 106, 114.

³³ See e.g. *German Ideology*, pp. 230 - 231.

What *Der Einzige* considers as his own, as 'mine', is supposed to be under his unlimited authority as material for his enjoyment. That is why Marx replies, rather convincingly, that unlimited control over the world is possible only for society as a whole and only in a distant, communist future.³⁴

As we saw (§13.3), *Der Einzige* claims his power even over the Other's life and death.³⁵ It follows logically from the Ego-absolutism which Stirner proclaims: 'you' are either 'mine' or 'alien'; in the latter case 'you' are a threat to 'my' own peculiarity, *Eigenheit*. There is, however, an alternative approach in Stirner: the Other is a You, a participant in authentic communication, 'intercourse' [Verkehr].³⁶ The 'communicative' Other is, therefore, different from the 'ego-related' Other. That inconsistency can be taken as the starting-point for dividing the concepts of the Other into 'dialogical' (Martin Buber is a standard example here) and 'ego-logical', the latter pertaining e.g. to Husserlian phenomenology.³⁷

Husserl develops his concept of the Other in *Cartesian Meditations*, which were published posthumously only in 1950 and remain, therefore, beyond the framework of the present essay.³⁸ The Other is a problem for any ego-centred philosophy, as the structural, even terminological, affinity between Stirner and Husserl, in that aspect, is clearly demonstrated when Husserl asks:

How can my ego, within his peculiar ownness [Eigenheit], constitute under the name, 'experience of something alien' [Fremderfahrung] precisely something alien [...]?³⁹

How indeed? If the whole world stands against consciousness as 'something alien' [Fremde], as the 'otherness' [das 'Anderssein'], then how can consciousness

³⁴ See *German Ideology*, p. 292; cf. *Der Einzige*, p. 318 <356>.

³⁵ See *Der Einzige*, p. 318 <356>.

³⁶ See *Der Einzige*, p. 289 <323>.

³⁷ For such a classification, see Theunissen, 1984, pp. 2 - 3.

³⁸ For a detailed analysis, see Theunissen, 1984, pp. 13 - 166.

³⁹ CM, p. 94 <126>. I have slightly changed the translation. Stirner uses the same category of peculiar 'ownness' [Eigenheit] when describing the Ego, 'my' Ego. See *Der Einzige*, p. 171 <188>.

become involved with it?⁴⁰ On the other hand, what is left of myself after phenomenological reduction is my absolute transcendental ego. Does it not imply that I become *solus ipse*? If 'the world' is constituted by pure consciousness as a certain 'sense' (§4.7), is it not comprised without residue by my own transcendental ego?⁴¹

At the end of his *Meditations* Husserl notes retrospectively that his 'theory' of experiencing the Other never abandoned transcendental reduction and considered the 'truly existing others' as a *sense* produced by phenomenological constitution; 'the illusion of a solipsism' is, nevertheless, dissolved.⁴²

Bakhtin should answer a similar question. I-the-only-one is the centre of my individual world, which is the panoramic view from my consciousness in the process of *postupok*. It is my individual world as lived in experiencing. The category of only-ness describes the form of my experiencing: any object becomes the only one in correlation to me, the only centre of that world. In fact, it is my relation to the object that determines its *'visage'.⁴³ In my relation, my directedness to the object, I can see it against the radiance of the absolute future and then a task is co-given with the object, a teleological *'halo' accompanies it (§12.4). Entering such a world, how could the Other remain other, 'alien'?

Bakhtin, of course, does not have to struggle with the inconsistencies inherent in Stirner. Nor has he any difficulties with Husserlian transcendental constitution. The reason is the same in both cases. I-the-only-one am aware of my limits: beyond them begins the sphere which is 'inaccessible' for me, where the Other is active.⁴⁴ Still, how can that Other become accessible and enter the sphere of my activity?

A heuristic clue can be found even in Husserl's early works. Thus, the concept of a pure Ego inherent in each mental stream, even after the phenomenological

⁴⁰ See *Ideas*, p. 81 - 82 <70>.

⁴¹ See CM, pp. 89 - 90 <121 - 122>.

⁴² See CM, p. 148, 150 <175 - 176>.

⁴³ See A&H, p. 8.

⁴⁴ See A&H, p. 76.

exclusion of the world, gives us a close parallel with Bakhtin's 'architectonics': different mental streams have the same architectonics in the sense that they all have 'their' pure Egos, their centres, as Bakhtin says. Husserl's insistence on the essential difference between those Egos⁴⁵ implies a plurality of centres of Subjectivity in the phenomenological residuum, the theme Husserl did not develop in the 1910s.⁴⁶

In Bakhtin's terms, the architectonics of the world of *postupok* is constituted by the opposition of the centre of such an individual world (*I-for-myself*) and 'the rest' of it, to put it simply, the opposition of 'me' and 'not-me':

In Being, nothing but myself is 'I' for myself.⁴⁷

A description of the Other, in this context, would be the description of difference in experiencing. *I-for-myself* is experienced in a different way than *other-for-me*:

In all Being it is solely me, the only one, whom I experience as 'I' [...]⁴⁸

Bakhtin explains this difference in experiencing by the fact of 'my' limitedness. I am not a pure Ego but an individual limited in all aspects. The question now is not about a possibility of something 'alien' present in 'me', but about the borders of 'my' individual world which correspond to 'my' borders with 'not-me'. The world as the panorama correlated to my consciousness in the process of *postupok* has a certain structure, 'architectonics':

[...] neither my actual perception nor my phantasy can form my world-panorama in such a way that it would have contained all of me, without residue, as limited through and through. In case of actual perception no special proof is needed: [...] I can [actually] see the space which is all around me as its centre, but I would never see myself as actually surrounded by it. Phantasy is a bit more complicated case. [...] With a certain effort I can imagine myself as totally limited, like any image of the Other. But within me such an image would not be convincing: I never stop experiencing myself from within and that would remain with me, or, better, I would remain in [that process of] experiencing myself which [process] I

⁴⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 133 <109 - 110>.

⁴⁶ In the first book of *Ideas* the problem of the Ego was put off until later: 'in many investigations *The Questions* concerning the pure Ego can remain in *suspensio*.' *Ideas*, p. 133 <110>.

⁴⁷ *PhP*, p. 112.

⁴⁸ *PhP*, p. 112.

can never include in my image. That which can never be convincing is precisely my awareness that the image represents all of me, that apart from this limited object nothing of me is left. [...]⁴⁹

Although Bakhtin speaks here mainly about the spatial limits of 'my' body, the same would be true with regard to 'my' other limits: the temporal limits of my life (my 'soul' as Bakhtin calls that temporal whole), by the sense-limits of 'my' character, my basic attitude in life.⁵⁰

Thus, I can, of course, *conceive of* 'the world after my death', but I cannot directly experience such a world, 'live it in experience': it can never become the panorama which opens from within my living consciousness.⁵¹

What does it mean that 'I cannot' live something in experience? Phantasizing about 'the world after my death', do I not live it in experience? According to Husserl's terminology, I certainly do: any intensive mental process, *Erlebnis*, is 'lived' by the pure Ego, whereas the object of that process is 'regarded' but never lived, *erlebt*.⁵² Bakhtin, by contrast, says it is the intentional object that we live in experience.⁵³ That difference can, of course, be explained simply by the lack of concise terminology in Bakhtin's draft papers.⁵⁴

It is, however, clear that Husserl does not mean here, or indeed elsewhere, 'the fact of the mental process in the world'.⁵⁵ Bakhtin, on the contrary, considers each single *Erlebnis* as but a moment of one's life-*postupok* which is lived as a *fact of actual history*. A mental process is lived, therefore, not by an extra-temporal transcendental 'Ego' but by a concrete 'I-living-Here-and-Now'. Moreover, it seems that in Bakhtinian terms, I live something in experience only if I have an

⁴⁹ *A&H*, p. 35.

⁵⁰ See *A&H*, pp. 89, 91, 96, 99, 121.

⁵¹ See *A&H*, pp. 92 - 93.

⁵² See e.g. *Ideas*, p. 97 <84>, p. 190 <160>.

⁵³ See e.g. *PhP*, p. 105.

⁵⁴ The difference is not that radical. As Bakhtin explains, 'I live in experience the object of my fear as feared, the object of my love as loved [...]' but I do not live in experience my fear, my love, my affliction'. *A&H*, p. 99. It is a certain interpretation of the object that is lived in experience. Husserl points out plainly that sensations and the acts of sense-bestowal interpreting them are lived, *erlebt*: see *LIS*, p. 567 <B1 385>.

⁵⁵ See *Ideas*, p. 74 <64>.

actual perception of that something.

Husserl, with his properly developed terminology, calls such mental processes 'intuitive', in opposition to 'signitive' acts;⁵⁶

we say that signitive intentions are in themselves 'empty', and that they 'are in need of fullness'.⁵⁷

In the acts of 'identifying coincidence' the intuitive act 'gives' its fullness to the signitive act,⁵⁸ and we can see that a thing is really and truly so, just as we had previously merely pictured or wished it to be.⁵⁹

We can now say that by 'living something in experiencing' Bakhtin understands those acts of identifying coincidence, when we see something *as a whole*, completely, without a residue which would have invalidated the identification. The presence of such a residue makes 'I-for-myself' never coincide with 'myself'. That is why 'I-for-myself' cannot be lived in experiencing 'identifying coincidence'; nonetheless, I-for-myself can be lived in immediate *self-experiencing*:

Whereas the mental image of the Other corresponds completely to the fullness of his image as actually seen by me, my self-image is but constructed, thus corresponding to no actual perception; what is most essential in my actual self-experiencing remains beyond the limits of my external image.⁶⁰

Bakhtin calls these two types of experiencing 'categories' or 'forms' of experiencing: the category of *I-for-myself* and *the-Other-for-me*.⁶¹

The Other in Bakhtin is, therefore, one of the two categories of experiencing. Bakhtin's concept has nothing to do with the 'dialogical Other' emerging in the context of communication. The Bakhtinian concept of *the Other* is not necessarily the category of experiencing a *You*.

⁵⁶ See *LI6*, footnote on p. 695 <B2 33>.

⁵⁷ *LI6*, p. 728 <B2 76>.

⁵⁸ See *LI6*, p. 735 <B2 84>.

⁵⁹ See *LI6*, p. 708 <B2 50>.

⁶⁰ *A&H*, p. 35.

⁶¹ See *A&H*, p. 23. Here and elsewhere in Bakhtin, *The Other* is masculine, which points to someone, and not to something.

It could well be 'myself' that I experience in the category of 'the Other': when I apply to myself a common norm (moral or legal) or a scientific law (physiological, psychological, sociological, etc.);⁶² this is also the case with *possession.⁶³ 'Possession', as Bakhtin uses the word, does not necessarily have a morally negative tone. For example, in the recollection of our early childhood we are 'possessed' by the mother: it is with her eyes that we see ourselves, as she was the first who articulated for us the very fact of our existence. 'Possession' is the state of moral passivity, such as in a collective, which is not at all immoral activity.⁶⁴

It is equally possible that I experience actual others in the category of 'I-for-myself' as ever striving for reaching an unattainable ideal.⁶⁵ The undue employment of the categories of experience is essentially a *reduction*: one of the two categories is disregarded and the other is made the universal form of experience.

The duality of forms of experience makes one ask why the thorough phenomenological description of consciousness undertaken by Husserl did not demonstrate it. How can phenomenological description which claims to be the self-evident ground of all knowledge lead to such widely different results? Bakhtin explains:

This disparity between experiencing myself and experiencing the Other is overcome by cognition, or, better, cognition ignores this disparity. In the single world of cognition I cannot find a place for myself as for the only *I-for-myself* contraposed to *Others-for-me*, to all other human beings of the past, present and future without exception. On the contrary, I know that I am also a limited human being, just as all others, and that everybody else also experiences himself essentially from within, never becoming embodied for himself and thus outwardly expressed for himself. However, by itself cognition does not make possible actual seeing and experiencing of the only

⁶² See *A&H*, p. 54.

⁶³ See *A&H*, p. 174.

⁶⁴ See *A&H*, p. 133.

⁶⁵ See *A&H*, p. 48.

concrete world pertaining to the only [such] experiencing subject.⁶⁶

Indeed, *eidetic reduction entirely disregards the difference between the individual worlds of experience: what is cognizable by one Ego must be cognizable by any Ego.⁶⁷ Bakhtin considers it as compromising, 'blurring' the *purity of the phenomenological method (§2.5), which should describe mental phenomena 'as they give themselves'.⁶⁸ The 'eidetic regard' equates me and the Other. Bakhtin calls that equating a 'theoretical generalization': it should have no place in research, which claims to be *pre-theoretical.

The disparity of the two categories, *I-for-myself* as contraposed to *Others-for-me*, describes the most original Either/Or in the individual world of experiencing before any reduction is made:

Any inner life-process of experiencing (and a mental life as a whole) can be lived in concrete experiencing, i.e. in inner perception, either in the category of *I-for-myself*, or in the category of *the-Other-for-me* [...]⁶⁹

We have already been told about yet another category of experiencing: *the *only-ness*: to live an object in experience means to have it as actual only-ness (§12.5).⁷⁰ How are these two new categories related to it?

§14.3. 'I' and 'The Other' as value-categories

Bakhtin's intention is to describe phenomenologically the world of *postupok*, 'my' individual world in which 'I' am its centre. For his description Bakhtin employs emotional-volitional *attitude (§12.4, 5). That excludes the possibility of a single, inter-subjective world in which the differences between those individual worlds would be disregarded. The situation reminds one of Rickert's description of historical reality against the background of the natural sciences:

[...] we designated nature as reality in view of the universal [das Allgemeine] and history as reality in view of the particular [das Besondere]

⁶⁶ A&H, pp. 35 - 36. My emphasis.

⁶⁷ See *Ideas*, p. 108 <90>.

⁶⁸ See *PRS*, p. 109 <314>.

⁶⁹ A&H, p. 23.

⁷⁰ See *PhP*, p. 115.

[...] ⁷¹

Rickert introduced the constitutive category of the given, a Datum, which organized 'raw' reality at a level which was logically prior to the Kantian unity of Nature (§5.8).⁷²

For Bakhtin, 'reality' is phenomenological reality as lived in 'my' acts of experiencing. Nonetheless, the description of that individual reality demands that the same choice be made. Thus, we can describe phenomenological reality 'in view of the universal', as Husserl does when he substitutes a concrete This-Here with its Eidos which belongs to a single, intersubjective, ideal hierarchy (§3.4). Bakhtin chooses the alternative approach. He describes phenomenological reality 'in view of the particular' by his category of *only-ness: to live an object in experience means to have it as actual only-ness correlated to 'my' only-ness.⁷³ In Rickert's terms, only-ness might be called a constitutive category with the obvious addition of phenomenological twist: an object is the object of an act.

Rickert, however, did not stop at that level of description. In order to become an object of historical description, a unique Datum should be related to a value, thus becoming a historical *in-dividual (§6.4).⁷⁴ Rickert developed his celebrated methodology of history as the description of historical in-dividuals. Describing the world of *postupok*, Bakhtin borrows extensively from Rickert. Indeed, Rickert considers his 'history' not as a sequence of historical facts but rather as the **Wirklichkeitswissenschaft*, the genuine science of that genuine reality which has been overlooked by natural sciences.⁷⁵

The crucial element of Rickert's method is the recognition of the difference between *direct valuation* and *relating to a value*. Direct valuation is common in an individual, practical life: an object is good or bad, useful or harmful, suitable or unsuitable for a purpose, etc. Historical description should be free from any

⁷¹ *Die Grenzen*, p. 355.

⁷² See *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, pp. 211 - 212.

⁷³ See *PhP*, p. 115.

⁷⁴ See *Die Grenzen*, p. 352.

⁷⁵ See *Die Grenzen*, p. 255.

such volitions with regard to its objects and abstain from any immediate valuation. It is difficult to say whether Bakhtin has noticed the affinity between the Husserlian phenomenological **epoché* (the abstention from any judgement about the 'real' existence of the intentional object) and the abstention from direct valuation in Rickert, which might easily be called 'axiological epoché'.

If a historian abstains from any valuative judgement about the material of his research, how can that material be formed into historical in-dividuals? The relation between a historical in-dividual and its value does not determine the result of any practical valuation. A valuation brings a verdict: an in-dividual is either negative or positive with regard to the value. Simple relating to a value has no such element. Values of universal validity stand for a set of issues which are universally recognized as important, regardless of the result of practical valuation. Thus, the Renaissance might be considered as the highest peak in human history or, on the contrary, as the period of unprecedented decline. Regardless of the position taken, both parties would agree that the Renaissance is an important period and should be thoroughly studied.⁷⁶

The next crucial element of Rickert's methodology is the concept of an historical centre. History is essentially human history. Some historical in-dividuals, such as 'Napoleon', have their own positions towards values, whereas others, such as 'the Reformation', have no such position. Rickert calls an in-dividual who issues valuations a 'historical', 'mental' [geistige] or 'valuing' [werthend] **centre*. *In historical description a n y object is related to a valuing centre.*⁷⁷

[...] an Object, in order to become the object of historical representation, must stand not only in a teleological relation to values in general, but also in a real relation to some actual Being [endowed] with will.⁷⁸

Without a historical centre historical representation is impossible.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ See *Die Grenzen* pp. 356, 363 - 365, 367.

⁷⁷ See *Die Grenzen* pp. 560 - 561, 567.

⁷⁸ *Die Grenzen* p. 563.

⁷⁹ See *Die Grenzen* p. 562.

In a historical representation a minimum of two value-perspectives are present: that of a historian, and that of a historical personality who is the historical centre. The two value-perspectives can coincide or be different. In the latter case the historian should consider all the material in the value-perspective of the historical personality. The historian himself has neither ought nor will with regard to that material. Employing the historian's value-perspective would have reduced an Objective historical representation to a partial value-judgement.⁸⁰

Historical description is, therefore, essentially anthropomorphic, human-centred.⁸¹ In this aspect history is close to art.⁸² Indeed, Bakhtin applies the Rickertian paradigm first to 'the world of aesthetical vision'. Describing the architectonics of that world, Bakhtin borrows Rickert's terms. Thus, the world of aesthetical vision necessarily has its valuative centre, a concrete human being; all the other moments of that world should be related to this centre.⁸³

For his analysis Bakhtin takes a lyrical poem by Pushkin which describes the parting of the hero from his beloved. There are two valuative centres (he and she) with two corresponding value-contexts (or, value-perspectives), both of which are considered in the value-context of the Author. All the moments of Being are related either to him or to her. She is leaving Russia for Italy. 'Italy', as related to her, is 'the fatherland', as related to him, is 'an alien land'. The fact of her leaving is, as related to her, 'a return', as related to him, 'a departure'. A self-same sense-content 'Italy' ('Italy' as Eidos, in Husserlian terms) within the two different value-contexts belongs to *two different objects*: 'Italy' as related to her and to him, 'Italy-fatherland' and 'Italy-alien-land'.⁸⁴

How does the author's value-perspective influence the architectonics? The

⁸⁰ See *Die Grenzen* pp. 563, 566.

⁸¹ See *Die Grenzen* p. 572.

⁸² *Die Grenzen* pp. 387 - 389. Simmel, whose philosophy of history is in many aspects parallel to Rickert's, considered the difference between literature and history as a matter of degree. See *The Problems of the Philosophy of History*, pp. 91 - 93. Max Weber extended Rickert's methodology onto the whole sphere of social disciplines: see Weber, 1949 <1904>, pp. 72, 79, 81 - 82, 90, 98 - 99.

⁸³ See *PhP*, pp. 128 - 129.

⁸⁴ See *PhP*, pp. 131 - 135.

author is totally excluded from it, he is not an element of the two-fold world portrayed. The parallel to historical Objectivity in the aesthetical world is 'Objective aesthetical love', the principle of aesthetical vision: the all-accepting, loving assertion of the human being portrayed, the Hero. This Objective love does not depend on the Hero's valuations: he might be a villain or a saint.⁸⁵

The Objectivity of such 'love' is guaranteed by the author's *outsideness*, his privilege to see what the hero cannot see with regard to all the moments of the inner architectonic field of aesthetic vision. The author is *outside* not only in time and space: his human value-perspective should be suspended in aesthetical activity, and his value-perspective as the creating author should remain entirely outside the value-perspectives of the characters. *Outsideness* is the precondition of aesthetical vision.⁸⁶

The key element of historical representation (Rickert) or aesthetical vision (Bakhtin) is value-transference. Instead of seeing an object against my values, I, the value-centre (a historian, an author), see it against a n o t h e r value-centre who is exempted from my valuation altogether (by historical Objectivity or Objective aesthetical love).

How could that paradigm be applied to the actual world of *postupok*? Says Bakhtin:

Two essentially different but correlative value-centres are known to life: Oneself and the Other; all concrete moments of Being are distributed between and located around those two centres.⁸⁷

The Other' is the analogue of the 'historical in-dividual' or 'the Hero'. The world of *postupok* is, therefore, essentially bipolar. Just as in the case of historical description or aesthetical vision, the precondition of such bipolarity is value-transference. The Other should be exempted from my direct valuation:

A valuation of the same person as 'bad' which has the self-same content ['bad'] can have different intonations, depending on the concrete value-centre under the circumstances: I either actually love h i m or I appreciate

[instead] a certain v a l u e (in which he has failed) whereas to him I am indifferent.⁸⁸

Bakhtin explains further that he does not mean here the hierarchical relation between two values, 'good' and 'human being': a concrete person and an abstract concept which cannot stand in such a relation. The difference of *intonation is, as we saw (§12.4), the difference in the *emotional-volitional tone which constitutes 'my' world. If I do not love the Other but directly 'value' him, measure him against a value, then before the face of that common value we two become comrades or enemies.⁸⁹ The bipolarity of my world is now lost: all its moments are directly measured against the same value. That is the case of socio-political ideologies based on the *consciousness of example. A cult of personality would be, by contrast, the expression of the unconditional love which is able to exempt even a tyrant from any direct valuation.

Unconditional love is the constitutive moment of the world of *postupok*. The Other is loved regardless of whether he is good or not. Then bipolarity arises and all the abstract moments acquire 'double' representation by p a i r s of different objects lived in experiencing:

A moment of Being, an object which remains self-same as far as its content is concerned, changes its valuative aspect depending on whether it is related to myself or to the Other [...]⁹⁰

Thus 'hunger' becomes either mine or the Other's. For Bakhtin, newly-wed during the Civil War, with its constant threat of starvation, it is n o t an abstract example:

There is a profound valuative difference between my own hunger and the hunger of another being: in myself, 'a desire' means no more than the fact of having a desire, of being in want, whereas the Other's desire is sacred to me, etc.⁹¹

It remains to explain the relationship between the different categories of experiencing: only-ness, on one side, and, on the other, 'I' and 'the Other'. Yet

⁸⁵ See *PhP*, p. 130.

⁸⁶ See e.g. *A&H*, p. 14, *A&H(2)*, p. 141. *Outsideness* stands for the Russian *vnenakhodimost'*.

⁸⁷ *PhP*, p. 137.

⁸⁸ *PhP*, p. 129. My emphasis.

⁸⁹ See *A&H*, pp. 16, 22.

⁹⁰ *PhP*, p. 137.

⁹¹ *A&H*, p. 57.

again, Bakhtin borrows from Rickert (§5.3), who distinguished between **Wertbegriffe* and *Seinsbegriffe*, valuative and existential concepts. A valuative concept always has a counterpart with the opposite meaning while an existential one never has a negative counterpart.⁹² Only-ness is an existential concept, the category of phenomenological Being. 'I' and 'the Other' are correlated in a binary opposition so that any object of experiencing, the only one, is related to a member of that opposition:

'I' and 'the Other' are the main *value-categories* which alone make possible any *actual valuation* whatever [...]⁹³

In order to describe a concrete object in the world of *postupok*, the existential category of only-ness is to be combined with the valuative categories of 'I' and 'the Other'. In that bipolar world 'only-ness' becomes either my only-ness or the only-ness of the Other:

Turning now to the actual architectonics of the world of life as it is lived in experiencing, the world which pertains to a participating consciousness in the process of *postupok*, we observe first of all the essential, architectonically significant difference between my only-ness and the only-ness of any other human being, both aesthetical as well as actual, [the difference] between concrete life-processes of experiencing oneself and experiencing the Other.⁹⁴

We shall now investigate the moral consequences of that architectonics.

§14.4. 'I' and 'The Other' as moral categories: the duality of the ought

The results of this 'phenomenological description of valuative consciousness'⁹⁵ made by Bakhtin depend essentially on the *attitude taken. The architectonics of the world of *postupok* is not a ready-made structure of reality:

[that architectonics] is unceasingly substantiated in my responsible *postupok*, it is built up by my *postupok* and sustained by its responsibility

⁹² See *Zwei Wege*, pp. 203 - 206.

⁹³ *A&H*, p. 163.

⁹⁴ *PhP*, p. 136.

⁹⁵ See *A&H*, p. 163.

alone.⁹⁶

The architectonic opposition is, therefore, more than a morally irrelevant *structural* opposition. The world of *postupok* pertains to a responsible *postupok*, a *postupok* which is performed in actual history but guided by the absolute future. Moral option is prior to the phenomenological description and underlies it. A comparison with a parallel fragment in James would demonstrate it:

The altogether unique kind of interest which each human mind feels in those parts of creation which it can call *me* or *mine* may be a moral riddle, but it is a fundamental psychological fact. No mind can take the same interest in his neighbour's *me* as in his own. The neighbour's *me* falls together with all the rest of things in one foreign mass against which his own *me* stands out in startling relief.⁹⁷

The sufferings of a crushed worm in an indifferent and alien world is the paradigm of that morality.⁹⁸

Probably responding to that 'fundamental psychological fact', Bakhtin notices that it is lack of interest, indifference, which always impoverishes the object, turning it, in James' words', into a foreign mass. Selfless love, by contrast, reveals the infinite richness of Being by relating it to the beloved.⁹⁹ Love is possible, of course, only with regard to a 'genuine' Other. It is not the Other whom I invite to replace myself *(possession). Nor is it the Other whom I directly 'value', whom I measure against a common value, so that we two become comrades or enemies. In Bakhtin, *the Other is actually the Beloved: that is the central fact of his phenomenology*. How does this option for love follow from the moral prerequisites of phenomenological description?

The moral validity of my *postupok*, the ought, is secured by the ultimate

⁹⁶ *PhP*, p. 138.

⁹⁷ *Psychology: Briefer Course*, p. 158.

⁹⁸ See *Psychology: Briefer Course*, p. 158. It should be noticed that James himself was not the proponent but the opponent of that morality. Already in his first book on philosophy we find the theme of overcoming the foreignness of the world: 'The universe is no longer a mere *It* to us, but a *Thou*, if we are religious [...]' (see James, 1979 <1897>, p. 31; see also *idem.*, *The Pluralistic Universe*, pp. 19, 144).

⁹⁹ See *PhP*, p. 130.

context, Being-event. My *postupok* belongs to that context when it is responsible, i.e. directed to unattainable justness, *pravda*, ever given as a task. I enter that context when I, in face of the absolute future (the ultimate sense), do not coincide with myself or, indeed, with anything in the world: I am ahead of myself. The corresponding category of experiencing would be my only-ness, which is morally imperative, 'urging'. My only-ness underlies my *postupok*, which ought to be incoincident with any other *postupok* whatever. Such a *postupok* is 'profitable', it enriches Being-event by articulating the ultimate sense of the ultimate context. Says Bakhtin:

My only-ness as my urging incoincidence with all that is not 'I' always makes possible my only, indispensable action with regard to all which is not 'I'. Even if I, from the only place I occupy in Being, just see, know, think of, just do not forget the Other so that he is for me, that could be done at the moment by me alone in the whole of Being; it is the action which complements his being, the action which is absolutely profitable and new, the action that could be done only by me.¹⁰⁰

Bakhtin formulates the moral imperative of *individuality, which has parallels in other versions of 'individualizing' philosophy. Lotze understood it as the imperative to develop one's own individuality, and, by doing *the good which none other can accomplish*, to realize moral Ideas.¹⁰¹ Rickert expressed that imperative almost in the terms which Bakhtin would borrow: '*postupok*', 'the individual place in reality', 'the individual world', the 'task' which belongs to nobody else.¹⁰² Rickert concludes:

The moral individual can perform his *postupok* [handeln] only as a teleological in-dividual. [...] The highest human moral duty must therefore consist in the formation of one's individuality so that it becomes suited to the fulfilment of one's individual moral task.¹⁰³

'A teleological in-dividual' means an individual striving to achieve a value. The highest moral duty is, therefore, cultivation, *Bildung*, and the production of

¹⁰⁰ PhP, p. 113.

¹⁰¹ See *Microcosmus*, vol. 2, p. 554 <3 441>; my emphasis.

¹⁰² See *Die Grenzen*, pp. 716 - 717.

¹⁰³ *Die Grenzen*, pp. 715 - 716. Note that *handeln* stands for a synthetic act which is called *postupok* in Russian (§8.3).

cultural goods, unique contributions to the cultural context: saints and moral leaders, politicians and military heroes, men of genius in the fields of art and science.¹⁰⁴ True, in a later work Rickert extended the sphere of cultural values / goods by including the goods of 'completed personal life at present'.¹⁰⁵ These include family life, parenthood, etc., the values of an average person, 'quiet islands' in the endless stream of cultural development.¹⁰⁶

By contrast, Bakhtin formulates the imperative of individuality regardless of culture. Yet again we can see the *attitude of cultural production reversed. My only-ness inspires me to enrich not a cultural but the ultimate context, Being-event: a *postupok* guided not by the ultimate sense but solely by a cultural value would be a non-moral, special *postupok* with reduced, special responsibility (§11.2). As Bakhtin says in the above quotation, by my responsible *postupok* I ought to do what 'could be done only by me'. How could I know that? Do I have competitors to consider who might do the same as I intend to do? It seems to be excluded because of the only-ness of my *'place':

In the [one and] only Being I have the [one and] only place which is unique and inaccessible for anybody else. At the moment I find myself at the [one and] only point given to me at which nobody else in the [one and] only Being, with its [one and] only time and space, has yet been. All of the [one and] only Being is arranged around this [one and] only point in the [one and] only, unique way.¹⁰⁷

Yet again, the clue to the fragment comes from Rickert as he defines 'places' [Stellen] in purely relational terms:

Every distinction requires a mediator between those which are different, a medium in different places of which [i.e. of the medium] the Different is found. [...] The places are completely the same as the One and the Other, so that *the medium is nothing but the relation between the One and the Other*.¹⁰⁸

It is not so that the One has a place on which it is found, and which remains

¹⁰⁴ See *Vom System der Werte*, p. 317.

¹⁰⁵ 'Güter des vollenden persönlichen Gegenwartslebens'. *Vom System der Werte*, p. 314.

¹⁰⁶ See *Vom System der Werte*, pp. 314 - 319.

¹⁰⁷ PhP, p. 112.

¹⁰⁸ *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins*, p. 44. My italics.

if the One is 'removed', but the One is that place and no Other could take 'its' place.¹⁰⁹

Using an expression by James, we can say each of us dichotomizes the Cosmos into 'mine' and 'not-mine' in a different place.¹¹⁰ Nobody else can be at my place in the one and only Being-event. Nobody else can do what I can do. What does the imperative of only-ness mean then? *I ought to do for the Other that which the Other cannot do for himself*. My only-ness, as Bakhtin claims, always makes it possible for me to take indispensable action concerning the Other.¹¹¹ It is the expression of my outsideness with regard to the Other. Bakhtin calls this possibility 'architectonical privilege'.¹¹²

Awareness of my architectonical privilege comes with an awareness of my limits. As we saw, the objective correlate of self-experiencing in the category of *I-for-myself* is empty, it cannot be a completed whole. As Bakhtin puts it, 'I do not know the form of given-ness with regard to myself'.¹¹³ My inner conflict between my Being-on-hand and my Ought is unceasing, I live before the face of the ultimate sense in a permanent identity crisis, I cannot free myself from 'the claws' of what is lying ahead: the future, the aim, the sense.¹¹⁴

Wherever I am, I am free and I cannot free myself from the ought; to be actively conscious of myself means to illumine myself with the sense lying ahead of me; apart from that sense there is no 'me' for myself.¹¹⁵

Nor can the Other free himself from the ought: it is I who can do it for him.

By applying the category of *the Other* I justifiably redeem the Other from the ought which confronts me as my categorical imperative.¹¹⁶ I never coincide with

myself; the Other, as experienced by me, does.¹¹⁷ I cannot find myself in the panorama of my consciousness; the Other is present in it as a spatial-temporal unity.¹¹⁸ In the Other, Being and the Ought are not hostile, as they are in me: they are organically connected, the Other organically grows in sense.¹¹⁹ *The Other* is a justifying and completing category, i.e. *aesthetical* category which exempts one from the claws of the absolute future.¹²⁰ I cannot experience myself in the form of the aesthetical without losing myself:

It is impossible to relate the [aesthetic] form to oneself by oneself; whenever we relate it to ourselves, we become the Others for ourselves, we cease to be ourselves, to live from within ourselves: we become *possessed [...]¹²¹

Love: that is indeed the action which complements the Other's being, the action which is absolutely profitable and new, the action that could be done only by me because *the Other cannot love himself*, just as I cannot love myself,¹²² contrary to what Stirner believed:

The case of Narcissus is interesting precisely because it is an exception which characterises and clarifies the rule. I can experience the Other's love for me, I can wish to be loved, I can imagine and anticipate the Other's love, but I cannot love myself as I love the Other, directly. [...] The egoist acts *as if* he loved himself, but in reality he experiences nothing that resembles love or tenderness for himself; the point is precisely that he does not know these feelings at all. Self-preservation is an emotional-volitional attitude which is cold and cruel: it is absolutely devoid of any loving and cherishing elements, any aesthetic elements whatsoever.¹²³

True, if I am looking at the Other with admiration I would never convey my impression by saying 'look at yourself!' In the latter case I misuse my architectonic privilege by perceiving the Other in the category 'I-for-myself', as a judge acting for the ultimate sense.

¹⁰⁹ See *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins*, p. 41.

¹¹⁰ See *Psychology: Briefer Course*, p. 158.

¹¹¹ See *PhP*, p. 113.

¹¹² See *A&H*, pp. 39, 118, 124, 128.

¹¹³ See *A&H*, pp. 108 - 109.

¹¹⁴ See *A&H*, p. 95.

¹¹⁵ *A&H*, p. 105.

¹¹⁶ See *A&H*, p. 106.

¹¹⁷ See *A&H*, p. 114.

¹¹⁸ See *A&H*, p. 97.

¹¹⁹ See *A&H*, pp. 139, 106.

¹²⁰ See *A&H*, p. 109.

¹²¹ *A&H*, p. 174.

¹²² See *PhP*, p. 113.

¹²³ *A&H*, p. 44 - 45.

Why does Bakhtin use the category of the aesthetical when speaking obviously about actual human beings? An aesthetical approach to a living human being, as it were, isolates him from his future, makes that future irrelevant.¹²⁴ It is the *synthesis* of the Other as a completed whole: in space (the Other's body), in time (the Other's soul) and in regard to sense (the Other's life-attitude): the Other himself cannot synthesize any of those wholes. This approach is aesthetic in a very broad sense. What Bakhtin calls 'aesthetical' is not technically artistic activity but, to give one example, my external actions in actual life, by which I assert the value of the Other as a completed whole: a kiss, an embrace, laying on hands in blessing.¹²⁵

It is only the Other that I can embrace [...] It is only the Other's lips which I can touch with mine, it is only on the Other that I can lay my hands, actively raising over him, blessing him all, his body and, in that body, his soul, all the moments of his Being. All that I cannot experience with regard to myself, not just because of physical impossibility but because of the emotional-volitional falsity of any attempt to redirect those acts towards oneself.¹²⁶

Bakhtin mentions especially the forgiveness of, and absolution from, sins. It is only the narrowness of my limits, my inner poverty and need, my helpless lust for life which make possible to receive from the Other forgiveness and absolution as the expression of leniency and mercy.¹²⁷

The duality of the ought is now evident. *My ought with regard to the Other is love*, or kindness. Love creates the Other as the only one, a completed, valuable whole which is the correlate of the aesthetic attitude. That attitude alone frees the Other from his guilt and responsibility and contemplates him with no regard to the ultimate sense.¹²⁸ The ethical subject, by contrast, lacks wholeness in principle: what is properly ethical, the ought, is experienced in the category of *I-for-*

¹²⁴ See A&H, p. 95.

¹²⁵ See A&H, pp. 38 - 39.

¹²⁶ A&H, p. 38.

¹²⁷ See A&H, pp. 110, 118.

¹²⁸ See A&H, p. 154.

myself.¹²⁹ *My ought with regard to myself is my incoincidence with myself*.

A concrete ought is an architectonical ought: one ought to substantiate the only *place one has in the only Being-event; first of all, this ought is determined as the contraposition of 'I' and 'the Other' in the aspect of value.¹³⁰

The architectonics of the world of *postupok* places an abyss between *I-for-myself* and *the-Other-for-me*. My moral imperative is to keep that abyss unbridged.

§14.5. 'I' and 'The Other' as religious categories

The description of the architectonical contraposition is supposed to demonstrate the phenomenological evidence for morality which Bakhtin calls 'Christian'. His phenomenology of *postupok* is supposed to be the first ever philosophical articulation of Christian moral praxis:

It implies not at all that this contraposition [of 'I' and 'the Other'] remains totally unexpressed and unarticulated, indeed, this contraposition is the meaning of all Christian morality, altruistic morality also issues from it; but this principle of morality is still in need of adequate scientific expression [accompanied] by exhaustive fundamental analysis.¹³¹

The implications of Christian morality, in Bakhtin's view, support the architectonics of the world of *postupok*. 'I' and 'the Other' are considered there as different in value: it is I who ought to take on myself the Other's burden.¹³²

Bakhtin not only refutes Stirner, a short-lived star of post-war philosophy, but also confronts Nietzsche, who contemptuously rejected the central Christian symbol of self-sacrifice:

[...] the feelings of devotion, self-sacrifice for one's neighbour, the entire morality of self-renunciation must be taken mercilessly to task and brought to court [...] There is much, too much sugar and sorcery in those feelings of 'for others', of 'not for me' for one not to have to become doubly distrustful here and to ask: 'are they not perhaps - seductions?'¹³³

Bakhtin leaves no doubt about his position: self-renunciation necessarily follows

¹²⁹ See A&H, p. 74.

¹³⁰ PhP, p. 138.

¹³¹ See PhP, p. 138.

¹³² See A&H, p. 36.

¹³³ *Beyond Good and Evil*, 33.

from the architectonics of *postupok*, from 'my' only-ness:

[...] self-renunciation is the ultimately active and complete realization of the only-ness of my place in Being.¹³⁴

The contraposition of 'I' and 'the Other' is a correlation: the more actively I project myself into the absolute future, clearing my field of vision from everything 'mine', the more completely Being-on-hand reveals its passivity, its dire need of my activity, like a helpless, abandoned child, dainty and frail.¹³⁵ Self-renunciation, the fullness of my becoming 'I-for-myself', is correlative to the fullness of the Other's being 'The Other', that is 'The Beloved'. This contraposition has an evident religious, indeed Christian, interpretation:

In Christ we find the uniquely profound synthesis of *ethical solipsism*, infinite rigour in treatment of oneself, the immaculately pure relation to oneself, and the *ethical-aesthetical kindness* towards the Other. [...] For him [Christ] all the people fall into two categories: he, the only one, and all the others, he, the merciful, and those who are shown [his] mercy [...] That is why in all Christ's norms 'I' and 'the Other' are contraposed: for oneself, the absolute sacrifice, for the Other, mercy. But 'I-for-myself' is 'the Other' for God. [...] For me God is what I ought to be for the Other. Givenness, which the Other overcomes and rejects in himself as 'bad', I accept and cherish as the dear flesh of the Other.¹³⁶

God can never be the Other for me: it is I who is the Other for him. *I-for-myself* is nothing but a task, the task of my life, and this spiritual experience is expressed as my *contrition* accompanied by faith and hope. My life is inseparable from faith and hope, it is by faith and hope that I live:

[my] life lives within itself by the hope of, and faith in, its incoincidence with itself, in its lying ahead of itself as sense. In this aspect, from the viewpoint of its Being-on-hand, life is mad because there is no reason at all for faith and hope to be here and now, on hand [...] That is why such faith and hope are prayerful in their character (within life itself there are only the tones of supplication and contrition). Within myself the last word of my life is but that madness of faith and hope [...] ¹³⁷

Accounting for oneself in confession is considered by Bakhtin as the prime

form of verbal self-Objectivation.¹³⁸ A pure *account of oneself and confession proper are its two unattainable limits. Such an account which addresses only myself in absolute solitude is not possible: it has to be balanced with confession, when I direct my account of myself outward. In confession this is potentially endless because it expresses my incoincidence with myself. Hope and faith which are born by that 'rightful madness' are directed beyond the limits of my life:

[...] confidence in God is the immanent constitutive moment of pure self-consciousness and self-expression. [...] The very fact that I come to the consciousness of myself in Being speaks for itself: I am therefore not alone in my self-account, I am reflected in someone's valuations, someone is interested in me, someone requires of me to be good. [...] Within itself, life (and consciousness) is nothing else but faith substantiated; to come to pure self-consciousness is to come to the consciousness of faith (that is of need and hope, of non-complacency and possibility).¹³⁹

Bakhtin finds the ideally balanced examples of accounting for oneself in confession in the Gospels.¹⁴⁰

However, it should be added that confidence in God is the constitutive moment of pure self-consciousness and self-expression. Purity means the *absoluteness* of my self-incoincidence, non-self-sufficiency. Being-on-hand is, by contrast, self-sufficient, it can only obscure God's presence. Being which has already taken place leaves no place for God.¹⁴¹

[...] space for God opens whenever I am *absolutely* incoincident with myself.¹⁴²

This purity of self-consciousness can be lost when I am trying to identify myself with the Other, e.g. look at myself with the others' eyes, or simply cannot differentiate myself from a collective. No intense inner life is possible for me if I am possessed by the Other. I have to struggle with the Other for the liberation of

¹³⁸ See A&H, p. 124.

¹³⁹ A&H, pp. 126 - 127.

¹⁴⁰ The tax collector's prayer as compared to that of the Pharisee (Lk 18.9 - 14), the supplication of the Canaanite woman (Mt 15.21 - 28) and, especially, the prayer of the father of the epileptic child: 'I believe; help my unbelief!' (Mk 9.24). See A&H, p. 127.

¹⁴¹ See A&H, p. 126.

¹⁴² A&H, p. 126. My italics.

¹³⁴ See *PhP*, p. 93.

¹³⁵ See A&H, p. 119.

¹³⁶ A&H, pp. 51 - 52.

¹³⁷ See A&H, p. 112.

my *I-for-myself*, and my self-account in confession provides the means for that.¹⁴³ If I win that struggle, my uncritical acceptance of the common values comes to an end:

The moral *I-for-myself* has neither kith nor kin (a Christian felt that he was without kin, the immediacy of the heavenly fatherhood destroys the authority of the earthly one). [...] On the ground of that value [of my kin] my confession cannot be total and pervading my whole self, on that ground no pure account of oneself in confession can grow; the fulness of confession is known only to people with neither kith nor kin.¹⁴⁴

The pre-requisite and the result of my accounting for myself in confession is the dissolution of my standard identity, the fictitious Other, provided by the collective. After 'he' is exorcised, I can exercise my architectonical privilege, contrapose myself to all the others and find them as Others-for-me. The Stirnerian paradigm (§13.1) is apparent here.

Bakhtin calls Christ's moral attitude 'moral solipsism', the term which in this context is typically associated also with Stirner's philosophy.¹⁴⁵ Bakhtin's whole project can be considered as a Christian alternative to Stirner. Without losing the critical part of Stirner's philosophy, Bakhtin develops a different concept of the Ego which in Stirner remains pregnant with nihilism: social (anarchism) or religious (mysticism), depending on the interpretation.

Bakhtin ingeniously exploits the phenomenological opposition of an Ego versus the Ego's mental stream: it leads him to the discovery of the bipolar world of experience. He describes it by the existential category of only-ness combined with the valuative categories '*I*' and '*the Other*'. In moral terms, the original bifurcation of individual experience is expressed as the bifurcation of the ought into a self-critical attitude of 'moral solipsism' and a caring, aesthetical attitude towards the Other.

The axiological part is borrowed, to a large extent, from Rickert, though reformed radically in Bakhtin's phenomenological context. It is Rickert's

¹⁴³ See *A&H*, p. 133.

¹⁴⁴ *A&H*, p. 156.

¹⁴⁵ See e.g. Askoldov, 1981 <1922>, p. 37.

teleology that undergoes a major change. The ultimate teleological process, Being-event, is guided not by values but by the ultimate sense, absolute future. It is the presence of the ultimate sense in individual experience which alone makes it possible to distinguish the ulterior '*I-for-myself*' from the existing '*the Other-for-me*'.

The two key elements of Bakhtin's philosophy are, therefore, the duality of the individual and the ultimacy of *telos*. The heuristic clues for both can be found in Kierkegaard.¹⁴⁶

In his two very short essays on the individual, Kierkegaard discloses the hidden agenda of his life's work as the theme of the individual, *den Enkelte*.¹⁴⁷ *Den Enkelte* is akin to *der Einzige*.¹⁴⁸ His opposite is '*Mængde*', the multitude which is the 'untruth'.¹⁴⁹ To stop living in anonymity¹⁵⁰ within '*Mængde*' and thereby to become *den Enkelte* is the universal ought.¹⁵¹ To be *den Enkelte* is the prerequisite of being religious.¹⁵² The category of *den Enkelte* is the category of spiritual awakening,¹⁵³ the Christian category which determines the future of Christianity.¹⁵⁴ This category was used only once in history by Socrates against paganism. For the second time it will serve to make 'Christians' into Christians: it is the category of a Christian mission within Christendom.¹⁵⁵

The only hint at the duality pertaining to the category of *den Enkelte* is Kierkegaard's enigmatic remarks about the 'dialectic' of *den Enkelte*, which sets

¹⁴⁶ There is biographical evidence that Bakhtin thoroughly studied Kierkegaard, learning Danish specially for that purpose. See Clark and Holquist, 1984, p. 27.

¹⁴⁷ See *Den Enkelte*, p. 126 <159>.

¹⁴⁸ Kierkegaard's essays were written a few years after the publication of Stirner's book. The remarkable structural affinity between the two thinkers is a well known fact: see a review in Paterson, 1971, pp. 162 - 166.

¹⁴⁹ See *Den Enkelte*, p. 112 <152>.

¹⁵⁰ See *Den Enkelte*, p. 118 <155>.

¹⁵¹ See *Den Enkelte*, pp. 114, 121 <153, 157>.

¹⁵² See *Den Enkelte*, p. 129 <161>.

¹⁵³ See *Den Enkelte*, p. 134 <165>.

¹⁵⁴ See *Den Enkelte*, p. 135 <165>.

¹⁵⁵ See *Den Enkelte*, p. 138 <167>.

the concept in a bidirectional movement, *Dobbeltbevægelse*. By using that term, Kierkegaard refers to his understanding of Hegel, a question too extensive to be discussed here. The duality [Dobbelte] in the concept of *den Enkelte* is, however, clear: in Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works its meaning is 'aesthetical', it is the 'pre-eminent' *den Enkelte*, whereas in his 'edifying discourses' *den Enkelte* means that which everyone is or can be. *Den Enkelte* stands, therefore, for both *the only one* and *everyone*. This duality [Dobbelthed] is precisely intended by the concept.¹⁵⁶

The theme of the ultimate sense, the absolute *telos*, is a topic treated at length by Kierkegaard. He describes the situation of a finite individual who must remain in the finite and relate himself absolutely to the absolute *telos* and relatively to relative ends.¹⁵⁷ The differences with Bakhtin are, however, significant. To take them into account is beyond the scope of this work.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ See *Den Enkelte*, pp. 125 - 126 <159 - 160>.

¹⁵⁷ See e.g. Kierkegaard, 1992, p. 422.

¹⁵⁸ To be sure, there are more Kierkegaardian elements in Bakhtin: expressions, such as *living life*, the extended meaning of *the aesthetical* in comparison to *the ethical*, and many others.

15. IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION: A POST-HISTORY

At the close of that fatal year, 1933, Martin Buber delivered a lecture which was developed into a book and published in Germany in 1936, in Buber's words, 'astonishingly, since it attacks the life-basis of totalitarianism'.¹ The life-basis of totalitarianism is attacked through the comparison of two concepts of the individual: Stirner's *Der Einzige* and Kierkegaard's *Den Enkelte*, which Buber renders as *Der Einzelne*.²

To be sure, Buber does not try to represent Stirner as the ideologist of totalitarianism. He, however, finds the roots of totalitarianism at the personal level as the nihilistic neglect of truth and responsibility. With regard to that contemporary phenomenon, Stirner deserves the credit for its conceptual articulation. This articulation, in its turn, quite contrary to the spirit of Stirner's egoism, was employed as the group credo, so that *Der Einzige* was turned into *Gruppen-Ich*, the group identity, we should say, which acknowledges neither responsibility nor truth.³

¹ Buber, 1947, p. vii.

² 'The original discovery of Stirner's metaphysical kinship to his contemporary, Kierkegaard, was the work of Martin Buber'. Paterson, 1971, p. 164. It seems now that Bakhtin was aware of that 'kinship' many years before.

³ See *The Question*, p. 41 <13>.

The difference between Stirner and Kierkegaard is as profound as the affinity between them. Both begin by opposing the assumption of any group identity. However,

The contrapuntal position of Stirner's *Der Einzige* in relation to Kierkegaard's *Der Einzelne* becomes clearest when the questions of responsibility and truth are raised.⁴

Stirner stands in the beginning of the process which has led to conditioning the truth with psychological complexes, class background and so on. Kierkegaard, by contrast, claims that truth can be lived only by *Der Einzelne*, who 'corresponds' to God.⁵

Buber considers the contemporary situation as the crisis of 'humanness'. It is impossible to be human if 'person' is not acknowledged as the immeasurable value [unermesslicher Wert]⁶ because the person has become collectivized and his prime value is now ascribed to a collective. The truth, correspondingly, has become politicized and thereby relativized, which has led to the paralysis of the human quest for truth. If 'person' and 'truth' have become questionable, then *Der Einzelne* has also become questionable.⁷

Buber finds defects in the Kierkegaardian concept of *Der Einzelne*: it lacks the element of participation, as if the relation with God would demand the abolition of the world. Another *Der Einzelne* is to come, one who will be involved in social life without being dissolved into it:⁸

There is need of a *Der Einzelne* who stands over against all Being which is present to him [...]⁹

Buber's essay is a masterpiece of its kind: the commonplace lamentations of the German mandarins in the 1920s are now skilfully refashioned in the genre of

⁴ *The Question*, p. 44 <18>.

⁵ See *The Question*, pp. 46 - 47 <22>, 48 <24>.

⁶ Quite unexpectedly, Buber begins talking here with Max Scheler's voice (§8.2), which sounds rather dissonant in the Kierkegaardian context. See Scheler, 1973 <1913>, pp. xxiv, 197 - 199, 389 - 390, 482, 503 - 504 <16, 213, 400, 487, 507 - 508>.

⁷ See *The Question*, pp. 79 - 82 <93 - 97>.

⁸ See *The Question*, pp. 64 - 65 <56 - 63>.

⁹ *The Question*, p. 82 <97>.

Biblical lamentations and exhortations. But his sermonizing is hardly a piece of philosophy. How shall one take, for example, a long fragment where Kierkegaard's failure to marry Regina Olsen is inseparably linked to the shortcomings of his concept of the individual?¹⁰ If he had married, it has to be asked, and his philosophy had become more full-blooded, then would the 'crisis of humanness' never have emerged? It is only a mandarin who is able to think like that.

Did Bakhtin, this offspring of German mandarins, do better? At least he did not fail to marry his, presumably, dearly beloved wife at the very time when he was working on the project: he failed to finish the project instead! And indeed, in several respects his project stands in opposition to the mandarin mentality. Mandarins claimed that it was culture which provided moral validity for an individual life. Bakhtin considers culture in the ultimate context, before the face of the absolute future, which liberates a moral individual from the immanent, cultural forces.

The concept of *postupok*, a distant echo of Marxian *praxis*, seems to be a very fortunate replacement for the concept of person, pregnant with metaphysics, with sermons about the 'beautiful soul', or with mysticism after the style of Buber. The phenomenological articulation of only-ness and its duality does not depend on 'faith' or 'morality' and looks very convincing, even if often lacking in precision. It opens the way to a moral philosophy, Christian by origin, which could be effective in both theistic or non-theistic contexts: the absolute future is compatible with a wide range of world-views, as is the aesthetical attitude towards the 'finished' creation.

However, is it not hopelessly obsolete to speak of the absolute future in a world where history has been declared at an end? Or, to speak of incoincidence with oneself when 'identity' is supposed to be the prerequisite of mental health?

In 1919 Max Weber, on his return from America, meant to, and did, shock his audience, by telling them that an American professor used to sell his knowledge

¹⁰ *The Question*, pp. 52 - 63 <34 - 56>.

and competence to the students in the same way as any commodity is sold on the market.¹¹ The decline of the mandarins became apparent in the phenomenon of 'Americanization'.¹²

The Cold War divided Europe into a 'West' open to trans-Atlantic winds, and a wind-proof, anachronistic 'East' which modelled itself on a 19th century empire, but was cemented together with an ideology which was essentially non-imperial and patently European in origin. The mandarins survived, some even flourished in the Soviet empire.¹³ This unstable composite, however, could not last long. Its end meant that mandarins, a living fragment of 19th century European culture, now finally fell into ruin.¹⁴

Have the fears of the German mandarins during the Great War become true? Fritz Ringer demonstrates that the image of the enemy, mainly England, actually represented Germany as it was emerging, whether in its industry, big cities or political assemblies.¹⁵

English society was what German society would soon be, unless the mandarins could prevent it. [...] German academics meant to show that English conceptions of freedom had little to do with the personal and cultural individualism of German tradition. [...] the force of public opinion stifled all genuine individuality, especially in the cultural field, so that a shallow, common ground alone remained. Worst of all, the economic interest groups which had *de facto* control over the political system were also the chief agents of public opinion. Amid the dreary homogeneity of a levelled society, their commercial mentality ruled over the nation's intellectual and spiritual life.¹⁶

¹¹ See *Science as a Vocation*, p. 24 <29>.

¹² See *Science as a Vocation*, p. 5 <5>.

¹³ Bakhtin became one of them. A professor of literature in a provincial town of Saransk, he had to deliver addresses praising Stalin and Lenin. In the last years of his life his mandarin status became apparent: the KGB chief Andropov, at the request of his daughter, who admired her old master, granted him certain favours. See Emerson, 1997, pp. 23 - 25; Clark and Holquist, 1984, pp. 336 - 337.

¹⁴ A comparison of post-Communist Russia with the Weimar Republic was commonplace in the early 1990s. The complaints of former Soviet mandarins echo the corresponding lamentations of their German colleagues in the 1920s. That explains also the conflicts between American and Russian 'Bakhtinologists': see Emerson, 1997, pp. 34, 59, 63, etc.

¹⁵ See Ringer, 1969, p. 187.

¹⁶ Ringer, 1969, pp. 185 - 186.

In a world like that, is there any chance of asking the ultimate questions? Or, indeed, of trying to answer them as Bakhtin did? Was it a pathetic delusion when Husserl hoped for generation upon generation working enthusiastically on the structure of knowledge, adding to it their own modest building-blocks, always being aware that the structure is endless and would never be finished?¹⁷

The next generation would, rather, look at the construction site with a mixture of amazement and fear, like tourists who gaze at the cathedrals and palaces, wondering about the alien energy which brought them into Being.¹⁸ That means a world in ruins: a world in flux...

Bakhtin was already over fifty when, in 1946, he presented his doctoral thesis:¹⁹ a study of Rabelais.²⁰ He goes back to the archaic roots of culture, to the seasonal festivals, when the crowd on the market square, the carnival crowd, celebrated both death and birth in their inseparability. Any death is pregnant with a birth. The chain of deaths and births is never finished and time is all-mighty in bringing change for the better.²¹

In a later version of his book on Dostoevsky, Bakhtin speaks of the catharsis which is achieved through carnival laughter:

nothing conclusive has yet taken place in the world, the last words of the world and about the world have not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still to come and will always be so.²²

Perhaps Husserl was right, after all.

¹⁷ See *PRS*, p. 135 <332>.

¹⁸ See Mandelstam, 1987, p. 62.

¹⁹ See Clark and Holquist, 1984, p. 322.

²⁰ See Bakhtin, 1990 <1965>.

²¹ See Bakhtin, 1990 <1965>, pp. 215, 281 - 282, 406.

²² *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, p. 193 / 166.

APPENDIX 1: THE RUSSIAN AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF FOREIGN AUTHORS (A SELECTION)

RICKERT'S WORKS

	Original published	Russian translation	English translation
<i>Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis</i>	1892	1904	
<i>Kulturwissenschaft und Naturwissenschaft</i>	1899	1911	1962
<i>Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung</i>	1902	1903	1986
<i>Zwei Wege der Erkenntnistheorie</i>	1909	1913	
<i>Vom Begriff der Philosophie</i>	1910	1910	
<i>Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins</i>	1912	1912	
<i>Lebenswerte und Kulturwerte</i>	1912	1912	
<i>Urteil und Urteilen</i>	1912	1913	
<i>Vom System der Werte</i>	1913	1914	
<i>Die Philosophie des Lebens</i>	1920	1921	
<i>Die Methode der Philosophie und das unmittelbare</i>	1924	1925	

SIMMEL'S WORKS

	Original published	Russian translation	English translation
<i>Über soziale Differenzierung</i>	1890	1898	1976
<i>Die Probleme der Geschichtsphilosophie</i>	1892	1898	1977
<i>Philosophie des Geldes</i>	1900	1900 ^a	1900 ^a , 1978
<i>Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung</i>	1908	1909	1959
<i>Der Begriff und die Tragödie der Kultur</i>	1911	1912	1968
<i>Das individuelle Gesetz</i>	1913	1914	
<i>Der Konflikt der modernen Kultur</i>	1918	1923	1968

WILLIAM JAMES' WORKS

	Original published	Russian translation
<i>Psychology: Briefer Course</i>	1892	1896 ^b
<i>The Will to Believe</i>	1897	1904
<i>Human Immortality</i>	1898	1911
<i>Talks to Teachers</i>	1899	1902
<i>The Varieties of Religious Experience</i>	1902	1910
<i>Pragmatism</i>	1907	1910
<i>A Pluralistic Universe</i>	1909	1911

^a Fragments.

^b Fourteen editions; in 1902 a different translation was published.

APPENDIX 2: KEY TO THE PAGINATION OF THE RUSSIAN ORIGINALS AND THE EXISTING ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF BAKHTIN'S TEXTS

In the list that follows, the first number refers to the page of the original text in Russian. The number to the right of the colon represents the corresponding page of the English translation on which the projection of the 'Russian' page begins. For the bibliography of the sources see *Bibliography: Primary Sources*.

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The works of the same author are given in the chronological order of their first publication.

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(The correspondence between the pagination of the Russian originals and their English translations is given in Appendix 2).

A&R, p. zz

zz: 'Iskusstvo i otvetstvennost' [Art and Responsibility]. In M.M. Bakhtin, *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*. Edited by S.G. Bocharov. Notes by S.S. Averintsev and S.G. Bocharov. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1979, pp. 5 - 6. First published in 1919.

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PhP, p. zz

zz: 'K filosofii postupka' [On the Philosophy of *Postupok*].² Edited by S.G. Bocharov. Notes by S.S. Averintsev. In *Akademiya Nauk SSSR. Filosofiya i sociologiya nauki i tekhniki. Ezhegodnik*. [Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Philosophy and Sociology of Science and Technology. Yearbook], 1984/1985, pp. 82 - 138. The text of the fragment which was removed by the Soviet political censorship from p. 96 was published in Russian on page 91, fn 65, of the following English translation:

¹ The new academic edition of the texts (Bakhtin, 2003) was not available to me until recently but neither the new reading of Bakhtin's manuscripts nor the 500 page commentary have had any effect on my project which is essentially a reconstruction.

² The original manuscript is untitled.

English translation:

M.M. Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Translation and Notes by Vadim Liapunov. Edited by Michael Holquist and Vadim Liapunov. Austin (Texas): University of Texas Press, 1993.

A&H, p. zz

zz: 'Avtor i geroj v esteticheskoy deyatelnosti' [Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity]³. Fragment 1. In M.M. Bakhtin, *Estetika slovesnogo tvorchestva*. Edited by S.G. Bocharov. Notes by S.S. Averintsev and S.G. Bocharov. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1979, pp. 7 - 180.

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ANALYTICAL SUBJECT INDEX

Abbreviations:

B - Bakhtin, H - Husserl, R - Rickert.

Numbers are page numbers.

absolute future; see also hostility, task

- the sense which lies ahead of the event of Being is its absolute future (B), 282;

- the absolute future is the presence of infinity within my finite life, the conflict of infinity with its ever finite articulation (B), 342.

account of oneself see self-account

acknowledgement

- act of judgement grasps the transcendent by acknowledging it and lets the product of cognition come into Being (R), 124;

- I-for-myself is the centre from which my *postupok* proceeds and from which I actively assert and acknowledge every value (B), 309.

activity (historical) and intentional acts

- the concept of intentional act excludes any thought of activity (H), 36;

- cognition as activity cannot be just one intentional act but a chain of acts (H), 151;

- intensive mental process (excluding any activity) and *postupok* (a fragment of one's life lived in history) (B), 216.

adumbrations

- the adumbration is a peculiar mode of givenness through continuous perceptual multiplicities: a thing appears constantly as a different Being (H), 89;

- the appearance in adumbrations is interpreted as the appearance of 'transcendent' Object' (H), 149.

alchemy as the opposite to rigorous science

- as alchemy was turned into the strict science of chemistry, so philosophy should become a strict science (H), 32;
- phenomenology is like philosophical chemistry if compared to alchemy (the traditional philosophy) (H), 58;
- world-as-a-whole is a semi-phantaastic concept similar to the philosopher's stone in alchemy, 86.

alibi in Being-event

- the opposite to my active participation in Being-event: my *alibi* means that I do not participate in Being-event, I 'stay outside' of it, *alibi quam* in it (B), 258;
- whenever I disregard living elements of *postupok*: me-the-author and the event of my here-and-now I have *alibi*, *alibi quam*, in Being-event (B), 262.

appearance

- Husserlean phenomenology does not accept that Object-reality exists only for the Subject, as 'mere' appearance (H), 48;
- in the psychical sphere there is no difference between appearance and Being (H), 44;
- in certain world-views Object-reality exists only for the Subject, as 'mere appearance', as it were the surface of the world (R), 108;
- Being-event is the *appearance* of Being and it is taken for the ultimate reality (B), 297.

attitude

- Husserlian phenomenology as the study of the correlation between 'looking at' (the attitude

taken) and 'seeing' (the content seen) (H), 45;

- *transcendental* phenomenological *epoché* which parenthesizes not the 'external' world but the 'natural' world, the correlate of a special attitude (H), 50;
- as the positive aspect of a reduction, that what is to be regarded as the attitude's 'world' or 'nexus' (H), 59;
- transcendental phenomenological attitude of regarding the mental stream which gives onto the 'absolute' Being (H), 93;
- in Rickert the analogous concept is value-perspective (R), 137;
- the moral ought as a certain attitude of consciousness with the structure which can be analysed *phenomenologically* (B), 239;
- *Weltproblem* as the problem of finding the ultimate attitude with its correlate, ultimate Being, 242;
- the correlate of the attitude of ultimate regard is Being-event (B), 244;
- the attitude of ultimate regard is moral responsibility as accounting for all the factors of *postupok* (B), 262;
- theoretism is a morally impoverishing attitude which identifies *postupok* with its cultural product (B), 264;
- the attitude of cultural production and its radical change (B), 307;
- emotional-volitional tone as the ought-to-be attitude of consciousness, morally valid and responsibly active (B), 315;
- in the emotional-volitional attitude it is impossible to live in experience a self-identical object or identical objects (B), 320;

- by disregarding non-moral Being, the emotional-volitional attitude reaches moral Being-event, which is given with assertoric evidence because it is ultimately individual (B), 320;
- the emotional-volitional attitude instead of the attitude of cultural production: to enrich not a cultural but the ultimate context, Being-event (B), 363.

axiological *a priori*

- the axiological *a priori* should be found as the response to the Nietzschean 'revaluation of values', 105;
- A universal axiological *a priori* is impossible as it would always refer to the values which governed its deduction (R), 121;
- the War and the post-War crisis suggested a parallel to Rickert's failure to come to an axiological *a priori*, 186.

beyond

- a self-sufficient thing can be conceived as existing by itself alone, and beyond it nothing else (the mental experiment of annihilation) (H), 87;
- the immanent Being of consciousness is absolute as if nothing else existed (H), 82;
- Being-event is ultimate reality, with excluded (B), 297.

Being-event see *alibi* *epoché*;
ultimate nexus (correlation)

Bildung

- precipitated out of the experience of the world (B), 3;
- its basis: (B), 3;
- Roman law (B), 3;
- Christian (B), 3;

religion, 104;

- expresses the ethos of the mandarin community, 140;
- *Bildung* as the process of the formation of *Gemuth* (Rickert paraphrases Lotze), 137;
- a 'person' as a culture-bearer, the product of *Bildung* (B), 183;
- includes both the process of cultivation and the result of it. Three basic elements: a unique individual as the starting-point of inner growth and self-development; the universality of personal development; the unity of character, inner unity, 184;
- the passage of the soul from incompleteness to completeness (Simmel), 204.

biological substratum see human being

causality and *Weltanschauung*

- causality is entirely excluded from phenomenology, which is an eidetic study of acts of consciousness and not a science of the matters of fact (H), 78;
- an Object-oriented *Weltanschauung* considers each and every process, psychical or physical, as occurring in time and space and linked to other processes by cause-and-effect relationships (R), 108;
- a Subject-oriented *Weltanschauung* either ignores altogether the results of special sciences as inessential, or subordinates them to a will or to a purpose (R), 109.

centre

- an individual who issues valuations is an historical centre; in historical description any object is related to a valuing centre (R), 346;
- the constitutive moment of the

context of my life is its centre, 'me', a historically actual person, all other elements of that context are related to me, the centre (B), 261;

- spirit is a phenomenological concept as it refers to 'me', the centre from which my *postupok* issues (B), 281;

- I-for-myself is the centre from which my *postupok* proceeds and from which I actively assert and acknowledge every value (B), 309.

concrete part versus abstract part

- a self-sufficient part is called a piece [Stück], a concrete part, whereas a part which is not self-sufficient is called an abstract, immanent part (H), 80;

- mental processes related to the pure consciousness constitute a concrete self-sufficient part of the stream of consciousness (H), 93.

consciousness of example

- the intuition of essence, ideation, forms a consciousness of example *versus* intuition of something individual (H), 64;

- consciousness of example as loss of moral responsibility (B), 273;

- consciousness of example as loss of the bipolarity of 'my' world (B), 359.

constitution

- my psyche is a part of the world, but *pure* consciousness is not a part of the world: the world is *constituted* by it (H), 51;

- all transcendencies are constituted by pure consciousness (H), 96.

context see nexus

contingency of individual existence

- everything belonging to the essence of the *individuum* another

individuum can have too (H), 72;

- two instances of a concept ('a leaf') are essentially the same with regard to this concept, even if in reality they are as different as leaves on a tree (R), 133;

- the certainty of knowledge should not depend on the peculiarities of individual worlds of experience (H), 302.

'costume' of cultural behaviour

- 'biologization' as the effect of starvation: man strips himself of the 'costume' of cultural behaviour and remains 'naked'. Life is driven then by animal instincts, not by cultural values (Pitirim Sorokin), 166.

cultural values

- it is cultural values alone that make history as a science possible, and it is historical development alone that brings forth real cultural values (R), 144;

- all values are related to cultural goods, they are essentially cultural values (R), 157;

- the problem of cultural values is prior to the world problem (R), 195;

- a cultural value should enter an event-relation with myself, the centre, and thereby become acknowledged (B), 309.

descriptive psychology, psychological description

- descriptive psychology as initial description of mental phenomena preparing the way for 'genetic psychology' (Brentano), 36;

- first philosophy as *eidetic*, or *descriptive*, psychology (H), 64;

- psychological description as the original term for phenomenology (B), 215.

direct / indirect relations

- to the world, which is lived in experience, everything abstract or general belongs not directly, as 'this man', but only indirectly: as the sense-content side of 'this actual thought' (B), 250;

- in the context of my life, as an active participant in Being-event, I am *directly* related to other participants and only *indirectly* to extra-temporal concepts which can be brought into flowing life solely by a concrete living consciousness (B), 265.

Dorians see Helots of the Dorians

economy and culture

- the analysis of cultural production is the development of Marxian political economy (Simmel), 203;

- the 'fetishism' which Marx assigned to economic commodities represents only a special case of the products of culture (Simmel), 209.

eidetic reduction

- the key element of pure phenomenology (H), 60;

- the affinity between eidetic reduction (H), and concept formation of natural science (R), 132;

- the attitude correlative to Being-event cannot include eidetic reduction, which isolates the mental stream from actual history (B), 251;

- the eidetic reduction as the constitutive moment of the cognitive context (B), 227;

- the residue of eidetic reduction is the one world of the cognizable: what is cognizable by one Ego must be cognizable by any Ego (H), 302;

- eidetic reduction entirely disregards the difference between the individual

worlds of experience and equates 'me' and 'the Other' (B), 354.

elemental forces see immanent (cultural) forces

emotional-volitional (sphere, element, tone); see also attitude, halo

- the difference between disinterested understanding and the reason sensitive to value is crucial for cognition because we long to know what is valuable in and for itself, and not the indifferent (Lotze), 112;

- emotional-volitional element is present in the theoretical Subject (R), 113;

- emotional-volitional tone is the ought-to-be attitude of consciousness, morally valid and responsibly active (B), 315;

- emotional-volitional tone is the function of the object in the oneness of the actual event (B), 318;

- emotional-volitional tone reflects all the individual once-occurrence of the current moment (B), 320.

epistemological Subject, consciousness

- the immediately given world is not the content of *my* consciousness but of the epistemological consciousness pertaining to the epistemological Subject (R), 130;

- cognition is based on some super-individual epistemological Subject acknowledging the value of truth (R), 235;

- by 'consciousness' Bakhtin means an individual, finite, concrete, living consciousness, definitely not epistemological consciousness (B), 297.

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- a self-sufficient thing can be conceived as existing by itself alone, and beyond it nothing else (the mental experiment of annihilation) (H), 87;
- the immanent Being of consciousness is *absolute* as if nothing else existed (H), 92;
- Being-event is taken for the ultimate reality, with any 'beyond' excluded (B), 297.

Being-event see *alibi*; attitude;
ultimate nexus (context)

Bildung

- precipitated out by *Gemüth* from the experience of life (Lotze), 3;
- its basis: Greek learning, the Roman law and the Christian

religion, 104;
- expresses the ethos of the mandarin community, 140;

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centre

- an individual who issues valuations
- is an historical centre; in historical description any object is related to a valuing centre (R), 356;
- the constitutive moment of the

epoché (abstention)

- transcendental phenomenological *epoché* parenthesizes not the 'external' world but the 'natural' world, the correlate of a special attitude (H), 50;
- *epoché* disregards the real transcendent Object of an act of consciousness. Its 'residue' is the intentional object, the *Gegenstand* (H), 59;
- philosophical *epoché*: a neutral position with regard to past philosophy (H), 50;
- the affinity between phenomenological *epoché* (H), and the abstention from direct valuation (R), 356.
- Bakhtin maintains philosophical *epoché* (B), 214.

ethics

- if pure norms of ethical valuation were to fall away, ethics would vanish altogether and there would be no possibility of ethical practice (H), 55;
- moral will should be identified with the will, which is aware of the ought (R), 141;
- the ethical good is what would be recognized as good by a future historian (R), 143;
- ethics could be based only on the presupposition that we live as individuals in the individual (R), 142;
- Husserlian ethics is content-oriented (B), 238.

event

- all that tells us about the events [Geschehen] in certain points of space and time we call history [Geschichte] (R), 134;

- Being-event is a *phenomenological* concept, the correlate of a special attitude (B), 244.

existing reality and the ought-to-be

- the ought-to-be as the ground of the existent reality (Lotze), 7;
- the ought-to-be as values *versus* Being (R), 149;
- the ought-to-be responsibility as the ground for personal wholeness (B), 184.

financial metaphor

- a *postupok*, which brings extra-temporal validity into Being-event, enriches Being-event (B), 252;
- leaving one of the factors of the *postupok* out of account by my irresponsibility would mean a reduction in the profit brought by my *postupok* to the whole of Being (B), 262;
- the individual worlds make the total of Being-event (B), 305;
- Being-on-hand is Being which could be counted up just as cash-on-hand (B), 342.

first philosophy

- pure phenomenology must claim to be 'first' philosophy (H), 99);
- Bakhtin explicitly calls his project 'first' philosophy (B), 199;
- first philosophy could be nothing but phenomenology (B), 215.

Fremde

- the material world stands in contrast to all consciousness as 'something alien' ['*Fremde*'], as the 'otherness' [das '*Anderssein*'] with which consciousness can never become involved (H), 90;
- the alien as a problem for any ego-centred philosophy, 348.

fringe

- the concept of fringe was developed in connection with 'the stream of thought' (James) 289;
- a responsible *postupok* is shifted to the fringe of the only Being-event, between the *used-to-be* and the *yet-to-be* (B), 291;
- emotional-volitional tone, 'the halo' co-given with a sense-content, can be called 'the fringe' of sense-content (B), 319.

'from below' approach

- builds philosophical science *from below*, based on sure foundations and progressing according to the rigorous methods (H), 33;
- abstains from a debate with scepticism, relativism, etc. (H), 48.

Futurism

- as 'barbaric' artistic movement (Berdyaev), 159;
- hostility to the past as a constitutive moment of Futurism, 293;
- a radical break with commonly accepted values, the doctrine practiced by Futurism, 306.

geben-aufgegeben see task

Gemüth

- the individual sphere of feelings and sentiments (Lotze), 2;
- a parallel motif of personal wholeness (B), 306;
- teleological in-dividual as the transcendental transcription of *Gemüth* (R), 183.

gods, the war of gods see polytheism of values

grounding (of norms on theory)

- moral norms are linked with theory through the procedure of grounding,

which applies an universal law to a particular fact (H), 54;

- the normative disciplines should be grounded on the general theory of value (R), 150.

halo see also fringe

- what is given at any particular time is usually surrounded by a halo of undetermined determinability (H), 313;
- when I attempt to make my 'I' the object of a mental process, I find it to be a totally undetermined 'X', 'a halo' of an object: 'I-for-myself' is nothing else but a halo, as the sense-content of the corresponding mental process is empty, 343;
- a task is co-given with the object as a teleological 'halo' accompanying it, 349.

Helots of the Dorians

- after the fall of Mycenaean civilization, the descendants of the enslaved Mycenaeans, Helots, living among the Dorians who took over the country, developed a new culture which contributed to the emergence of the Greek culture, 160;
- as the metaphor for the cultural elite living in the Bolshevik Russia; the vocation of the 'Helots of the Dorians' is to unite the disjointed worlds: culture and life, 167.

historical materialism

- in spite of its methodological errors historical materialism is the only contemporary philosophy which tries to give guidance for an individual *postupok* (B), 200;
- historical materialism provides a context to which such a concrete historical *postupok* can belong (B), 228;

- historical materialism cannot properly distinguish the given from the ever given-as-a-task, a criticism typical for the 'ethical' socialism of the Marburg school (B), 286;
- Bakhtin's whole project was inspired by historical materialism, 341.

hostility between the absolute future and the present

- the absolute future is hostile to the present and past in the same way as the ought is hostile to Being, redemption is hostile to sin (B), 283;
- the phenomenological 'After' is the closest future which is not in conflict with the Now (H), 292;
- the hostility between *yet-to-be* and *used-to-be* is expressed in the moral ought, which implies bringing change to the world of the status quo (B), 319.

human being (biological substratum)

- phenomenology severs any link with the species *Homo Sapiens* (H), 39;
- mental phenomena' are not empirically observed phenomena in the consciousness of a human being (H), 301;
- a concrete, living consciousness is not necessarily correlative to a biological substratum (B), 300.

immanent (cultural) forces, laws

- divorced from life, culture is left to its immanent forces and becomes destructive (B), 182;
- torn away from the cognitive act, its content falls under its own immanent law, so that the act is further progressing, as if by its own will (B), 205;

- the act's sense-content makes claim to its final self-determinedness in a cultural region with its immanent forces (B), 227;
- the difference between developing weapons for reasonable defence, or as a means of aggression, is ignored by the immanent forces of technical progress (B), 229;

- the split of *postupok* into its event and sense-content reflects the separation of a cultural area, with its corresponding immanent law, from the nexus of events (B), 245;
- theoretism: if the author of *postupok* is disregarded, *postupok* loses its moral character and becomes a technical action driven by the immanent forces of cultural development (B), 264;
- irresponsible rationality turns into a destructive elemental force (B), 276;
- if *postupok* actually proceeds under the impact of immanent cultural forces they become 'diabolical' (Weber) 271, or the author of *postupok* is 'possessed' (B), 271.

immanent time

- 39 - pertaining to consciousness, an inner time which 'is not measured by chronometers' (H), 43;
- phenomenological reductions exclude historical or astronomical time (H), 292.

in-itself

- to suggest that 'there is' some reality 'in itself' which remains for ever unperceived by consciousness in principle is 'nonsensical' (H), 48;
- solipsism or the admittance of thing-in-itself, is avoided (H), 51.

individuality, individual, in-dividual

- that what is unique [*einzig*] and different from anything else (R), 134;
- in-dividual is a single form, the way we select and organise empirical reality from our value-perspective (R), 136;
- *einzig* makes the equivalent of the Russian *edinstvennyj*, the only one (B), 197;
- the ought is the category of individuality, of the only-ness of *postupok*, of its historicity (B), 419;
- 'heavy' Being means being a historical in-dividual, once-occurrent, different from anything else and related to a value within my value-perspective (B), 249;
- responsibility of *postupok* unites its universality (the universally valid) and individuality (the actual) (B), 275.

individuality, the imperative of

- the duty of each to develop his own individuality (Lotze), 5;
- the universal moral imperative can be only the imperative of individuality (R), 143;
- my *postupok* ought to be individual as my unique contribution into Being-event (B), 306;
- the imperative of incoincidence with oneself which makes possible an action complementing the Other's Being (B), 362.

intentional essence

- the residue of the eidetic reduction an act of consciousness (H), 70;
- the essence of the act's 'matter' (i.e. the 'what' of its object) combines with the essence of its 'quality' (*how*

- the object is intended by the ego: presented, judged, etc.) (H), 231;
- a mere presentation of an object taken apart from any *postupok* is impossible to live in experience without a co-given task (B), 316.

intentionality, intention

- intentional objects divide the continuous flow of experience into discrete acts 'directed' to those objects (H), 36;
- intention as the relation to a self-same 'something', to the (intentional) object [*Gegenstand*] (H), 65;
- according to intentionality, consciousness indicates something of which it is consciousness (H), 96;
- as the principal theme of phenomenology (H), 216;
- the correlation between the directedness (intention) and the object of the act (H), 219;
- directedness of *postupok* as the equivalent of intentionality (B), 218.

intonation

- the intonation of the spoken word expresses my valuative relation to the object and thereby sets it in motion in the direction of its co-given task (B), 315;
- the difference of intonation is the difference in the emotional-volitional tone which constitutes 'my' world (B), 359.

life and culture

- not only does culture perform no duties for life but, on the contrary, it is life that performs duty for culture (R), 157;
- life stands in service to one's professional vocation (Weber), 189;
- a philosophy which claims that

culture performs no duties for life, but that life should perform duty for culture, reduces life to the waste products of culture (B), 243.

'man in general' *see also* **consciousness of example**

- when man liberates himself from private property, he becomes for the first time a man of history, man in general (Lunacharsky), 264;
- love of 'man in general' appears to be nothing but the celebration of sameness and the denial of any only-ness (Stirner), 329.

mandarins

- a social and cultural elite which owes its status primarily to educational qualifications, rather than to hereditary rights of wealth (Ringer), 7;
- could not tolerate the separation of learning from life (Ringer), 156;
- *Bildung* as the single most important tenet of the mandarin tradition (Ringer), 184.

mechanical universe

- a self-sufficient nexus ruled by laws which are valid for all its members (Lotze), 183;
- the mechanical universe in itself is senseless and value-irrelevant: *an interpretation* is necessary to invest it with sense and values (Lotze), 7;
- those who are left uninvolved in *Bildung* belong to the mechanical universe (Windelband), 165.

mental stream

- the most originary stratum of inner experience (H), 40;
- the event of Being as a parallel to the Husserlian 'mental stream' (B), 297.

moral (ethical) solipsism *see also* **individuality, the imperative of**

- as negative characterization of Stirner's philosophy, 370;
- as found in Christ: infinite rigour in treatment of oneself and kindness towards the Other (B), 368;
- the ought combines a self-critical attitude of 'moral solipsism' and a caring, aesthetical attitude towards the Other (B), 370.

nexus (context) *see also* **ultimate nexus**

- science is an ideal nexus which provides the acts of thinking with ideal validity (H), 224;
- whatever real nexus acts of thought might belong to, that nexus is irrelevant for the ideal validity of science (H), 230;
- any region of factualness is contingent within the context of cognition and remains outside its limits (B), 226;
- context is a unity in the sense that its elements are related to each other but remain unrelated to the context's exterior. To belong to a context means to be related to its elements, to have a *place*, or a *position*, within that context (B), 228.

noema and noesis

- the two 'sides' of any intensive mental process: noesis (subjectively oriented) and noema (objectively oriented) (H), 98;
- noema (e.g. judgement) as the product of the process of noesis (judging) (H), 220;
- there can be *no noetic moment without a noematic moment specifically belonging to it* (H), 232;
- the stuff-stratum of

phenomenological Being is interpreted by constituting the *noema*, the correlate of an intensive process, *noesis* (H), 312.

norms, absolutely valid

- Eidos functions as an absolutely valid norm for fact (H), 69;
- Husserl's project as the quest for the ideal norms of culture 53;
- the mere social acceptedness [Gelten] of the norms is to be substituted by their absolute validity [Gültigkeit] (H), 243.

object of cognition

- the main problem of epistemology: what is the object of cognition and from where does cognition acquire its Objectivity? (R), 111;
- for the transcendental idealism the object of cognition is not 'given' immanently or transcendentally, but given as a task, as the transcendent ought (R), 122;
- the theory of the object of cognition (R), 'ethicizes' epistemology by equating the true with the ought-to-be and the valuable (B), 235;
- the independence (transcendence) of the object of thinking from the actual event, or act, of thinking (R), 223.

Objective culture

- the subjective individual development (subjective culture) and the Objective cultural values are in prime opposition ('the tragedy of culture') (Simmel), 203;
- the opposition of *within-without* (B), finds certain parallels in the conflict between inner subjective life and the outer world of Objective culture, or a conflict between the individual and the social (Simmel),

302;

- the products of my mind tend to become nobody's products, self-sufficient and independent from me (Stirner), the thesis articulated in the concept of the 'tragedy of culture' (Simmel), 335.

only-ness

- only-ness as the ultimateness of Being-event (B), 244;
- only-ness as the category of living in experience the actual world-Being as event (B), 320;
- only-ness might be called a constitutive category (R), with the obvious addition of a phenomenological twist: an object is the object of an act (B), 355.

the ought *see* **ethics; individuality, the imperative of**

participation

- instead of living naively in experience and theoretically exploring what is experienced we put all those positings 'out of action' ['ausser Aktion'], we do not 'participate in them' (H), 94;
- the relation of the Subject to a content of his consciousness includes his emotional-volitional participation (R), 111;
- by my *postupok* I play my part, *Ich mitmache*, in the ongoing event which involves me and which is made different by my participation (B), 257;
- consciousness as an individual, living consciousness which actively participates in Being as in an event (B), 302.

place

- phenomenological reductions 'purify' psychological phenomena

from what confers reality on them and, with that, their place in the real 'world' (H), 62;

- our place in the world should be deduced from what cannot have a place in a world (H), 75;
- our place in the world as the main problem of philosophy (R), 107;
- 'places' [Stellen] can be defined in purely relational terms (R), 363;
- historical materialism tries to give place to a determinate, historically concrete, actual *postupok* (B), 199;
- something is valid in regard to a context if it can enter the context's immanent system of relations, 'to find its place' in that context (B), 228;
- in Being-event I have the one and only place which is unique and inaccessible for anybody else (B), 363.

polytheism of values

- different gods struggle with each other today, disenchanted and divested of the mythical (Weber) 187;
- the question about a world-view is unworthy of a scholar, who should stand apart from any 'polytheism of values' (Weber), 230;
- the paradigm of 'polytheism' is entirely alien to Bakhtin, 270;
- 'polytheism' (Weber) and 'possession' (Stirner), 337.

possession

- 'possession' is a prime moral phenomenon, a metaphor for *self-alienation*: the substitution of an 'identity' for 'myself' (B), 271;
- the loss of self, a specific clue which points to Stirner (B), 334;
- the dominion of the 'inverted world' of 'spooks' (essences, mind, spirit)

over the real world (Stirner), 328;

- the pursuit of any ideal, vocation, task, is merely possessedness: a possessed person ceases to exist here and now and can relate only to the future by trying to make disembodied, fixed ideas tangible (Stirner), 336;
- possession is the state of moral passivity, such as in a collective, when I experience myself in the category of 'the Other' (B), 353;
- love is possible only with regard to a 'genuine' Other, not the Other whom I invite to replace myself ('possession') (B), 361.

postupok

- *Weltproblem* is the problem of 'determination' of a *postupok* in regard to the world whole which is also to be co-determined (B), 196;
- the category of individuality (onlyness) of *postupok*, of its historicity, is the ought (B), 422;
- historical materialism is the only contemporary philosophy which tries to give guidance for an individual *postupok* (B), 200;
- *postupok* faces the cultural region of self-sameness which contrasts with the endless flow of Being-event (B), 204;
- *postupok* is a fragment of one's life lived in history and, therefore, differs from an intensive mental process (act of consciousness) which excludes any activity (B), 216;
- in case of *postupok* the equivalent of intentionality is directedness (B), 218;
- historical materialism provides a context to which a concrete historical *postupok* can belong (B), 228;
- to find an ultimate nexus where any

individual *postupok* would belong is to find a solution of *Weltproblem* (B), 241;

- the split of *postupok* into its event and sense-content reflects the separation a cultural area, with its corresponding immanent law, from the nexus of events (B), 245;
- a *postupok*, which brings extra-temporal validity into Being-event, enriches Being-event (B), 252;
- theoretical and aesthetical object-worlds are brought into Being-event by a 'responsible' *postupok* and become the moments of that event (B), 255;
- by my *postupok* I play my part, *Ich mitemache*, in the ongoing event which involves me and which is made different by my participation (B), 257;
- my participation in Being-event provides the 'ontological roots' of my *postupok*, versus 'rootless' Being apart from Being-event (B), 259;
- whenever I disregard living elements of *postupok*: me-the-author and the event of my here-and-now, I have *alibi*, *alibi quam*, in Being-event (B), 262;
- it is moral responsibility which makes my *postupok* valid with regard to the ultimate context (B), 262;
- the responsibility of *postupok* knows a single context (Being-event) where theoretical validity, historical factuality and emotional-volitional tone appear as the moments of a single decision (B), 262;
- leaving one of the factors of the *postupok* out of account by my irresponsibility would mean a reduction in the profit brought by my *postupok* to the whole of Being (B),

262;

- the attitude of theoretism disregards the author of *postupok* so that *postupok* loses its moral character and becomes a technical action driven by the immanent forces of cultural development (B), 264;
- the paradigm of theoretism is the substitution of the sense-content for my act-*postupok* in its entirety (B), 265;
- the abyss between the sense-content and the process of *postupok* remains unbridgeable because all contemporary philosophy is infected with theoretism (B), 267;
- if *postupok* actually proceeds under the impact of immanent cultural forces they become 'diabolical' (Weber), or the author of *postupok* is 'possessed' (B), 271;
- a responsible *postupok* sets its synthetic *pravda* as a task for itself and that *pravda* unites the sense-content and the historical event of *postupok* (B), 275;
- responsibility of *postupok* unites its universality (the universally valid) and individuality (the actual) (B), 275;
- sense-content is the content of the ultimate sense in an individual *postupok* (B), 281;
- a technical action 'makes no profit' so that loss of responsibility is a 'financial' loss of Being and loss of life: a 'profitless' *postupok* is not 'alive', it can live only by its absolute novelty (B), 287;
- a responsible *postupok* is shifted to the fringe of the only Being-event, between the *used-to-be* and the *yet-to-be* (B), 291;
- an attempt to describe the world of the only life-*postupok* from within

postupok on the basis of its [postupok's] non-alibi in Being would have been a self-account in confession (B), 304;

- my *postupok* ought to be individual as my unique contribution into Being-event (B), 306;
- the centre from which my *postupok* proceeds and from which I actively assert and acknowledge every value is *I-for-myself* (B), 309;
- the emotional-volitional tone is the expression of *pravda*, which relates the whole world of my *postupok* to the ultimate sense, absolute future (B), 315;
- a mere presentation of an object taken apart from any *postupok* is impossible to live in experience without a co-given task (B), 316;
- the process of *postupok* implies the unceasing revaluation of cultural conflict of infinity with its ever finite articulation (B), 319.

pravda (justness)

- a responsible *postupok* sets its synthetic *pravda* as a task for itself and that *pravda* unites the sense-content and the historical event of *postupok* (B), 275;
- *pravda* arising from Being-event is the imperative urging me to reach out towards the ultimate fringes of Being (B), 291;
- the emotional-volitional tone is the expression of *pravda* which relates the whole world of my *postupok* to the ultimate sense, absolute future (B), 315.

'predestination'

- the essence of an abstract moment which can never be conceived apart from a context 'predestines' it to partial Being (H), 81;

- in the stream of consciousness some contents are predestined to be self-sufficient, while others are not (H), 87.

pre-theory as first philosophy

- pre-theoretical philosophy as descriptive phenomenology: free from any presuppositions, self-referential (H), 39;
- its only basis is inner experience, truths not deduced but self-evident, grasped immediately by intuition (H), 37;
- any theory whatever is itself in need of grounding through the pre-theoretical description of the mental phenomena, phenomenology (H), 58;
- phenomenology, which claims to be pre-theoretical, is unable to articulate the prime phenomenon of the moral ought (B), 239;
- eidetic regard is a theoretical generalization which should have no place in research claiming to be pre-theoretical (B), 354.

principle of all principles

- every originary presentive intuition is a legitimizing source of cognition (H), 41;
- eidetic reduction logically precedes the principle of all principles (H), 62;
- the source of all cognition is the pre-conceptual intuition which presents its objects with ultimate evidence (B), 250.

Protagoras, Protagorean maxim (thesis)

- 'man is the measure of all things' as the expression of anthropologism (H), 29;
- the refutation of the Protagorean thesis as the main task of rigorous

philosophy (H), 99;

- return from Plato to Protagoras as the epitome of pragmatism *versus* the transcendental philosophy, 118.

psychological reduction

- regarding the *phenomenon* of 'reality' instead of 'reality' (H), 44;
- its residue is the flow of mental phenomena, while 'outer reality' (physical phenomena) is disregarded (H), 59.

purity of the phenomenological attitude

- the consistency or absurdity of the investigations depends entirely on the purity of the phenomenological attitude (H), 46;
- eidetic reduction which disregards the difference between individual worlds of experience 'blurs' the purity of the phenomenological method, which should describe mental phenomena 'as they give themselves' (B), 354.

real

- belonging to the 'outer' realm of things in space and time as opposite to *reell*, belonging to immanent time (H), 43;
- 'mundane', that which can become *manifested* in consciousness but which is not *inherent* in consciousness or, the transcendent *versus* the transcendental (H), 63;
- the difference between direct and indirect moments of the world as lived in experiencing reflect the opposition of *real* and *reell*: direct moments are themselves individual events occurring in actual, historical time; an abstract, indirect, moment cannot 'occur' other than by becoming the sense-content of an

actually occurring act which is directed to it (B), 250.

reductions

- a reduction is a particular way of regarding and disregarding mental phenomena (H), 59;
- 'natural scientific' conceptualization (R), is a reduction (H), 132;
- the core of Husserlian phenomenological description consists of reductions, 296.

regions, ontological

- phenomenology is supposed to allot all sciences the regions of their Objects (H), 49;
- Husserl's ontology provides the demarcation of the provinces of individual Being (H), 67.

responsibility

- the demand of personal wholeness is based on personal responsibility (B), 178;
- theoretical and aesthetical object-worlds are brought into Being-event by a 'responsible' *postupok* and become the moments of that event (B), 255;
- moral responsibility makes my *postupok* valid with regard to the ultimate context (B), 262.

revaluation

- a revaluation of 'Christian' values as the main condition for the genesis of the superhuman (Nietzsche), 103;
- a revaluation of values as the leitmotif of Futurism, 293;
- the process of *postupok* implies the unceasing revaluation of cultural values within the ongoing event of Being (B), 319.

roots (of a nexus)

- the ultimate attitude (first

philosophy) is supposed to provide some *ultimate* nexus in which all the other nexuses can be 'rooted' (H), 60;

- the realm of transcendental consciousness ('absolute' Being) is the primal category of all Being (the primal region), in which all other regions of Being are rooted (H), 99;
- any nexus which contemporary philosophy determines for integrating the process of *postupok* remains itself rooted neither in any oneness nor in only-ness (B), 243;
- my participation in Being-event provides the 'ontological roots' of my *postupok*, versus 'rootless' Being apart from Being-event (B), 259.

scepticism, epistemological

- the influence of epistemology on philosophy is paralysing and leads to scepticism; a 'dogmatic position' with regard to epistemology (H), 49;
- the real Object's claim to transcendence over cognition is a metaphysical problem (H), 149;
- the independence of the phenomenological analysis from the dilemma of solipsism / realism (H), 298.

self-account

- an attempt to describe the world of the only life-*postupok* from within *postupok* on the basis of its [*postupok*'s] non-alibi in Being would have been a self-account in confession (B), 304;
- all the moments of such a self-account are related to the absolute sense-future: that is why an individual self-account can be only a confession (B), 346;
- the prime form of verbal self-Objectivation (B), 369.

self-sameness

- the self-sameness of an *eidos* should not be set in opposition to the flow of the stream of consciousness, which is never self-same (H), 71;
- any intensive mental process relates the fluidity of psychological data to a self-same to the intentional object (H), 65;
- consciousness continuously re-constitutes the unity of reference to 'the same' Object (H), 97;
- *postupok* faces the cultural region of self-sameness, which contrasts with the endless flow of Being-event (B), 204;
- Being-event is not equal to itself (B), 254.

sense-content

- sense is given as something non-existent but valid (R), 148;
- an object is posited, or interpreted in a certain sense, or 'constituted as' sense (H), 220;
- the paradigm of theoretism is the substitution of the sense-content for my act-*postupok* in its entirety (B), 265;
- sense-content is the content of the ultimate sense in an individual *postupok* (B), 281;
- sense is the full noematic correlate which consists of the noematic core accompanied by other 'characterizations' (H); the noematic core is also called content and corresponds to the Bakhtinian sense-content, 312.

sense-future see absolute future

separability (of the theoretical content from the ought)

- a theoretical content separable from the notion of normativity of the

'shall' or 'should' (H), 56;

- a moral norm differs from a valid theoretical thesis only in its grammatical mood: imperative versus predicative (H), 238;
- the ought remains a foreign, unarticulated element in the Husserlian project (B), 234;
- the abyss between the sense-content and the process of *postupok* remains unbridgeable because all contemporary philosophy is infected with *theoretism* (B), 267.

spirit

- the cluster of the directednesses of one's life, of the acts which proceed from oneself (without disregarding one's 'I') (B), 281;
- Stirner sneers at the one who rushes 'to catch the spirit', thus 'chasing after himself' without ever attaining his own self, 346.

stuff (formless) and structure (form)

- relating 'stuff' to a structure as the paradigm of science of the period, 34;
- Stuff-Data as the stuff for sense-bestowing, which forms them into intensive mental processes, consciousness *of* (H), 96.

task: given as a task versus given (geben-aufgegeben)

- the object of cognition is not 'given' but given as a task (R), 122;
- *pravda* (justness) is given as a task (B), 275;
- the ultimate sense of Being-event is never given as an articulated something but remains always given as a task (B), 286;
- the world-event is not the world of given-ness only: an object is always

given together with a task associated with it: something ought to be done, something is desired (B), 314;

- 'I-for-myself is never self-identical and given solely as a task (B), 344;
- givenness, which the Other overcomes and rejects in himself as 'bad', I accept and cherish (B), 368.

technical

- *technical* as the opposite of *moral* (B), 234;
- phenomenological attitude is perfectly legitimate as a technical device; as the integral moral attitude of life it is the opposite to the attitude of responsibility (B), 262;
- a technical action 'makes no profit' so that loss of responsibility is a 'financial' loss of Being and loss of life: a 'profitless' *postupok* is not 'alive', it can live only by its absolute novelty (B), 287.

This-Here (a concrete datum)

- the data of sensation are related to the object, a some-thing at this particular place and time, a This-Here given in immediate intuition (H), 63;
- the category of givenness is correlated to the existential judgement 'this is' [*dies ist*] and posits a particular datum (R), 124;
- reality cannot be articulated conceptually: the only judgement possible would be '*dies ist*', This-Here-Now (R), 129.

'tragedy of culture' see Objective culture

truth and pragmatism

- 'truth is made, just as wealth' (James), 31;
- seeking the truth is driven by a

practical interest (James), 119;

- the incarnation of a theoretical truth does not mean compromising its validity-in-itself (B), 252.

ultimate nexus (context)

- phenomenology as first philosophy is supposed to provide some ultimate nexus in which all the other nexuses can be 'rooted' (H), 60;

- culture provides the ultimate nexus for the world's history because it embodies *all* the values which make reality meaningful for everybody (R), 144;

- culture, in its transcendental transcription, is considered as the ultimate context, providing moral validity (R), 307;

- to find an ultimate nexus where any individual *postupok* would belong is to find a solution of the *Weltproblem* (B), 241;

- the responsibility of *postupok* knows a single context (Being-event) where theoretical validity, historical factuality and emotional-volitional tone appear as the moments of a single decision (B), 262.

ultimate questions (problems)

- the questions philosophy is trying to answer are ultimate: philosophy should reach what is the most important for all of us (R), 106;

- Bakhtin returned to the theme of ultimate problems in his 1929 book on Dostoevsky, 198;

- scholars should not try to solve the ultimate problems of life (Weber), 186;

- the ultimate questions could be answered only on the basis of personal convictions and beliefs (Weber), 242;

- culture is the nexus which provides

the Ego with the interpretation of the world: this is how the ultimate questions are answered (R), 241.

ultimate sense *see* **absolute future; hostility; task**

valid culture (art, law, philosophy and religion)

- philosophy should provide the cultural ideal of valid [gültig] art, law, philosophy and religion (H), 33;

- philosophy as a historical phenomenon is to be opposed by the valid philosophy (H), 32;

- the mere social acceptedness [Gelten] of the norms is to be substituted by their absolute validity [Gültigkeit] (H), 232;

- the ideal norms which would make culture valid can be discovered in the realm of absolute Being (H), 99.

validity versus existence

- truth is beyond temporal existence (H), 30;

- the individual existence does not ought to be, whereas ideal essences are extratemporal (H), 132;

- the validity of truth-in-itself regardless of the existing world (Lotze), 223;

- the validity a theoretical proposition retains its absolute independence (B), 225;

- events which occur are separate from ideas that are valid (Lotze): mutual self-sufficiency of those two nexuses (Windelband), 245;

- validity can be expressed in relational terms: something is valid in regard to a context if it can be put into that context (B), 228;

- moral responsibility makes my *postupok* valid with regard to the

ultimate context (B), 262.

value-perspective, value-context

- the primary conception of reality: the perspective on the basis of which the essential and inessential aspects of real existence are distinguished (R), 136;

- in the value-context of my life an object is opposite me as the object of my life's cognitive-ethical and practical directedness (B), 219;

- 'heavy' Being is lived in experience within my value-perspective (B), 249;

- no ultimate nexus is possible unless it be an individual value-perspective (Weber), 242.

visage

- a determined object, gets its determinedness, its visage, only by our relation to it (B), 219;

- in the literary tradition of symbolism *visage* [lik] stood for the epiphany of *face* [litso]: the opposition between the already articulated and the as yet unarticulated (B), 288;

- any object becomes the only one in correlation to me, the only centre of my world (B), 349.

Weltproblem, the world problem

- the world problem: the relationship between the Ego and the world (R), 107)

- Husserl understands *Weltproblem* as the categorial structuring of 'all that is' (H), 68;

- a solution to the world problem is a particular *Weltanschauung*, a 'concept of the world' (R), 107;

- Ego and the world would be reunited by the set of absolute values, which belong neither to the Ego nor to the world (R), 105;

- as the problem of 'determination' of a *postupok* in regard to the world whole which is also to be co-determined (B), 196;

- to find an ultimate nexus where any individual *postupok* would belong is to find a solution of *Weltproblem* (B), 241.

Wertbegriffe / Seinsbegriffe (valuative and existential concepts)

- a valuative concept always has a counterpart with the opposite meaning, whereas an existential one never has a negative counterpart (R), 112;

- 'I' and 'the Other' as valuative categories (B), 360.

Wirklichkeitswissenschaft, the science of reality

- 'history' as a science of the individual which ought to be the genuine science of reality by contrast to natural science, which disregards the individual reality (R), 134;

- Bakhtin describes phenomenological reality 'in view of the particular' by the category of only-ness (B), 355.

within-without

- entirely within the limits of a closed context; its 'beyond' is disregarded (B), 298;

- the 'outside' of an individual life is society with its culture (Simmel), 299;

- Stirner describes the situation 'from within', whereas Marx undertakes his analysis 'from without', 328.

world problem, world concept *see* *Weltproblem*

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