

Applied Social Sciences

Applied Social Sciences:
Philosophy and Theology

Edited by

Georgeta Rață, Patricia-Luciana Runcan
and Michele Marsonet

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P U B L I S H I N G

Applied Social Sciences: Philosophy and Theology,
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FOREWORD

The book *Applied Social Sciences: Philosophy and Theology* provides readers with an important set of essays related to the two aforementioned fields of study. As for philosophy, many topics are carefully taken into account, and I limit myself to mentioning only some of them. Aesthetics plays a key role in contemporary philosophy and several authors examine its various aspects such as the question of identification of works of art, the concept of “social aesthetics,” the social therapeutic function that art can have, and the relationships among hermeneutics, aesthetics and communication sciences. Other chapters deal with ethical issues like, for example, the role of human values in applied ethics and moral determinations in public life. The meaning and role of postmodernism in philosophy and society is examined at length in various contributions to the book, and the same is true for phenomenology at large. Even the theoretical seduction and practical failure of Marxism are addressed, while anthropological issues are studied with reference to truth and other key philosophical concepts. John Searle’s theory of intentionality is seen as a factor for creating social institutions, and the true meaning of “globalization” is investigated in another article. Many chapters deal directly with theological and religious topics. For instance, the alleged “illusion” of religion versus its persistency is analyzed, along with the current relations between church and civil government in Romania, the presence of different forms of Christianity in the Romanian nation, the dialogue between social theology and anthropological research, the antinomic nature of the church. All chapters included in the book are original and open new perspectives on the many issues addressed by the authors. Even the philosophical styles are different, covering hermeneutics, analytic philosophy, historical approach, postmodernism, communication theory, and linguistic approach. Some chapters are theoretical, and others have a more empirical or historical flavour. There is, however, an underlying unity because they all purport to provide new ideas to professionals involved in the socio-humanistic field. This volume is addressed not only to specialists, but it is accessible to the wider public interested in an interdisciplinary approach.

Michele MARSONET

CHAPTER ONE

PHILOSOPHY

SEDUCTION: STRATEGY AND CONCEPT VIA POSTMODERNITY

MIHAELA-MERAL AHMED

Introduction

Seduction represents not only a postmodern discursive strategy, but also the ultimate discursive strategy. Baudrillard calls it the “fatal strategy.” Seduction represents one of the major themes of postmodern culture because it transforms the modern theoretical pattern in which the subject exerts its dominance on the object through knowledge. In the case of seduction, the object imposes its dominance over the subject at the first level, where the object is annihilated because of its destructive inner mechanism. Seduction is primarily opposed to interpretation, these two concepts illustrating the antagonistic conflict between the postmodern and the modern. The interpretation may lead, in its most extreme form, to transparency and even to obscenity.

Postmodernity is Interdisciplinary

This chapter presents an interdisciplinary analysis specific to various research fields: linguistics, rhetoric, aesthetics, postmodern philosophy, and communication sciences, as we believe that postmodernity is interdisciplinary. This research relies on postmodern texts, especially the works of Jean Baudrillard. It is a postmodern theme analyzed from a postmodern point of view.

Discussions on Seduction: A Postmodern Approach

Seduction is the opposite of manipulation. Manipulation requires the intention to conquer, to change, to estrange itself, while seduction does not take these elements into consideration. Seduction is innocent. According to the pragmatic theory of language, through repetition everything

becomes a concept due to its presence in all contexts. Thus, the more we analyse seductiveness, the more it seems like dislike because it is gaining significance, and postmodern thinking appreciates deficiency of meaning. The frequency of emergence of a term transforms it into a concept, through the same mechanism that transforms simple people into celebrities, or simple facts into events. Postmodern times are an era of constructed celebrities and fabricated events. We no longer simulate events, we create them. The work of art is not the only human creation—we create everything, and everything can be a work of art. All boundaries have been dissolved. We are in the POSTmodern age (Harvey 1990).

Seduction: A Concept?

Seduction implies nonsense, and nonsense seduces us. Logic is never seductive—seduction can occur in things that escape the logical order of all occurrences. We are seduced by the “improbable” that is close to the “impossible.” The rhetorical strategy of seduction does not use evidence; it is not what we usually call a discourse, but quite the opposite. We are fascinated by signs without sense. This kind of sign has the potential to absorb people, to drive people from their path: “The attraction of the void lies at the basis of seduction ... seduction begins in secrecy” ((Baudrillard 1979, 77–78). Information leads to an exacerbation of transparency that Baudrillard characterizes as obscene. Clarity and transparency do not lead to knowledge but to the absolute reverse, a deconstructed universe. The secret is the solution to the eternal proliferation of information. The limitation of the enigmatic role of language leads to tragic consequences for the entire society. Transparency means the cessation of this function. Baudrillard’s well-known figures of transpolitics—the obese, the hostage, and the obscene—can be applied in this game of transparency and secrecy. The obese involves transparency, and is linked to theory as information.

Seduction vs. Obscene

There are two kinds of obscene: surface obscene and deep obscene. Surface obscene may occur at the image level, and image can be obscene. Image does not limit itself to being obscene only when it is used to manipulate. In this case, an image is not seductive, but quite the opposite—it is the cultural pattern of the postmodern age, and it is seductive. We cannot explain the means by which an image can alienate people from themselves. Image has its secrets, by which it seduces us. Baudrillard’s obscene is the figure that states for dissolution of the secret.

Loss of distance is obscene, and also leads to transparency. When there are no more secrets in the world, everything we encounter is obscene, and so essence of science is always obscene, because discovery and research involve revealing secrets. The idea that the more we explore, the more we end up knowing everything leads to destruction. Therefore, we need to keep this vital secret of human thinking. Things cannot become fully transparent.

Seduction: A Strategy?

Information can be an extreme phenomenon because it can reach the point where an overabundance leads to full transparency of all things. The insistence on an over-accomplishment of an aim leads to an opposed phenomenon (Baudrillard 2008). This is what made the rise of postmodernism possible, because it marks the nuanced distinction between postmodernism and postmodernity. Postmodern and postmodernity are both situated in the different theoretical approach of postmodernism. Postmodernism is an extreme phenomenon. Technology is seen by Baudrillard as the monstrous result of the over estimation of information. Seduction is a mechanism that reverses the modern hierarchy between subject and object—in this phase, the object dominates the subject, which is surface seduction; in deep seduction, the seducer is seduced themselves because the mechanism of seduction is destructive.

Seduction vs. Theory and Manipulation

To the assumption of command of reality (science), Baudrillard opposes the assumption of power of illusion (image) (2008). Art is not the ultimate hypothesis of mastery of illusion because illusion can be understood as a state located at the second level of the simulacrum (a simulacrum cannot pretend that it is an image because it deliberately imitates reality in order to be confused with it). Images procure pure pleasure that does not rely on moral, social or even aesthetic judgments. Their strength lies in the fact that images are immoral. Baudrillard's idea is surprising because, in general, their moral and social dimension fascinate us less than their aesthetic dimension. Images have an objective existence but the fact that all images do not draw the attention has to do with subjectivity. The power of images to fascinate and ultimately seduce is not due to their meaning and representation but to the fact that meaning and representation tend to disappear in them. Images are non-representational, and they lack substance. Images not only have meaning, but they also produce and

absorb it. Meaning cancels the fatal strategies, even dissolving the reality principle. Sontag (2001) shares the same views with Baudrillard concerning the critique of transparency. The main limit of theory is transparency. It raises the question of how far we can proceed with the interpretation of signs, by which means of interpretation we obtain too much information. We cannot use the information because it is too extended. The concepts are no longer distinguishable. The more information we receive from various disciplines about something, the more chances there are that the object of research will be dissolved as a concept. Therefore, transparency is the major risk of Baudrillard's obese. Information in postmodern culture leads to transparency. According to Baudrillard, manipulation requires intention, while seduction is random and innocent. Manipulation represents the achievement of a goal while seduction is not even self-conscious because seduction is the strategy of the object and manipulation is the strategy of the subject. The only problem is that any strategy requires intention.

Conclusion: Postmodern Culture, the Limits of Seduction

Although seduction is one of the major acquisitions of postmodernity, we may wonder to what extent recognizing its academic strength does more than driving it away from postmodernity, turning it into a so-called strong and modern concept. The same issue occurs when we consider seduction as a postmodern mechanism, because any mechanism implies a construct, involves functionality, not just pure randomness.

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ON THE LOGICAL FORM OF INSTITUTIONAL CREATION FROM JOHN SEARLE'S PERSPECTIVE

IOAN BIRIŞ

Introduction

This study relies on John Searle's theory about the role of collective intentionality in the creation of social institutions. This theory is now seen as the most elaborated (Varzi 2010) conception about the explanation of institutional reality. This approach is one of applied logic. We are starting from the following fundamental ideas presented by John Searle:

- The logical form of institutional creation is the form of performative declarations
- The constitutive rule of social institutions has the form "X counts as Y in context C," or simply "X counts as Y in C."

What is a one hundred euro banknote? It is about money, the institution of money, a piece of paper with special signs as a result of a collective agreement (of a collective intentionality) through which one has agreed that the respective piece of paper is worth of one hundred euros in the present economic context. How does this piece of natural paper gain the status of social reality? Through the already-stated collective agreement, the decision that it should allow the person who possesses it to obtain, in return, different goods and services.

In a condensed way, Searle's theory tells us that the social institutions are the result of the application of a constitutive rule which can be expressed by the formula:

X counts as Y in context C

A further explanation is that the intended aim and intentionality can only have three situations: they can be aligned in the direction “mind-world,” the direction “world-mind” and the null case, without directioning.

Methods of Partitive Logic

Given that Searle is concerned primarily with the ontology of social institutions rather than the logical aspects, we aim to establish the kind of applied logic suitable for Searle’s theory. To achieve this goal, we consider two aspects:

- The “social objects” are referentially opaque, which means to use an intensional logic that is adequate for the theorizing of the constructions which express propositional attitudes and intentions.
- The collective intentionality expresses a partitive relationship.

In his recent book, *Making the Social World*, Searle (2010, 19) announces that he plans to make a general theory of the social reality construction. In this theory, one must notice the centrality of Status Function Declarations. Thus, the formula up to now, *X counts as Y in context C*, must be seen only as one form of the declaration of the function of status, besides other forms of this type. The performance of a function assumes the existence of a collective recognition of the status which the persons or objects have. The status functions can be called deontic powers and these powers represent in effect the glue of society, of the entire civilization. (Searle 2010, 9). The deontic powers are created by the collective intentionality.

Intentionality may know different directions of access, from the mind to the world (↓), or from the world to the mind (↑). One must distinguish between two types of intention:

- The intentions that precede the performing of an action, which are prior to the action (“prior intention”).
- The intentions-in-action that is those which are parts of the action itself (“intention-in-action”).

What are the prerequisites for intentionality to be collective? For example, someone, in their quality as a member of a religious community, may think something only as “part” of a collective faith, or someone who is politically engaged may wish something as “part” of a collective wish. Searle is especially interested in cooperative collective intentionality.

One must take into consideration Searle's proposal to distinguish between intentionality and intentionality, the assignment of functions (the essential characteristic of intentionality) and the causal ascription being an intensional process *par excellence*. For Searle, intentionality is the property of sentences and of other representations that do not pass the extensionality test, that is they have "a referential opacity" and do not fulfil the substitution demand, while intentionality is a property of the mind, an orientation towards the objects and states of things in reality. In the assignment process of the functions, symbolization is essential. This symbolization function is achieved by the formula *X counts as Y in context C*.

For Searle (2000, 200), the formula *X counts as Y in context C* serves as a useful mnemotechnic means to remember the idea that institutional facts exist only because people are prepared to consider or treat things as having a certain statute, and relate a function to this statute which they cannot exert only on the basis of the physical structure of objects. Thus, the formula is nothing but a simple summary of a complex thought.

One could further ask how one can logically and methodologically imagine the passing—by assumed obligation—from individual to collective? Searle does not admit the summation method of the conjunction, and he is absolutely right to do this. We are therefore left with the partitive relation direction. This option is repeatedly confessed by Searle, since he constantly turns our attention to the fact that, in a collective intentionality, a personal ego does not operate by itself, and its action is not simply laid near another, is not totalled, since each individual action is part of the collective (this is what some of his critics have not understood). In this relation, an essential spot is taken by the status functions. This presents two specific features:

- They demand a collective intentionality, not only for their creation but also so they can continue their existence after being created.
- A person or another entity has these types of functions not only in virtue of its physical structure, but also in virtue of the collective enforcement and the recognition of a status.

Of all the speech acts, only declarations have a double direction of access. When I state "this is my house," I represent my right of property over this house (the access direction being word-to-world), and when, in the same statement, I wait for other persons to accept my representation this means that I created the right only because there is a collective acceptance (the access direction being now world-to-word), having thus a simultaneous

double direction (\Downarrow). That is why, in Searle's conception, the logical form of the creation of the institutional reality is that of the performative statements, of statements with status functions, and the utterances about institutional facts are not always extensional. That is why, logically speaking, these facts do not pass the test of substitution (Leibniz's law), being referentially opaque, in Quine's terms. In other words, the part of the formula proposed by Searle, "... counts that ...," will create an intensional context, not extensional. In conclusion, the logical structure of the creation of all institutional realities is the same with the structure of the performative acts, respectively a partitive structure.

Results

One should ask the following question: "What kind of partitive logic is right for Searle's theory?" Our hypothesis is that for Searle's conception, mereology or hology is not appropriate, but a form of partitive logic that can be called holomery. To determine this, the present study involves a nuanced analysis of how the logical principle of identity operates in Searle's theory.

One should have in the centre of attention the following ideas:

- In the formula X counts as Y in context C , the expression "... counts as ..." may be understood as an equivalence, as a symbolic identity.
- The symbolic identity between X and Y is produced by the double access of the declarations (\Downarrow).
- Under the logical aspect, it remains to be established which is the form of identity in these situations.
- The partitive relation which expresses the collective intentionality is a symbolic-value, which implies a hermeneutical logic.

Let us take, for example, "this is my home." This is a declaration about a physical object (this house), an object which represents my property (the institution of property). That is, the declaration has the form: "this object (house) X counts as my property Y , in this context C ." The institution of property is expressed and symbolically equated through the physical object which constitutes my house. In other words, it is not about a referential substitution "house-property," but about a symbolical identification of the property (as institution) with my physical house.

What kind of identity is the symbolical identity? As we know, identity is a form of equivalence and the relation of equivalence has the properties of reflexivity, transitivity and symmetry. Such a relation is too strong, and

it allows the substitution operation. However, Searle turns our attention to the fact that we cannot have a substitution relation, so identity is weakened, attenuated, partial. In general, in any empiric scientific approach, one cannot appeal to a total identity, but to a partial one. What are the features of an attenuated identity? The weaker it is, the more an identity should assure certain continuity on the temporal side, which means that it could be used for the logical relation gender-species. But the identity from Searle's formula lies in the value register, as from whole to whole or from part to whole, so one cannot use the relation gender-species.

When talking about wholes, the philosophical tradition presents at least two modalities of analysis: the "mereologic" modality, initiated by Lesniewski, in which we have ascendant optics because it relies on parts and claims that any part is part of a whole, which, in turn is part of a successive whole, etc.; the "holologic" modality, a modality with distinct optics in comparison to the mereologic one, being a descendant one, starting from the wholes to the parts, then from the parts to their respective parts, this theorizing being initiated by Brentano (Poli 2009, 216).

Does this mereology help us express the weak identity from Searle's theory? We think not, since the Lesniewski mereology type does not aim for the value register, respectively the hermeneutic-symbolic identity. Would Brentano's holology be more useful? At a first look, it may seem so because at least with the organic wholes, we witness a series of nuances. Unfortunately, in the passages postulated between wholes, one cannot clearly see the identity mechanism.

For this reason a third solution is presented, a "holomery" modality (Biriş 2012, 183), which, as we know, was tried only by Romanian philosophers (Noica 1986). Holomery is an alternative to mereology and holology, since it is about those exceptional parts which succeed in reaching the power of the whole. Therefore, this is not about a dominant ascendant passage from parts to the whole (as mereology proceeds), nor a predilection towards a descendant one, from the whole to the parts (holology), but about a double perspective (as in the case of the double access declarations from Searle's theory); from the whole to the parts and the other way around, in the conditions in which the part gains the power of the whole (holomery) or is a wearer of the whole.

What happens in the world of the spirit, in the social world? For Constantin Noica, a holomer has another potential over the other diverse ones through the fact that it represents an exceptional singularity, it rises to power, the potential of the whole. Noica's identity is not thought to be logical or substantial (as persistence), but rather a value of a symbolic sense, as it happens in the cultural spiritual perimeter when, for example, a

certain language (as a holomer) is able to express the logos in its totality (the part being on the side of the power of the whole, that is the part is identical to the whole, as a symbolic value). We believe that this pattern of thought suits Searle's conception about the institutional creation. In the example above, the "house" can be understood as a holomer, that is a part of the whole can be called a "property." Everything happens at a symbolical level. If I do not possess another property, then my "house" is, symbolically speaking, a "part" that rises to the power of the entire property.

Let us look at this in detail to see how the weakening of the value-spiritual identity is logically explained. If we take into consideration the direction of analysis of whole-part, in the model proposed by Noica there is unilateral identity in the sense that, in the register of spiritual values, in the symbolic register, the whole passes totally in the part (the logos passes in its totality, without diminution, in a language; the institution of the property, as a social-value whole, passes into the totality in my "house," when it is the sole property which I possess). Identity is unilateral since it is valid only from whole to part. In other words, in the relation whole \rightarrow part the identity functions in an absolute way, keeping its properties of reflexivity, symmetry and transitivity:

reflexivity: $(\forall x) (\forall y) ((Rxy \vee Ryx) \rightarrow Rxx)$;

symmetry: $(\forall x) (\forall y) (Rxy \rightarrow Ryx)$;

transitivity: $(\forall x) (\forall y) (\forall z) ((Rxy \wedge Ryz) \rightarrow Rxz)$.

When we are in the direction of the analysis part \rightarrow whole, things are changed very much: here the relation of unilateral contradiction dominates. That is the part that will contradict the identity of the whole value, so that it establishes a new whole of the value. When my "house" is the sole property, it is for me the symbol of property as a whole, trying to substitute itself to the entire property. Respectively, when a "part" becomes a holomer, it will contradict one-sidedly the whole to which is related. The contradiction is unilateral since it functions only in the direction part \rightarrow whole and not the other way around. This unilateral contradiction will impose the following logical properties:

ireflexivity: $(\forall x) (\forall y) ((Rxy \vee Ryx) \rightarrow \neg Rxx)$;

asymmetry: $(\forall x) (\forall y) (Rxy \rightarrow \neg Ryx)$;

intransitivity: $(\forall x) (\forall y) (\forall z) ((Rxy \wedge Ryz) \rightarrow \neg Rxz)$.

Here, we are in a situation as interesting as it gets. Holomery allows a transmission of identity in the direction between whole \rightarrow part and, at the same time, a rejection of the old whole in the relation part \rightarrow whole, explicable by the new part's potential to lift itself to the power of the new whole. The new whole of value will keep an identity greatly weakened in relation to the old whole, and at a pinch can annul that identity.

Conclusions

Looking at the process as a whole, and the relation whole \rightarrow part and the relation part \rightarrow whole simultaneously, as one already knows, in partitive logics one does not have inclusion relations but compenetrations. The parts and the wholes interact by compenetrations and potentiation. What happens in this process of institution of the weak identity from a logical point of view? Taken as a whole, the process of unilateral identity displayed together with the unilateral contradiction tell us that the compenetrations must combine the reflexivity of the whole of value with the irreflexivity of part of value, the symmetry from the old whole with the asymmetry of the part becoming a holomer, the transitivity of the whole with the intransitivity of the new part. These compenetrations lead us to other logical properties:

non reflexivity: $(\forall x) (\exists y) ((Rxy \vee Ryx) \wedge \neg Rxx)$;

non symmetry: $(\forall x) (\exists y) (Rxy \wedge \neg Ryx)$;

non transitivity: $(\exists x) (\exists y) (\exists z) ((Rxy \wedge Ryz) \wedge \neg Rxz)$.

These could be the logical properties of the weak identity, respectively of the symbolic holomer, as it functions in the institutional symbolic creation from Searle's theory. It would often occur that one needed a particular context in order to create a function of the statute, but once created this function exists independent of the context. In addition, the perpetuation of the context is sometimes essential for a "social object" to continue to exist. We can probably explain these situations through the organization laws on which the values function. In Robert Poli's opinion (2009, 8), the most important of these would be the following:

- The law of the values force
- The law of the height values
- The law of the resistance of values.

The stronger the values, the bigger the force, the less sophisticated they are; conversely, the higher the values, the weaker they are, the less force they have. Though it may seem paradoxical, in conformity with the third law, though the high values may have little force, they oppose a considerable degree of resistance, because the higher they are, the harder they are to attain, a situation from which a negative component is derived, that is negative values, this being a structural characteristic of values.

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ON TRUTH AND LIE: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

IONEL BUȘE

Introduction

The *Dictionary of the Romanian language* (1998) offers a comprehensive meaning of the term “cunning” as “a skilful manoeuvre by which one deceives another who is in good faith.” All other synonyms (perfidy, hypocrisy, deceit, etc.) stem, in one way or another, from this base meaning. From the various texts written on hypocrisy, perfidy, cunning, and lie (religious, literary, philosophical-moralist, etc.), we start from Homer’s *Iliad* as read by Plato in his early dialogue *Hippias Minor* or *On Lying* and further interpret a philosophical-cinematographic parable of the Japanese director Akira Kurosawa.

From Truth to Lie as an Accident

Plato’s dialogue *Hippias Minor* entails a discussion about truth and lies between Socrates and the sophist Hippias, starting from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and two legendary characters of the Trojan War, Achilles and Ulysses. Among Socratic dialogues, this seems unique through the contradiction that Socrates creates in the confrontation with Hippias, a man of knowledge in the field of arithmetics, geometry and astronomy. Everything starts from Hippias’ assertion “Homer depicted Achilles as the bravest of the men coming to Troy, Nestor the wisest and Odysseus the most versatile” (Plato 1976). Achilles is also a “righteous man, as honest as possible,” and Hippias recalls the scene of the “Supplications” from the *Iliad*. The versatile man (Odysseus) who “says one thing while thinking something else, which stays hidden in his mind” is, therefore, the liar. Later, through successive questions in his well-known manner, Socrates tries to show that Hippias actually protects a contradiction, not the truth.

First, he demonstrates, helped by Hippias, that liars are intelligent people and are versatile due to their intelligence. In other words, they are skilful (they know the truth which they are aware they conceal). Liars are those who have both the skill and the capacity to lie, says Socrates. The philosopher takes an example, the sophist, who is good at arithmetics, geometry and astronomy. Beyond the discrete irony of the “recognition” of the incontestable skills of Hippias, there arises the irony of the art of forcing the interlocutor into conflict with themselves, thus demonstrating their philosophical incompetence in a different way, in the sense that Hippias has knowledge of trees perhaps, but not of the forest. He is good at precision, not truth. How, then, could he be good at understanding lies if he does not know what truth is?

If the one knowing the truth is the only one who can deceive, then the good one, i.e. the one who knows their subjects, can also be evil, since only they can be versatile, cunning, hypocritical. In this way, Hippias reaches a contradiction, almost amazed at what he had stated: “Then Hippias, the one who makes mistakes and commits shameful and wrongful acts intentionally, should there be such a man, can be no one but the good man.” “I cannot agree with you, Socrates,” replied Hippias. As a matter of fact, he cannot agree with himself, because he had followed without protest the Socratic reasoning directly implying it. Actually, the trap that Socrates set him was connected with the relationship between truth and will. Here, Romanian philosopher Constantin Noica performs a remarkable interpretation that we might consider—there is a truth as will and a lie as will. In other words, the gnoseological dimension is doubled by the ethical. “To be wrong,” arising out of ignorance (and Achilles seems to fall within this category according to Hippias), has nothing to do with the cunning of “to deceive” someone who is in good faith. Odysseus would fall into this latter category, just because the Trojan horse belongs to him. This does not mean that the one who knows the truth must undoubtedly be cunning (one who conceals it with a selfish goal in mind).

If, in the beginning, Socrates speaks of a man confined to doing things well or poorly when he refers to knowledge and ignorance, in the gnoseological sense, in order to convince Hippias that only one who has knowledge can be cunning, versatile, a liar (in fact “the expert Hippias”), in the second part of the dialogue he tries, as Noica notes, to transcend the subject and approach the general nature of humankind, rather than the one confined to the quality of technical expertise. In other words, the very person who has full knowledge of values, not of some technical aspect or another, cannot do evil because they know and have the moral duty of responsibility.