Political Philosophy
in Motion *.mkv

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By

Viorella Manolache

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INTRODUCTION[1]

DEVELOPING IDEAS IN THE DARK ROOMS OF OUR SELF: THE CONCEPTS AND THE COMMUNICATION OF HUMAN CONSCIENCE IN FILM

ANGELA BOTEZ AND HENRIETA ŞERBAN

> Motto: "Film as dream, film as music. No art passes into our consciousness in the way film does, and goes directly to our feelings, deep down into the dark rooms of our souls."
> —Ingmar Bergman

Viorella Manolache´s *Political Philosophy in Motion *.mkv* is an examination of the linked triad of ideas, consciousness-communication-film, a topic worthy of the careful philosophical examination it receives in this book.

Consciousness

If we examine the concept of "consciousness", we can see that it derives from the Latin term *conscientia*, meaning "with science" or "knowledge together [with others]". The related Greek term, *syneidenai,* includes the meaning of knowledge combined with self-analysis (introspection). Consciousness has been considered to be the basis of knowledge (Hamilton) or the basis of self-knowledge, linked to the idea of "spontaneous consciousness", or directed towards an object of knowledge ("reflected consciousness"); given and construed consciousness; subjective and objective consciousness; being conscious of a stage of human development or of a social class; a conscious form of existence, perceptual consciousness; psychological consciousness; moral consciousness and so on, examined in the philosophical works of Descartes, Kant, Hamilton, Schopenhauer, Hegel; in the works of philosopher neurologists such as M. Daude, J. Lachelier, M. Blondel, M. Bernes, E. Claparéde; and in the works of cognitivists such as Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Bergson, Bachelard, Canguilhelm, Foucault, Desanti, Mouloud, Gusdorf, Ricoeur etc. It is impossible in an introduction to offer an exhaustive characterisation, but we propose instead to give some indication of the complexity of the subject and a few theoretical signposts.

Moore and Russell analysed (in constitutive and relational terms) the difference between the mental states and their objects. Ordinary consciousness is always consciousness of something, the object of a mental state, which is linked to the idea of intentionality. James disagrees with Moore, considering consciousness to be not an aspect of identity, but an extra element, detached from the essential characteristics of identity (in "Does Consciousness Exist?" *Essays in Radical Empiricism,* London, 1912). Consciousness appears in the context of a specific relationship between two terms, in which one knows the other. James offered a relational analysis of consciousness, which culminated in the neutral monism of pure experience. Relational analysis emphasizes that no relational term ever stands alone, either as the object or as the subject of consciousness, since it must be situated and related in relation to another term. Russell developed this neutral monism in his *Analysis of Mind.*

We should note that this sort of relational analysis of existence and reality, of interpersonal interaction, of personal history and history in general, of feelings and suffering, and of joy and love, provides the core of contemporary communicational and philosophical perspectives on life and film, although this is not the only possible perspective.

Another approach to consciousness sees it as a process which takes place in the brain and also as an event in the mind. Is a state of

consciousness a disposition of behaviour, as in behaviourism, or is it an internal state? There is a space created by the study of states of consciousness and mental events as the examination of the actions and movements resulting from mental activity and as the expression of intentions, desires, impressions and motivations, as seen in the works of Max Black, C.D. Broad, C.A. Campbell, W. Hamilton, W. James, A.C. Macintyre, Bertrand Russell, G. Ryle, W. Sellars and Charles Taylor.

   "Consciousness in the moral sense" or the *conscience* represents a landmark in the British approach. From this perspective, consciousness is the grand total of mental faculties responsible for human emotional and will empowering capacities, and is the ability to set in motion and sustain human decision making and choice making processes. F. Hutchenson sees mental decisional faculties as being indebted to feelings.

   The literature also sets out the interpretative dimension that further emphasizes consciousness as the generator of a moral sense which provides the capacity to distinguish good from evil (S. Clarke, R. Price, J. Butler). Behaviourism sees the issue as being the consequence of *stimuli*, the reaction to *stimuli*, and in this way consciousness becomes a kind of credible guide to action. The resolution of the problem of morality receives a variety of answers within different cultures. The essential theme of moral prescription is the possibility of universality in these answers. Among the main representatives of this position are Kant, Butler, Clarke and Price, and in the 20th century, R.M. Hare, C.D. Broad, W.D. Ross and T.V. Smith.

   In the collection *Philosophy*, edited by H. Schnädelbach and E. Mortens[2], in Heiner Hastedt's chapter "Consciousness", Hastedt argues for the centrality of conscience and consciousness as philosophical themes since its beginning. The variety of meanings attached to the word "consciousness" throughout the history of its interpretation goes far beyond contemporary understanding, as in the pre-modern period it was the moral dimension which dominated the conceptualisation of consciousness.

   Descartes was the philosopher who set aside this original ethical understanding of consciousness. In Descartes' vision, consciousness takes centre stage in the philosophy of knowledge and with this connection to knowledge the interest of philosophers shifted toward psychology, especially the psychology of the individual, marking off as a particular field of enquiry the study of the psychology of consciousness, an area which excluded unconscious mental phenomena.

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2 H. Schnädelbach and E. Mortens (editors), *Filozofia,* Romanian translation, Bucharest, Editura Ştiinţifică, 1999, pp. 511-541.

The philosophy of consciousness is connected to this Cartesian tradition, as well as to the philosophy of Heidegger and Adorno. It is a common belief that the era of this kind of philosophy is over, having been replaced by the philosophy of language, via the linguistic turn associated mainly with Wittgenstein and Rorty. Ethical considerations returned via the Heideggerian perspective, although the phenomenology of consciousness does not directly incorporate ethical considerations. Heidegger considered that the fundamental error of the philosophy of consciousness, in the Cartesian sense, was what produced the "scandal of philosophy" because it attempted to search for proof of the existence of mental life in other people. The analysis found in *Dasein* identifies a conscious self-characterization of man. The notion of consciousness does not indicate a psychological aspect, but the choice of a good life and "consciousness" points towards an attitude which ensures this possibility. Consciousness is a non-mental phenomenon which enables the qualitative dimension of the experience of the self.

Contemporary philosophical approaches to consciousness, as exemplified by the work of Heidegger, have developed along the lines of the mind-body relationship, with a conception of mental phenomena appropriate for computer sciences and Artificial Intelligence. The philosophy of mind represents that category of the philosophy of science concerned with ontology, epistemology and the methodology of science in the field of Artificial Intelligence, cognitive science and neuroscience. It includes, among other things, philosophical meditations on consciousness. The conceptual definitions and disciplinary boundaries in this area are still being worked out. There have been various attempts to clarify, systematize and critically analyse the different theories of consciousness, some of them philosophical, others scientific. This has led to a blurring of the borders among the approaches in science and philosophy. It is significant that a new type of science has emerged: it is called neuroscience and its object is conscious experience. A large number of studies in the philosophy of mind and in the area of consciousness have been undertaken in the light of this science. No account of developments in this approach to the study of consciousness could be complete without mentioning philosophers of mind such as: Penrose, Hofstadter, Papineau, Wilkes, Searle, Honderich, Churchland, Dennett, Chalmers, Hameroff, Drăgănescu, Crane, Hacker and Mellor.

These ideas have focussed attention once more on the areas of conscience, on consciousness and on the question of whether it is possible to produce consciousness through Artificial Intelligence. In the view of certain philosophers, the problem is related to an appreciation of the technological possibilities in the field of computer development, rather

than to the psychological explanation of consciousness or to the philosophical understanding of consciousness. The significance of consciousness remains in the area of its bodily embedding and of information. Current approaches in the philosophy of consciousness claim that a large number of the issues around mental phenomena and consciousness are philosophical issues, which are directly related to issues concerning computer sciences and cyber culture.

Another philosophical direction preoccupied with consciousness is critical theory, represented by the works of Lukacs, Habermas and Adorno, who discuss the problem of whether a program can function simultaneously, empirically and logically alongside the idea of consciousness. The philosophy of mind includes for the most part the current philosophy of consciousness, which takes into account ideas deriving from the cognitive sciences. Dennett's and Putnam's functionalism, the eliminative materialism of Churchland, the anomalistic monism of Davidson, the concepts of Searle, and those of the Arizona School (Chalmers, Hameroff) are philosophies of knowledge, which are very close to that group of sciences termed neural and cognitive. A distinction is made between the mental and consciousness and the possibility of defining consciousness in terms of intentionality are pursued, as can be seen in Reid, in Brentano and in Searle. This involves cases where we can speak of non-intentional mental phenomena (anxiety, for instance). There are debates about mental processes that may in time become conscious. The diversity of mental phenomena: ideas, opinions, motives, desires, expectations, intentions, interests, memories, dreams, representations, feelings (of fear, joy and anger etc.), dispositions (such as cheerfulness or melancholy) and sensations (pain, pleasure, disgust, indisposition and so on) do not fall within the universality of consciousness. And all these are the themes and preoccupations of great literature, painting, sculpture and film.

A number of contemporary American philosophical currents study the relationship between the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of language: neopragmatism and holism (Rorty, Quine, Davidson, Putnam); historicity, contextual and social-constructive epistemology (Kuhn, Toulmin, van Fraasen, Sal Revisto, St. Fuller); language and the philosophy of mind (Chomsky, Davidson, Sellars, Searle, Dennett, Churchland, Chalmers); neo-transcendentalism (Danto, Bloom, Wolin, Margolis, Schrag); and postmodern philosophy (Rorty, Paul de Man, Calvin O. Schrag, J. Sallis, P. Heelan, D.M. Levin). All these trends can be pursued using the arts and films in their capacity as means of expression and communication of conscience and consciousness.

However, the intention of this Preface is not to exhaust the concept of consciousness nor to simply present the long list of specialists who have investigated this concept, nor to identify the fascinating debates concerning mind-body dualism (Thomas Reid, Shoemaker, N. Goodman). Are mental states influenced by introspection? Are they similar in all human beings? Is self-reflection sensorial perception or direct consciousness?

There are countless interesting perspectives on consciousness coming from philosophy, psychology and neuroscience. For example, G.F. Stout places the accent on introspection and mental operations, and Locke, Reid and Hamilton, who take the view that introspection is awareness and accompanies all mental states. From such perspectives, film becomes a specific means of communication and a symptom of consciousness. Humanity's powers of introspection are set in motion on a variety of subjects through film. Communication and film share the interest of continental postmodern philosophy in post-epistemic values*:* subjectivism, relativism, instrumentalism, pragmatism, historicism, pluralism, probability, indeterminism, trust, incommensurability, contextual truth, complementarity, holism, social-constructivism, sociology and psychology.

The modern cultural paradigm is characterised by concepts and orientations that have at the forefront a postmodern paradigm with a different approach. The concepts of modernism (romanticism-symbolism-realism), formalism (conjunctive-closeness), purpose-orientation, authority and logos, object (finished work), distancing, creation-totalizing-synthesis, presence, centre-limit, semantics, paradigm (example), totalizing-synthesis fundamentalism (religious, epistemic), representation, selection, origin and depth, interpretation and reading, signified, legible, narrative (grand history), authoritative code, symptom, typical, genital/phallic, origins/causes, God/Father, metaphysics, determination and transcendence, (sectarianism) are replaced by postmodern concepts regarding privileged positions (eclectic-paranormal-Dadaism), anti-formalism (disjunctive-open), game-happening, equal chances, anarchy (Eros), process (accidental spectacle), participation, destruction-deconstruction-antithesis, absence, dispersion, rhetoric, parataxis, metonymy, liberalism, solidarity, combination, rhizome, surface, anti-interpretation/misreading, signified, scripted, anti-narrative (small history), idiolect, desire, mutation, polymorphous/ androgyny, difference/traits, polyphony, Holy Spirit, irony, indeterminacy, immanence and holism[3].

<div align="right">—Angela Botez
Bucharest, September 18, 2017</div>

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3 David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1992.

Consciousness, Knowledge, Communication and Epistemology

Consciousness is always expressible and communicable, both within and outside the realm of rationality. Like knowledge, communication is not a purely mental endeavour free of all particular or social considerations. Both knowledge and communication are informed by rationality and irrationality, gender and social practices, factors which need to be considered in contemporary epistemology. Knowledge is communicable knowledge. At the same time, the attempt to communicate knowledge poses important epistemological questions which are connected to contemporary philosophy of communication and social constructivism. Last but not least, this perspective starts from the idea that philosophical investigation and epistemology in the philosophy of communication have taken a pragmatic turn. Classical, "strong" epistemology viewed social relations as an external variable independent of scientific judgement and vice versa; only the content of the scientific endeavour being dependent on scientific judgement.

Contemporary epistemology investigates the border marked out by the drastic separation of social context from scientific practice even though these questions have been tackled ever since Thomas Kuhn focused on the nature of scientific revolutions. This line of separation is blurred by arguments that identify the scope, the role and the influence of social relations and focus on how social relations affect scientific research and communities of researchers. The values, the interests and the generally liberal views of research communities are influenced by social characteristics and in their turn these influence research and knowledge. Within and between research communities and the various mediators that are aware of knowledge and transmit it to society at large are social relations with specific characteristics which undoubtedly influence research and the products of research. These are social and cognitive elements of investigation central to epistemological success or failure.

The key figures in "strong" epistemology – Andrew Pickering, Harry Collins, Donald MacKenzie, David Bloor, and others – investigate the extent to which personal or group ideologies, as well as personal or group interests, have a bearing on scientific approaches and their findings. On the other hand, the ethnographic aspects of group activities and group dynamics are also relevant to the epistemological study of the scientific activities involved in the production of knowledge.

   Feminist epistemologists noticed that science was for a very long time almost exclusively a masculine realm[4]. Theories of gender, feminist studies of the history and philosophy of science, were used to identify models of scientific knowledge, emphasizing the masculine elements that represented typical patterns of masculine psychological development, and which associated knowledge and objectivity with domination[5]. The divisive influence of power is also present in the area of gender and reflects the interests of the powerful: on the one hand, alternative theories tend to be marginalized, and on the other, they are mostly associated with marginalized researchers[6].These perspectives, though, do not indiscriminately reject existing perspectives, methodologies and philosophies that, for the most part, can be used to express a feminist epistemological point of view.

   The principal characteristic of epistemology in the philosophy of communication is the pragmatic nature of epistemological success. Mary B. Hesse, places the accent on epistemological reconstruction and not on a deconstructionist approach. Epistemological reconstruction should start from the "useful classification of the objects, materials and processes from a practical standpoint (and not from some 'real categories'), and from relatively specific and local affirmations concerning the regularities of the processes (and not from universally quantifiable 'natural laws')"[7]. This innovative epistemological approach constitutes a type of pragmatism and it is neither a feminist depuration of science, as other approaches are, nor deconstruction at all costs.

   The contribution of Mary B. Hesse[8] starts from a constructive critique of the standard philosophy of language which epistemologically ignores the deconstruction of the phallocentric and considers only the deconstruction of logocentrism to be interesting and sufficiently constructive. But when logocentrism is deconstructed, the analysis arrives at a mythological point which includes the phallocentric, although it is not reduced to it: "This is

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4 Caroline Herschel, Barbara McClintock, and Marie Curie were, for example, notable exceptions, in the spheres of science and popular culture. Only the latter has achieved any sort of enduring fame in the popular mind as a remarkable icon of a female scientist. As a quick observation, popular culture and collective memories include film and film-like narratives.
5 Evelyn Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science*. New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1985.
6 Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges", *Feminist Studies* 14, 3, 1988, pp. 575-600.
7 Angela Botez, *Filosofia în paradigma culturii britanice*, Bucharest, Editura Academiei, 2004, p. 144.
8 Mary Hesse, *Revolutions and Reconstructions in the Philosophy of Science*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1980.

an engagement that postmodern feminists and others wish to reject, but in practice it is improbable that any society would wish in this epoch to abandon the 'goods' (the products) of science (which also include techniques for the propagation of energy and information, as well as valuable medical treatments). A new epistemology, nevertheless, will decrease the value of their intellectual meaning in comparison to other social values. Technical science will be regarded as a useful 'whipping boy' and not an indubitable source of rationality and knowledge"[9]. Mary Hesse developed a theory about the network of scientific inference which was not essentially a feminist theory, but which was used by other scientists to assess the gender aspects of various epistemological contexts (for instance, Elizabeth Potter 2001)[10].

However, the epistemological possibility of self-reflection on our values, ideologies and biases represents a crucial epistemological gain and an opportunity. We are not necessarily simply the prisoners of our values, ideologies, methodologies, theories, culture and views. These opportunities are illustrated through specific communicational concepts with epistemological value – *différance*, episteme, narration, transversality and irony. It is not an accident that these communicational concepts with epistemological value are also the main concepts in film theory, operating like windows into the dark chambers of human spirituality (where film narrations are tested and developed).

Communicational Concepts with Epistemological Value

Contemporary epistemology has undertaken a dialogue with postmodernism and from our perspective it has begun to operate with new models which serve as valuable exemplars – the paradigms of difference[11]. These paradigms of difference assume only hegemonic roles, which are taken to be of their time rather than timeless, and they are more modest, often self-critical and self-ironizing. Such paradigms of difference are appropriate means for the interpretation of communication and its true value and importance in society.

Jacques Derrida's approach starts from *différance,* and it is developed using a deconstructionist methodology. Based on the process of

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9 *Ibidem*.
10 See also Helen Longino "The Social Dimensions of the scientific Knowledge", available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/scientific-knowledge-social/.
11 Thomas Kuhn, "Noi reflecţii desspre paradigme", in *Tensiunea esenţială* [Essential Tension], Bucharest, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1982, pp. 334-359.

identification of what can be labelled as "other", or indeterminable or traditional or patriarchal, he reflects on the concept of *différance*. His approach tends to be marginalized in philosophy in general, but has found greater acceptance within the philosophy of communication. The concept of *différance* identifies the undermining of the metaphysical and logocentric presuppositions common to structuralism and phenomenology. Thus, with the notion of *différance* postmodernism is also post-phenomenological. Both structuralism and phenomenology have undergone a series of revolutionary transformations in the area of correlation between truth and its origin in logos, and their foundations in a view of the world based on binary oppositions, where the "first" term is always privileged and loaded with multiple positive connotations in relation to the second; always subordinated, negative, corrupted or at least incomplete in comparison with the first. As a result, there is a strong tendency to formulate discourses and arguments starting from binary oppositions such as the one between "good" and "bad", with the whole history of human civilization and culture unfolding as a struggle to maintain and reinstate the value of the "good", namely, of the first term of the binary opposition[12].

Structuralist dichotomies were among the first conceptualizations attacked by postmodernism in general and particularly by the "deconstructivism" generated by the idea of *différance*. As a consequence, postmodern "undermining" acts mainly in the four domains of *différance*: between speaking and writing, privileging the writing between nouns and verbs; as terms that can function as actions at some point; between the sensible and the intelligible domains; and between words and concepts, but with a disposition for conceptualization, thus avoiding the traps of "idle" thought, a tribute to the automatisms and mechanisms of classical philosophy. The deconstructionist approach initiated by Derrida is aimed at the totalitarian arrogance of Reason, indifferent to all that does not

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12 In the philosophy of communication and identity, known as *discourse theory*, E. Laclau and C. Mouffe propose the concept of "antagonism", retrieving, completing and continuing the idea of binary oppositions. Here antagonisms are the key element of the theory. The use of the plural is suggestive of the number and perennial nature of antagonisms as "fuel" and catalyst for relations and communication in society. This epistemological and political view of social interaction sees antagonism not just in binary pairs, but as a number of elements standing in correlative relationships to each other, elements with complete but not absolutely definitive and fixed identities (identities in a permanent process of becoming). The opposition of such elements is dynamic and relative and they are clarified within communicational interaction through narration and discourse.

accord with the classic patterns and indifferent to alterity. But, equally, Derrida's approach has a use value that recommends it as (post-) pragmatism.

Gilles Deleuze studies "difference" in relation to repetitions and within a chain of successions of difference and repetition, with no accent placed on "différance", but not obviously related to post pragmatism and deconstructionism. He sees difference as an aspect of conceptual difference which he follows through the entire history of philosophy. But conceptual difference is actually a part of *différance* and deconstructionism, taking aim at the classic patterns of philosophy. He says: "In conformity with a principle of difference any determination is eventually conceptual or at least part of the comprehension of a concept. In conformity with a principle of sufficient reason, there is always a concept for every particular thing. These principles taken together form the interpretation of *différance* as conceptual difference or the exposing of representation as mediation"[13].

Erecting the epistemological ordering of the entire postmodern approach around the notions of "difference" and "deconstruction", we can see the parallel between "deconstruction" and "archaeology". The archaeology of science is yet another type of deconstruction. From this perspective it is interesting to see Michel Foucault's interest in the investigation of the "knowledge-power" relationship. This relationship has become significant in contemporary philosophical discourse and a key part of the investigation of the so-called exhaustion of modernity. His archaeology of the human sciences uses the genealogical method of Nietzsche to unveil specific intellectual constructions, ways of seeing, classifying, understanding and saying things – ways of doing science in different historical periods. Perceiving identities and similarities was the mark of being scientific. "The activity of the spirit… will not consist thus in making things closer but in discriminating, separating relations, attraction or any secretly shared nature, with a view to discerning things establishing separate identities, in all the degrees of their separation"[14].

The fundamental observation here is that any work and any discourse can present itself as objective, but in reality it is the product of a specific person. Furthermore, scientific discourse is a discourse of power and to be scientific is not just to engage in an effort to follow the procedures laid down, by which one arrives in a methodological way at knowledge, but it is also to describe the very practices involved in the scientific approach

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13 *Ibidem*, p. 187.
14 M. Foucault, *Cuvintele şi lucrurile. O arheologie a ştiinţelor umane*, translation by Bogdan Ghiu and Mircea Vasilescu, Bucharest, Editura Univers, 1996, p. 98.

and the configurations imposed by and on reality. The scientific approach becomes, in a sense, suspect.

Foucault emphasized that any discourse that takes shelter behind the claim to objectivity is clearly the discourse of someone in power. "Discourse analysis (…) does not unveil the universality of meaning, but it sheds light on the game of rarity imposed alongside a fundamental power of affirmation. There is rarity and affirmation, eventually rarity of affirmation, but in any case, not a continuous generosity of meaning, or a monarchy of the signifier"[15]. The "scientific" process is one which makes an *object* out of the *subject,* leading to a way of ordering and organising social space as attested by the separation between the mad and the sane, between the sick and the healthy, between the criminal and the good citizen. As a consequence, we understand that philosophical vigilance is required to supervise the potentially abusive powers of political rationality as well as hegemonic rationality of all kinds, dressed up as "science". Nonetheless, Foucault should not be considered to be an enemy of the process of rationalization *in corpore*. On the contrary, the author recommends a limited, empirical and detailed approach appropriate to each particular field, which addresses fundamental experiences such as crime, insanity, sickness, death and sexuality, where or through which political rationality and hegemonic rationality could engage in an abusive way, despotically invading individual life. The importance of this approach lies mainly in the possibility of identifying concrete forms of resistance to various types of power. It concerns using resistance "as a chemical catalyst that allows the highlighting of power relations, to see where they fall, to discover their points of application and the methods they use"[16].

Postmodern rupture[17], according to Jean-François Lyotard consists in the "scepticism about grand narratives" as imposed order, understandable also from the perspective opened up by Deleuze and Guattari, as an order "un-rhizome", or, an imposing order[18]. Lyotard shows explicitly that

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15 M. Foucault, *Ordinea discursului. Un discurs despre discurs*, translation by Ciprian Tudor, Iaşi, Eurosong & Book, 1998, p. 55.
16 *Apud*, A. Graf, *Marii filosofi contemporani*, translation by Cornel Bâlbă, Iaşi, Institutul European, 2001, p. 105.
17 C.O. Schrag denies paternity of the idea behind this term, motivated in his writings by the construction of an argument for "transversal reason".
18 Grand narratives could be considered Barthes' myths, too. They are hegemonic myths, such as, for instance, the dominant myth of science, so important in contemporary society. The counter-myth of the mad scientist present in popular culture only emphasizes its importance.

"grand narratives lost their credibility, indifferent of the modality of unification used, indifferent as to whether they are speculative narratives or an emancipatory ones"[19]. Grand narratives are statements about ultimate, absolute and universal truths with legitimating power for both scientific and political projects. For example, these could be: the emancipation of mankind by the proletariat (Marx); the evolution of life (Darwin); the domination of the mind by the unconscious (Freud); and so on. According to Lyotard, a correct theory does not guarantee agreeable political or ethical choices. The refusal of grand narratives relates to the limits of discourse, with applicability for scientific discourse as well, which is not perfectly insulated against the insidious intrusions of the social and political realm[20]. Roland Barthes contributed significantly to the deconstructive archaeology of modernity revealing the fabric of myths that sustain contemporary culture. Such "narratives" weave the universe of our lives as discourses.

Myths are more or less central to all narratives. For Barthes, they are the result of the negotiations of meaning involving a variety of contemporary phenomena related to people and their social, political and cultural status. Feelings, emotions and values govern the manner of appreciation of a phenomenon in a culture. An entire culture reorients itself, moving from the identification and knowledge of unique truth, from the concept of information as quantity transmitted, towards nuanced quality less dependent on unique and definitive truths[21]. The whole field of the philosophy of communication opens the gate to semiotic reflection and analysis evolving towards a semiotic marginalization and the elimination of the transcendent from the explicative picture of the world[22].

Anti-representationalism offers new openings, to be considered alongside the investigation of the disappearance or repositioning of the hegemony of metaphysics in philosophy as the only fully-fledged

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19 J.-F. Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984, p. 37.
20 J.-F. Lyotard, J.L. Thébaud, *Just Gaming*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1985, p. 28.
21 The Geist of the birth of a new spiritual aeon by the exchange of the modern cultural paradigm for a postmodern cultural paradigm that brings about radical changes within the system of values and concepts is captured through the "integrative concepts" of Angela Botez, in her article "Integrative concepts in 20th century science", http://cogito.ucdc.ro/2011/en/integrativeconceptsof20thcenturis cienceangelabotez.pdf.
22 After Adrian-Paul Iliescu, *Filosofia limbajului şi limbajul filosofiei*, Bucharest, Editura Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1989.

philosophical quest, the quest for unique truth, within a multitude of constellations of philosophical literature bearing creativity and myth. We are now participating in, to use a phrase introduced by Angela Botez, a postmodern resurrection of the metaphysics.

Transversality is currently the most useful of the solutions identified to the problems posed by rationality. C.O. Schrag's contribution is exemplary in the effort to overcome the crises of rationality through a vision which goes beyond the limits of thinking bounded by rigid hierarchies (on a vertical symbolic dimension) and by imposed egalitarianism (on a horizontal symbolic dimension). These two (and the same must be considered in what concerns the *logos* and rhetoric) are evaluated as complementary, via transversality. It is an attempt to retrieve rationality, without reinstating it in its metaphysically dominant position, generating universality. The subject is perceived by this author as de-centred, "a multiple persona," with multiple social roles. The critique of the "language of consciousness" is completed by the delimitation and limitation of the subject within communicational praxis, and by the conceptualization of subjectivity from an ethical perspective ("the fitting response").

The contemporary concept of subjectivity implies a plurality of dimensions of the self, an embodied subjectivity at once communicational and action oriented, and a new, "transversal" form of reason to conceive and analyse it. Transversality is the retrieval of reason, in the way it opens towards alterity and offers a modality for communicating with the other through openness, respecting both differences and the noble human collection of universal values. Through transversal communication these values can only be reaffirmed and not guaranteed. Transversality nuances the concepts of deconstruction, difference and *différance*. Deconstruction values differences, attempting in critical fashion to supersede the hierarchies developed symbolically on the vertical axis as well as those belonging to interpersonal symbolic representations. Rorty's ironism is a post-analytical notion created around a particular profile of an individual, an ironist. According to Rorty's definition an "ironist" is "someone who fulfils three conditions: (1) she has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses, because she has been impressed by other vocabularies, vocabularies taken as final by people or books she has encountered; (2) she realizes that argument phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite or dissolve these doubts; (3) insofar as she philosophizes about her situation, she does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power outside herself. Ironists who are inclined to philosophize see the choice between vocabularies being made neither within a neutral and universal

metavocabulary nor by an attempt to fight one's way past appearances to the real, but simply by playing the new off against the old"[23]. So the ironist creatively employs other vocabularies as a continual source of inspiration for their own vocabulary, continually "under construction". An ironist is still a philosopher, either by training or by orientation, but not an analytic philosopher and, more precisely, not a "metaphysician", that is, not someone who considers that "any term in his vocabulary has as correspondent something of a *real* essence." Both intellectual types have in common the desire to know, but in the case of the ironist this has different manifestations and outcomes from those of the metaphysician.

For the ironist, the desire to know is not oriented towards a unique and final vocabulary to the detriment of other vocabularies. Ironism is an intellectual attitude which can be associated only with more educated individuals, and, because of its intellectual flexibility in relation to tradition, favours the elaboration and use of the network of scientific inference that Mary Hesse inherited, and imposed patterns of knowledge. In this respect, ironism is also an inclination towards a relative and more flexible, un-hegemonic positioning within the praxis of communication. We see ironism as an incentive to search for plausibility within scientific and communicational approaches towards the relativity of truths and positions in society.

Film

> "Cinema is a matter of what's in the frame and what's out".
> —Martin Scorsese

Film is not only a wide window into our own spiritual and conscious depths, not just an art of the small narratives of difference, or the catharsis through self-irony and transversality or the document of a praxis of communication, but also an art of selections (what is said and what not, what is shown and what not) and order. Through this virtue of selection, appropriately timely and architecturally ordered meaning, film is political, according to Michel Foucault's definition of political approach.

The rejection of the mirror of nature in the renewed character of epistemology is related to the philosophically pragmatic, linguistic, rhetorical, ontological and sociological turns. Within these philosophical

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23 R. Rorty, *Private Irony and Liberal Hope*, in Walter Brogan, James Risser (eds.), *American Continental Philosophy. A Reader*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2000, p. 46.

frames, the debates indicate the hybrid epistemic nature of justification that renders objectivity a concept used with a lot of precaution and not a given fact within the epistemological approach. In this respect, the relation between the philosophy of communication and epistemology in film is especially interesting, given the narrative approach in all epistemological endeavours with a specific mythologizing cortege, masking and unmasking the interests governing knowledge which are at home in film-making[24].

Ilie Pârvu, alongside other authors, is interested in the world of language and of image representing "possible worlds", the virtual being "a new form of human experience" and a "fascinating" challenge addressed to philosophy, for the virtual is nowadays both an enabling of the real, and a condition of accessibility for the real[25]. While the philosophy of communication is concentrated on the study of the principal concepts relevant to the field and on their use for the understanding of the world, of contemporary societies and future perspectives, the theory of communication is oriented toward the identification and investigation of communication models. Each model, besides the technical elements incorporated, is based on a philosophical foundation with a certain influence on the outcomes and on the limits of the big picture.

Ernesto Laclau, in his theory of the rhetorical foundations of society, destabilises the borders between rhetorical categories imprisoned in linguistics and other cultural and social signifying actions. "And, in film, the plurality of angles and close-ups in Griffith's production is metonymic in nature, while in Charlie Chaplin and Eisenstein a metaphoric substitution of images structures the narrative. Indeed, any semiotic system can, for Jakobson, be understood in terms of metaphoric/ metonymic alternative"[26].

In the case of the film *Natural Born Killers* the camera itself is ironic, incessantly operating metonymic orders of meaning. This is a fascinating postmodern film that adopts irony as its method: in describing the romantic floweret when Mickey meets Mallory, in constructing violence as the main trait of American life, the attention given to violence and killers, the high level of tolerance for violence, the fact that we have become accustomed to it and the treatment of the killers by popular culture as though they were royalty are all ironic, and are all metonymies standing

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24 See also Alphonso Lingis, "The Unlived Life Is Not Worth Examining", in John Sallis (ed.), *Portraits of American Continental Philosophers,* Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1999, pp. 119-127.
25 *Ibidem*, p. 196.
26 Ernesto Laclau, *The Rhetorical Foundations of Society,* London, Verso, 2014, p. 60.

for the deterioration of meaning in our lives. Here irony allied with metonymy is postmodern political criticism. As Laclau noticed, "Copjec, in her film studies, has shown how close-ups are not a part within the whole, but a part that functions as the very condition of the whole, as its name, leading to that contamination between particularity and totality that, as we have seen, is at the heart of all tropological movement"[27].

A tropological interplay reveals the meaning of the series entitled "The Man in the High Castle". The title is built around this pun, which relates to the main character, a mysterious figure, a subjective instantiation, fulfilling the objective tropological role of panopticon and beacon of truth, symbolically situated up in the high castle, metaphorically an area which is also a higher level of hope and elevated human values such as freedom. The panopticon issues possibilities, new narratives, throughout film, which become alternatives and even strategies, so convincing that they are worth fighting for. The Nazi-Japanese imperialist and totalitarian universe of the film is, for the most part, deprived of humanity, truth, liberty and friendship. In this universe young romance joins with a quest for humanity and freedom, due to the catalytic action of the presence of a film reel, something solid and tangible, and the burgeoning of the idea of the possibility of the existence of many others. The film reel is a metonymic signifier for the film in general. Each film reel contains a brighter and better alternative universe. The reel of film which the main characters, a young woman and a young man, save and protect is a metaphor for the possibility of an alternative and for all the moving battles that have taken place in history, either led by young people, closer to the ideals of new political horizons, or intensified and carried forward by them. The film reels are the initiators of a politics of new possibilities, of strategies of allegiance and betrayal, of innocence lost and purposes found. These reels are engaged in a merry go round of events and suggest the myth of eternal return, an eternal return of values. Jean-Luc Godard said that cinema is truth 24 times a second.

The values of friendship and human life are in fact the main forces that keep the reel going. And the reel is both a metaphor (standing for freedom and, eventually, for life itself) and a metonymic signifier (the part which indicates the entire universe of a film). We should always pay attention to the metaphors and the metonyms in films, for they are more than a stylistic interplay, expressing the intertextuality and rhetorical foundations of consciousness, meaning and human life, as well as the strong interconnectivity of these three.

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27 *Ibidem,* p. 67.

Film as political philosophy succeeds in delineating particular areas of concern with politics, aspects of the ideal and of actual roles in and of politics, and last but not least, the immensity of what is implicit in the political realm (intentions, interests, subtexts etc.) and its paramount importance in public and, ultimately, in personal life.

—Henrieta Şerban
Bucharest, September 18, 2017

PHILOSOPHY / CINEMA: "BEYOND ANY DISCIPLINE"

MARINA ROMAN

A challenge! An equally scientific, creative and elegant discourse, an exercise in style that testifies that acribia is not just fertile, it can also be spectacular. A passionate reading, like hiking along mountain paths, where, until you get to the cottage, you are always worried about being abducted, stolen by the forms and colours of the vegetation that, in your imagination, have the power to transform themselves unexpectedly.

Political Philosophy in Motion *.mkv is a book for specialists who have, if not the vocation, at least the temptation towards transdisciplinarity. Moreover, I dare to say that this volume – written by Viorella Manolache – proves the capacity of the young generation of philosophers to revive and re-live this essential concept, sharing this capacity with exemplary precursors from the history of Romanian culture. The term, introduced in 1970 by Jean Piaget, was redefined, developed and promoted by the Romanian scholar Basarab Nicolescu: "Transdisciplinarity – as the *trans* prefix indicates – looks at what is at the same time between disciplines, within different disciplines, and beyond disciplines. Its aim is the understanding of the present world, one of its imperatives being the unity of knowledge." – Basarab Nicolescu, *Manifesto of Transdisciplinarity.* It was Basarab Nicolescu who, in his preface to *The Gold Number* (Nemira Publishing House – Bucharest, 2016) by Matila C. Ghyka, calls him "the New Pythagoras" and puts him alongside Pius Servien (Nicolae Piu Şerban Coculescu) as one of the founders of a new scientific field: mathematical aesthetics – "Celebrated in France, almost ignored in their home country (...), both are great precursors of transdisciplinarity."

It's not by chance that Viorella Manolache starts her quest with *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989), one of the most interesting books by Linda Hutcheon, who is herself a remarkable exponent of transdisciplinarity, recognized for her influence as an original theoretician of postmodernism. University Professor Emeritus at the Department of English and the Centre for Comparative Literature at the University of Toronto, Linda Hutcheon

has an impressive body of work, her books approaching fictional narrative, irony, parody, postmodern literature, Canadian ethnic minority writing, and, not least in importance, feminist theory from a new perspective,

   Viorella Manolache begins the discussion "under the *influence* and the *confluence* of the concepts of *dedoxifying*/*dedoxification*, launched by Linda Hutcheon in *The Politics of Postmodernism*", and the demonstration we witness from the first chapter is – using a term from music – an exercise in virtuosity, "focused almost exclusively on the determination of the meanings attributed to it and on the (re)confirmation of the interest given to the term, due to its ability to assert itself in its current usage as a conductive way of meaning". The title of this chapter – "Starting clips: sense conducing prefixes" – announces, from the very beginning, the conjunction of political philosophy and cinema, at the formal level, in a sui generis syntax. The clip is, in the context of film, the image carrier between the camera's starting-up and shutting down (the rough clip), or between two edited cuts (the useful clip); the clip has its own semantics – the basic elements of cinematic language (framing, angling, movement of the camera) and the supra segmental elements (sound, light) – which fits, following the editing process, into the semantics of the general discourse by being contextualized into sequence and then into the finished material.

   Daniel Frampton's *filmosophy* brings together the links between the two areas and, as the author notes, "reopens the series of questions on the conceptual path specific to the cinematographic field that begins with the ways of inserting philosophy into film and extends to forcing, motivating, illustrating, possessing, patronizing, or multiplying the basic research (film + philosophy). Working philosophically on a film is the recommended method against the application of film philosophy or at the expense of potentiating/impregnating a film with more philosophy than the philosophical quintessence itself." From here on, the approach to political philosophy ... *mkv* – a political philosophy with elementary video attributes (MKV is a flexible format of standard video files that can include video and audio, a format that offers the best ever media experience) is applied to a filmography which, dare I say it, is vast. Interestingly, Viorella Manolache chose, with few exceptions, films from the third millennium; not at random, but because they are clearly the conscious expression of current ideologies. It is appropriate, however, to draw attention to the titles she chose from the second half of the history of cinema. Because films like *Europe '51*, director Roberto Rossellini (1952); *Lord of the Flies*, director Peter Brook (1963); *Fahrenheit 451*, director François Truffaut (1966); *Kramer vs. Kramer*, director Robert Benton (1979); or *Offret*, the last film by Andrei Tarkovsky, made in Sweden and

finished the year the Russian film director died (1986), form, from the perspective of this research, a paradigm shared by the recent *Hail, Caesar!*, director Ethan Coen, Joel Coen; *Nocturnal Animals*, director Tom Ford; or *Suicide Squad*, director David Ayer, all three produced in 2016.

Because of the way in which the volume is conceived, it constitutes a *conceptual template* which encourages both a constant updating of the history of the cinema and, because of the particular interest that filmologists will have, a drilling down into the history of the cinema, in search of the isotopes of the vast field of political philosophy.

And since we are talking about filmologists, I confess – as a filmologist – that I'm grateful to Viorella Manolache for giving us not only the chance to read a film, beyond its *fabula* and its *specific language*, but to use also an analytical tool...transdisciplinarity. Why is this of great importance? The answer Pius Servien, whose opinion Matila Ghyka accepts, gives us: "We must free ourselves from the last slavery – specialization (...). We must learn this freedom that is so difficult that even the great spirits hesitate to adopt it. With the prudence of molluscs, they move between two shells. We must preserve all the possibilities of movement, all the degrees of freedom that exist potentially in the human species. We have to find a safety and a wisdom that goes beyond that of the bivalve mollusc, processes that perhaps give birth to a pearl but which ignore the rest of the universe".

CHAPTER ONE

STARTING FRAMES:
SENSE-CONDUCING PREFIXES

Under the *influence* and at the *junction* of meanings of the concept of *dedoxification* advanced by Linda Hutcheon in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989), the introductory chapter engages in a *discussion* centred on fixing meanings which may thereby be assigned, and on the (re)confirmation of any interest granted to the term, thanks to its ability to assert itself, in reality, as a sense-conducting modality.

The present volume, while emphasizing such a clarifying purpose, will place the concept under the pressure of double prefixes, explaining the formation of the word *dedoxification*, which adds the element "of" – identifying the nature of the object which it determines and revealing the method of construction for the actual object of the action, without omitting the significance in the degree of comparison which is assigned to the second lexical segment, "dox". Therefore, this assumption, when put to work, will restrict the range of any proffered opinions, involving them in textual and visual compositions, thus verifying the status of "frames" identified in this depiction of ideological architecture (re)placed *behind* cultural constructions. The structure established will access both composure and derivation, having the effect of sense dynamic, dual management and targeting: both *inside* and *outside*.

Un-clarified to the end, with deliberate openings and (re)contextual concept inventories, the notion of *dedoxification* is explicitly defined and used by Linda Hutcheon (1989:3) in reference to a triple registry: postmodernism *dedoxifies* any cultural depictions of their political residues, and indicates that the world is not knowable unless one draws upon significant, socially established networks of systems, and those events that make up culture, recognizing that historical metafiction constitutes a way of legitimizing collective identity; if *pastiche* has been accorded the status of being the official sign of neoconservative postmodernism, or the allegorical impulse of postmodernism, then

postmodern parody[1] offers a challenging review/rereading of the past, confirming the power of the default historical representations it implicitly undermines, in order to offer, in the end, a formula of presumption, a *dedoxification* with respect to representations of the past (Hutcheon, 1989:95); the action of *dedoxification* accredits the idea/theory that postmodernism is part of the crisis of cultural authority.

From/in the file of sense deferment[2], there is a *manifest* and *manifested* interest in the verb *to dedoxify* and in the action of *dedoxification*, impossible to separate/decouple from/in the Hutcheonian context, according to which *dedoxification* equates with the challenge posed by postmodernism to mimetic assumptions about representation (Hutcheon, 1989:30). If *to dedoxify* = to problematize by self-defining, in terms of denaturalizing the primary sense and disclosing the ideology behind cultural norms, *dedoxification* – as an artificial/constructed term – supposedly accepts the operation of extracting particular meanings from the generality of received opinions. The concept is to be accounted for at the confluence of cultural landmarks stemming from specific societies which operate with certain cultural forms. *Revelation, clash, unveiling through denaturalization – of that which ideology manages and accepts as truth –* are clues (sometimes *hard,* sometimes *soft*) associated with the concept.

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1 We can consider that the parodic-postmodern clues offered to political philosophy are elements of the direct (trenchant-ironic) method which operates, at the limit of *an ideologically assumed lack of seriousness*, in the films *The Dictator* (2012) and *The Interview* (2014). The first clue invoked by *The Dictator* overestimates the product of a mélange between "supreme leader" and "*Air France* stewardess" as dictatorial origins/foundations, not ignoring the pre-fabricated-by-image status of the leader (his faked presence at the premiere of the film "Saturday Night Fever"). *The Interview*, labeled as "an act of terrorism" (the film contains and possesses attributes of terrorist action - *sic*!), re-filters, through the tabloid category and the tabloidization effect, a rounding-up of "what" is seen" and "what is produced in the subtext" (through the privileged presenter-producer relationship), and exemplifies the category of the privileged fan and his relationship (with all the resulting consequences) with the North Korean dictator Kim Jong-Un. Besides this, *Deadpool* (2016), for example, becomes a cinematic construct, based exclusively on parodic methods and modes delivered in an unsophisticated style, without any disguising conventions, even replacing the names of the actors with general appeals, indicating a parodic category.
2 See, in this sense, the virtual debate about the concept, during the forum dedicated to the subject, http://forum.wordreference.com/threads/oposition-leads-to-dedoxification.2111800/.