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Confronti con Heidegger a cura di Giuseppe Semerari

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demic writing" (25). So much of what academics refer to as the postmodern, then, is caught up in this migration of the terminologies and priorities of criticism into other fields of study, such as philosophy and historiography, and then back into literature. The adoption of the rhetoric of fiction by other disciplines brings to life "otherwise potentially tedious details" (23) that are their stock-in-trade but effectively forestalls efforts at gaining critical distance (23-24). The change in vocabulary modifies the academy's view of the world and this in turn motivates the proposal that the world has indeed changed (3).

Simpson contends that the postmodern storyteller is quite different from Benjamin's. The latter, by allowing the listener to participate in the authenticity of shared experience, gives counsel for the future. In the "academic postmodernism" convincingly described by Simpson, the "self-enthusiasm and self-projection" (26) of the "autobiographical moment" prevails. Storytelling is limited in scope to the writer's situatedness or historic specificity, a state of affairs that dovetails nicely with the postmodern valorization of local knowledge and delegitimation of all metanarratives. Legitimacy is gained when writing about oneself, ostensibly the only thing the individual is capable of knowing, and the particular is considered "as effectively imbued with the determining powers of the social whole" (13).

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Confronti con Heidegger

a cura di Giuseppe Semerari. Bari: Edizioni Dedalo, 1992.

The volume edited by Semerari presents a series of confrontations with Heidegger—confrontations which occur at two levels: 1) between the philosophers who have contributed to the volume and Heidegger, and 2) between Heidegger and various philosophers of the western tradition.

These confrontations set for themselves the task, and have the merit, of deepening and widening our understanding of the thematic and problematic ramifications of Heidegger's thinking throughout the history of philosophy—a ramification that for Heidegger himself was never above all and necessarily historical, except for the fact that the history of Western philosophy, as the history of metaphysics, represented for him the history of the concealment of the truth of being.

Heidegger comes out of these confrontations as a philosopher modernity cannot dispense with, and yet as one whose thinking needs to be critically examined and gone over again.

The volume starts with an essay by Valerio Bernardi on the relationship between dialectical theology and Heideggerian ontology. The essay focusses on Bultmann's appropriation of certain Heideggerian themes such as the historicity of man as *Dasein* and his potentiality-for-being and resoluteness, as well as the theme of being-towards-death. For Bultmann, Bernardi says, Heideggerian philosophy is not "a philosophy, but the philosophy" (8);

it provides the theologian with a method that may enable him to expound the evangelical message to the contemporary world. The debate on whether Heideggerian philosophy—or, for that matter, any "philosophy whose presuppositions are atheistic" (32)—can be a useful method for theology follows directly from Bultmann's position.

After considering the criticism of Heim, Löwith, and Brunner, Bernardi concludes by stating the difficulty of establishing a relationship between a theology based on Revelation and an atheistic philosophy; moreover, he says that Heidegger's view of the matter was that of a subordination of theology to philosophy. As Bernardi says, "[s]uch a relationship, in which philosophy becomes the basis and the presupposition for theological work, is problematic for a theology that, like dialectic theology, has always sought autonomy" (32).

The second essay, on Heidegger and Plotinus by Ferruccio De Natale is not an attempt at tracing any kind of relationship between the two thinkers, but to show that a relationship is in fact impossible. Accordingly, the essay itself—well-written and well-researched—is like a little jewel that leaves one with the same impression a little jewel gives: it is beautiful; but it is difficult to say more about it. Perhaps the most interesting point is when De Natale discusses the concept of destiny in the two thinkers. There is, however, little wonder that, at the end of his essay, De Natale asks: "Was then our journey a *useless* one?" (his italics). And his answer, "Yes, especially if we wanted to 'show' or 'explain' or 'prove' anything, but what we wanted to do was trace consonances between two equally great and different thinkers" (65). And these consonances, as his title says, are imperfect.

The essay by Francesco Valerio (seventh and last in the collection) on Heidegger and Spinoza is not a jewel but a brick—better, a whole solid structure. Valerio's is indeed a very useful reflection on today's philosophical dis/orientation and the need for a re-orientation. Valerio starts by pointing out Heidegger's historical silence on Spinoza. For Valerio, Heidegger's harsh judgment of Spinoza's work—that Spinoza used concepts of medieval Scholasticism and of other philosophers who preceded him, notably Giordano Bruno, in a rarely acritical way—was enough to determine his "historical sense" (Valerio puts this phrase in scare quotes) in such a way as to "declare Spinoza's position as theoretically irrelevant within that dynamic of the destiny of Being as embodied in modern metaphysics" (213).

Valerio's essay is thematically connected to the fourth essay in the volume, by Michele Illiceto, on the relationship between the 'self' and the 'is' in Heidegger's ontology. The philosopher with whom Heidegger is here having a confrontation is Husserl, concerning the Cartesian *cogito.*

In Heidegger's reading of Descartes, Illiceto says, man enters the scene with the *cogito*; indeed, "he posits himself as the scene" (121). By way of overturning the sense of the Cartesian *cogito*, Heidegger establishes Being as the scene so that the 'is' becomes the place of *a-letheia* in

which "man appears" (125). For Husserl, Illiceto continues, the 'is' opens up in and through the movement of the Ego; the 'self' finds itself—as its 'beyond'—in this movement and place. For Heidegger, on the other hand, the 'beyond' has the configuration of the 'already': it is "the space of the 'is' understood as *phusis*" (125). What Husserl and Heidegger share is Husserl's dictum to go 'towards the things themselves'; that is, as Illiceto explains, not to the things as such, but to their self-sameness. However, they diverge in their understanding and employment of the *über*: "in Heidegger, transcendence indicates the 'beyond' that, in the 'There,' is the sphere in which we are 'already' thrown and in which we are in the manner of having-been-thrown. In Husserl, instead, it indicates the way to the constitution, through reduction, of the Ego" (130). For this reason, Heidegger's ontology becomes an ontology of impossibility.

Illiceto's conclusion is that Heidegger leaves us with two fundamental impossibilities: the first is that man has no access to temporality; the second, that he is condemned to the absence of himself. In this sense, Illiceto proposes a move away "from a relation [between the 'is' and the 'self'] founded on transcendence to a relation founded on intentionality" (139; brackets mine). A return to Husserl? Not quite so. Illiceto ends his essay by referring to E. Bloch's 'ontology of possibility'—one which Heidegger, in establishing a 'possibility of ontology,' has indeed not provided. He reassumes Heidegger's ontology as follows: "man configures himself as a possibility that is fundamentally unable to be the possibility he is" (140).

The essay of Domenica Discipio, third in the volume, is on Heidegger and Freud. As in the case with Plotinus and Spinoza, Heidegger's relation to Freud is not direct or explicit. Perhaps, a reason for this can be found, Discipio suggests, in Heidegger's declaration, in *Being and Time*, of "the need to operate a critique of traditional thinking that, in its historical forms, has covered and concealed the essential historicity of *Dasein* and of its Being" (70).

To draw a confrontation between Heidegger and Freud, Discipio starts with a discussion of Heidegger's *Zollikoner Seminäre* (1969) on the meaning of the word consciousness (*Bewußtsein*), where, for the first time, Heidegger "evokes" Freud, "so accurately ignored in his whole philosophical reflection" (69). Discipio goes through M. Bartels's and W. J. Richardson's works on the connections between Heidegger's thinking and Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Both authors ask the question as to whether it is possible to apply Heidegger's onto-existential analysis to Freud's theory of human personality. However, by way of overturning these questions, Discipio is interested in whether it is possible to use psychoanalysis for a rethinking of Heidegger's thought in an attempt to understand why Heidegger might have wanted to focus "constantly," and "only and always" (95), on the Being of *Dasein*.

After recalling Heidegger's emphasis on the primacy of ontology (here Discipio reminds us of the most fundamental metaphysical question:

Why is there anything rather than nothing?), she goes through a series of similar themes in Heidegger and Freud, of which the most important is the theme of the *Es* as what "gives existence to man" in Freud, and as the *Es* of the *Es gibt* in Heidegger. For the latter, Discipio explains, "the being of man is concealed in the depths of the *Es*" (97). Inasmuch as the *Es gibt Sein* constitutes a destiny—for it makes man what he is—thinking moves from the *Es* to the *gibt*, to the giving itself as an "act of love" not different from the libido of the *Es* in Freud, that is, Eros. Consequently, Discipio speaks of Eros and Thanatos as the two fundamental principles of Freud's theory, and Thanatos is to be found in Heidegger's Being-towards-death. However, Discipio also says that, notwithstanding their similarities, there is in Freud, particularly in relation to the death instinct, a departure from a possible analogy with Heidegger.

Mauro G. Minervini's essay on Heidegger and Hegel (fourth essay in the volume) is an analysis of Heidegger's understanding of phenomenology as phenomeno-logy, that is, literally, as logic in the Hegelian sense—a sense that, according to Heidegger, Hegel receives directly from Aristotle. The essay also contains a good discussion of certain central themes in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, necessary to an understanding of Heidegger's interpretation of Hegel's concept of time as "constitutive of logical labor" (161).

Finally, Giuseppe Semerari's essay deals with the relationship between Heidegger and Parmenides and, essentially, with the question of man as being (entity). Semerari starts by clearing the way from the two current and opposite interpretations of Heidegger's thinking as either humanistic (with an emphasis on anthropocentrism) or anti-humanistic (with an emphasis on the death of man). Then he draws an important distinction between two possible philosophical models to approach the question of man and his cosmic disposition: either a Parmenidean or a Protagorean model. The former grounds itself on the fundamental undecidability of man's destiny by man himself; the latter, on the idea of self-responsibility which follows from Protagoras's discovery that man is 'the measure of all things' (168-69).

Obviously, Heidegger works with and within the Parmenidean model. From here, Semerari moves to the concept of man's "facticity" and to the hermeneutics of facticity—that is, Semerari says quoting Gadamer's "felicitous definition", which I paraphrase— the fact that man cannot conceptualize his existence. Semerari identifies Heidegger's Parmenidism in the fact that, in Heidegger, man himself is not freedom but "the place in which freedom liberates itself" (180), for freedom is Being. Unlike the Protagorean model, in Parmenides, it is not "man who has __, but __ has man as its determination, as its There (*Da*)..." (181). Man is a project, but the project is tautological—here one finds a relation between Semerari's and Illiceto's essays—for it is the "choice of what man already is by virtue of his being-thrown in the way in which he has been thrown" (182).

Semerari's essay—but this is true of all the others—is mainly concerned with the issue of freedom and destiny, and thus with what today, in the era of technology and danger theorized by Heidegger, still can and must be thought. By way of confronting Heidegger on the ground of his confrontations with other thinkers of the Western tradition, the whole volume becomes an important source of critical orientations for the future of thinking, as well as a serious reflection on themes whose problematics have not yet been exhausted.

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Il gioco dei limiti. L'idea di esistenza in Nietzsche.

Furio Semerari.
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For the past forty years, Nietzsche has been a major interlocutor in contemporary Italian critical thought. He been subjected, in nearly chronological succession, to compelling interpretations by existentialists, structuralists, Marxists, thinkers of the negative and of difference, and hermeneuticians. Some readings, in particular, have become witness to and icons of specific intellectual-cultural moods, and here we can briefly recall the influential monographs by Gianni Vattimo, Antonio Penzo, Giangiorgio Pasqualotto, Giuseppe Masini, Massimo Cacciari, Giorgio Colli. In each case, Nietzsche's peculiar textuality was made to support the thesis that his Overman was a model for liberation and emancipation, or that he was systematically misrepresented for the early part of the century, especially in Germany. On another front, Nietzsche's notion of difference manifested significantly disparate traits to the Italians than it did to the French; thus he was read as the ultimate hermeneutician of endless interpretation or, on yet another reading, as the last expression of an utterly fragmented subject(ivity) of metaphysical thought, the announcer of achieved nihilism. Of course, artists and writers also have dug inside the endlessly configurable *Nachlass*, especially in the seventies and through the eighties. One aspect which recurs often is the elusive rapport between body and meaning, life and art, the dynamic of the creative impulse, life itself as constantly changing positions; "gaming", as we might say with Lyotard.

Fulvio Semerari's book intends to re-read the Colli-Montinari corpus in terms of a problematic concept which is perhaps not sufficiently thematized by Nietzsche himself, at least explicitly, but which can serve as the background web or linkage among a constellation of other assertions and divagations only apparently contradictory or unrelated. This is the concept of *limit*, which according to Semerari takes on several meanings and on the basis of which we can further penetrate and pay homage to the thinker who refuses to be, who cannot be, categorized, and seems destined to spur and produce ever-different interpretations. Beginning with Karl Löwith's observation that Nietzsche's "travailled thinking is