

# Note on Hegel and Heidegger<sup>1</sup>

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Delp compares, it is true, Hegel and Heidegger. And he even says that: “In some extensive passages, Heidegger’s *Dasein* is the simple transposition of the finite (*verendlichte Parallele*) of Hegel” (1935: 56). Unfortunately, for Delp, Hegel is still the “panlogist” maliciously invented by Schelling, who almost managed to erase the true Hegelian thought from the history of philosophy. Similarly, talking about Heidegger, Delp *counters* Hegel with what is – actually – deeply and essentially Hegelian. He also manages to make Heidegger a “consequent antipode” (1935: 79) of Hegel: “Hegel hypostatizes the positive component, man’s *being*-component (*Seins-Komponente*); Heidegger hypostatizes the negative component, the finitude-limitation component (*Endlichkeits-Beschränkung-Komponente*)” (1935: 80). Or better, this opposition shows only Delp’s complete misunderstanding of Hegel’s thought. Although we cannot deal more in depth with this aspect, we would like nevertheless to translate some passages, which show clearly how close is the relation of Heidegger’s anthropology with that of Hegel.

“This negative-or-negating absolute, this pure freedom, is – its appearance (*Erscheinung*) – death; and through its faculty/aptitude (*Fähigkeit*) to die the subject reveals itself (or proves himself: *erweist sich*) as free and utterly above all coercion” (Hegel VII: 370). “Totality, as a singularity [that is, the free and historical human being, the *Dasein* as *je-meines* in Heidegger] is posited upon itself as merely possible [totality], not existing as a static-isolated-being [*nicht fürsichseiende*]; in its subsistence, it is no other than that [singular totality] which is always ready for death, which performed an act of relinquishment [*Verzicht*] of itself” (Hegel XIX: 231).

<sup>1</sup> Review (1936) to A. Delp, *Tragische Existenz*, in *Recherches philosophiques*, V, 1935-1936: 415-419; first English translation, edited by Marco Filoni; a very special thanks to Nina Kousnetzoff, who granted us permission to translate and publish Kojève’s essay.

“The act-of-recognizing (*anerkennen*) the singularity of the totality brings with itself, therefore, the nothingness of death (...). Each one can know whether the other is [or not] a totality [that is, *Dasein*] only by forcing him to go to death. And in the same way, each one can reveal himself to himself [proving himself] as a totality only by going with himself to death” (Hegel XIX: 299). “Man is this night, this empty Nothingness which contains all in its simplicity (...). It is the night that one sees when one looks into a man’s eyes (...). The active-power (*Macht*) of drawing images out of this night or of letting them slip away into it; active-self-positing (*Selbstsetzen*), internal (*innerliches*) consciousness, action (*Tun*). What-exists-as-a-static-given-being (*das Seiende*) returned into this night; but the movement of this active power is equally posited” (Hegel XX: 180). “If one represents [as Hegel himself does] consciousness [that is, Heidegger’s *Dasein*] as going beyond [its determinate innate *nature*, which is its *Sein*, its static-given-being, or – in Heideggerian terms – which is simply the *Vorhanden-sein* of the *Dasein*] and as wanting to bring some other content [than that of this innate nature, of this Heideggerian *Vorhanden-sein* that Hegel calls also *Nichtgetanhaben*, What-man-did-not-do] to objective-actuality, then one represents this consciousness as making a nothing work actively its way (*hinarbeitend*) into the nothingness” (Hegel II: 261).

Generally speaking: “in my view, (...) everything hangs on understanding and expressing the True [that is, the being completely revealed to itself by the *logos*, by the reasonable speech] not [just] as substance, but just as much as subject (...). The living substance (...), as subject, is the pure [and] simple Negativity” (Hegel II: 12). Now, this Negativity (or freedom), this negating absolute is – in its isolation – death, or nothingness (*Nichts*; cf. Hegel V: 110). What converts the *substance* into a *subject* – Heidegger would say: the *Vorhandensein* into the *Dasein* –, in other words, what converts the being which only *is* (within or as space) into a being which reveals itself to itself as a being that reveals the being (within or as time); what posits the *totality* of *what is possible* (that is, *what is nonexistent* within space) as a *singularity* that have a duration within time (or, even better, as time); in other words, what converts a merely natural being into a human being, i.e. a free historical individual conscious of the being and of its own being, is the essential *finitude* of the being, which reveals itself to itself as such, as death.

This could sufficiently show whoever knows, to some extent, Heidegger’s philosophy how close this latter is to Hegel’s thought. In fact, we can identify in Hegel almost all those ideas defined as specifically Heideggerian, or Kirkegaardian, or Nietzschean, etc. That the human being (*Dasein*) is essentially a being-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-sein*); that the human *world* (*Welt*) substantially differs from *nature* (*Natur: Vorhandensein*) because it is modified, or

– at least – revealed/considered as having to be modified, by work (*Zuhandensein*); that understanding (*Verstehen*), Speech (*Rede*) or reasonable thinking are based on the practical-and-emotional-presence (*Befindlichkeit*) – and not that purely “theoretical” – of the man in his world; that the totality of being reveals itself to the man only within and through anxiety (*Angst*), which shows him his own finitude, his death; that the human being is not only a being that *is* within space, but also – and above all – a nothingness which, as time, annihilates; that at the level of human consciousness such annihilation manifests itself as the heroic-resolution (*Entschlossenheit*) to accept the annihilation of the human, in the strict sense – which is time and pure possibility, not real – within and through the active *realization* (that is, *spatialisation*) of his essential possibilities; all this, and much more, is also Hegelian.

By mentioning this, we have no intention of depreciating Heidegger’s work nor – this would be completely absurd – of indicating any plagiarism. Our only desire is to highlight its *philosophical* value, showing that the ideas of his work can be directly linked to – bypassing Kierkegaard’s or Nietzsche’s mythological poetry – to those of a man who undoubtedly developed a philosophical thought and who can be certainly counted among the greatest philosophers of humanity. And again, only by comparing him to Hegel, can we see what in Heidegger is philosophical and philosophically new. Now, it seems to us that such a newness does exist and exists as a definitive asset of philosophy. This new asset is the resolute acceptance of the ontological *dualism*, of the essential and ontologically irreducible difference between the human-being (*Dasein*) and the natural-being (*Vorhandensein*). Of course, this difference has often been affirmed, especially since the advent of Judeo-Christian thought; however, so far we have not acknowledged any *philosophy*, that is, any *ontology* that might accept two irreducible modes of the being. The Kantian revolution had only cleared the way for this dualist ontology, and – afterwards – nobody has dealt with it. As to Hegel, he never admitted even the possibility of questioning the traditional monistic postulate: all that is in one and the same way. And it is this which makes his ontology – on the whole – a complete, albeit grand, failure. His ontology, which – being unique – was aimed at supporting natural sciences, does not account for his anthropology, his phenomenological description of the finite, annihilating, negating man who *is* time. For him, however, the traditional ontology, unsettled in its deepest foundations by the introduction of Negativity, which aimed at providing an anthropological interpretation, also ceases to account for the identical subsistence of the spatial natural being (in three or four dimensions). Since then philosophy has failed to overcome this impasse of Hegelian ontology, opting for a general abandonment of ontology and thus ceasing its existence as philosophy in the strongest sense of the

term. Inspired by Husserl's rediscovery of philosophy, Heidegger is the first – after Hegel – to answer the ontological question to its greatest extent. He is the first to ask the question, without assuming the supposedly evident principle of monism. Of course, his ontology remains so far a plan. Nevertheless, this plan is such as to prevent the risk of repeating, by realizing it, what had already be done, that is, the ontological monism that – with Hegel – had apparently exhausted *all* its resources. This program is such that it apparently does not preclude the possibility of realizing an ontology that might finally account for the truths about human existence, mythologically expressed in the Bible, phenomenologically described by Hegel, and accepted, as to their essence, by modern thinkers in general and especially by Heidegger.

This notwithstanding, Heidegger does not limit himself to the transcription of the phenomenological content of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* into a (if not German, at least) modern language. He modifies it markedly. And – what we consider seriously dangerous for the future ontology – he modifies it by cancelling – or more precisely, by softening – whatever is related to the element of Negativity in a strict sense, which nevertheless constitutes the specific human element in Hegel's anthropology.

Essentially, Heideggerian anthropology reveals/is founded on three primary and irreducible categories (or *Existenziale*): *Befindlichkeit*, *Verstehen* and *Angst* (the *Rede* – the *logos* – that is deduced from the first two). These categories correspond to Hegel's three primary and irreducible anthropological categories: *Begierde*, *Arbeit* and *Kampf auf Leben und Tod*. Now, in each of these three categories, the active-negating element is attenuated by Heidegger. The *Befindlichkeit* is the man reduced to the feeling of his 'being' and his 'ought' (*dass es zu sein hat*). The *Begierde*, too, is all this but also something more: the man who is – and ought to be – by *negating, removing, destroying* actively the given being which is not his own, which is not him; the man who is what he is, as a man, only within and through such active negation of the non-human given being. The *Verstehen* (and the reasonable speech) is the man who actively achieves a goal (*Entwurf*), thus mastering the thing and becoming its master through his act of *understanding* (that is, *naming*) it. This perfectly corresponds to what Hegel states about *work* (*Arbeit*). However, he claims that work is always active *negation* of the given form of the transhuman being. (Hegelian *Welt*, too, arises only within and through work in a strict sense, whereas Heidegger's *Welt* is *Welt* and not *Natur* for the simple reason of the presence of a *Befindlichkeit*). In short, it is only within and through the *anxiety* (*Angst*) revealing his death that man definitively constitutes himself as a man, that is, as historical free individual, who can ultimately become *sophos*, i.e. the man who is what he does and knows what he is, and who expresses all this within and through his

reasonable speech, through his philosophy which shows him to himself in the form of a nothingness that annihilates as time within space. And this is precisely what Hegel states about the *anxiety* (*Furcht*) felt within and through the *fight* for life and death. Nevertheless, unlike Heidegger, Hegel states that what has human or, more precisely, the humanising value attributed by Heidegger is not the anxiety due to the passive contemplation of one's approaching biological end, but only the anxiety within and through the fight for death – that is, within and through the active-*negation* of the given being as What-is-like-him-without-being-him (in short: of another man), of a being which can then negate him actively, too –, in other words, it is only the death revealed within and through such negating fight. It is in this way that, in Heidegger, the other man emerges only as a *Mit-dasein* or as a mere *Mit-sein*, which can be passively understood as a mere being-together-as-men within the spatial nature converted into *Welt*, into the human, social, historical sphere/world, through the simple co-presence of many *Befindlichkeiten*. On the contrary, in Hegel, the other-man as well as the being-together-as-men constitute themselves only within and through the *negating* interaction of the fight to the *Anerkennen*, that is, the act of recognising others and being recognized as *human-being*, a human-being who constitutes himself as human only within and through this fight, or better, within and through this act of recognising that is mediated by this fight, through the anxiety over possible death as actively given to the other and voluntarily accepted by him. Therefore, the Hegelian reconstruction of the human-being shows us this being as being essentially social and historical, that is, as being always either in the attitude of active internegation with other men (i.e. as taking part in wars and bloody revolution constitutive/constituent of the State) or in the attitude of the communal active negation of the given form of the natural being (that is, as integrated into a working society), thus participating/cooperating in the active creation of an ever-new present of the spatial being, resting on the nothingness of the past of the being that is actively negated in view of the nothingness given as possibility of the future, which – being human in a strict sense – has thus a real presence (*Gegenwart*) in this spatial present temporilized, “presented”, converted into historical now. On the other hand, Heidegger's reconstruction, excluding and softening the constitutive value of the negating action of *fight* and *work* (this work is – according to Hegel – actively imposed on the vanquished by the victor of the fight), which arose from the negating desire, does not necessarily lead to the constitution of society (the State) and history. In other terms, the *Dasein* might constitute itself by remaining in its isolation, without any contact with the other-man: if, on the one hand, we clearly understand how and why Heideggerian anxiety over death individualizes the *Dasein*, on the other we do not understand how

and why such anxiety could or should really socialize and historicize it. Now, there is undoubtedly an insufficiency, even in the phenomenological description: the “essence” man is determined by the Social and the Historical not less than by the Individual sphere; and human “existence” seems to be characterized not so much by the *fact* of being finite (biological subsistence is finite, too) but rather by the *voluntary* death, by the death without biological necessity, so easily accepted by himself and the others and so often imposed on others. And such insufficiency of the phenomenological description may have serious consequences for the ontology of the human-being, which such a description is supposed to make possible and accessible. Hegel had grasped this danger. When in Chapter 5 of the *Phänomenologie* he talks about the individualistic bourgeois intellectual, i.e. the man who – never risking his life nor working – realizes and understands himself without taking into account the constitutive value of the true negating action, that is, the action of fight and work, Hegel shows that this man, after the failure of the subjective idealism that he has imagined at first, comes to understand *himself* (by misunderstanding – within his self-understanding – the true man, that is, the citizen who fights and works in and for a State) within a purely individualistic anthropology, which ultimately reduces the human-being to the static-given-being (*Sein*) of an inherited skull. Now, this naturalistic anthropology can only lead to an ontology of the natural-being, which could not account for the essential human realities/truths that Heidegger would like to analyze in their own being. In fact, by opposing the *Sein* of the *Dasein*, the *Sein* that is *Existenz*, to the *Sein* of the *Vorhanden-sein*, can we consider the former as anything other than the *Sein* that manifests itself as action? And can we consider this action as anything other than the *negating* action, in the Hegelian meaning of the term, that is, as *Aufheben*, as an action that *destroys* the given natural and human being, although *preserving* it as human and natural and *sublimating* it within and through such a preserving destruction, which is performed in view of a future *aim* (*Zweck*), of some What-is-not-yet in the spatial present in which, without the active intervention of man, What-is-not-yet is – eternally – only What-is-not-at-all? And is such negating action anything more than, on one hand, work and, on the other, the fight for life and death that a man carries out in order to impose on another, whom he recognizes as a man for the simple fact that he risked his own life to impose on him as a man – such a work and such a fight that can be found wherever it is possible to speak of *human* realities and that we naturally tend to seek and find precisely there?

[...]

In fact, it is highly improbable that Hegel and Heidegger’s point of *departure* could have been a sense of finitude: men whose point of *departure* is such a sense

rather tend to clear out of it within and through a religious conversion, which gives them faith in immortality. In fact, Hegel starts from the idea of man's freedom and historicity and – quite laboriously – arrives at the idea of the finitude of the human being as a necessary ontological condition for the existential reality of the free and historical man. Later, he presumes that the fact of self-consciousness (or of the *Logos*) is not possible without the finitude of the being which reveals itself to itself as being through speech. Heidegger – at least in his philosophy – avoids the fact of freedom and historicity as point of departure, probably afraid of ending up with a *Weltanschauung*. He limits himself to the fact of self-consciousness (not to the *cogito* but to the *cogito-sum* which is *entirely* the primary philosophical datum), – and precisely like Hegel – it is from this latter that he states the necessary premise (*Cogito-sum ergo sum finitus*). Now, it is difficult to deny the fact of self-consciousness; and it does not make sense to say that there is a particular *Befindlichkeit* in view of which a *Weltanschauung* is constituted, since any *Befindlichkeit* presupposes (logically) self-consciousness with no other determination of oneself (the pure *cogito-sum*). In order to refute Hegel-Heidegger, one should therefore show that self-consciousness does not presuppose (ontologically) finitude. Now, as far as we know, neither Delp nor any other opponent of finitism has ever furnished such a demonstration. In general, one does not even understand that – to use Hegel's words – it is only in order “to comprehend and express the substance as subject” that we ascribe to such a substance-subject this Negativity, that is, the essential finitude and – finally – the consciousness of finitude, in other words, the anxiety revealing death.

The “refutation” that we find in chapter 4 of Delp's book is much simpler. Finitist “existential” philosophy is only a *Weltanschauung* that arises from the *Befindlichkeit* of the man who made the mistake – for that matter, inexplicably – of losing faith in God. Recover your faith and the Heideggerian nightmare of death will soon disappear. We do not wish to ask Delp whether believing in God means anything more than the refusal to accept the idea of death. Hegel denied it, but maybe he was wrong. We do not insist. We only draw Delp's attention on the fact that, in order to convert a philosopher as a philosopher, it is necessary to show him that he can be still a philosopher after his conversion. Now, as to Heidegger's conversion to Catholicism, it would be necessary to show him that he can continue to *understand* himself as a being that reveals the being, assuming himself as an immortal, eternal being – that is, ultimately, merely spatial (in four dimensions).

However, let us go back to our question. May we say that Hegel-Heidegger did actually prove the finitude of the human being? We are inclined to answer positively, but with an addition: to those who *want* to believe it. And, saying this, we address again the problem of *Weltanschauung*.

We have said that self-consciousness is not a *Befindlichkeit* and that, consequently, it cannot constitute by itself a *Weltanschauung*. Of course, we do not deal here with *Befindlichkeit* in a strict and common sense. We could even say that it is a *fact*, in the strong meaning of the term. Nevertheless, it is not a fact from which we can deduce necessarily/without any ambiguity the finitude of the being-conscious. Speaking of self-consciousness, Hegel and Heidegger say: *I* am conscious of (the being which is as) *myself* (*cogito-sum*). Had we not said, however, that it is an infinite God who thinks within “us” and gains consciousness of *his* being? Let us presume that the *I* think presupposes/entails the finitude of the thinker/of the being which thinks so. It follows therefrom – if it is God who thinks in “me” – that, so far as *I* think as *myself*, *I* am finite; but, so far as “*I*” think, or better, so far as *God* thinks in “me”, “*I*” am or, at least, can be infinite (immortal), precisely like the divine thinking being. Or again: from the fact that *my* thinking is finite it does not follow that *the* thinking must be finite. Let us suppose that *my* thinking, as thinking of something finite, is finite; the *thinking* (of God, as thinking of something infinite) can be infinite. Let us suppose that *I* do not manage to understand a self-consciousness that would not entail finitude; this means only that *my* finite thinking, which reveals *me my self* as finite, cannot comprehend *the* infinite thinking that reveals to God *his* being infinite. Now, it is not surprising that the finite – as finite – does not comprehend the infinite. And if the finite as finite can neither demonstrate nor comprehend the infinite, this finite is not allowed – demonstrating and comprehending himself as finite – to deny the infinite nor to deny the possibility of the infinite to *comprehend* himself as infinite. In other terms, from *cogito-sum ergo sum finitus* we cannot state that *cogitat-est ergo est infinitus* is a fallacy, nor can we exclude the possible conclusion that the *ego-cogitans*, as a mode of the *id-cogitat*, takes part – if not as *ego*, at least as (*res*) *cogitans* – in the infinite. Of course, this kind of considerations gives rise to great difficulties (on which we shall not dwell here). Nevertheless, the difficulties resulting from the contrary thesis are no less great, so that the choice of one of these two theses is not *demandé*; the choice remains *free*. Now, in order that this choice is really free, it is necessary to know the alternatives between which we have to choose. Between which alternatives is our choice here? On one hand, there is a philosophy whose point of departure is the *cogito-sum* and which results necessarily in the finitude of the *ego cogitans*; according to this philosophy, every *id-cogitat* is always an *ego-cogito*; in its perspective, *whatever* thinks is then finite, and the infinite can, at most, be thought without being himself able to think; consequently, this philosophy – as Delp efficiently noticed – is necessarily atheistic. On the other hand, there is a philosophy which presupposes the existence of an infinite; its point of departure

is the (*ego cogito-sum*), but it rapidly focuses on the (*id cogitat-est*), observing that nothing contradicts the supposition that this *cogitat* is the *cogitatio* of an infinite being; this philosophy does not exclude therefore theism. May we say that the choice at issue is a choice between theism and atheism? But what do theism and atheism mean to whoever must choose between them? In atheism, the *cogitatio* is reduced to the *cogito*, to the *ego cogito*; in other words, I am *myself* and I think myself as *myself*, without requiring a Self who is not me in order to *think* myself as myself (and to *be* myself); the *ego* is what he is by himself, and it is he who reveals himself to himself as being by himself and as revealing himself to himself; if he had to suppose a – perhaps infinite – being who is not him, this being will be a being that can be thought without being himself able to think. In short, in atheism there is an autonomous ego, but this ego is necessarily finite and conscious of his (mortal) finitude. In theism the (*ego cogito*) is connected with a (*id cogitat*) (and – ultimately – with a *cogitor*); in other words, I can be myself and think myself as myself only if I take part in the being and the thinking of a Self who is not my self; the *ego* is not what he is – *ego cogitans* – by himself, but through (and within) the Self who is not him; since this self of mine is – by definition<sup>2</sup> – infinite, the *ego* – according to the-

<sup>2</sup> We say “by definition”, because we do not know any decisive reasoning which may allow us to deduce from the fact of the (finite) *cogito* the objective reality of a transcendent infinite thinking being. In our opinion, all the demonstrations, albeit barely questionable, of the existence of God can be reduced to that proposed – in its definitive formulation – by Descartes. The reasoning can ultimately be reduced to the following: the *ego cogito* reveals the finitude of the *ego*: a finite *ego* cannot create/produce the idea of an infinite; now, the *cogito* entails – among others – this idea; *outside* my finite self there must be an *infinite*, who makes this self of mine fathom the thought/idea of infinite; the thought of infinite is an infinite thinking; now, my thinking is finite; there is, therefore, an infinite *thought outside the cogito*: we can suppose that such an infinite *thought* is the thought of the infinite *being*, since the *infinite* being entails *all* that *is* in whatever way; therefore outside myself there is a being who thinks – there is a God.

Such an argument makes sense only if we admit that a finite being cannot think the infinite, except by taking part in the (infinite) thought of an infinite being. Now, we do not understand why we should admit such a thing. Let us suppose that every thought reveals – ultimately – a being. The thought of infinite reveals then an infinite *being*. If we want, we can define this thought as infinite. If we do not introduce the postulate according to which a finite being cannot have any infinite thought (that is, revealing an infinite being), one cannot come to the conclusion that there is an infinite being *who thinks*. Now, an infinite being *which does not think* (the infinite space, for example) is certainly not God. The whole thesis is, therefore, reducible to a postulate which seems far from being evident. (The problem/argument of the ‘actual’ infinite – after Cantor and although in opposition to his own personal opinion – has no longer any theological meaning: apart from the Continuous, any ‘actual’ infinite can be transcended, that is, converted into a non-‘actual’ infinite). In more general terms, the postulate which allows for a demonstration of theism states that the (finite) being can never transcend itself (not even within and through its thinking). Now, modern (atheistic) anthropology definitely assumes this possibility, by defining the (finite) man as a being who transcends himself or who is transcendence of himself (*Dasein ist Transzendenz*, says Heidegger; *Mensch ist Tat*, says Hegel, which means the same thing; both the formulas ultimately mean: *Geist ist Zeit* or *Dasein ist Zeitlichkeit*). In

ism – takes part in infiniteness and can conceive himself as such (immortal), but this *ego is not autonomous*. So, apparently the question can be reduced to the choice between autonomy and non-autonomy of the *ego*. And it seems then that Hegel was not wrong to address the problem as follows: either God (and immortality) without freedom or freedom without God (that is, without immortality). Doing so, Hegel justifies himself twice. On one hand, he claims to adhere to the fact that the immanent development of (Judeo-Christian) theism results (with Calvin) in the radical negation of freedom, of the autonomy of the *ego*. On the other hand, he believes he has shown (and, personally, we agree with him):

- that the *ego cogito sum* only arises and can arise from and within the *Begierde*, the negating *desire*, which is already the destroying action, that is, Negativity or freedom;
- that this Negativity *is* finitude, annihilation within (or as) time;
- that the affirmation of such a Negativity excludes the existence of an infinite Self transcending my negating self.

For Hegel, the *ego-cogito-sum* is already freedom; in his opinion, the choice between the *cogito-sum* and the *cogitat-est* (or *cogitor-sum*), that is – ultimately – between atheism and theism, *is* already a choice between the consciousness of freedom (and the freedom of consciousness) and the consciousness of servitude (and the servitude of consciousness); and we can see that this choice is – ultimately – a decision for and against death. This is what we find in Hegel, but we could show that it is no different in Heidegger. Although he softens the constitutive value of the negating action, that is, the action of fight and work, it is nevertheless *autonomy* – the freedom of the *ego* – what he considers the fundamental content of the *ego-cogito-sum*, which is his point of departure and which he wants to explain within and through his philosophy (which takes no interest in the *cogitat-est*, almost never dwelling on the – atheist and Hegelian – philosophical problem of the *cogitat, ergo est res cogitata non cogitans*, problem of science). Undoubtedly, in unison with Hegel (and perhaps with all true phi-

the perspective of the atheistic anthropology, therefore, Descartes' argument is not decisive: in other words, it is not an evidence.

However, it seems to us that nor the thesis of the possibility of self-transcendence (for Hegel, within and through, or even better, as conscious negating action) – which would make atheism possible – is evident. In another formulation, the problem rises often: there is who says that one can overcome (and conceive) evil, the imperfect, only by conceiving (and moving to) what is good, that is, an already existing perfection; there are others who think that it is possible to overcome What-is only moving from What-is, that it is possible to (conceive and) overcome What-is as imperfect by simply negating it and by creating within and through this same negation a new What-is which, being the negation of the imperfect, is perfect (or, at least, more perfect than the negated, overcome imperfect). And, apparently none of these two positions manages to convince the other.

losophers), in addressing the problem of *ego-cogito-sum*, Heidegger is not interested in the *cogito* or the *sum*, but rather in the *ego*: if he addresses the ontological problem of the Being, it is above all to solve the problem of the being of the *Self*. Apparently the whole question can be reduced to the free choice between the (atheistic) freedom and the (theistic) servitude.<sup>3</sup> However, once more, in order to choose, it is necessary to know between which alternatives one must choose. Autonomy, freedom are initially only words that express, at most, a *Befindlichkeit*, giving rise therefore to a mere *Weltanschauung*. In order to become *philosophy*, freedom must comprehend itself within and through a philosophical comprehension. Now, philosophy has to do with concrete realness and not with abstractions. What is real and concrete is not *the* freedom but *my self* who is free. In order to comprehend freedom philosophically, I have then to comprehend myself within my exercise of freedom. In other words, I have to do what Hegel and Heidegger – for instance – respectively did in the *Phänomenologie* and *Sein und Zeit* 1, or – at least – recognize myself within what they said there. (And, ultimately, I have to realize the *ontology* of my being/myself as free – or to wait for the publication of the 2nd vol. of *Sein und Zeit*, if I am not satisfied with the two volumes of Hegel's *Logik*). The decision for or against freedom, so far as it is philosophical (that is, entirely conscious and – therefore – truly free), is thus a decision for or against the truth of a philosophical anthropology (or an ontology) that reveals the *sense* as well as the *essence* of my freedom to my empirical consciousness. Since this is ultimately about *myself*, we could say with Fichte – and Delp who quotes him – : “The philosophy that one chooses shows what kind of *man* one *is*”. And, in this sense, we could say that every *choice* of a philosophy is finally done in view of a *Befindlichkeit*, of the irreducible emotional attitude that one assumes within the world where one lives. However, this notwithstanding, the philosophies that we choose are not a function of the *Befindlichkeit*: by choosing one of them, one chooses the *truth*, which annihilates all that the latter is not, and not just any *Weltanschauung* among the innumerable others, already realized or only possible. *And*, once one chooses a philosophy, one must admit that a man who has chosen the *fallacy* of a *Weltanschauung* is – although he is still a *man* – a man who does not live *in/within the truth*, who is not *sophos*, who is not even a philosopher.

*Translated from the French by Gennaro Lauro*

<sup>3</sup> We have chosen this formulation especially because we would like to say that one should not reason as follows: the necessary consequence of the *free* choice is the choice of freedom (that is, atheism). This argument entails a very serious problem, but – as such – it does not prove anything at all.

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