

# Thinking in Clichés

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# Table of contents

<i>Thinking in Clichés</i> _____	<b>4</b>
<b>0. Abstract</b> _____	<b>5</b>
<b>1. What are deep clichés?</b> _____	<b>5</b>
<b>2. The cliché of inside and outside consciousness</b> _____	<b>12</b>
2.1. Aporias of the subject-object split _____	15
2.2. Totalized causa efficiens _____	20
2.3. Inner time _____	23
<b>3. Wilful mental blindness</b> _____	<b>25</b>
3.1. Leibniz's divine mediation between the monad willing inside and the world outside _____	26
3.2. Schopenhauer's ubiquitous will _____	28
3.3. Stepping out into the play-room of the time-clearing _____	33

Die oft genannte ‘weltweite Wirkung’ meines Denkens bleibt eine rätselhafte Illusion. Was hält den Menschen in der Sperrzone des ‘Bewußtseins’ gefangen? Warum wird der Rückgang ins Dasein nicht vollzogen und nicht gewährt?

The oft-mentioned ‘worldwide impact’ of my thinking remains a perplexing illusion. What holds humankind captive to the restricted zone of ‘consciousness’? Why is the path back into Dasein not taken and not granted?

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# Thinking in Clichés<sup>1</sup>

## 0. Abstract

Deep clichés in thinking that come to be taken for granted as self-evident cast the scaffolding of each historical era, furnishing the age with its deep ontological compass. This essay focuses especially on one of these clichés in the present age, that of the supposed distinction between the inside and outside of consciousness, which goes hand in hand with the subject-object split. With the subjectivist metaphysics of the Modern Age from Descartes through Kant to Husserl and Wittgenstein, a wilful blindness progressively comes to hegemony, resulting from the will's being cast as its centrepiece, thus assuming the place previously occupied by God in metaphysics. This shift is investigated via two exemplary thinkers, Leibniz and Schopenhauer. Finally, it is shown that stepping out of the cliché of inside and outside consciousness leads into the play-room of the time-clearing.

## 1. What are deep clichés?

...teils wird das an sich Bedeutende, die reinen Bestimmungen des Gedankens, wie Subjekt, Objekt, Substanz, Ursache, das Allgemeine usf., geradeso unbesehen und unkritisch gebraucht wie im gemeinen Leben...

...in part, what is intrinsically significant, the pure determinations of the thought, such as subject, object, substance, cause, the universal, etc., is used just as unquestioningly and uncritically as in common living...

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<sup>1</sup> Many thanks to Astrid Nettling for insightful comments.

G.W.F. Hegel  
*Phänomenologie des Geistes*  
 Vorrede W3:49.

To think and speak in clichés is not the done thing. It is frowned upon and treated with disdain, so that good speakers and writers are admired for the inventiveness of their linguistic articulations and the freshness of their choice of words. In normal usage, a cliché is a ‘stereotyped expression, a commonplace or hackneyed phrase’ that is used over and over again thoughtlessly. Both ‘cliché’ and ‘stereotype’ were adopted into English from the French printing industry at the budding of the age of the public press. With the author Balzac, who also tried his hand as a printer, we have also superb descriptions of the rise of the newspaper as a medium through which to exercise political power.

‘Cliché’ comes from F. ‘cliquer’, ‘to click’ that was “applied by die-sinkers to the striking of melted lead in order to obtain a proof or cast” for printing. ‘Cliché’ is therefore the “French name for a stereotype block; a cast or ‘dab’; applied esp. to a metal stereotype of a wood-engraving used to print from” (OED). A ‘stereotype’, in turn, is formed from the Greek for ‘solid’ and ‘type’, being the name given to a printing technique developed by the French “in which a solid plate or type-metal, cast from a papier-mâché or plaster mould taken from the surface of a forme of type, is used for printing from instead of the forme itself” (OED). Clichés and stereotypes are therefore words cast in a form that can be used economically over and over again, perhaps ad nauseam. The mass-printing of newspapers is presumably associated also with the emergence of hackneyed, over-used phrases that gain wide currency in journalistic print-media which, in turn, constantly generate new, faddish clichés destined for over-use. A present-day example would be the phrase, ‘At the end of the day...’ or ‘going forward...’.

The phenomenon of forming hackneyed commonplaces is itself commonplace. The word ‘commonplace’ is a translation from the Latin ‘locus communis’ which is itself a rendering of Aristotelean κοινὸς τόπος signifying “a general theme or argument [or topic], applicable to many particular cases” (OED). A topos is a place, so a common place is one often revisited and used by everybody. Such topoi employed in

rhetoric encapsulated commonly used arguments that slip without resistance, i.e. thoughtlessly, into the audience's mind, for they seem to be self-evident, thus "a common or ordinary topic; an opinion or statement generally accepted or taken for granted" (OED). Such oft-revisited common places of saying and thinking make life easier in communicating a common world that has long since been type-cast in the stereotypes of a shared way of living, i.e. an ethos. The cliché and stereotype are therefore originally not linguistic phenomena, but, underneath that, ways in which the world is understood and communicated self-evidently and thoughtlessly.

Any self-respecting intellectual or philosopher does not want to be accused of presenting hackneyed ways of thinking that, like a hack, are easy and comfortable to ride. Rather, intellectuals of all stripes aspire to critical thinking, and many brands of philosophy and social science insert the epithet 'critical' in their self-labelling, such as Kant's Critical Philosophy, Frankfurt Critical Theory or Critical Realism. To criticize (from Gk. κρινεῖν 'to separate, differentiate, decide') is to discriminate between what stands up to a closer inspection and what doesn't. A critical mind will not swallow apparently self-evident commonplaces but, on the contrary, will put them into question. The cry of the enlightenment, "sapere aude", was to have the courage to think for yourself, and Kant himself put this slogan into practice in his three *Critiques*, criticizing, in the first place, traditional metaphysics to show up the limits of pure reason prior to experience of the world. In philosophy, critical thinking first and foremost puts ways of thinking handed down by the long tradition of philosophy into question. In critical social theory of all kinds, the ultimate aim is to change a social reality, i.e. a customary, 'hackneyed' way of living together, that is subjected to criticism. The critique of reality, however, depends intimately on the critical, thoughtful thinking through which that reality is seen and assessed. Critical thinking's pretension is to see more clearly.

Critical thinking in this serious and deepest sense must not rest easy with any well-accepted commonplaces often returned to for understanding the world in its order and disorder, and so is characterized by a backward movement into the deepest presuppositions and

preconceptions underlying any interpretation of the world. It is these deepest presuppositions that must be unearthed, exposed to the light, and thus seen, made re-vise-able for the critical mind. The move back from the clichés that inevitably structure the understanding of the world amounts to melting and making fluid these casts of thought, as if there were no longer any self-evident ground on which to stand. Such attained fluidity in thought is the presupposition for recasting other, phenomenally apter clichés in which an alternative cast of world can be cast from the ground up. Criticism's measure then becomes what a thinker, who may be a philosopher or an artist, can bear and dares to venture by way of loosening and liquifying the ground under her or his feet in order eventually, if things go well, to regain ground through a recasting that is more in line with how the most basic and simple phenomena show themselves to be.

It is not merely a matter of metaphor that certain writers, through their printed works, contribute much to understanding and perhaps even recasting a world; their language itself allows the world itself to light up differently. But it is those more difficult writers, the philosophers, who dig deeper and are thus able to attempt casting more radical alternative clichés that can serve as the scaffolding of an other historical age.

Each historical era of people and peoples living together sharing a world rests on the deepest clichés defining that age in the sense of making sense of it for those living through it. These deepest clichés are apparently immovable, and it seems hardly possible at all to put them into question. Any attempt to do so is repulsed violently, in the first place by ridiculing anyone attempting such critical questioning and recasting, and in the last place perhaps even by killing them. Much of what goes under the label of 'critical' is not critical at all in this deepest sense, but rather a way of invoking community among the like-minded in a sort of family, a more or less comfortable 'we' riding a purportedly critical hack of supporting presuppositions about which, apparently, everyone agrees. There's something amiss here in this constitution of a 'we'. In particular, the modern media's element is the cliché that facilitates easy communication and understanding on the surface of daily life. Thus the media speak in clichés; their images are likewise clichés,

so that exposure to the media today amounts to riding easily along a concatenation of clichés, even in so-called ‘in-depth’ reports. If anything thought-provoking emerges from such clichéd discourse, it comes from the unsaid in the media, and conversely, genuine, unclichéd thinking has no place in the media, but at most in their interstices.

The lot of those strange few risking a questioning of the deepest clichés of an age is singular solitariness and solitary singularity, for they are taking away the historical ground from underneath others’ feet, themselves risking becoming hyperbyssal. Or are they just trying passionately to get to the bottom of things, to see more clearly? In any case, such a questioner remains the exception, for “all modern philosophizing is political and policing, being restricted to scholarly semblance by governments, churches, academies, customs, fashions, people’s cowardice.”<sup>2</sup> The ground that a we-resistant individual questions and destabilizes may be a religion such as Christianity or Islam, or a political worldview that may be liberal, conservative, leftist, Marxist, anarchist, nationalist, royalist, ecological, etc., or a more encompassing worldview such as modern science, historical materialism, liberal humanism or technologically enabled and enthused post-humanism.

A further exemplary cliché is to approach all kinds of art — from the fine arts, via music, literature and the performing arts, to the modern visual media of film- and video-art — through the instrumentarium of aesthetics. Why is art experienced and thought aesthetically, and why does this cliché sit so deep?

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<sup>2</sup> “Alles moderne Philosophiren ist politisch und polizeilich, durch Regierungen Kirchen Akademien Sitten Moden Feigheiten der Menschen auf den gelehrten Anschein beschränkt.” Nietzsche F. *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen* in *Sämtliche Werke* Kritische Studienausgabe, Giorgio Colli andazzino Montinari (eds.) dtv/de Gruyter, Berlin 1980 Bd. I p. 812; Nietzsche hereafter cited in the form KSAI:812. Is there a philosophical scholar today (no one dares to conceive or describe him/herself as a ‘philosophical thinker’, for that would be presumptuous) who knows that s/he is peddling “scholarly semblance”?

Another cliché is the thoughtless dichotomy between egoism and altruism on which even entire anthropologies are built, as if there were nothing in between, namely, mutuality.

Another is the thoughtless conviction that the complicated and complex is hard, whilst the simple is easy, whereas in truth, it is hardest to see and think through the simplest phenomena, as copiously demonstrated today even by those who should know better, namely, the philosophers — leaving entirely to one side the scientists and normal, educated folk.

Yet another is the distinction between literal language and metaphor, as if there were a literal meaning, on the one hand, and then metaphorical meanings that were free to roam in fantasy. If this distinction, ultimately deriving already from Plato's metaphysics, is bogus, then language itself has to be hearkened to more attentively and strictly. Language is not merely means of expression for a subject.

The well-worn dichotomy between rationality and irrationality is a further cliché, again arising from Plato's metaphysics of the soul, that finds employment everywhere from theology (e.g. reason vs. faith) through psychology (e.g. cognition vs. feeling) to economics. The latter constructs models on the basis of a fictitious so-called homo oeconomicus who is allegedly rational, whereas real, empirical market behaviour is asserted to be largely 'irrational', being guided by mere 'psychology', 'sentiment' and 'emotions'. This noxious cliché can only be loosened up by going back from reason to its origins in Greek λόγος and λέγειν (meaning not only 'to say, tell' but, more primitively, 'to gather, glean') to see more clearly the gathering achieved by reason and what remains ungathered.

A further cliché is the distinction between theory and practice, whereby theory is abominated as grey and abstract, whereas practice is regarded as vital, rich and concrete, immersed in the thick of real life. Theory is then justified only insofar as it is ultimately useful for practice, thus unfortunately necessary to provide a framework for ordering concrete action and gaining practical pay-offs. Thereby it is overlooked, for instance, that without the abstract, simple categories such as 'something', 'this', 'same', 'other' thoughtlessly presupposed and taken

for granted by all practical action, the practitioner would understand nought of the world and be unable to act at all.

Yet another cliché is the dichotomy between subject and object, according to which there are ‘merely’ subjective views of the world from the human subject and a ‘hard’, objective ‘real’ world out there that is altogether independent of subjectivity, as if the objective world existed *an sich* without subjectivity at all. The object, however, is literally ‘that which is thrown against’ the subject, so there is only an object where there is a subject and vice versa. Subject and object cannot be separated. Furthermore, the human being only took on the role of subject fairly recently, in the Modern Age. In Greek antiquity, the subject as the *ὑποκείμενον*, i.e. ‘that which underlies’ was the thing out there, which today has become the object! So much for the self-evident common sense of the supposed subject-object split. This cliché shaping all modern thinking will be taken up again in the next section dealing with the cliché of inside and outside consciousness.

If to feel at home in the clichés of an age is to be unwittingly unfree, because deluded, then, to risk putting clichés of thought into question, stripping them of their illusory distortions, is to risk freedom. The wilful mental blindness of the present age leads it to live, at best, in delusions of freedom. More on wilful mental blindness below.

An investigator getting to the bottom of things to bring the facts of the matter to light is generally lauded. These facts are correct. Not so with the thinker trying to unsettle the most settled preconceptions, presuppositions and prejudices on which an age rests. The attempt to break the mould of firmly cast clichés is welcomed by hardly anybody, i.e. only by those few who sense that something is awry with how the world shapes up in accepted casts or ‘models’ of thinking. Deconstructing and recasting clichés is not a matter of establishing correct facts, but of disclosing the truth, which invariably amounts to clearing away the distortive historical debris preventing the simplest phenomena from being seen clearly. Such thinking therefore always involves a confrontation with the traditions of thinking to critically distinguish what holds up to closer scrutiny from what does not. As such, it is necessarily divisive, since the various schemata of thinking

that have established themselves historically do not simply melt from the scene, but offer fierce resistance. A power struggle ensues. Any historical age is characterized not only by multiple established parallel, overlapping, competing castings of how the world traditionally shapes up, but also, at certain rare, critical, historical moments, by an abyssal questioning that shakes the ground of all established ways of thinking with turf to defend.

## **2. The cliché of inside and outside consciousness**

Geradeheraus will ich es Dir nur  
gestehen, daß, wie ich meine, alles  
Entsetzliche und Schreckliche, wovon  
Du sprichst, nur in Deinem Innern  
vorging, die wahre, wirkliche  
Außenwelt aber daran wohl wenig  
teilhatte.

Straight out I only want to admit to you  
that, I think, everything dreadful and  
terrible of which you speak only  
happened inside you; the true, real outer  
world, however, likely had only little to  
do with it.

E.T.A. Hoffmann  
*Der Sandmann*

Our present age is deeply marked above all by a cast of thought according to which there is a self-evident distinction and separation between inside and outside, that is to say, between the interiority of consciousness and the external world existing outside consciousness. Of course, the idea that what's 'in my head' is separate from the 'outside world' is not the unique conception of the Modern Age and has a long pedigree, but it was made explicit in a metaphysics associated in the first place with the name of Descartes with his famous "cogito ergo sum", which amounts to positing the self-certain subject of consciousness vis-à-vis the external world as the foundation whence access to this external

world is to be achieved via the modern scientific method. Post-Cartesians such as Locke or Husserl cast not the shadow of a doubt on this inside/outside distinction. Today there is scant resistance in everyday, scientific or even philosophical thinking<sup>3</sup> against the notion

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<sup>3</sup> Even among those relatively few scholars entirely sympathetic to Heidegger's thinking, there is vacillation between accepting the subject-object split, on the one hand, and accepting also Heidegger's alternative casting of human being as *Dasein*, always already out there in the *Da* and also in the world. Here, James Mensch serves as an example of the very many scholars who mix together subjectivist metaphysics with its critical alternative, Heideggerian thinking of being, without even noticing they are doing so. In his essay, 'The Living Temporality of European Identity' (uploaded to Academia.edu in December 2013), for instance, Mensch has it both ways by asserting, on the one hand, "To begin with the obvious, we internalize by remembering" (after mentioning Husserl), and, in the very next breath, on the other, stating that "As Heidegger argued, [in whose thinking there can be no "internalization" ME], it is in terms of both the remembered past and the anticipated future that we disclose our present world". Mensch then goes on to claim that "Heidegger uses the metaphor of a 'clearing'", without noticing that if this key-word in Heidegger's thinking is a "metaphor", then it does not name the phenomenon of the clearing itself, but only by analogy. Thinking thus loses in precision, becoming the plaything of metaphorical slipping and sliding, a fate that invariably befalls scholarship due to the narrative liberties it takes and its aversion to thinking strictly in concepts. In a later paper, 'The Spatiality of Subjectivity' (uploaded to Academia.edu in April 2014), Mensch presents a subjectivist conception of time that is the inverse and diametrical opposite of the three-dimensional, ecstatic conception inaugurated by Heidegger, above all through the latter's phenomenological reinterpretation of Parmenides. The root of this inversion is the 'self-evident' distinction between an inside of consciousness and an outside, external world which Mensch determines first of all as space in its extension. Hence he claims, "Space, rather, is the ultimate reason why the moments with their different contents do not coincide. Thus, what distinguishes the appearances of a moving body are not the moments that they inhabit; it is the spatially distinct positions of its path. It is the outside-of-one-another of such positions, the *extension* of the path, that translates itself into the extension of time." Otherwise, the implication is, time would be merely 'collapsed' within the mind conceived subjectivistically *as* internal consciousness. According to this account, however, space itself, too, would have only one 'space' in which to appear, namely, 'inside' consciousness, as Kant claims. Be that as it may,

that the mind is consciousness (with or without the so-called unconscious) which has a spatial location, this location being within the head and either identified with the brain or generated materially by its workings. Scientifically speaking, thinking itself is a brain function depending on orderly firing neurons. Neuroscience today is enjoying the prestige of one of the foremost, most promising sciences toward which budding career-making scientists strive and funds generously flow.

Even the rebellion against Cartesianism's rationalism in the romantic period emphasized all the more the subject's interiority, further cementing the age's fundamental prejudice. Psychoanalytic theory has put the conscious ego-subject into question by positing a disruptive id-unconscious that undermines the subject's self-certainty, but the subjective *unconscious* is still subjective *unconscious*, a point invariably lost on 'critical' intellects. As for today's neuroscience, it is axiomatic that the conscious mind is 'nothing other than' the material brain that can be subjected to experimental research. Anyone suggesting that the mind cannot be identified with consciousness 'happening' within the brain which, in turn, is located physically within the head is 'obviously' a crank, or at least pre-modernly 'mystical' — perhaps some kind of esoteric spiritist from another (old or New) age or a primitive culture and therefore clearly 'beyond the pale' of modern, enlightened science.

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Mensch claims, "Time must depend on something outside of itself in order to be. Following the tradition that stretches from Augustine to Husserl, we can say that the past and the future exist in our minds. They are present in a modified way through our memories and our anticipations." What, however, does it mean for time "to be"? The meaning of being is here presupposed, which opens the vicious circle already entered by Aristotle when he claims that only the present moment 'is' without clarifying what 'is' means. Mensch uncritically adopts this false Aristotelean lead: "But the present has no extension. In this, it is like a point on a line. Neither nows nor points can be summed up to give a definite quantity. The paradox, then, is that the past and the present do *not* exist and the now that *does* exist is not part of time."

## **2.1. Aporias of the subject-object split**

On the other hand, all the anomalies arising from the subject-object split, i.e. the gulf between the inside of consciousness and the outside, real world, in subjectivist metaphysics don't seem to bother anyone much anymore, not even the philosophers.<sup>4</sup> If one cannot adopt, say, Leibniz's theological solution of a divine "pre-established harmony" between the monad's inside and the real world outside, this matters not one wit to a pragmatic, scientific standpoint interested only in what's effective, without worrying about any 'abstract', 'theoretical', philosophical niceties that get in the way of science's progress. Practical effectiveness wins the day today over any deeper 'speculative' pondering. Only what 'works' is 'true' (a position defended even philosophically in varieties of empiricism and pragmatism), and only that thinking contributing to practical effectiveness in some more or less mediated way is valued and rewarded in such a world. The shorter the mediation, the better, and the more successful and esteemed the philosopher concerned will be.

Moreover, only if you toe the line of this pragmatic, effective worldview will you gain acceptance by any of the established learned institutions, that is, unless you find a niche in one of the older traditions within the established institutions, such as theology, with another line to toe. The established institutions are very adept in sifting out unpalatable thoughts, even and especially when radically unconventional thinkers are taken up. Somehow the institutions have a way of accommodating themselves to challenges, of adapting thinking that puts the subject-object split into question so that it is defused.

The distinction between consciousness inside and the world outside seems obvious. The world outside is taken to be, in the first place, the sensuously, physically real that can be seen, heard, tasted, smelt and touched, i.e. this reality in its reality is mediated by the human bodily

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<sup>4</sup> If there is a bother, it's the interminable debate in today's hegemonic Anglo-analytic philosophy between realism and idealism, which crucially presupposes the subject-object split, i.e. it is a pseudo-debate that cannot come to an end within subjectivist metaphysics.

senses as the base on which consciousness gains access to the external world at all. How sense impressions are worked up into the conscious perception of something *as* something remains a hoary, insuperable problem for empiricist metaphysics, but this doesn't prevent neuroscience from forging ahead as if the problem didn't exist and taking 'innate ideas' such as that of substance for granted. Anything that occurs to consciousness which is not presented to it by the senses either immediately or mediatedly (say, by sophisticated scientific apparatuses) is experienced as inside consciousness, 'in your head'. The bodily senses can only sense what is presented to them in the present, whereas 'inside' consciousness, the subjective mind can range freely over past, present and future, calling to presence and focusing on what it wills, of course, with the defect that this is merely 'ideal', an immaterial imagination. What you recall from memory, for instance, is always suspect because such memories occur 'inside' consciousness and may very well not correspond to what 'really' happened 'out there' in the external world. To confirm recollection, you then need the traces of real, physical evidence in the present that corroborates your past 'story', much the same as in any forensic investigation.

All modern science, too, must rely on experimental data that can only be given in the present, even when they refer to past occurrences. Usually, the scientist must be able to sensuously *see* these data, even though such seeing is invariably mediated by experimental apparatuses, (today mostly enormously complex) data-records and long strings of references to trusted scientific literature that records 'black on white' the results of previous research. The data must be accessible to any scientist for checking; thus does modern science claim to get beyond mere individual subjectivity to objectivity, which in truth is merely multiple, scientifically-trained subjectivity. The experimental apparatuses themselves are conceived and constructed within the terms of a scientific theory, i.e. a model, that tells the scientist what he will sensuously 'see' via the mediation of this apparatus. Seeing is believing — that is, if you believe in seeing, and also in the model mediating this seeing, which is necessarily interpretive, i.e. hermeneutic, and by no means nakedly factual. The metaphysics of modern science, with its insistence on a

construed anonymous third-person access to the world in the present evidenced by ‘objective’ experimental data has enormous consequences insofar as it demotes, and tendentially annihilates, the ontological status of other modes of world-access in which the second person and the other two temporal modes, past and future, *as such* come into play.

These other modes are then ‘nothing’ or ‘inferior’ compared to the hard exactness of hard science with its hard-data-fed mathematical hold on the world. But then phenomena such as love, empathy and trust have *no place whatever ontologically* in such a metaphysics, and practices such as psychoanalysis or psychotherapy, insofar as they rely essentially on the relating of dreams, phantasies and memories to a person of trust, must be regarded as not up to the scientific mark. Hence the attacks on psychoanalysis by scientific psychology that aims above all to ‘prove’ empirically and measurably that psychoanalytic therapy is ineffective. Even more than that, any attempt to countenance and develop a metaphysics of the second person that ranges over all temporal dimensions must be fiercely combatted or brutally ignored. Nevertheless, modern science cannot deny the *ontic* occurrence of such second-person phenomena within the scope of, and essential to, human experience of the world but they must be treated as mere ‘useful illusions’. The social science of economics, for instance, is inconceivable without a notion of contract, and contract, in turn, is inconceivable without a notion and practice of trust among contractual partners, so trust has to be presupposed ontically by such a social science. Modern science, however, is totally at a loss to say *ontologically* what mode of being a phenomenon such as trust has, and does not even know, nor any interest in knowing, what ontology as the investigation of beings *as* beings, is. As such, modern science is in denial about its impoverished metaphysical state.

One philosophical expression of this impoverished metaphysical state is Ludwig Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* which famously opens with the lines: “1 The world is everything that is the case.1.1 The world is the totality of facts, not of things.” The facts are what can be sensuously established to be the case in the third-person present. Such ‘objective facts’ are the necessary counterpart to

subjective consciousness; subjectivity and objectivity necessarily go hand in hand in this metaphysics. It is only thoughtlessness that often separates subjectivity and objectivity from each other, as if there existed an objective world out there, independently of any subjectivity whatsoever. Anything unable to evidence itself factually in the third-person present does not exist and is not part of the world. Phenomena such as emotions, memories, phantasies, empathy must be banished to the interiority of consciousness as representations (Descartes' *representatio*; German: *Vorstellung*; Locke's ideas) having no external, factual existence, i.e. no legitimate ontological status. Emotions can then be treated scientifically only as objectively expressed perceptions, i.e. always one step removed from the phenomena themselves, which are declared to be merely subjective, interior imaginings, although 'very real' in their effects.

In this way, modern science, along with the subjectivist metaphysics on which it is based, is cut off, in its very casting, from entire swathes of phenomena that are relegated to the inside of consciousness, as if, say, an emotion such as fear or love were not a mode of being out there in the world as a whole ranging over its three temporal dimensions; or as if memories did not relate to the world itself, including specific people and things out there, as it presences from the past in a mode of absence. Emotions are then preconceived as 'bottled up' inside, perhaps in the breast or heart, being represented in the 'brain's consciousness', seeking 'expression', i.e. a pressing outward from consciousness' interior into facticity. Such expression has sensuous existence in the present that can also be perceived by others in the third person, including scientists, and thus 'objectified' and measured as a 'fact'. Thinking is misled by language insofar as the pressing-out of air out of the body through the mouth in order to speak is conflated with a purported expression of emotions or thoughts likewise from inside the body, perhaps from the heart or the brain, as if emotions themselves somehow were located physically in the heart or thoughts themselves resided physically in the brain.

But there is no ground for the conviction that emotions or thoughts have physical locations; the mind cannot be confined within the body; its

location is not bodily, but the spatially unlocatable time-clearing over which it ranges freely (cf. 3.3 *Stepping out into the play-room of the time-clearing* below). That the mind uses the body to express thoughts through speaking or writing says nothing about the mind's location, indeed, whether it has a location at all, whether it has a physical nature, nor about an inside/outside distinction. That the mind has become interiorized inside consciousness is an event of the Modern Age that goes hand in hand with the coming to hegemony of the modern subject of consciousness vis-à-vis an external objective world. Mind was not always thought this way. Indeed, one need only return to Anaxagoras and Aristotle to find mind out there as the first principle of the world's movement, the famous "unmoved mover".<sup>5</sup>

What is phenomenally plain is that individual human beings can keep their thoughts to themselves. They thus remain concealed, undisclosed, hidden from others. Speaking or writing is a way of revealing, disclosing one's thoughts to others, to the 'world', such disclosure making sense only within a shared world with a shared language, although not necessarily restricted to the present. Instead of the distinction between inside and outside consciousness, that between *concealing* and *revealing* pertains insofar as individuals themselves disclose their thoughts and emotions or hold them back, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. Shared thoughts are not objectively out there in the sensuously experienceable external world, but are shared in a shared world that is in the first place a shared mind inhabited by many. There is an historical mind of the times, a *Zeitgeist*, in which each individual partakes, that is not merely present, but contemporary in encompassing also time foregone and time future.

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. e.g. "This perpetual, energetic thinking of mind is nothing other than the self-showing of the sight of the fair that keeps the world open in the ontological sense. Mind is not a static substantive; rather it is nothing other than pure energy, or at-work-ness, thinking the fair sight of beingness." in the Appendix on "Aristotle's purely energetic god of the fair" to my essay 'Absolutely Divine Everyday' 2008 at URL <http://www.arte-fact.org/untpltcl/absdvnev.html>

## 2.2. Totalized causa efficiens

Modern science is cast to gain, and cast inexorably into gaining, access to the world by virtue of a *certain* grip on empirically given, present data<sup>6</sup> (including data retrieved from the past for presentation in the present). *Certainty* goes before and substitutes for truth conceived as the multi-faceted, and perhaps subtle, disclosure of the phenomena as they present themselves of themselves,<sup>7</sup> i.e. without substituting

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<sup>6</sup> The late Wittgenstein is centrally concerned, if not obsessed, with the sense certainty of sense data (“Sinnesdaten”) in the present or, at most, the recent past, e.g. “whether ‘a tree is really standing there’ or a dummy...” (ob nun ‘wirklich ein Baum dasteht’ oder eine Attrappe,...; *The Big Typescript* Wiener Ausgabe (ed.) Michael Nedo, Springer, Vienna 2000 § 2.155.1.1 1 p. 328) and how these perceptions are described, expressed, said. In this chapter entitled “The Representation of the Immediately Perceived” (Die Darstellung des unmittelbar Wahrgenommenen) there follow thoughts on “the question concerning the existence of sense data” (§ 2.266.3.1 2), on how “appearance can be right or wrong”(§ 2.266.3.2), etc., all in connection with the *linguistic, propositional* expression of such first-person sense-perceptions of third-person objects. The following section is headed ““The Experience of the Present Moment, Authentic Reality”” (‘Die Erfahrung im gegenwärtigen Moment, die eigentliche Realität’), containing thoughts such as the following: “When I describe the immediately given past, I describe my memory and not something this memory indicates.” (Wenn ich die unmittelbar gegebene Vergangenheit beschreibe, so beschreibe ich mein Gedächtnis, und nicht etwas, was dieses Gedächtnis anzeigt. 3.152.2.2 p. 331), i.e. Wittgenstein here tears apart the sensuously perceived thing itself just remembered and the representation of it ‘inside’ memory-consciousness. This is the situation typical of subjectivist metaphysics, which is constantly struggling to reconcile the outside world with the representations inside consciousness and vice versa. See also below on Leibniz’s and Schopenhauer’s attempts at reconciliation.

<sup>7</sup> The late Heidegger calls this “Phänomenophasis” or “Tautophasis” (III 27): “*Phenomenon* from clearing of the region of authority — *-phasis* from the path-character of naming” (*Phänomen* aus Lichtung der Befugnisgegend — *-phasis* aus dem Wegcharakter des Nennens; *Auszüge zur Phänomenologie aus dem Manuskript ‘Vermächtnis der Seinsfrage’* (1973-75) II 135 Jahrgabe der Martin Heidegger Gesellschaft 2011/12). The enigmatic word, “Befugnisgegend” is explicated “as *clearing regionality* — the *quintessentially*

surrogate ‘explanations’ in terms of something *else*. Such certainty is supposed to be attained through mathematization that i) constructs theoretical models proceeding from axioms and hypotheses and ii) quantifies the data into measurements so as to be able to calculate within the mathematical models, especially with a view to precalculating future movement and change. As will be explicated below, behind this is a metaphysical destiny of the *blindly absolute will to effective power over all kinds of movement and change* — including those occurring in today’s fast-inrolling tsunami of the cyberworld.<sup>8</sup>

The privilege accorded to empirical data in the present and the ‘objective’ third person, is not restricted to modern science, but arises already in everyday life where, seemingly, a firm grip on the world is to be had through sense-certainty in the present. Even though the senses can delude, the sense-data can be double- and triple-checked to gain reassurance. Modern science dispenses with Descartes’ intermediating god who guarantees that the senses are not entirely delusive. The Cartesian god’s indispensable role is to mediate the metaphysically irreparable gulf between consciousness inside and the world outside.

If, according to the prejudices of everyday consciousness, beings show themselves to human consciousness primarily, or rather apparently, as objects in the third person present, and this access to beings as a whole is mathematized, as it is in modern science, to calculate predictively the movement and change of beings, then there can be no human *freedom* at all insofar as the human being him/herself is taken scientifically to be also a third-person object among others from which measurable empirical data can be derived and suitably processed by models. Even quantum indeterminacy provides no loophole for human freedom because quantum physics presents only a modified schema of effective causality to which merely a deficiency is attributed, i.e. a certain qualified negation. Moreover, it dogmatically, without further ado, equates the mode of being of physical particles with that of

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*non-objective*” (als *das lichtende Gegendliche* — *das schlechthin Ungegenständliche*; *ibid.* II 125).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Capurro R, Eldred M. & Nagel D. *Digital Whoness: Identity, Privacy and Freedom in the Cyberworld* ontos, Frankfurt 2013.

human beings (cf. 3.2 *Schopenhauer's ubiquitous will* below). If everyday consciousness opines nonetheless that human beings are essentially free, this remains merely an ontologically unfounded extraneous opinion and prejudice that contradicts the scientifico-mathematical metaphysical casting of the world.

The ongoing, centuries-old debate in Anglo-Saxon empiricist-analytic metaphysics over determinism vs. free will must remain entirely fruitless within the strictures of this sterile metaphysics. The modern scientific world is built solely according to the schema of efficient causality, i.e. of endless concatenations of cause and effect, whereby such chains are always anchored in the third-person present of the observed sensuous data available to confirm or refute the scientific model concerned, curiously, through 'disinterested' 'objective' observation by scientific subjects. Falsified scientific theoretical models are refined or altered or replaced to fit the experimental data better in terms of effective-causal predictions. Empiricist scepticism about effective causality remains within this schema as a mere negation.

Even where specific causes, i.e. certain beings on which certain empirical events are 'blamed', cannot be specified, regularities in observed data are assumed a priori to be attributable in principle to underlying causes ('hidden variables') that science has 'not yet' uncovered. Consciousness, as the sole site where truth can be revealed, takes in these data-based findings of science (also known as 'information') in the present, with their efficient-causal explanations and so constructs its surrounding world along the sole lines of efficient causality in endless complex concatenations of cause and effect, including causal feedback loops, without ever asking the question concerning the ontological nature of ontic, efficient causality, nor seeing its ineptness for coming to terms with not only the hallmark phenomenon of human being, namely, freedom, but also with the phenomenon of life itself.

Modern scientific thinking itself is wholly inconsistent insofar as it axiomatically posits efficient causality as the only respectable kind, whilst surreptitiously introducing a teleological cause when it comes to life, even though teleological cause ostensibly had been discredited and

banished as part of the old scholastic Aristoteleanism. Darwin's theory of evolution, namely, conceives life itself as a movement toward the end (τέλος) of self-reproduction. The attainment of this end is the reproduction of the species and thus its survival. The theory of evolution thus relies on one of the four kinds of movement discerned by Aristotle according to the first four elementary ontological categories of what (τί, substance, οὐσία), how (ποῖος), how much (πόσος) and where (ποῦ). Reproduction is thus implicitly and unknowingly determined ontologically as the self-movement of life from what to what, i.e. from one specimen of the species to another specimen in the next generation, brought about by pro-generation, without science itself being aware at all of the ontological difference.

### **2.3. Inner time**

The link between the outside and the inside of consciousness is (posited to be) mediated by the senses that, of course, sense only in the present, which consciousness itself orders 'inside' between the before and after. What may happen and what has happened 'are' only 'ideally' inside consciousness, and the sensuous present, too, via the input of the senses from outside, is given its temporal place only within consciousness. All three temporal dimensions of past, present and future 'are' only on the inside, spread out along an ideal line;<sup>9</sup> they cannot be

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Kant's "transcendental aesthetics" at the beginning of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), in which time itself is shown to be a construct by subjectivity within consciousness prior to any experience of the outside world, i.e. transcendently. For Kant, as in all other subjectivist metaphysics, experience of the external world is given solely through the conduit of the senses. Cf. also Husserl's *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Inner Time-Consciousness* (1928) in which the 'inside' nature of time is asserted already in the title. Husserl explicitly takes for granted also a "real objective time" (wirkliche objektive Zeit, § 1), whilst claiming "the complete exclusion of any assumptions whatever" (der völlige Ausschluß jedweder Annahmen, § 1) about it for the sake of a "phenomenological analysis" (phänomenologische Analyse, § 1), then proceeding to exclude it altogether from these lectures, which leaves him and subsequent subjectivist phenomenology to the present day to grapple with the problems associated with the constitution of a measurable objective

found outside consciousness in the ‘real world’, say, as a scientifically verifiable ‘objective’ fact, but are a priori, i.e. prior to any experience of the world. Inside consciousness, time is ‘real’ only in the tick, tick, tick of the sequential, countable passing of now-instants, the so-called ‘flow of time’; the ego cogito is certain it ‘is’ (sum) only in marking off the *present* moment in which it is conscious of certain contents, i.e. cogitations in the broadest possible sense, including also all kinds of feelings and inklings. Hence, what is most certain and thus true is, paradoxically, the subjective, which flies in the face of the thoughtless scientific preconception that only the objective world out there really truly ‘exists’, the meaning of the word ‘existence’, of course, being taken for granted as self-explanatory.

The internal now-time ticking within cogitating consciousness can be projected sensuously to the outside, onto the audible or inaudible tick-, tick-, ticking of a clock with its visual display of a ticking motion that enumerates the instants of time passing through the present along the so-

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time, as required by modern quantitative science, and of an intersubjective time constituted through what this phenomenology postulates as a “shared now”; cf. Lanei M. Rodemeyer *Intersubjective Temporality: It's About Time* Springer, Dordrecht 2006. It remains a question whether subjectivist phenomenology in Husserl’s sense is able to access the ‘objectivity’ of any phenomenon whatever, and whether it makes any sense at all to speak of an objectivity cut off from subjectivity or of an intersubjectivity constituted within the first-person world of individual consciousness as suggested by the following quote: “Communal world of human beings within me, of human beings constituted as human beings on primordial ground and thus the first personal world, and the world comprising all truth within itself, within its horizons. The human being is the bearer of truth.” (Gemeinschaftswelt der Menschen in mir, der als Menschen auf primordialem Grund konstituierten, und somit die erste personale Welt, und die alle Wahrheit in sich, in ihren Horizonten befassende. Der Mensch ist der Träger der Wahrheit. Edmund Husserl *Späte Texte zur Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934). Die C-Manuskripte. Husserliana Materialien* vol. VIII ed. Dieter Lohmar Springer, Dordrecht/Berlin/Heidelberg/New York 2005 p. 172. Falsely cited as “Gemeinschaftswelt der Menschen in mir, dem als Menschen auf primordialen Grund konstituierte und somit die erste personale Welt, und die alle Wahrheit in sich, in ihren Horizonten befassende. Der Mensch ist der Träger der Wahrheit.” in the lead motto of Rodemeyer op. cit.

called unidirectional ‘arrow of time’, which itself does not exist ‘objectively’ outside, but only inside consciousness with its sequential ordering of events according to before and after. Time is ‘objectively’ outside only in the objectified ordinal numeric specification of the present now-instant on a clock or in the time-stamped records of past events which can be retrieved to the present and taken in again by consciousness through reading them. The future itself ‘is’ not yet, but can only be projected ideally along the time-line inside consciousness, through the power of imagination, perhaps according to scientific predictions derived from a calculative theoretical model. The past can be recalled and evoked inside by memory which, however, is proclaimed to be ‘merely’ subjective, requiring for its validation the time-stamped records outside, of whatever kind, to prove its objectivity. ‘Intersubjective’ time is then established only via external, ‘objective’ clock-time stamps, and intersubjective experience must be mediated by verifiable clock-time-stamped, shared ‘objective’ data.

Modern science, of course, chafes at being restricted to an inner time of consciousness and seeks external support for the arrow of time from objective physical laws, the Second Law of Thermodynamics being a favoured candidate for the job. This gambit is Aristotelean insofar as it posits that time is something lifted off movement, whereby the Second Law of the inexorable movement toward greater entropy guarantees that movement can proceed only in one direction. Voilà: the one-way arrow of time! In contrast to Aristotle’s countable time, the one-way arrow of time is imagined as a linear abstraction from the universe’s ‘objective’, continuous, real, irreversible process-movement.

### **3. Wilful mental blindness**

A phrase like ‘wilful mental blindness’ will inevitably be taken as having merely polemical intent, but this is not the case here. Rather, the phrase is intended to indicate that there is something the mind of our times does not see, to which it is oblivious and that it is the will itself that represents the hurdle to seeing clearly. The will wills that it overlooks something for the sake of its own willing; it resists an insight that would diminish its absolute primacy. This resistance stands in the

way of casting apter clichés that would open another, more receptive, attentive cast of world.

### 3.1. Leibniz's divine mediation between the monad willing inside and the world outside

The will has been a philosophical topic since the start, being paired with ὄρεξις for Aristotle, from the verb ὀρέγω ‘to reach, stretch out’, which was rendered in Latin as ‘appetitus’. The will comes to the fore in modern metaphysics of the subject, for instance, with Leibniz, for whom the subject is the monad or entelechy, from the Greek μονάς meaning ‘alone, solitary’ and ἐντελέχεια signifying ‘actuality, perfected presence’. The monad for Leibniz is the single, individual, simple substance that is a ‘perfected presence’ in the sense of an autarchy (αὐτάρκεια<sup>10</sup>) and endowed with an “*internal principle*” (*principe interne*; *ibid.* Para. 11) accounting for “changes” (*changemens*; *ibid.*). This principle of movement is internal because “the Monads have no windows through which anything could enter or exit them” (*Les Monades n’ont point de fenêtres, par lesquelles quelque chose y puisse entrer ou sortir*; *ibid.* Para. 7). A monad is thus truly a solitary, isolated governing starting-point or ἀρχή for its own movements, which is also one of the primary determinations of freedom. Hence there is a gulf between the interior and exterior of a monad.

Furthermore, the outside world is only ever “represented” inside the monad. This inside representation of the outside is what Leibniz calls “*Perception*, which is the interior state of the Monad representing external things” (*Perception qui est l’état intérieur de la Monade representant les chose externes*<sup>11</sup>). The monad changes only insofar as it strives to change from one perception to another, i.e. from one state of representation of the external world to another. This striving is its “Appetition” (*Appetition*; *Mon.* Para. 15), so that each monad is essentially characterized by perception (internal representation) and

<sup>10</sup> Leibniz G. F. *Monadologie* Werke Bd. I, Para. 18 S. 446.

<sup>11</sup> Leibniz G. F. *Principes de la Nature et de la Grace, Fondés en Raison* Werke Bd. I, Para. 4 S. 420

“appetite” (l’appetit; *ibid.*). Perception, however, is not to be equated with representation in consciousness, for there are various levels of perception, starting with the confused ones of i) the simple monad, through distinct, conscious perceptions that are “more distinct and accompanied by memory” (plus distincte et accompagnée de memoire; *ibid.* Para. 19) characterizing ii) the soul, to the iii) “Reasonable Soul or *Spirit*” (Ame Raisonnable, ou *Esprit*; *ibid.* Para. 29) which is capable of “knowledge of necessary truths” (la connoissance des verités necessaires; *ibid.* Para. 30) and insofar of imitating God. The monads, and most of all the spirits, are therefore finite imitations of God in His infinite “*Power* that is the source of all, then *Knowledge* that contains the detail of the ideas, and finally the *Will* that makes changes or products according to the principle of the Best” (*Puissance*, qui est la source de tout, puis la *Connoissance*, qui contient le detail des Idées, et enfin la *Volonté*, qui fait les changemens ou productions selon le principe du Meilleur; *ibid.* Para. 48) which correspond to i) the subject as the basic, isolated principle of movement, ii) perception and iii) appetite, respectively (*ibid.*).

Since each single monad is enclosed within itself and can have neither have an effect outside nor be influenced from the outside, there can only be an influence “through the intervention of God” (par l’intervention de Dieu; *ibid.* Para. 51) who, when comparing one monad with another, “finds reasons that oblige him to accommodate the one to the other” (trouve en chacune des raisons, qui l’obligent à y accommoder l’autre; *ibid.* Para. 52). This Godly intervention thus produces a “universal harmony” (harmonie universelle; *ibid.* Para. 59) for the best of all possible worlds in accordance with God’s “goodness” (bonté; *ibid.* Para. 55) wherein each simple substance or monad seems to be mutually dependent on the other. The interplay among the independent monads is thus mediated by divine intervention of an infinitely powerful, knowing, divine subject that wills the best.

Moreover, each body “belonging” (appartenant; *ibid.* Para. 63) to a monad or entelechy, a soul or a spirit constitutes a *living being* (*vivant*; *ibid.*), an “*Animal*” (*Animal*; *ibid.*), or a human being endowed with reason (*ibid.* Para. 82), respectively. These bodies “act according to the

laws of efficient causes or movements” (agissent selon les loix des causes efficientes ou des mouvemens; *ibid.* Para. 79), whereas the souls (including the spirits, i.e. the souls endowed with reason) “act according to the laws of final causes through appetition” (agissent selon les loix des causes finales par appetition; *ibid.*). As isolated monads, the souls have no effect on the bodies but “they meet by virtue of the *pre-established harmony* between all the substances because they are all representations of the same Universe” (ils se rencontrent en vertu des *l’harmonie préétablie* entre toutes les substances, puisqu’elles sont toutes des représentations d’un même Univers; *ibid.* Para. 78). The souls endowed with reason, i.e. spirits, as “images of the Divine” (images de la Divinité; *ibid.* Para. 83) have in addition the advantage that they are “capable of knowing the system of the Universe and of imitating something of it through architectonic models” (capables de connoitre le system de l’Univers et d’en imiter quelque chose par des échantillons architectoniques; *ibid.*). Thus a divine pre-established harmony is required to co-ordinate the inside of the monads with the outside and to bring their appetitive strivings according to final causes or aims into line with the physical movements of bodies according to the laws of efficient causes.

Almighty, omniscient, divine will-power is therefore the ultimate sufficient final cause of all (*ibid.* Para. 38) that is required to harmonize the inside and the outside both with regard to the interplay among the monads (universal harmony), and also between themselves and their bodies acting in the material world (pre-established harmony). These are the lengths to which Leibniz has to go to mediate the single, self-enclosed will inside, and wills and bodies outside, which therefore is possible only on an ontotheological foundation.

### **3.2. Schopenhauer’s ubiquitous will**

Shifting from Leibniz to Schopenhauer it can be seen that their respective metaphysics are homomorphic, manifesting the same basic ontotheological structure. The place of God is taken by the will itself in Schopenhauer’s opus magnum, *The World as Will and Representation* (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* 1st ed. 1818, 3rd ed. 1859), albeit

that Schopenhauer would turn in his grave to read this, because for him the will is not responsible for any universal or pre-established harmony, indeed, quite the contrary, for the many manifestations of will are engaged in “their endless, irreconcilable struggle against one another” (ihren endlosen und unversöhnlichen Kampf gegen einander; Bk. II § 28). Nevertheless, Schopenhauer still evokes an harmony, as will be discussed below. Leibniz’s *perceptio* and *appetitus* become representation (*Vorstellung*) and the striving of will, respectively, in Schopenhauer.

The term “will” initially signifies (§ 18) the “power” (*Kraft*) manifested in the movement of a human being’s own body (*Leib*). The human will acts according to motives which are always united with a movement of the individual’s own body; otherwise, the will is not really will. Hence, Schopenhauer does without a pre-established harmony to have the individual’s will working in concert with its body. Schopenhauer extends this inner experience of the human will stepwise to other beings, attributing to them, too, will as the a priori inner essence that accounts for their movements. Thus animals act and plants move according to stimuli (*Reize*) soliciting their inner vital power, and inorganic things such as stones move through the action of inner forces according to laws of nature. Schopenhauer thus extends the signification of will to cover i) what was the power of self-movement in all living things that Aristotle attributed to the psyche and also ii) the passive powers of lifeless things, such as impenetrability, to suffer being moved by natural forces, along with iii) an inner tendency of things to move to a particular place which in modern science is attributed to being affected by the force of gravity.

With this extension of its signification, the will becomes the name for the inner essence of all beings sans phrase and thus the noumenal *Ding an sich* that Kant had placed as beyond bounds for any knowing. Hence Schopenhauer’s critique of Kant, whom he otherwise follows in the construction of objectivity within subjectivity and the realm of appearances. With this move, Schopenhauer makes a valiant effort to leap out of the interior of subjective consciousness to the outside by declaring the will to be the inner essence of everything. Such a leap, of

course, does not heal the caesura between inside and outside. The will itself as *Ding an sich* for Schopenhauer is one, groundless and non-manifest, just as God is hidden, unified *causa sui* in earlier metaphysics. All appearances are to be led back ultimately to the will *an sich*, just as for Leibniz's *nihil est sine ratione*, God is the ultimate sufficient ground for all. The will has countless gradations of objectivation in the various "ideas" (Bk. II § 25) that are the various species of being (or better: the various modes of being of the will) that provide the "model images" (*Musterbilder* § 25) for individual, movable things (Aristotle's *κινούμενα*). Hence the will — as the highest, single idea analogous to Plato's idea of the good — is hidden behind all its stepwise objectivations and appearances and is itself without ground.

Its coming to appearance amounts to the will's stepping into the phenomenal world, thus assuming a place as an object within time and space and becoming subject to the laws of causality that govern the spatial apartness and temporal succession, and thus movement, of these appearances as representations. The world *as* representation means for Schopenhauer that the object is only ever what it is as a representation within the subject's consciousness.

The world *as* will, by contrast, is the *a priori*, non-appearing, groundless essence of all beings behind the phenomenal appearing that ultimately grounds them. Kant had worked out space, time and causality as the inner-subjective, *a priori*, transcendental conditions of possibility for the representation of any being and thus of any knowledge at all. Schopenhauer adopts this Kant inner-subjective realm of appearance insofar as the world is nothing other than a representation in subjective consciousness, but breaks with Kant in postulating the will as the *Ding an sich*. The will as the universal essence of beings encompasses the dull urge of natural forces such as gravity, impenetrability, electricity and magnetism behind all natural movements, through the vital forces behind all living beings susceptible to stimuli and driven by instinctual drives, to human will that acts through understanding according to motives. Whereas natural inorganic forces are blind and act uniformly according to unchanging natural laws of motion, plants' vital force reacts to stimuli soliciting it from the environment. Animals' vital force

is activated both blindly by environmental stimuli and also by motives according to what the animal sensually sees, hears, smells, tastes and touches and thus gathers into a sort of understanding of its world. Finally, human beings' will acts according to motives arising from understanding of the world and also according to the self-reflection of an ego reasoning according to concepts. Schopenhauer's will thus forms the core of a metaphysics of all beings insofar as they *moving* or *movable*.

The will is objectified in all beings as some gradation or other of a groundless inner force that only comes to appearance in the world for the subject *as* representation through being solicited to act, thus subjecting the being concerned more or less to causality, whether it be the strict, uniform causality of laws of nature ("a blind urge, a dark, dull drive"; einen blinden Drang, ein finsteres, dumpfes Treiben § 27), the looser causality of stimuli leaving some room for the individuality of the living being, or the conditional causality of motives that are highly individual, being dependent as they are on individual character. Schopenhauer underscores that each level of objectivation of the will is its own idea of force that cannot be reduced to forces on a more primitive level of the will's objectivation. Hence, on the one hand, his metaphysics of will offers a way of criticizing today's science's die-hard conviction, implicit or explicit, that somehow or other the essence of all beings could be led back to the most primitive physical forces, which today are named as electromagnetic forces plus gravity. In particular, Schopenhauer ridicules contemporary scientific beliefs that the vital force could be thus reduced. On the other hand, the objectivations of the will an sich from dark, blind, natural forces through to the light of reason in humankind is analogous to Schelling's ontotheological construction of a dark primal will urging and yearning toward the divine light of understanding spirit, all of these stages amounting to a stepwise revelation of God in and through creation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Schelling F.W.J. *Philosophische Untersuchungen über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit und die damit zusammenhängenden Gegenstände* (1809) *Werke* Bd. 4 C.H. Beck, Munich 1927 or Suhrkamp, Frankfurt/M. 1975, and Heidegger M. *Schellings Abhandlung über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (1809) Niemeyer, Tübingen 1971. Heidegger's lectures from SS 1936

The various levels of objectivation of the will for Schopenhauer are all in intense rivalry with each other, each laying a claim on matter to move physical beings according to specific forces. Thus, for instance, human understanding and reason as motive forces for the movement of the human body has to overcome and hold at bay the solicitations of instinctual drives, the dull claims of vegetative forces such as digestion as well as the primitive claims of natural forces such as gravity, impenetrability, chemistry, electricity and magnetism. There is thus a hierarchy of rivalling forces as objectivations of the will that is the inner essence of all beings, with each force striving to assimilate the lower forces to maintain the upper hand. This savage contestation among objectivations of the various levels of will, and also among the individual beings embodying forces on the same level ensures that the world of movement is by no means harmonious, but quite the opposite. Nevertheless, and at first paradoxically, the hierarchical objectivations of the will through its various stages from natural forces through to human will amounts to a “harmony” (*Harmonie* § 28) according to an overarching “purposefulness” (*Zweckmäßigkeit* § 28) of beings as the manifestation of stages of objectivation of the will an sich through organic and inorganic nature, resulting in the reproduction of the cohesive whole. This is akin to Leibniz’s ultimately rooting all that is and happens in the final ground and end (*τέλος*) of God’s will for the best of all possible worlds.

Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of will could be regarded as the consummation of Aristotle’s ontology of movement as summed up in the famous triad of *δύναμις*, *ἐνέργεια* and *ἐντελέχεια* (force, energy, perfected presence) according to which all movable beings (*κινούμενα*) move in the four characteristic categorial ways according to what, how, how much and where they are. This ontology of movement, streamlined and mathematized, underlies unbeknowns all modern science, albeit with

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work out in particular that for Schelling, “Beyng, however, is now originarily conceived as a willing. ... Existing things each strive for definite stages of willing;” (*Seyn wird aber jetzt ursprünglich begriffen als Wollen. ... Die seienden Dinge erstreben je bestimmte Stufen des Wollens; ibid. p. 148*).

a great loss of detail and insight that accounts for much of modern science's dogmatism and blind belief in itself. Nietzsche prefers to align Schopenhauer's insight into the essence of the being of beings as will, and the essence of the world of appearances as the being-at-work (Wirken) of will, with Herakleitos' preconceptual intuition, setting him purportedly at loggerheads with Aristotle's thinking in dry "concepts and logical combinations" (in *Begriffen und logischen Combinationen*; KSAI:823). Schopenhauer's pronouncement on matter that "its being is its effecting/working" (Ihr Seyn ... ist ihr Wirken; op. cit. I § 4) leads him to praise the German word "Wirklichkeit" (literally: 'working-ness' or 'effecting-ness') as the "quintessence of everything material" (Inbegriff des Materiellen; *ibid.*) in preference to the synonym, "Realität" (reality), but misleads Nietzsche to counterpose Being to Becoming as has been traditionally done in counterposing Herakleitos to Parmenides.

### **3.3. Stepping out into the play-room of the time-clearing**

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche each casts a metaphysics of will, the former drawing the pessimistic consequence of resignation in the face of the interminable struggle of wills and forces from this finding, the latter drawing the more 'optimistic' consequence of an affirmation of will, no matter what, in his famous formula of the "eternal recurrence of the same" (ewige Wiederkehr des Gleichen). Since both are disciples of Kant, they are captive to his subjectivist metaphysics, especially that of time and space as subjective constructs and foils for the appearance of objective appearances. In Kant's thinking, time remains the a priori intuitive formal representation in consciousness of succession providing the temporal ordering for appearances. As such, there remains no play-room for time; it remains a flattened, linear succession of nows (as in Aristotle), of one present instant of time annihilating the past instant, only itself to be annihilated by the next instant. If time is to be seen as a play-room, you have to step back from the idea of time as a linear succession.

You could say, if you thought about it, that in their unwavering fixation on the metaphysical determination of the being of beings *as will*

— a kind of mental tunnel-vision —, both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are blinded by will-power to the ambient play-room of time in which the will plays out. The play-room of will for Schopenhauer is the world *as* representation in which appearances are ordered according to linear time, homogenous Euclidean space and the law of causality. Causality orders the sequence of the appearances according to the schema of cause and effect, to which Schopenhauer sticks when proceeding from strict natural laws through environmental stimuli to motives for voluntary action, allowing, however, that the link between cause and effect thereby becomes progressively looser. An individual human's character is then supposed to be the causal ground on which motives move the individual in one willed direction rather than another. Another word for character is who the individual has become through already having been cast into the world and having gone through individual life-experiences. This already-having-become-who-you-are, however, does not preclude the will's spontaneity in being its own free starting-point for future actions. This circumstance puts the schema of cause and effect into question, since each individual will its own spontaneous ἀρχή. Given that Schopenhauer asserts that the will itself is groundless, it is odd that he does not himself put effective causality into question when considering human will which, after all, is his familiar phenomenal starting-point when first introducing the will (op. cit. § 18).

When it comes to the interplay between human individuals, each individual will acts in an interplay with the other not merely from a predictable basis in each individual's character, but also from each individual's spontaneity, so that the free spontaneity of interplay among individual will-powers is potentiated to the power of two.<sup>13</sup> One could say that the groundlessness of will is thus squared. When more individual human will-powers motivated by motives come into play with one another, the groundlessness of this willed interplay is exponentiated all the more. The schema of efficient causality thus becomes all the more

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<sup>13</sup> For more detail, see e.g. Chap. 5 of my book *Social Ontology: Recasting Political Philosophy Through a Phenomenology of Whoness* ontos, Frankfurt 2008. Second revised, emended and extended e-book edition 2011 Version 2.0 available at <http://www.arte-fact.org/sclontlg.html>

doubtful, giving away to a vista of incalculable interplay. Moreover, the interplay is always also a play of mutually estimating who each other is and what they have.<sup>14</sup> In engaging in estimating interplay, the individuals are always already out there with each other in the world, and not confined to any imagined interiority of consciousness. Their interplay is always ‘timely’, i.e. happening as a play of presencing and absencing within the time-clearing.

The play-room of time itself is not inner-subjective. Unlike the inside and outside of consciousness, there is no outside to the time-clearing and therefore also no inside. Anything at all that presents itself presences, if at all, in some mode or other in the time-clearing of presencing, which is pre-spatial, not requiring the physical presence of beings for them to be ‘there’. Physical presencing of beings in the present is only *one* mode of presencing, i.e. being, through which beings take their places in the world next to others.<sup>15</sup> Beings thus placed in the world can presence as such also in the time-clearing in its two modes of absence as withheld by the future or refused by foregone-ness. Breaking with the thought-cliché of the inside and outside of consciousness therefore introduces unfamiliar, very simple ways of thinking that heal also the rift between subject and object. The human mind’s attentiveness ranges freely through all three dimensions of the play-room of time. The mind itself is thus the same as the time-clearing:

If the (implicit metaphysical) meaning of being *as such* is expanded from presence in the present (in the first place, of *what* is sensuously present in the third person) to (the explicit post-metaphysical meaning of being as) *presencing and absencing within the three-dimensional time-clearing* (rather than time-space, to avoid misleading connotations of ‘space’), then there are different, equally valid ways of being with beings (which now become ‘presents’ and ‘absents’) in such a temporally structured world. To exist as a human being then does not mean primarily to be with things as such in the present through the mediation of sense perception (e.g. through scientific experiment), but rather to call, or let come to presence, to mind, those matters that have to be taken care of. Such matters come primarily from the future, although this does not at all

<sup>14</sup> For more detail, cf. *ibid.* Chap. 5 Section vi).

<sup>15</sup> For more detail, see my essay ‘Being Time Space: Heidegger’s Casting of World’ 2013 URL: <http://www.arte-fact.org/untpltcl/bngtmspc.html>

exclude, but emphatically includes, what has been, the so-called ‘past’ or ‘foregoneness’, that has to be dealt with through recollection. Dasein has to be primarily future-oriented to shape its own existence in the world which, of course, it shares with certain others. Such a future-orientation is a presencing of the absent things themselves as arriving *potentially*, as yet *withheld* within the temporal dimension of the future, and not an inner imagination through which future events are simply represented inside consciousness, lacking external reality.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> For more detail and unfolding of a line of thought, read further in my essay ‘Out of your mind? Parmenides' message’ 2012 URL: <http://www.artefact.org/untpltel/outyrmnd.html>