

#4

The world is made of facts (Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logicus philosophicus*)

Being is possibly being. (Edith Stein)

Introduction

In this essay I will analyze the quote from both a noetic and a noematical point of view and I will consider self-knowledge and self-discovery as dependent on the world considered as the structure and totality of the relation between things or the structure of actions. I will identify environment with world itself and then surrounding world.

I will also refer to human nature as both infinite and finite (which I'll eventually do by identifying universality with infinity) and the effects of the surrounding world upon our singularity. I shall also consider the dimension of the philosophy of the cure as cure of our possibilities and also cure towards objects meant as pro-cure (In Heidegger's *Zeit und Sein*). I will also consider the structure of Categories as actions towards things (referring to Hegel's point of view).

In the conclusion I'll eventually consider if noetic and noematic view of the world could be united. All essay will be founded on a materialistic point of view and a materialistic concept of things' nature, rejecting the pre-idealistic thesis of us only knowing the being-for-us of things.

On the human nature as it is-in-the-world

We could say Watsuji's quote suggests we are to be shaped by reality. I will first consider that and lately the relation between two different nature of the world and their effect on our self-knowledge.

As the first part of the quote is concerned, we could consider the before being born condition of a child. A child (the example comes from the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, G.W.F. Hegel)

that's not born yet is in-beingly a man but he's not as far as his being-for-himself is concerned. The in-being is universality and only thought. It's our quid, the *essentia*, to put it simply. Being-for-yourself is the dimension of singularity, is what you actually are in the world, and more importantly, *is what you become*. It's the expression of your singular self in the moment you express that. For-himself the unborn child is a unconscious little being with only the future possibility of being a man which he is not yet. That future is not sure. That possibly is related to accidentality and a series of future casualties that might kill that baby before he ever becomes an adult. That accidentality, that precarity is common to everyone. Our being-in-the-world, which means to be surrounded by reality, to be in it, is co-being. We all share a universal in-being which means we have the same rights as man (if we want to consider with an ethical point of view), but what truly puts us all together on the same line is that we don't know what future will bring us.

That our being-in-the-world is indeed a possibly-being. And eventually being what we in-beingly are would be like objectifying our existence in the surrounding world.

Difference between noema and noesis

In order to clarify the effect the world has upon man I will consider first the world as the structure of the relations of objects and lately as the structure of actions towards objects.

To do that, we might first have a glimpse at Husserl's distinction between noesis and noema. Let's consider a table. The way I look at that table is not the table itself. Just in the same measure the act of knowing something is not the object known. If I attempt to look at the table from right in front of it, I'll only have a view of that side of the table. Indeed the object as it's seen-from-right-in-the-front is the noema. The act of seeing that object only by standing in front of it is the noesis.

Act of thinking is noetic. The thought itself is noematic.

A small inch about the nature of the world as made up by things (materialism and idealism)

I have previously said I will consider the world from a materialistic point of view. Here I will briefly explain the difference from idealistic and materialistic conceptions of reality and of things. Materialism believes things are for-us what they are-for-themselves. Which means they need no supporting subject on the consciousness of which they depend (Frege's idea). Idealism believes things are in-being (what Kant would call the noumenon) only if they are for-us (the phenomenon). We could state idealism turns subjectivity into the objectivity of the world as the Subject is the entire reality (As Hegel's reason would state: Reason is everything). Indeed the world is existing by itself (materialism) or is dependent on the consciousness of a subject. We'll consider materialistic view.

The way we relate to the world. World as the structure of the relation between things

We have stated our being-in-the-world means we have infinite possibility and yet we have no certainty we will be able of achieving what we want to achieve or what we might need. That means that the first action towards the world is that of trying to own things, the desire of them, desire of pro-curing things. But that, just as much as future does, includes possibility. We desire something as we understand their possible use-for. The action towards things is a desire for a potential they show. I need a pen because I think I'll be able to put something down with its help. But that doesn't mean that pen will automatically work. Perhaps the ink is over. Which means more than the object, what we desire is the possibility of it. That we could say is our first attempt in relating to reality. What we first state is the relation between things and the structure of that as the world. We get the so-called sense-data related to the objects and that means we happen to consider their qualities (whether we want to believe we can only know that of objects or not). We also find out things about our own selves by looking at the world. We believe to have infinite potential, yet we have to cope with the finiteness of our being. Through knowing things, we witness they're finite too. Indeed we witness the limit.

Knowing the limit

World as power of action is infinite. As to say it with Murphy's law, everything that can happen, will happen. In the moment we related to things surrounding us, to our world, we happen to understand things are limited. First thing we notice (Descartes believed that) is the *extensio* of things. That is the first limit we witness. Things are not infinite in space. Another limit we witness is time. Things are not eternal and neither are we. Energy that shaped us will one day be given back to the nature it belongs to. We could say that is the first point of the self-discovery Watsuji is talking about.

You realize 'everything you can bare' (Sapphus) but you also realize you have limits. And death is one of them. Worst fears come from witnessing our limits. Limits come from our being-in-the-world, inhabiting an environment. Da-sein as being the world in German is related to expression 'vertraut mit', which means to share something with, to be familiar with. We understand we are familiar to things in the measure we both have limits.

"Know your limits" is basically what Michel de Montaigne states. Knowing limits means somehow also act to cure ourselves and indeed cure our limits (philosophy of the cure). Indeed from reality (external world) we have come back to internal side as what was first cure of the objects as pro-cure (*ich pflege etwas*) is now cure of our own limits, and has gone back to interiority.

The way we know the world. Objectivity of knowledge and the role of Category as action

In ancient Greek, to 'know the world' is '*noein*'. That is also related to the fact in that language to know is connected to have seen. I know what I have seen. Knowledge of environment is objective as we could all say things are what they are. I will here consider knowledge as the

use of categories (Kant's a-priori thoughts or pure concepts of mind the legitimacy of which is the universal structure of knowledge, the transcendental apperception). Category does not state something that is already in the thing itself. Things do not own difference, for example. We could say difference comes from us. We state it. That seeing-the-difference is an act towards things. *Difference is the act of differentiating*. That act towards objects is indeed knowledge meant in a noematic way, as the act of knowing. From a noetic point of view, we could consider every result as not still and continuously changing. We could consider substance as the act of becoming it. World would then be the structure of actions, their universality as their legitimacy. It would be the same of saying: *the fact is the action of happening*. Which means not just that everything can happen, but that the structure of actions is finite, as the only structure meant as the legitimacy of the relation of these actions one with the other, yet the action itself is potentially infinite.

The surrounding world shapes us. Knowledge as an expression of our environment.

World, whether we consider that as the structure of the relation between things or the structure of actions, dicotomy of which I'll try to solve in the conclusion of the essay, makes us what we are.

`The External part of us (what's shown of our singularity, our physical aspect, as to put it in simple words) and the Internal part (what we deeply are) can just be correlated by accidentality? The way I look like differs from what I truly am?`

Almost all of you would answer yes. We are not what we look like. It would be the same thing as saying our name means what we really are, but as we all now a same's just a sort of label, it is not the essentia of our singularity, and the haecceitas it depicts only by itself is only valid within language symbols. I would be different from someone called X even if I had his same name. What differentiates me from someone else, you might say, *is the way I've been brought up*. As to refer to the beginning of the essay, in-beingly we're all universal, all the same. What shapes us is the being-for-ourselves part. That's what we build up.

We have infinite potentiality but we can only apply that to shaping our finiteness. It means our actions are always infinite but within a finite limit (that could explain why the world surrounding us, if meant as the structure of actions, is made of finite parts). How do we shape ourselves? Can the world around us have a role in that? We'll again refer to ancient Greek. In ancient Greek, verb to be, *gignomai*, which means to become, to always change, and is the word that perfectly describes the always mutating structure of the world, comes from the same semantic root of verb to know, *gignosco*. We could state we are what we know. We are what we have seen, indeed. Knowing the outer world means deeply knowing ourselves, because it means knowing what shaped us. If we consider the world as the structure of actions, by giving structure to that action it shaped us, means it shapes us in a noetic way, if

we consider ourselves as power of action and not substance (Scheler indeed considered man as action and not substance). If we consider the world as the structure of things, it provides us with self-knowledge because we are what we have known from our environment. We know the language of our country as that's where we were born and that language (in an analytic way of referring to it) has shaped us and shaped our thoughts. Its legitimacy among our peers has made it possible to communicate, which is the *essentia* of being-in-the-world, co-being, *cure of ourselves through the cure of the other*.

Conclusion

We have considered the nature of human beings as both universal and singular and how that singularity is shaped by the world. By considering that universality as only thought, our aim within action is to make that real, to turn it into reality. That is our potential of action. Infinite possibilities of action and the desire for universality that can only be turned into reality as singularity. We have stated in a noematic way of meaning the quote, the world as the structure of things lead us to the knowledge of ourselves as the knowledge of the limits of our being substances. From a noetic point of view, the surrounding world as the structure and the relation between actions gives us knowledge of the infinite potential inside ourselves as the neverending power of action. One gives us self knowledge of our finite part and the other of our infinite part, which is yet only potential.

Can we consider that noetic and noematic way together? Could be state the world is the structure of our action of becoming ourselves and also the structure of the substance (the thing, the body) we become and its relation with other things characterized by *extensio* and material limits? I believe solution to that question is not inside the world itself. It is inside us. Self-discovery is discovery of our actions within their mundane (belonging to the world) structure. It is also the discovery of our singularity, the limits of our body and our rational mind.

We shall now consider again the example of the baby. Struggle to make the thought of in-being (universality which we will now consider as infinite) real needs the being-for-ourselves. Universality alone is just dissolution. It needs singularity to show up. We could then state the cure of our possibilities (the infinite power of action) is the cure of our singularity, of our being-related-to-things as we're the only being that is *finitevily infinite* (Giordano Bruno).

Indeed the world surrounding us shapes us and leaves us to self knowledge as the world is the unity of things and action towards things. It is the land of finite substances and infinite potentiality because so are we. We witness our limits in that reality and the way we witness that (the way we're brought up, the way we become what we are in our country, speaking our languages) makes us what we are. Subjective infinity needs legitimacy, objectivity (meant as the finiteness of objects), to manifest. And that is what the world gives it.

We could eventually say in both a noematic and noetic way that the world gives us knowledge of infinity of action within the limit of finite things.

References:

The concepts of noema and noesis come from Husserl's Phenomenology and theory of knowledge. The concept of Category as action is mutated from Hegel's view expressed in the Phenomenology of the Spirit, where it is said Category is Subject as thinking substance and it is the unity of the action of knowing the object and the object we know itself as things are, according to Hegel, in-being only if they are for us. Also the idea of manifestation of the infinite in the finite as the only way to understand infinite not only potentially and finite not only actually comes from the Phenomenology of the Spirit. Scheler's view of man as power of action is quoted in Heidegger's Zeit und Sein.