

Authenticity as Emerging Meaning – Dialectics, Pragmatism and Psychotherapy

PD Dr. Donata Schoeller, Senior Lecturer, University of Koblenz, Guest Professor University of Iceland

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Abstract

Taking a philosophical interest in authenticity, is following Adorno's encouraging appeal to turn to something as transitory and particular as individuality. At the same time, Adorno expresses the vast area of conflict such an interest holds for us. In my paper, I dip into this tension by demonstrating how difficult it is for philosophers, past and present, to convey the specificity and richness of ordinary experience. Looking closely at how people succeed in conveying their experience in psychotherapy, one can notice an unpredictable process that challenges philosophical theories of meaning. In the course of this paper I will not give a definition of authenticity. My examples suggest that authenticity needs a subtle kind of practice allowing for meanings to emerge. This is an entry point for reconsidering meaning in terms of a transformational happening.

1. Experience vs. Experiencing

“The matters of true philosophical interest at this point in history are those in which Hegel, agreeing with tradition, expressed his disinterest. They are nonconceptuality, individuality, and particularity- things which ever since Plato used to be dismissed as transitory and insignificant, and which Hegel labeled „lazy Existence.“ Philosophy's theme would consist of the qualities it downgrades as contingent, as *quantité négligeable*. A matter of urgency to the concept would be what it fails to cover, what its abstractionist mechanism eliminates, what is not already a case of the concept.“

(Adorno 2000, 8)

“Could we succeed in shaping a language that is not only parallel to the living world but is itself living and participates in cultivating life?” (Irigaray, 2016, 80)

Adorno's and Irigaray's encouraging appeal to turn to those matters which are not yet a case of a concept expresses at the same time the vast area of conflict such an interest holds for us.¹ The mentioned disinterest is also due to well established reasons dating back centuries. What empirical knowledge can be gained from something that has not, respectively will not, become a concept? Whether it is the skeptical tradition, which in order to gain certain knowledge, has learned to mistrust the changeable and the phenomenological since the ancient Greeks; or the epistemological tradition, according to which experience can only ever be constituted by concepts; or the idealistic tradition, which demonstrates the workability and vividness of concepts as opposed to void immediacy; or the linguistic turn, which in order not to become entangled in the realms of pseudo-problems, accounts for the language as the only unambiguous source of material; or the discourse theory, relating to the long-established uncircumventable union between power and concept: nothing seems to be more difficult for the philosopher than dwelling in the near of a theme like “the pre-conceptual” without digressing into mystification, esoterics or simply vagueness.

What seems impossible to the philosophers is ‘daily business’ for the psychotherapists: to deal with something that appears perfectly unclear but too meaningful to be ignored, too particular to be easily classified, so intricately woven that we are lost for words when trying to describe it. Clients who attend to the experiencing going on while they tell or analyze their situations, begin to pause, grope for words, struggle with explicating something which seems to matter, but cannot be put to words easily. Therapy research findings show, that shifting attention to an experiencing process happening *now*, staying with it and speaking-

¹ This chapter is based on a translation and modification of a chapter in my forthcoming book: *Close Talking. Erelben zur Sprache bringen*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2018. [Humanprojekt]. I am thankful to Neil Dunaetz for his help in making this article more readable in English and for the eye opening discussions during this process. His deep understanding of Gendlin's philosophy was ‘maeutic’ for my own beginnings.

from it is highly significant for therapeutic progress (Gendlin 1961, 1963a, 1963b; Petitmengin 2007).

In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant speaks of experience as a way of conceiving „whose rule I have to presuppose in myself before any object is given to me, hence *a priori*, which rule is expressed in concepts *a priori*, to which all objects of experience must therefore necessarily conform, and with which they must agree“ (B, XVIII). But is there not a similar kind of predetermined conformity between objects of experience and concepts *a priori* corresponding to the idea of experience in psychotherapeutic theory? While speaking of their experiences, psychotherapy clients are referred back to a basic pattern which appears to be the essence of the experience they try to describe, also determining the object of the experience. The real issue seems to be the structure the therapist can detect, thereby identifying the kind of experience the client is talking about. As in the transcendental theory of knowledge, various schools of psychotherapy assume that experiences seem to match a *a priori* a corresponding basic pattern (like e.g. Adler's „effeminate“ or Jung's „archetypical“ or Freud's „compulsive“ pattern), which can be recognized through analysis and diagnosis. Thus it seems inevitable that some kind of pattern is necessary for access to our experience. What alternative could there be?

By focusing on pre-reflexive and pre-conceptual functions of experiencing, hermeneutic, pragmatistic and phenomenological thinkers like Dilthey, Dewey, Merleau-Ponty consider alternative approaches. A process of understanding, as well as creative work in progress (scientific, artistic etc.) depend on processes, that are not controlled by concepts alone, as they are capable of generating new ones. Gendlin, as a Classical Pragmatist in the third generation, focally develops these impulses forward by means of analyzing progressions in psychotherapeutic transcripts.

Mr. X for instance has a problem with authority which according to a Freudian psychological diagnosis goes back to an unsolved Oedipal conflict on account of which he transfers certain emotions related to his father on other people. Mr. X suffers from castration anxiety.

“ ‘Yes, from what I've read I agree that I have an Œdipal conflict, but I'm not aware of that. I guess I must have repressed it. What I *am* aware of is that I get so mad I can't eat or sleep and I argue with myself constantly. I know how I ought to behave, how I wish I behaved, but when some little thing happens, then I blow up.” (Gendlin, 1963c, 249)

Up to this point one could still think that the Œdipal structure underlies his experience but he doesn't know it, as he has "repressed" it.

But than Mr. X continues:.

‘I'm mad. Let's see, why do I get so mad? I understand a lot about the dynamics of it, but that gets me no place. I mean, I know it's true and all that, but I'm still just as mad. It hasn't gotten any better. It just doesn't 'give.' Let's see.” (Silence . . . he focuses his attention directly on the felt meanings of his experiencing.) Sigh. "Well, uh, it's funny but it seems to me now that I'm not really angry. Resentful is more like it. My feelings are hurt, really. Hurt, I think really I'm hurt. I feel so bad that people don't think more of me, that I'm such a mere hireling, I mean that's nobody's fault, of course, but I can't be talked to like that, like they talk to me. I won't stand for it, I mean it hurts my feelings.’” (Gendlin1963c, 249)

This new conceptualization by Mr. X not only changes the picture he has, but “his concrete inward experiencing is momentarily changed”. He shifted from being so angry that he can't eat or sleep to something different: feeling hurt and humiliated. Mr. X's is again certain that he is *now* speaking truly, for he can feel the “concrete continuity between his felt meanings and the words he uses. (...) .” (Ibid.)

Yet, after a few moments he will say, how very much he is afraid to have to look for another job. He gets so desparate, because his colleagues show him everyday that he can't stay and respect himself. And later again he says, that he has always been afraid among people, that is why he can't quite “get around in the world or face life”. (Ibid)

While Mr. X's various movements to understand himself may be interpreted as castration

anxiety, we want to direct our attention to the movements of the assertions themselves. The flexibility of this movement could indicate certain forms of anxiety, but it could also indicate, other basic patterns expressible in terms of “life styles or power drives or life avoidances or interpersonal patterns“ (Gendlin 1963c, 250). Depending on the school of therapy, different basic conceptions can be used for interpretation. It seems impossible to agree on the conceptual structures which psychology hopes to find at the root of individual experiences. So one could philosophically conclude, that the innumerable possibilities of interpretation seem to account for a confusing arbitrariness or for a radical constructivism in the sense of Heinz von Foerster, who assumes „the invention of a world“ (von Foerster 2001, 233) taking place in such expressive processes. The constructivist conclusion may become even more obvious when Gendlin, in the same article, describes a client going through a successful therapy by deriving the meaning of his experience with the help of a pattern for which a game of tennis stood as model. Although different schools of therapy attribute utmost importance to their mode of interpreting, none of them takes the lead regarding the rate of success in treatment (Gendlin 1997, 246). Does all this amount to an „anything goes“ regarding the basic nature of our experiences, as it seems to make no difference whether the interpretation derives from widely supported research in depth psychology or any common wisdom such as the reference to sport rules? Or does it speak for the passivity of our experiences, depending like wax on the kind of mould imposed on it?

2. Responsive vs. dialectical movement

According to Dewey’s essay on Qualitative Thought and Gendlin’s thinking continuing from here, the provocation of a case like Mr. X as well as of the client who cures himself with tennis rules, might point a different way. The unpredictability of the movement in Mr. X’s statements indicate the exact opposite of „anything goes“, both in terms of arbitrariness of interpretation as well as of passivity of experience. The flexibility of the statements as well as of their interpretation show something, which does not show up if our attention is only directed towards interpreting and classifying experience according to predetermined

patterns. It has to do with a forming and regulating effect, that does not stem from concepts, but from something Dewey names the felt quality of a situation:

“By the term situation in this connection is signified the fact that the subject-matter ultimately referred to in existential propositions is a complex existence that is held together, in spite of its internal complexity, by the fact that it is dominated and characterized by something we can feel“ (Dewey 1984, 246).

Dewey refuses to classify this feeling as something merely internal and distinguishes it from emotion. In his article on *Qualitative Thought*, as well as in *Art as Experience* and *Logic of Inquiry* he develops a wider notion of feeling: as a point of reference, that holds situational complexity that needs further development to transform into clear propositions and states of affairs. (This developmental aspect distinguishes qualitative feeling from Heideggers *Befindlichkeit*).

Having this in mind, one can say that in the changes from one statement to the next, Mr. X does not just arbitrarily choose different interpretations of his experiences. Rather, the movement created in this attentive way of speaking seems to result from an interplay between interpretation and what is interpreted - as something felt. In fact, what is interpreted seems to regulate the interpretation, thereby causing its constant modifications. What seems to be a provoking arbitrariness of possible interpretations is an indication of a provocation of a very different sort: the *interpreted* itself seems capable of *reinterpreting* the interpretation. Thus many different ways of getting to the point can be rightly applied to Mr. X's case as well as to others. Dewey's impulse is further elaborated in Gendlin's work on *A Responsive Order* (1997).

„This is no accident of this one example. Because felt meanings are (...) capable of being conceptualized by modifying *any* vocabulary and using it in reference to this experiential process of felt meanings and differentiated aspects.“ (Gendlin 1963, 251)

In a dialectic way of speaking, one could say, it is this „counter-thrust“ of the ‘felt meaning’s’ capacity of modifying vocabulary, which renders the articulation of Mr. X's felt curvy. Or to put it differently: experience can be conceptualized in very different ways, not because it is

relative, but because as experiencing it is capable of modifying the vocabulary referring to it in a very precise way. Regarding the speaker's capacities to be able to make a point with different notions, in different sets of arguments, systems and expectational backgrounds, the felt point "has this odd "order" of responding to different formulations differently—*but very exactly, just so to each*. And not only to different systems—"the" point would respond just so to different purposes, backgrounds, even loyalties to certain groups." (Gendlin, 1989, 404)

Analogous to Hegel's speculative movement, we find a kind movement in the above propositions of Mr. X which disturbs the identity of the subject and predicate, the subject in this case being the anxiety and the predicate its interpretation. The motion here however is not initiated through the notions alone, but - to continue in Hegelian terms - through the contact of a concept and its 'other'. Hegel helps even a bit further by explaining the speculative movement as going against the idea of a subject to which predicates are linked, whereas „here, that subject is replaced by the knowing „I“ itself, which links the predicates with the subjects holding them“ (Hegel 1977, 37). Instead of the knowing „I“, which according to Hegel links subject and predicate in a way that their meaning dialectically expands, hermeneutical and pragmatist thinkers point to an *experiencing* „I“, functioning creatively and precisely to form a meaning which is not determined by one basic pattern (e.g. dialectics), but from which many (basic) patterns emerge in an undeterminable way. This experiencing function - and at this point Hegel's help comes to an end - does not constitute the starting point of a conceptual dynamics as it's „poorest truth“ (Ibid, 58).

A Hermeneutic and Pragmatistic turn is characterized by a different beginning. We are always already in the midst of our experiencing process, in "Erleben", "in-der-Welt", in "situations", which is so rich, that its expression becomes a challenge needing, the precise felt functions of something "more" than propositional forms.

In order to demonstrate this reversal of a traditional philosophical starting point, it seems promising to continue with Hegel as a background. Hegel very transparently shows a kind of beginning that is linked by the kinds of moves conceptuality alone makes possible and

impossible.

Hegel's Phenomenology starts and proceeds by way of abstracting from the wealth of individual experiencing, which his famous beginning calls „sense-certainty“. As his description indicates, he does not mean sensory perception (like a sensation such as red). Sense-certainty is characterised as „the richest kind of knowledge“, „infinite wealth“ being attributed to it. According to Hegel, it is something that could be „entered“ and to which „no bounds“ are found etc.“ (Hegel, 1977, 58)

It is well known, that Hegel does not even need pages, only a few lines, to dismantle this certainty and to present it as the 'poorest truth'. It is poor, because the thing of which this certainty is certain of is not yet a host of distinct qualities, has not yet entered into various relationships with other objects, and is still absent any knowing I moving in this certainty. Hegel demonstrates a first dialectic movement by showing how much is involved in what seems given in an immediate way: the thing, that conveys certainty to me as well as being certain through me. Thus immediacy is already a kind of product, a form of certainty that is produced through a twofold relation of the thing with myself. The first transition from immediacy to mediacy is carried out by Hegel in detail. At first, the essence of certainty appears to be nothing else as the thing itself: „this“. The essence of „this“ is what is here and now. Obviously therefore this essence cannot be preserved – it changes constantly with every new here and now. What stays constant is nothing but the concepts of 'now' and 'here', preserving themselves negatively in relation to the passing moments, to which they refer. Staying constant only in contrast to the transient moments is what makes them universal, at the same time being the only form in which we can have transience. Hegel states this basic dialectic as follows: „A simple thing of this kind which *is* through negation, which is neither This nor That, a *not-This*, and is with equal indifference This as well as That – such a thing we call *universal*. So it is in fact the universal that is the true [content] of sense-certainty.“ (Ibid, 60)

The infinite wealth of sense-certainty, into which according to Hegel - one could 'enter', virtually dissipates into something entirely ephemeral of which only the opposite can be

kept: the constant form of language, deriving its constancy through negation of the fleeting wealth it indicates. Therefore Hegel concludes that language, “as we see, is the more truthful; in it, we ourselves directly refute what we *mean* to say, and since the universal is the true [content] of sense-certainty and language expresses this true [content] alone, it is not possible for us ever to say, or express just in words, a sensuous being that we mean.” (Ibid.)

As the infinite and boundless wealth of sense-certainty seems to be too changeable to be held and kept, it melts down to what Adorno called a philosophical *quantite negligeable*. Equating truth to a form of predictable stability is obviously not unique to Hegel; it can be found, as pragmatistical critique of philosophy has shown before Adorno, throughout the history of philosophy (Dewey in *Logic of Inquiry*, Chapter V, and James throughout the *Pluralistic Universe*). Hegel therefore is a powerful representative of an utmost traditional intellectual strategy, freeing itself from a “particular texture [of things D.S.] in favor of universal structures, as well as from phenomenalism in favor of intelligible form of being.” (Anghern 2000, 145, translated by D.S.). Nothing partakes in this thinking that does not fit into the concept, even if it is engaged in speculative movement. Other ways of having *this* house, *this* tree ‘stay’ with us (as memories, forms of attachment, love or hate, ‘felt meanings’ e.g.), do not fit into this concept of permanence, which Hegel assumes. Keeping a ‘this’ and ‘now’ in a biographically engraved way, as a wealth of personal meaning eventually making us the persons we are and imprinting the meaning of the notions we have, has already been noticed by Leibnitz. Hegel however is not interested in this kind of individual experiential permanence. What matters here is the linguistic and conceptual constancy that carries the speculative movement in a clear dialectical pattern over the vastness of an immediate kind of experienced meaning which drops out off the only formal understanding of the ‘here’ and the ‘now’.

The conceptual understanding of Now, This and Here, as the only possible way to conserve the ever changing sequence of nows and heres, which Hegel draws over the boundlessness of sense-certainty, at the same time prevents his entry into it. The pursuit of the dialectical implications of the used concepts and their resulting movements turns upside-down, what

people mean to say and their point of expressing, being exactly what Hegel intends to do: turning around common sense approaches.

Pragmatism can be viewed as the counter-movement: Common-sense thinking in its concern with actual experience, its complex daily and situational interactivity becomes a role-model of the challenge going along with experience and its philosophical reflection. This inspires Pragmatistic thinkers to including an experiential happening, which not only Hegel excludes, but which also seems to have become the blind spot of philosophy after the linguistic turn.

Philosophical 'therapy' in an Analytical sense of curing philosophy from its tendency to get caught up in pseudo-problems by wrong use of language paradoxically makes it hard to conceive what people do in actual therapy dealing with ordinary experience. From a dialectical as well as from an analytical standpoint it becomes impossible to understand how different forms of *having* meaning seem to make the expression even of a simple experiential aspects a compelling challenge.

To go further into this, let first again go back to Hegel's struggle with the inconceivability of sense-certainty. Let us take up from where we stopped: After realizing that sense-certainty can neither be located in the thing itself nor in the I, neither in the Here nor in the Now, Hegel starts anew by conceiving the essence of sense-certainty as a whole, to which he refers to as „immediacy“. Immediacy is a kind of relation which „no distinction whatever can penetrate “ (Hegel 1977, 62). It is not yet separable as a certainty of the thing and of the I, as it is only given in the sequence of Now and Here. As this certainty cannot yet be approached analytically, it can only be pointed to: „We must let ourselves *point to* it; for the truth of this immediate relation is the truth of *this* „I“ which confines itself to one „Now“ or one „Here“. Were we to examine this truth *afterwards*, or stand *at a distance* from it, it would lose its significance entirely; for that would do away with the immediacy which is essential to it. “ (Ibid., 63).

What kind of truth is at stake, which confines itself to Here and Now, and whose meaning results from our not 'stand[ing] at a distance to it'? It is a truth, according to Hegel, that is

constituted by the story of its movement, or, what seems to be the same for him, by experience. This movement, says Hegel, is constituted by the sequence of “Thises” which change into other “Thises”, of “Nows” which disappear, “Heres” which again vanish to other “Heres” to become a „simple complex of many Heres.” (Ibid). The truth confining itself to a Here and Now, this very particular truth, is carried by a movement which can be traced (respectively is traced in this way by Hegel) only through transitions from One (Now) into Many, from Being (This) into Nothingness, from Particular (Here) into Universal. The complex of many Heres seem to add up to a (hi)story whose course unfolds through the dynamic logic of a dominant patterns.

Obviously Hegel did not succeed in achieving what he intended: not to stand „at a distance“ from this truth. By only stating the disappearance of This into another This as well as of Here into another Here, he renders himself distant in such a principle way, that the truth that confines itself to a Here and Now can hardly show up. What story would emerge if it could unfold itself with regard to its content which has not been abstracted to a bare series of notions such as This, Here and Now? ‘What is it like’ to actually experience ‘a complex of Heres’? The point of immediate experience is already lost by Hegels pressing it to move towards seemingly only one alternative of either-or: either something abides or vanishes. The thickness of immediate experiencing, does not, as Hegel assumes, culminate in only one kind of doubt and eventually in “desperation” about the nothingness of it’s own certainty? (Ibid., 64) What happens if we do what Hegel describes as an option without trying it out himself: *enter into* the wealth of this kind of certainty, even at the risk of finding *no boundary*? Will this not amount to very different stories with very different kinds of points, challenging philosophy to consider very different kinds of movements, even more, the continuous necessity of making sense of ordinary experiencing.

3. Meaning that calls for closeness: what does philosophy have to do with it?

An extract from a conversation with Ms Y:

"Oh . . .,it isn't that, I like him. I *thought* I liked him. Really, I try so hard to please him

because I want *him* to like *me*, *that's* it."

Pause, a little bit later:

"I don't care whether he likes me or not. But, to realize that I'm really *all alone*, I can't stand *that*, yet that's true, I guess."

Again a little bit later:

"Being alone is fine with me, in fact, I feel fully real only when I'm alone. But, that good kind of alone comes only when I feel there is someone out there who knows me. Otherwise I feel like *I could disappear*." (Gendlin, 1963 248)

According to Hegel's characteristics of sense-certainty, this passage from a therapy record could be viewed as predications that expose a constantly changing form of certainty of a *truth which confines itself to a Now or a Here*. The meaning of the statements derives exclusively from the proximity to a kind of truth, which cannot be uttered from the distance of a 3rd person. The truth seems to change from „this“ to “this” with every new now, but not in an arbitrary way. By stating of a first „this“ („ I like him“), one “now” changes to a next “now”, in which a different kind of certainty becomes expressible („I thought I liked him“), which again changes to a next now, which modifies “this” again („I try so hard to please him“), which then changes anew („I don't care whether he likes me or not. But to realize that I'm really all alone, I can't stand that“), and once more („being alone is fine with me. But, that good kind of alone comes only when I feel there is someone out there who knows me. Otherwise I feel like I could disappear.“)

As regards to *content*, one could say that these examples demonstrate very well what Hegel analyses: a kind of continuing exchange between the I and the thing the immediate certainty involves (I like him, I don't like him, I don't care whether he likes me). The shifting certainties move as whole, thereby unfolding a content contained in them. By letting speak the truth of this kind of certainty explicitly and *without* distance, Gendlin, as mentioned above, again notices the distinctive curves the sense-making takes. The sequence thereby forming however is not adequately conceivable only through a negation- or contradiction pattern, or through any kind of predetermined set of logical patterns. The ‘complex of different Nows’, to use Hegel's inviting expression, unfolds in a thickness of a content, that is carried

out by every new statement, not as a movement of negations, but as a kind of qualified sequence. The certainty of feelings towards „him“ modify to a certainty about herself located within that first certainty, about her own way of being able to be alone under exactly what circumstances. The sequence unfolds only as she really „enters into“ the wealth of the first certainty (as Hegel suggests, but does not seem to consider a serious option). The above example of a truth of an I *which confines itself to a Now or a Here*, (how she is presently doing in her relationship) is not only the poor content of some few universal structures which remain, but it tells something both particular and important about herself, herself in relations to others and the world, and how she is going to tackle the next phase of her life.

So what kind of statements are we talking about here? They are obviously not statements of a sense-certainty like there is a tree or it is raining. Here a different form of certainty is at stake. If the statements uttered by Mr. X and Ms. Y are regarded in relation to Searle's classification of speech acts, where would they fit? They are performative in the sense that these sentences have an effect, but not in a declarative, commissive, or directive sense, according to which the statement performs or causes an action (like Austin's famous order: 'shoot her'). They are not representative by articulating states of affairs (like the famous cat which is on the mat), because the states they are articulating can not be observed by a detached spectator. They can best be classified as expressive statements, although Searle does not grant this class of predication any kind of direction of fit from word to world or vice versa. The expression of statements like the above have, according to this classification, nothing to do with the world and neither does it have an effect on it, whether we express it or not. With this classification Searle partly corresponds to a paradigm which he alludes to as the „model for all knowledge“ (Searle, 2008, 50). This model declares all concepts either to consist of things which are physical, or, from a dualistic point of view, of things which are either physical or mental. Searle admits that „large tracts of apparently fact-stating language do not consist of concepts which are part of this picture “. He gives as example aesthetic and ethical statements, which have actually not been classified as such by philosophers as „mere expressions of emotions“, or „simply biographical statements of a psychological kind, recording (.....) sentiments “ (Ibid).

Before the type of predication of Mr. X or Ms. Y become classifiable, it seems necessary to explore, what kind of reference, what kind of order becomes apparent through them, and also what functions in those statements to make them accurate. Both speakers do not get lost in boundless, arbitrary immediacy. They choose their words exactly and they modify what they are saying while speaking about what they are certain of in a specific way. Exploring the above questions causes one to doubt whether such types of statements have no universal value as being „mere“ expressions of emotions, „simply“ biographical statements of a psychological kind. The words „mere“ and „simply“ insinuate that they cannot be types of statements being relevant to philosophy. Also Ratcliffe's (2008) considerations on 'existential feeling' make it questionable if the statements of Mr. X and Ms. Y are about emotions at all. It seems more adequate to view them as expressions of the complexly felt situatedness of one's being-in-the-world, so that a classification like Searle's seems too narrow to be helpful here.

Before following this perspective further, we want to take a rather general philosophical stance towards the possibility of a closer look, that Mr. X and Ms. Y take at themselves in therapy sessions, which could also take place while talking to friends. The way Mr. X and Ms. Y are engaged in a process trying to make sense of themselves and their specific ways of experiencing situations could be regarded as an elementary form of occupation, which has been part of the definition of philosophy since ancient Greek time. From the oracle at Delphi „Gnothi se auton“ to the three, respectively four questions by Kant to their reformulation and extension by Hermann Schmitz in this century, self-exploration and gaining of self-insight has been of crucial philosophical concern. Despite its neglect from modern academic philosophy (Cavell being the big exception) , it has been cultivated by erudite philosophers for centuries, who are taught at the academy. Schmitz outlines the scope of this philosophical concern for today as follows:

„philosophical questions which cannot be answered adequately by any positive science, although their objects overlap with the possibility of finding an answer, are questions like: What concerns me? Which of the things offered by my surroundings should I, will I, or do I have to take seriously and accept as my thing? (...) What am I

capable of ? (...) What can I believe? Where shall I doubt (...)? To what extent do I have reasons to participate in or to withdraw from the devouring bustle of life around me? (...) What experiences will I be deprived of if I let myself guide? What do I ignore, what do I treat with inconsideration without being aware of doing so? Where do I take my courage from to carry on with my life in spite of there being death, misery and guilt? Is this all real? Who am I myself beyond all that has been carried into me and taken over by me? What is real of me, and what is merely façade? What remains and continues to exist in my life? What does this all amount to? “ (Schmitz, 2007, 9).

These questions, making the scope of the ancient claim for self-knowledge as well as of the Kantian questions explicit in modern language, turn all genuine self-experiencing and its striving for expression into a philosophical project. As long as the possible insights are self explored and not according to an external scheme, the explorations practiced by Mr.X and Ms.Y can be considered as a kind of rudimentary form of philosophical practice, insofar as it accomplishes what Gert Achenbach (1984) asserts as the definition philosophical practice : the dismantling of our *own* questions. Different than learning a theory, these self-investigations involve the challenge of deriving sense by facing the complex subtleties of our own experience.

This individual process points to something further of basic philosophical interest. Individual paths of self-assurance, providing us with the certainty of what is really experienced and how it is experienced, bring to light an emerging kind of meaning which cannot come about from greater distance or through abstraction. What emerges has to do exactly with this individual path or process. The turns which immediate experiencing takes in the light of investigative attention are contrary to the static of observable states of affairs. Analogous to Socratic dialogues, they seem to transform something which at first glance seems known (this „state“, this „feeling“, this well known experience) into something intricately unfolding. Like Socrates attention on well known concepts like bravery, justice, beauty disperses premature certainty by demonstrating the complexity involved in them , thereby cultivating and initiating a different kind of reflexivity; similarly, a careful and attentive reference to

immediate experiencing makes it apparent in its thickly layered and intricate conveyance,. The usual concepts which at first may seem applicable soon show their limits, so that a new way of expressing from them becomes necessary.

Hegel's critical comment regarding 'sensuous certainty', according to which it seems impossible to 'ever be able to express the thing we mean' can thus become illustrative for a difficulty, which as such is an opportunity enabling entry into the complexity of our immediate experiencing: People find that their inward experience does not fit common categories and shared phrases. It is vastly more, specific complexity, gradually opening up This insight however depends on a kind of self-reference, which must be actively practiced and cannot be dedicated to the ideal of the passive observer (Gendlin 1992, Petitmengin 2009).

4. Tentative Speech Acts

Extract from the therapy protocol of Ms. Z

“And there's also something vague. I can't make out what it is.(...) I feel a great tension.(...) It is as if I wanted to run away.(...) Somebody will be cross with me if I let this part live, and this is very uncomfortable.(...) I want to run away and never look back and just be free.(...) Then this is sad again. (...) Yes. To run away from something that is vague is sad.(...) On the one hand I want to find out what this something vague is. On the other hand I don't. (...) I don't feel friendly. I want to...jump on it. (...) I'm very angry. (...) It's a big loss, something missing. This what this vague something is.(...) And there is also my energy.(...) Yes, I don't know yet what the missing thing is, but nevertheless I feel lighter .” (Gendlin, 1998, 186)

This extract is from the beginning of a process. During the ongoing process the client notices her experiencing and struggles to explicate it by directly referring to 'it'. This already raises a number of questions: How can one refer to something without knowing what it is one refers to? How is it possible to speak sensibly from there? In other words, how can such speaking

„know“ what it is talking about? What changes through the process of speaking? Why does something change at all? What does this suggest about the relation of speaking and experiencing? What does it have to say about the relation between present and past? And what does this tell us about the relation of experiential and conceptual order?

These kinds of questions lead to profoundly different inquiries than theories of meaning whose main interest seems to lie in the process of the exchange of information. Already the starting point of the quoted examples seem to oppose the analytical verdict formulated by the early Wittgenstein, namely that we should remain silent about things we cannot speak about. Ms. Z for example does not know what it is she is speaking about, it is too vague. And it's not a case of not knowing the language sufficiently. Speech acts like the above challenge in a certain way Searle's principle of expressibility. Difficulties of expression in the mentioned cases don't result from troubles of overcoming boundaries by not knowing a language sufficiently or from its lack of certain concepts. On the other hand, the processes of Mr. X as well as of Ms. Y and Ms. Z confirm this principle, though in a way which differs completely from Searle's thinking and from the way his examples allow reflecting upon (e.g. Searle, 2008, 19f.): Searle's principle of expressibility exemplifies a framework which in different variants seems to determine the function of language in the transmission of (finished) meaning from one person to the other. Even limits to the principle, keep hold of this framework (compare *ibid.*, 20), which seems to form a basic premise within classical and current debates of language philosophy, namely the successful outcome of the exchange of meaning between speaker and hearer. Linguistic performances as we find in the above quoted extracts, but also in personal conversations, or when talking to oneself, in diary entries and sometimes even in professional talks would philosophically not count as speech acts worth philosophical inquiry. All cases in which the understanding of what one is talking about develops in the course of talking or writing about it. Such a conclusion seems obvious with regard to Searle's inference from the principle of expressibility, which matches precisely Grice's Logic of Conversation: „It has the consequence that cases where the speaker does not say exactly what he means – the principal kinds of cases of which are nonliteralness, vagueness, ambiguity, and incompleteness – are not theoretically essential to linguistic communication.“ (*Ibid*, 20) A pragmatistic-hermeneutical motivated approach can thus go

beyond Language theories which start from the principle that one always has to know for certain the intention of an utterance and the effect it should produce on the Other.

Paradigmatic thinkers of Language Philosophy, e.g. Grice (1957), start from a situation in which a speaker S utters X with the intention to create a certain effect on a hearer H, and this effect is caused by H's knowing of S's intention. Hence, the speaker must always be conscious of the exact intention he seeks to call for as effect on the hearer. There seems to be no other way of generating meaning. Searle's addition that meaning also always depends on linguistic convention does not lead to any fundamental change. Even references to internal states of consciousness are always examined in relation to an „Other“ (Tugendhat 2003, 24): how can another conceive and examine those expressions. Accordingly Tugendhat stresses lack of symmetry in utterances about internal states as one of the main problems of the issue. Evidently, linguistic processes as described in the examples of X, Y, and Z require an extended theoretical framework to become a research item of language philosophy, which until now seems preoccupied with the transfer of formed meaning with known effects from a speaker to a hearer. Examples of experiential intricacy brought up by Gendlin (1961, 1997, 2004), Ratcliffe (2008), Petitmengin (2007) can no longer move within such a narrow conceptual framework of linguistic meaning. It is therefore of great interest to describe in detail the possibility of reference to something vague but intricate, which happens during the process of speaking.

“Clients frequently speak of feeling something without knowing what it is they feel. Both client and counselor call such a feeling "this feeling" and continue to communicate about it although neither person knows just what that feeling is. At such times, both persons directly refer to the client's ongoing experiencing. They do so without a conceptualization of what the client refers to. The symbols used (such as the term "this") do not conceptualize. They do not formulate anything. They only point.” (Gendlin, 1961, 23).

Even though there is no transfer of finished meaning from speaker to hearer, it seems sensible to the speaker to point to something in the process of speaking as well as to the hearer to continue listening despite this vagueness and ambiguity. That this does not only

apply to therapy, but to many different sorts of creative processes is also exemplified by the physicist Heisenberg. He avoided mathematical expression in creative sessions, where a new approach to a problem was at stake.

“He spoke slowly and concentratedly, often with closed eyes, preferring normal language for allowing greater amount of tentativeness”. In these exchanges, his former assistant Hanspeter Duerr recalls, „one could stammer, one could be vague and speak incomprehensible. The listener would only repeat in his own words, until one could say: „Yes exactly like this!“. During this kind of intensive and lengthy exchanges, notions and conceptions became clearer and contours of the problem became visible“. (Duerr 1981).

What might be the conditions as well as the criterion for the success of such tentative speech acts? The conditions seem to be exactly those of trying to pursue, what one is talking from and ideally somebody listening, that does not interrupt this process. The criterion for success lies in nothing else than the vague becoming clearer, somehow opening up in the process of pursuing and speaking. Why should it thus become clearer or open up? How can the act of speaking have an influence on an unclear starting point? And how should one know that ‘it’ becomes clearer? At first sight there seems to be nothing which the gradually discovered meaning can be tested against. How does the process of becoming clearer happen? Does one have to assume that in these cases something is ‘represented’ unclearly although it manifests itself as something clear, so that one should simply practice conceptual representation more intensely like someone wishing to improve their drawing skills? In which case one would be confronted with an “inner act”, which Austin rejects, as reducing words “as (merely) the outward, visible sign (...) of an inward and spiritual act“ (Austin 1957, 9) and at the same time creating a double world leading to infinite regressions and duplications, whose absurdity Ryle (1966) showed thoroughly enough.

Along the lines of pragmatistic and hermeneutic approaches one does not need to think of ‘inner act’ in that way, an inner act and the notion of the ‘double-life legend’ do not necessarily have to go together. The act performed by Ms. Z or by Heisenberg while speaking

does not fit the description of words being external, visible signs of an internal process, which they would only have to represent. The words in these case do not represent the inner act but help constitute it's meaning by *carrying it forward*.

By developing the concept of 'carrying forward', Gendlin (2004) emphasizes how words in these kinds of speech-acts gain a decisively different function than to represent or to perform in the usually described senses. The explication itself can carry the experiencing process forward, which becomes – not only conceptually, but also experientially – more specific and differentiated in the course of articulation. To go deeper into this would need another article.

All this article intended to do, was to hint at the ways in which a philosophical interest in 'non-conceptuality' and 'particularity', as Adorno put it, demands basic work on a practical as well as conceptual. The practical dimension may consist in a very subtle sense of practice: as a kind of attentive-tentative speaking and thinking that "begins with looking for, letting come, waiting for... what is not yet 'there'" (Gendlin 1997, 221f.). It is this kind of practice, which is the necessary condition for an intricate, yet unclear 'object' of experiencing and thought to become articulable and clear. This is what Irigaray might mean with a use of language that is able to 'cultivate life'. The 'objects' of a cultivating language are not just there, waiting to be found and copied in words, parallel to the living, as she formulates. Rather, these 'objects' of experience are in need to be cultivated through a sequence of attentive pursuing and tentative thinking and speaking *from* the living, embodied and experiential process. What emerges are meanings which do not represent the individual living process, but in which this experiencing goes on. What is lived, felt and experienced is intractably interwoven with the meanings that come-from and 'grow'-from a careful practice to stay in touch with the actual experience while formulating. The conceptually unpredictable specificity of what is said thus *carries forward* and cultivating lived experiences, which continue to unfold in what is said. Maybe this is what we mean by authenticity. And maybe this is why at times it is more challenging to be authentic than to be honest, because in speaking authentically from experience one has more to deal with than facts and states of affairs. Authenticity requires the cultivation of a use of language that formulates experience in such careful precision that it is not interrupted yet able to unfold

according to its own intricate and responsive order.

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