

verifiche

verifiche
rivista semestrale
di scienze umane

Verifiche. Associazione di Studi filosofici
Sede Operativa e redazione: via Giorgio Schiavone, 1 - 35134 Padova
Direttore responsabile: Antonella Benanzato
Amministrazione: info@verificheonline.net
Autorizzazione Tribunale di Padova n. 2445 del 17/09/2017
Poste italiane - Spedizione in Abbonamento Postale
Digitalandcopy sas - Vignate (MI), Via Roma 25
Anno XLIX - N. 1-2 Gennaio-Dicembre 2020
www.verificheonline.net

PREZZO € 55,00

VERIFICHE 2020

1-2

«VERIFICHE» ISSN 0391-4186

Hegel
and/in/on Translation

Edited by Saša Hrnjez and Elena Nardelli

M. Capasso, G. di Giovanni, F. Duque, A. Esposito,
G. Faraklas, G. Garelli, P. Giuspoli, F. Iannelli, Z. Kobe,
G. Lejeune, J. Mácha, M. Marder, A.S. Mirza,
A. Nuzzo, A.P. Olivier, F. Orsini, M. Pańków,
S. Pieroni, E. Renault, A. Takeshima, M. Teixeira

2020

ANNO XLIX N. 1-2

Verifiche

Rivista fondata da Franco Chiereghin e Giuliano Rigoni

Direzione/Editors

Luca Illetterati (Scientific Coordinator), Paolo Giuspoli (Editorial Coordinator), Francesca Menegoni.

Redazione/Editorial Staff

Michela Bordignon, Francesco Campana (Editorial Guidelines), Valentina Chizzola, Luca Corti (Peer review Editor), Alberto Gaiani, Paolo Livieri, Armando Manchisi, Giovanna Miolli (Web Manager), Antonio Nunziante, Federico Orsini, Giovanni Realdi, Barbara Santini (Reviews and Discussions Editor), Sergio Soresi, Alberto Vanzo.

Consiglio scientifico/Advisory Board

Gabriel Amengual, Myriam Bienenstock, Rossella Bonito Oliva, Claudio Cesa (†), Franco Chiereghin, Ferruccio De Natale, Giannino Di Tommaso, Alfredo Ferrarin, Luca Fonnesu, Stephen Houlgate, Marco Ivaldo, Jean-François Kervégan, Claudio La Rocca, Eugenio Mazzarella, Adriaan Th. Peperzak, Michael Quante, Leonardo Samonà, Birgit Sandkaulen.

The Journal uses a double-blind peer review procedure. Authors of articles to be considered for publication should email one copy in .doc or .rtf format, and another copy in .pdf format, to Luca Corti (redazione@verificheonline.net). Please include a short abstract in English (about 1,500 characters) and 4-8 keywords. The Journal accepts contributions in English, German, Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese. Accepted contributions should be prepared according to the journal's guidelines. Book reviews are generally commissioned by the Editorial Staff. If you are interested in writing a book review, please contact Barbara Santini (recensioni@verificheonline.net). Books should be sent to the following address: «Verifiche», via G. Schiavone n. 1, 35134 Padova, Italy.

 This publication is part of TRANSPHILEUR project (researcher: S. Hrnjez, coordination: L. Illetterati) that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska Curie grant agreement No. 798275.

«Verifiche» is an international biannual, peer-reviewed Journal (ISSN: 0391-4186)

info@verificheonline.net
www.verificheonline.net

Verifiche

International biannual, peer-reviewed Journal (ISSN: 0391-4186)

ABBONAMENTO/SUBSCRIPTION PRICE (2020/2021)

Italia: privati € 55,00 (sostenitori € 65,00; studenti € 35,00); enti: € 80,00.

Europe and Mediterranean Countries: € 75,00 (students: € 55,00); institutional: € 100,00.

Other Countries: € 90,00 (students: € 70,00); institutional: € 115,00.

Spese postali incluse/Shipping charges included.

FASCICOLI SINGOLI/SINGLE ISSUES (2020/2021)

Italia privati: € 35,00 (fascicolo doppio: € 65,00); enti: € 45 (fascicolo doppio: € 85,00)

Europe and Mediterranean Countries: plus € 11 shipping charges (double i.: plus € 17).

Other Countries: plus € 16 shipping charges (double i.: plus € 22).

FASCICOLI ARRETRATI/BACK ISSUES

Italia: € 40,00; Europe and Mediterranean Countries: € 40,00 (plus € 11 shipping charges).

Other Countries € 40,00 (plus € 16 shipping charges).

MODALITÀ DI PAGAMENTO/METHOD OF PAYMENT

Con bonifico bancario intestato a/By bank transfer to:

«Verifiche. Associazione di studi filosofici»

Intesa Sanpaolo Spa – Filiale Accentrata Terzo Settore, Piazza Paolo Ferrari, 10 – Padova

IBAN: IT54X0306909606100000142839

Nella causale specificare il numero o l'annata (per ordini) oppure solo l'abbonamento (in caso di abbonamento annuale). Please indicate *issue number* and *year* (for single issue) or *year* only (for yearly subscription).

Per usufruire dello sconto per studenti è necessario indicare nella casuale il numero di matricola e la sigla della sede universitaria (oppure l'indicazione dell'istituto).

For further details:

info@verificheonline.net

www.verificheonline.net

Cover Design by Giulia Battocchia

verifiche

Anno XLIX, N. 1-2, 2020

Dir. resp. Antonella Benanzato • Amministrazione: Via G. Schiavone 1 35134 Padova
Autorizzazione del Tribunale di Padova n. 2445 del 17/09/2017
Poste Italiane s.p.a. - Spedizione in Abb. Postale 70% - NE/PD
Digital And Copy S.a.s. - Vignate (MI) - Via Monzese 40 - A. XLIX (1-2), 2020

Hegel and/in/on Translation

V *Is It Possible to Speak About a Hegelian Theory of Translation?
On Hegel's Übersetzungsbegriff and Some Paradigmatic Practices
of Translation*

Saša Hrnjez and Elena Nardelli

1. On Translation: Theoretical Perspectives

1 *The Untranslatable in Translation. A Hegelian Dialectic*

Angelica Nuzzo

19 *Das Fremde in der Sprache: Hegel e la sfida dell'estraneo*

Silvia Pieroni

37 *L'Übersetzen comme articulation interne du système encyclopédique.
Hegel et Novalis en perspective*

Guillaume Lejeune

55 *Critica della «regione pura». Übersetzung e rappresentazione in Hegel*

Gianluca Garelli

- 75 *La traduzione come forma. Hegel, Benjamin e il laboratorio romantico*
Michele Capasso
- 95 *L'attività del tradurre nella psicologia hegeliana:
trasformazione e liberazione del soggetto finito*
Alessandro Esposito
- 113 *Pure translation in Hegel's Phenomenology*
Michael Marder
- 129 *La filosofia come traduzione in Hegel*
Federico Orsini

2. Effects of Translation

- 147 *The Reception and Translation of Hegel in Japan*
Ayumi Takeshima
- 159 *Kojève's «Dialectique du maître et de l'esclave».
Notes on the Wirkungsgeschichte of a Traitorous Translation*
Mariana Teixeira
- 177 *A quoi ressemblerait une philosophie hégélienne de la traduction?
Réflexions à partir des traductions françaises de la Phénoménologie
de l'esprit*
Emmanuel Renault
- 203 *Translating Hegel's Aesthetics in France and Italy:
A Comparative Approach*
Francesca Iannelli and Alain Patrick Olivier

- 227 *Beispiel / By-Play in Hegel's Writings*
Jakub Mácha
- 243 *Some Dimensions of Translating or Writing about Hegel in Urdu*
Ashfaq Saleem Mirza

3. Hegel Translated

- 249 *In Conversation with Hegel: A Translator's Story*
George di Giovanni
- 261 *Hacerse lenguas de «Hegel»*
Félix Duque
- 275 *Hegel en Grec*
Georges Faraklas
- 291 *Come si può tradurre la Scienza della logica?*
Paolo Giuspoli
- 303 *Translating Hegel into Slovenian*
Zdravko Kobe
- 317 *Translating Hegel's Logic. Absolute Negativity and the Crisis of Philosophy as an Institution*
Marcin Pańków

Discussion

333 *Unlikely Bedfellows? On a recent rapprochement between Hegel and Wittgenstein*

Guido Tana

Book Reviews

347 C. Canullo, *Il chiasmo della traduzione. Metafora e verità*,
(Angela Monica Recupero)

352 R. Morani, *Rileggere Hegel. Tempo, soggetto, negatività, dialettica*,
(Giulia La Rocca)

358 M. Quante, *Antropologia pragmatista. Padova Lectures*,
(Elena Alessiato)

366 D. Charlston, *Translation and Hegel's Philosophy: A Transformative, Socio-narrative Approach to A.V. Miller's Cold-War Retranslations*
(Ruth Abou Rached)

KOJÈVE'S «DIALECTIQUE DU MAÎTRE ET DE L'ESCLAVE». NOTES ON THE WIRKUNGSGESCHICHTE OF A TRAITOROUS TRANSLATION

by Mariana Teixeira*

Abstract. *This paper addresses Alexandre Kojève's rendition of 'The Phenomenology of Spirit and his interpretation of the 'master-slave dialectic', which had a deep and lasting influence on subsequent generations of philosophers in France and elsewhere. Kojève's translation-commentary has many idiosyncrasies regarding word choices, sentence structure, and even the omission of whole paragraphs of Hegel's text. This last feature has important philosophical consequences because the parts of section IV.A missing in Kojève's translation recount the master-slave relationship from the viewpoint of absolute knowledge ('for us'). Thus limited to the standpoint of natural consciousness ('for it'), the Phenomenology appears for Kojève as a work of philosophical anthropology where the slave's labour, motivated by fear of death before the master, impels him to engage in a struggle with the master for the recognition of his autonomy achieved by dominating nature. Although Kojève's rendition can be depicted as 'faulty' in many ways, one can also argue that it has had fruitful effects for the Hegelian reception in France: not only did it prompt generations of young philosophers to engage with Hegel and read him for themselves, but it also resonated with, and responded to, its own social and philosophical environment: contrary to his own claims about 'the end of history', Kojève triggered a number of open-ended readings of the 'master-slave dialectic' that would shape history to the present day.*

Keywords. *A. Kojève; For us; G.W.F. Hegel; Master-Slave Dialectic; Translation*

1. *A. Kojève's unorthodox rendition of 'The Phenomenology of Spirit*

Traduttore, traditore! Invoking the 'translator, traitor' trope has become commonplace to indicate that there is always something

* Lateinamerika-Institut (LAI) – Freie Universität Berlin

This article is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Marcos Lutz Müller and his continued efforts to inspire new, and careful, readings of Hegel. The author would like to thank the editors and reviewers of *Verifiche* for the useful suggestions.

lost in translation. This is said not only of literary, but of philosophical texts as well: reflecting on his French translation of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre highlights the many semantic and syntactic restrictions that the translator's activity implies. He then wonders, however, whether one could also extract 'heuristic benefits' from such 'French losses':

The result of these disjointed remarks would then be rather pessimistic, if one didn't count on the exceptional contextualizing power of the Hegelian procedure and the integration that always begins afresh in each development or each phenomenological pronouncement of the totality of the experience of consciousness¹.

In a sense, Lefebvre adds, «[e]ven a faulty translation functions in a positive way». Could that be said of Alexandre Kojève's admittedly unorthodox rendition of *The Phenomenology of Spirit*? Has his 'faulty translation' produced arguably fertile effects?

Figures such as Jean Wahl and Alexandre Koyré had already made important contributions to the French reception of Hegel in the twentieth century when Kojève delivered his lectures on the *Phenomenology* between 1933 and 1939 at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, at the Sorbonne². His course had nonetheless an

¹ J.-P. Lefebvre, *French Losses in Translating Hegel: A Heuristic Benefit?*, in *Translating Hegel: The Phenomenology of Spirit and Modern Philosophy*, ed. by B.M. Delaney and S.O. Wallenstein, Huddinge, Södertörn University, 2012, p. 221.

² There are many studies on the different moments of the French reception of Hegelian philosophy. The first attempt to systematize it can be found in A. Koyré, *Rapport sur l'état des études hégéliennes en France*, in *Études d'Histoire de la Pensée Philosophique*, Paris, Librairie Armand Colin, 1961 (1930), pp. 205-230. M. Kelly and V.Y. Mudimbe & A. Bohm provide useful overviews of French translations of Hegel's texts and decisive readings by French philosophers, as well as of secondary sources (M. Kelly, *Hegel in France*, Birmingham, Birmingham Modern Languages Publications, 1992; V.Y. Mudimbe and A. Bohm, *Hegel's Reception in France*, «Bulletin de la Société Américaine de Philosophie de Langue Française», VI (3), 1994, pp. 5-33). For a more recent take on the changing fortunes of

indelible impact on a whole generation of intellectuals in France and elsewhere³. Georges Bataille, to give but one example, recounts being left «broken, pulverized, killed ten times over: suffocated and immobilized» from the impact of the lectures⁴, considered a crucial intellectual event for the subsequent Hegel *renaissance*. Indeed, until the first French version of the *Phenomenology* appeared in two volumes in 1939 and 1941, translated by Jean Hyppolite, the French audience that did not read German had to mostly rely on Kojève's lectures, which were conceived as a line by line reading of the *Phenomenology* followed by an impromptu translation⁵ and his own commentaries⁶. A collection of the lectures and students' notes was assembled by Raymond Queneau and published in 1947 with the title *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*.

Kojève also published a translation-commentary of Section A of Chapter IV (Self-Consciousness) of the *Phenomenology* in January 1939 in the journal *Mesures*⁷. The section was translated as «Autonomie et dépendance de la Conscience-de-soi: Maîtrise et Servitude»

French Hegelianism until World War II, cf. A. Bellantone, *Hegel en France, vol. 2: De Vera à Hyppolite*, Paris, Éditions Hermann, 2011 (2006).

³ Registered participants of the seminars include Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Georges Bataille, Jacques Lacan, and Eric Weil (cf. the complete list in M. Roth, *Knowing and History: Appropriations of Hegel in Twentieth-Century France*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 225-227). As the courses were open to the public (ivi, p. 95), other figures – such as André Breton, Jean Hyppolite, and Raymond Aron – were also said to have occasionally attended Kojève's seminar (D. Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève: La philosophie, l'État, la fin de l'Histoire*, Paris, Éditions Grasset & Fasquelle, 1990, pp. 258-259; R. Aron, *Memoirs: Fifty Years of Political Reflection*, trans. by G. Holoch, New York, Holmes & Meier, 1990 (1983), p. 65).

⁴ D. Auffret *apud* J.H. Nichols, *Alexandre Kojève: Wisdom at the End of History*, Lanham (MD), Rowman & Littlefield, 2007, p. 21.

⁵ Cf. Annett Jubara's notion of *Stegreifübersetzung*: A. Jubara, *Philosophie als Translation: Alexandre Kojèves Einführung-Überführung Hegels in die Gegenwart und nach Frankreich*, in *Kultur und Übersetzung: Studien zu einem begrifflichen Verhältnis*, ed. by L. Heller, Bielefeld, Transcript, 2017, pp. 215-234.

⁶ Aron, *Memoirs*, p. 65.

⁷ Auffret mentions the impact of the *Mesures* translation-commentary on Beauvoir and Sartre, according to Claude Simonnet (Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*,

and contains what achieved notoriety – not least because of Kojève’s reading – as the ‘master-slave dialectic’. Like his lectures on the *Phenomenology*, Kojève’s translation of Chapter IV.A is unorthodox for various reasons: it displays unusual and interpretively charged word choices, the whole prose is interposed with Kojève’s own remarks and commentaries, and he even omits parts of Hegel’s text. This peculiar translation style can be well illustrated by an excerpt of § 186 of the *Phenomenology* (first in German, then in Kojève’s French rendition):

So *unmittelbar* auftretend, sind sie füreinander in der Weise gemeiner Gegenstände; *selbständige* Gestalten, in das *Sein* des *Lebens* – denn als Leben hat sich hier der seiende Gegenstand bestimmt – versenkte Bewußtsein[e], welche *füreinander* die Bewegung der absoluten Abstraktion, alles unmittelbare Sein zu vertilgen und nur das rein negative Sein des sichselbstgleichen Bewußtseins zu sein, noch nicht vollbracht, oder sich einander noch nicht als reines *Fürsichsein*, d. h. als *Selbstbewußtsein[e]* dargestellt haben⁸.

Se présentant ainsi *d’une-manière-immédiate*, ces individus existent l’un pour l’autre dans le mode-d’être des objets-chosistes vulgaires. Ils sont des formes concrètes *autonomes*, des Consciences plongées dans l’*être-donné* de la *vie-animale*. Car c’est en tant que *vie-animale* que s’est déterminé ici l’objet-chosiste existant-comme-un-êtré-donné. Ils sont des Consciences qui n’ont pas encore accompli, *l’une pour l’autre*, le mouvement [*dialectique*] de l’abstraction absolue, qui consiste dans l’acte-d’extirper tout être-donné immédiat, et dans le fait de n’être rien d’autre que l’être-donné purement négatif-ou-négateur de la conscience identique-à-elle-même.

p. 14). This translation was later added to the collection of lectures published in 1947.

⁸ G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Leipzig, Felix Meiner, 1952 (1807), p. 143, § 186.

Ou, en d'autres termes, ce sont des entités qui ne se sont pas encore manifestées l'une à l'autre en tant qu'*Être-pour-soi* pur, c'est-à-dire en tant que Conscience-*de-soi*⁹.

Many idiosyncratic features of Kojève's translation appear in this short excerpt. One can see that Kojève does not respect the punctuation marks employed by Hegel, breaking down Hegel's sentences: in the example, whereas the German version has only one full stop, Kojève's translation has five – not to mention the fact that Kojève splits the sentence into two different paragraphs. Given that French and German have significantly different syntactic structures, it could be argued that such re-arranging of the sentences is justified in order to provide the text with fluidity and a more natural rhythm. Breaking down a single sentence into two different paragraphs is harder to justify, however, especially in the case of Hegel's work, which is so often divided into paragraphs and referred to accordingly.

One can also remark Kojève's insertion of the adjective *dialectique* – absent in the German original – after *mouvement*, showing his penchant for spelling out the meaning of Hegel's text for the reader (or, more precisely, the meaning *he* sees in Hegel's text). This is however but a very modest example of such interventions: one would not exaggerate in saying Kojève's interpolations and commentaries amount to approximately half of the translation's length, as many of them are actually pages-long. This sort of interpolation makes his translation similar to a lecture, in the same manner his lectures were also similar to an (interpretatively) commented translation.

The word choice itself is rather striking: Kojève often creates hyphenated compound words to render a single German term. He thus translates *seiend* as *existant-comme-un-être-donné* ('existing' as 'existing-as-a-given-being'¹⁰), *Gegenstand* as *objet-choisiste* ('object' as

⁹ A. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel: Leçons sur la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit professées de 1933 à 1939 à l'École des Hautes Études réunies et publiées par Raymond Queneau*, Paris, Gallimard, 1947, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰ The English versions of Kojève's French neologisms were mostly drawn from the partial translation by James H. Nichols. It is noteworthy that translators of

‘thingist-object’), *Leben* as *vie-animale* (‘life’ as ‘animal-life’), *Sein* as *être-donné* (‘being’ as ‘given-being’), *negativ* as *négatif-ou-négateur* (‘negative’ as ‘negative-or-negating’), and *wirklich* as *d’une-manière-objectivement-réelle* (‘effective’ as ‘in-an-objectively-real-way’). This creates odd-sounding expressions such as *éléments-constitutifs particuliers-et-isolés* (‘particular-and-isolated constituent-elements’), which Kojève uses to translate *einzelne Momente* (‘singular moments’), rendered simply as *moments singuliers* by other French translators of the *Phenomenology*¹¹.

These brief examples invite several discussions, terminological as well as philosophical. But in addition to his peculiar choices regarding sentence structure, interpolated commentaries, and wording options, Kojève also makes important *omissions*, which have vital interpretive and philosophical consequences and will be the focus of the remainder of this paper.

2. Beyond ‘French losses’

From the whole of the *Phenomenology*, Kojève singles out Section A of Chapter IV to be translated, commented, and published in 1939; it is also reproduced in the 1947 collected lectures «In Place of an Introduction». This shows the importance

Kojève’s book are faced with an unconventional difficulty: *translating Kojève’s translation of Hegel* into other languages. It would have been a curious effort to ‘re-translate’ Hegel’s *own text* back to German from Kojève’s French rendering, but the translators resorted instead to the original (allowing however to some paraphrases, cf. A. Kojève, *Hegel: Eine Vergegenwärtigung seines Denkens. Kommentar zur Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. by I. Fetscher, trans. by I. Fetscher and G. Lembruch, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1975 [1947]).

¹¹ Cf., for example, § 194 in the translations by J. Hyppolite, G. Jarczyk & P.-J. Labarrière, B. Bourgeois, and J.-P. Lefebvre: G.W.F. Hegel, *La Phénoménologie de l’Esprit*, vol. 1, trans. by J. Hyppolite, Paris, Aubier, 1939, p. 164; Id., *Phénoménologie de l’Esprit*, vol. 1, trans. G. Jarczyk and P.-J. Labarrière, Paris, Gallimard, 1993, p. 198; Id., *Phénoménologie de l’Esprit*, trans. by B. Bourgeois, Paris, Vrin, 2006, p. 209; Id., *Phénoménologie de l’Esprit*, trans. by J.-P. Lefebvre, Paris, Flammarion, 2012, p. 203.

Kojève attributed to the section on master and slave, elevated by him to the very key to understanding the whole book – and Hegel's *oeuvre* in general.

But even within the selected section there are omissions: Kojève skips the twelve paragraphs of the introduction to Chapter IV (§§ 166-177) and then another seven from the beginning of Part A proper (§§ 178-184). The first omission could be justified by the fact that these paragraphs correspond to the introduction to the whole chapter on Self-Consciousness, not just to Part A. The omission of the first seven paragraphs of Part A, on the other hand, is harder to explain. Kojève does include in his translation the very first sentence of § 178: «Self-consciousness is *in* and *for itself* while and as a result of its being in and for itself for an other; i.e., it is only as a recognized being»¹². He then indicates a break in his translation (.....) and takes up the text again only at the beginning of § 185. According to Iring Fetscher, editor and translator of the German version, the omitted paragraphs amount to «an introductory anticipation of the whole section, which is thus not yet understandable»¹³. But that is precisely why §§ 178-184 are so important to the section as a whole.

In order to make this argument, a small detour is necessary. Following the Spirit's path, the *Phenomenology* has been described as a sort of *Bildungsroman*. In Hyppolite's words: «Hegel's *Phenomenology*, for its part, is the novel of philosophic formation; it follows the development of consciousness, which, renouncing its first beliefs, reaches through its experiences the properly philosophic point of view, that of absolute knowledge»¹⁴. What makes this work particularly difficult to navigate is *how* the story of consciousness is recounted. It is a prevalent understanding of the *Phenomenology* that there are two narrative modes at play throughout the book: one recounts the experiences undergone by natural consciousness *from the viewpoint of experiencing consciousness itself*, while the other describes

¹² Id., *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by T. Pinkard, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018, p. 108, § 178.

¹³ Editor's note in Kojève, *Hegel*, p. 301.

¹⁴ J. Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, Evanston (Ill.), Northwestern University Press, 2000 (1946), p. 12.

this movement *from the viewpoint of philosophical consciousness*, which has already achieved absolute knowledge – the philosopher. The succession of figures described in the *Phenomenology*, while painfully erratic for the experiencing consciousness, hence appears for the philosopher in its meaningful development.

It is not always easy to discern one mode of narrative from the other, as Hegel alternates between them without giving the reader unequivocally clear signs. In addition to interpreting the content and context of each passage, however, there are some linguistic indications that can help the reader to identify who is telling the consciousness' formative story at one given point. Philosophical consciousness is at work when something is described as it is 'for us' (*für uns*): 'we' already had the experiences natural consciousness is now going through¹⁵. On the other hand, when something appears 'for consciousness' or 'for it' (*für es*), it usually means that it is being recounted as the subject of the experience is experiencing it – and is, thus, a description that will be overcome in a higher, more complex figure of consciousness. Terms such as 'appear' (*erscheinen*) and 'at first' (*zunächst*) also hint at something taken as true but which is likely to be revealed as false, or at least partial, once absolute knowledge is attained.

¹⁵ After mapping out every appearance of the term *wir* ('we') and its derivatives (*unser*/'our', *uns*/'us') in the *Phenomenology*, Joseph Gauvin argues that only the phrase *für uns* ('for us') denotes the narrative from the viewpoint of the philosophical consciousness: J. Gauvin, *Le 'für uns' dans la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit*, «Archives de Philosophie», XXXIII, 1970, pp. 829-854. In addition to Gauvin, cf. also: M. Müller, *A experiência, caminho para a verdade? Sobre o conceito de experiência na Fenomenologia do Espírito de Hegel*, «Revista Brasileira de Filosofia», XVII (66), 1967, pp. 146-177; K.R. Dove, *Hegel's Phenomenological Method*, «Review of Metaphysics», XXIII, 1970, pp. 615-641; D. Parry, *Hegel's Phenomenology of the 'We'*, New York, Peter Lang, 1988; T.M. Giladi, *Sur le 'Pour nous' dans La phénoménologie de l'esprit. Étude de cas: La conscience de soi*, Paris, Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2015; and M. Nobre, *Como nasce o novo*, São Paulo, Todavia, 2018. There is less consensus about «Who is meant by 'we'?», as Heidegger put it: M. Heidegger, *Hegel's Concept of Experience*, trans. by K.R. Dove, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1989 (1950), p. 126. Cf. the discussion in Dove, *Hegel's Phenomenological Method*, pp. 629f.

After the mentioned break, Kojève resumes his translation-commentary with § 185 of the *Phenomenology*, where Hegel writes: «This pure concept of recognition, the pure concept of the doubling of self-consciousness in its unity, is itself now up for examination according to how its process *appears for self-consciousness*»¹⁶. In the preceding paragraphs (from § 178 to § 184), on the other hand, the 'pure concept of recognition' was presented by Hegel *from the viewpoint of the philosopher*: one self-consciousness, a for-itself, encounters another self-consciousness, and cannot regard it as a mere object, an object for the gratification of its desire, because the other self-consciousness is also for-itself, that is, an independent being. «For that reason», says Hegel, «it can do nothing on its own about that object if that object does not do in itself what the first self-consciousness does in it» so that «They recognize themselves as *mutually recognizing each other*»¹⁷. These are precisely the paragraphs Kojève leaves out of his translation-commentary, which means he omits virtually all the description of the dialectical movement from the viewpoint of philosophical consciousness, focusing instead on the perspective of natural consciousness¹⁸. Hence the paragraphs omitted by Kojève are indeed an anticipation of the section, and thus not yet completely understandable – at least not *for the experiencing, natural consciousness*. These anticipatory reflexions can be grasped, on the other hand, by the *philosophical consciousness*, i.e., from 'our' viewpoint.

The consequences of this omission are remarkable. To the extent that he limits Hegel's text to the bounds of the 'for it', or natural consciousness, Kojève makes it concur with his own *ontological dualism between Nature and Spirit*, which he does not find in Hegel's philosophy. A connected interpretive effect of this translation choice concerns Kojève's *agonistic conception of anthropogenesis*, given the role he attributes to life-and-death struggle as the key moment in Spirit's itinerary.

¹⁶ Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 110, § 185 (my emphasis).

¹⁷ Ivi, p. 109, § 182 and p. 110, § 184.

¹⁸ Although there are instances where the narrative 'for us' appears later in the section, these are commentaries in passing, not a systematic account (cf., for example, § 189).

It is only ‘for us’, as described in §§ 178-184, that the attainment of self-consciousness appears as a necessarily *reciprocal* process, a process of *mutual* recognition. ‘For it’, i.e. for natural consciousness, this is immediately experienced in a different way: when two self-consciousnesses meet, each sees the other as opposed to itself with no mediation between them; each wants to assert its self-certainty, its being-for-itself through the exclusion from itself of all that is other. So each self-consciousness exists, for the other, as an unessential object. However, this other object is also a self-consciousness that poses a similar claim to the first one, which prompts a confrontation between them. In this confrontation, each self-consciousness seeks to present itself as independent, as «fettered to no determinate *existence*»¹⁹, as not bound and shackled to life – and, conversely, each at the same time wants to negate the independence of the other. So each self-consciousness seeks the death of the other and, for that, is compelled to put its own life at stake.

If one self-consciousness surrenders to the other fearing imminent death, it becomes the other’s slave. The other self-consciousness becomes the master, since it showed no fear of death and thus has not degraded itself to the level of mere physical existence. In this new, unequal situation after the death struggle, the slave works for the satisfaction of the master and the master consumes or enjoys the products of the slave, who is compelled to indefinitely postpone his own gratifications. The master thus depends on the slave – not only for the satisfaction of his needs, but also for his recognition as an independent being. As a consequence, the certainty of the master as an independent self-consciousness is challenged: «his truth is to an even greater degree the unessential consciousness and the unessential activity of that unessential consciousness»²⁰. «In these terms, he continues, the *truth* of the independent consciousness is the *servile consciousness*»²¹.

¹⁹ Ivi, p. 111, § 187.

²⁰ Ivi, p. 114, § 192.

²¹ *Ibidem*, § 193.

His independence is only apparent; the master is frozen in a situation where he is not able to develop his abilities to deal with either the material world or with the slave (that is, with another self-consciousness). The slave, on the other hand, experiences his work as the overcoming (*Aufhebung*) of «all the *individual* moments of his attachment to natural existence»²². By means of his transformative labouring of the natural and material world in order to create the products which will satisfy the master's demands, the slave comes to develop his own capacity to create and give form to an independent object, and thus comes to see himself in the products he creates. In this cultivation (of himself and the natural world) motivated by the fear of death, the slave «attains the consciousness that he himself is in and for himself»²³.

Whereas Hegel then refrains from giving an immediate account of how this consciousness of autonomy would play out in practice, Kojève argues that a new struggle for recognition is needed for the slave to assert his 'for-itself', his independent self-consciousness vis-à-vis the master: «To be sure, this work by itself does not free him. But in transforming the World by this work, the Slave transforms himself, too, and thus creates the new objective conditions that permit him to take up once more the liberating Struggle for recognition that he refused in the beginning for fear of death»²⁴. The proof of free, independent 'humanness' is, for Kojève, the willingness to risk one's life «for an essentially nonvital end»²⁵ and thus to overcome mere biological, animal life. This stance is formulated in more detail in «the Dialectic of the Real and the Phenomenological Method in Hegel», the complete text of four lectures of the academic year 1934-1935 published as an appendix to *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, where Kojève explicitly talks about such «final Struggle for Recognition»:

²² Ivi, p. 115, § 194.

²³ Ivi, p. 116, § 196.

²⁴ A. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit Assembled by Raymond Queneau*, ed. by A. Bloom, trans. by J.H. Nichols Jr., Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1980 (1947), p. 29 (translation amended).

²⁵ Ivi, p. 7.

The Slave is obliged to overcome Mastery by a nondialectical overcoming of the Master who obstinately persists in his (human) identity to himself – that is, by annulling him or putting him to death. And this annulling is what is manifested in and by the final Struggle for Recognition, which necessarily implies the Risk of life on the part of the freed Slave. This Risk, moreover, is what completes the liberation which was begun by his Work, by introducing in him the constituent-element (*Moment*) of Mastery which he lacked. It is in and by the final Struggle, in which the working ex-Slave acts as combatant for the sake of glory alone, that the free Citizen of the universal and homogeneous State is created; being both Master and Slave, he is no longer either the one or the other, but is the unique ‘synthetical’ or ‘total’ Man²⁶.

As one can see, Kojève adopts the viewpoint of natural consciousness, for which being free and autonomous means showing oneself to be unfettered from bare life (ontological dualism between Nature and Spirit), and for this reason conflict takes on a larger role in the path of Spirit than mutuality and reconciliation (agonistic conception of anthropogenesis).

In defence of Kojève’s selective reading of section IV.A of the *Phenomenology* one could argue that, from a Hegelian point of view, the totality is itself always present in each partial moment, which would exempt one from recounting the whole experiential path of Spirit. But what counts as a ‘moment’ proper, as opposed to a mere ‘fragment’? Here it should be remembered that, for Hegel, the false is not a moment of the true *as false*, but only when its falsehood has been overcome (*aufgehoben*), revealed in its falseness²⁷. Hence, taking the viewpoint of natural consciousness – either as master or slave – at face value amounts to taking the false (in its non-dialectical, merely negative sense) as if it were the whole truth. Only when apprehended in its becoming, in the movement towards its

²⁶ Ivi, p. 231 (translation amended).

²⁷ Cf. Hegel’s remarks in the Preface to the *Phenomenology* (pp. 24-25, § 39).

overcoming can a particular moment be said to already contain the universal – which is possible solely if one looks at it from the viewpoints of both natural (experiencing) and philosophical (experienced) consciousness.

3. *Heuristic (or otherwise) benefits?*

Several Hegel scholars have pointed out how far Kojève's rendering of the *Phenomenology* is from the 'real' Hegel. Gwendoline Jarczyk and Pierre-Jean Labarrière, for example, although recognizing its historical importance, refer to Kojève's interpretation as a «coup de force» and a «vulgate»²⁸, and George Kelly calls it «drastically one sided», an «unwarranted romanticized refraction of Hegel's thought»²⁹. Jon Stewart lists Kojève's book under the section «Propagators of the Hegel Myths» (as opposed to «Critics of the Hegel Myths») in his edited collection *The Hegel Myths and Legends*³⁰, and Robert Pippin considers it to be «truncated and unsatisfactory jumbings of Hegelian ideas that get a better hearing in the original»³¹. Richard Lynch argues that Kojève's presentation is partial not only in the sense that it is «incomplete, omitting critical sections», and thus «skewed to give a one-sided reading», but also, and more seriously, in the sense that it «mislead[s] us, taking us away from its true significance». «If we are not to be misguided by Kojève's reading», Lynch continues, «then it behooves us carefully to distinguish Kojève's Hegel from Hegel himself»³².

²⁸ G. Jarczyk and P.-J. Labarrière, *De Kojève à Hegel: 150 ans de pensée hégélienne en France*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1996, p. 7.

²⁹ G.A. Kelly, *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis: Studies in Political Thought*, Princeton (NJ), Princeton University Press, 2015 (1978), p. 52.

³⁰ J. Stewart (ed.), *The Hegel Myths and Legends*, Evanston (Ill.), Northwestern University Press, 1996, p. 381.

³¹ R. Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 260.

³² R. Lynch, *Mutual Recognition and the Dialectic of Master and Slave: Reading Hegel against Kojève*, «International Philosophical Quarterly», XLI (1), 2001, p. 34.

While describing the intentions of ‘Hegel himself’ in order to have a template against which to measure the fidelity of any reading is not feasible, it can hardly be denied that Kojève took many liberties in his interpretation. He admits to that himself in 1948, in a letter to Tran-Duc-Thao, who had published a review of Kojève’s book on Hegel in *Les Temps Modernes*:

I would like to indicate, however, that my work did not have the character of a historical study; it was of relatively little importance to me to know what Hegel himself meant to say in his book; I did a course on phenomenological anthropology using Hegelian texts, but only saying what I considered to be the truth, and dropping what seemed to me to be a mistake in Hegel³³.

Kojève goes on to specify what he considered to be ‘a mistake in Hegel’ and what should be emphasized instead: «Hence, renouncing the Hegelian monism, I consciously moved apart from this great philosopher. Furthermore, my course was essentially a work of propaganda intended to strike the spirits. That is why I consciously reinforced the role of the dialectic of Master and Slave and, in a general way, schematized the content of phenomenology»³⁴. He was aware, therefore, that the ontological dualism between Nature and Spirit was alien to the *Phenomenology*, and that the struggle between master and slave was in fact far more limited than he had portrayed. Kojève was also aware of the book’s peculiar mode of presentation and the distinction between the perspectives *für es* and *für uns*, which is made explicit in his lectures when he opposes an ‘ontological’ to an ‘existential’ description of

³³ Letter from Alexandre Kojève to Tran-Duc-Thao, 7 October 1948, in Jarczyk and Labarrière, *De Kojève à Hegel*, p. 64 (my translation).

³⁴ *Ibidem* (my translation).

the dialectical movements³⁵. It was a conscious choice, then, to omit that in his translation of Chapter IV.A.

If this is so – if for Kojève the name ‘Hegel’ was merely a prestigious pseudonym³⁶ –, should one then dispense with this interpretation of the *Phenomenology* and, in addition to that, come to accept that a great deal of philosophy in the French-speaking world – the works of, amongst others, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Bataille, and Lacan – stems at least partially from a misunderstanding of Hegel’s work, or even worse, on a wilful disregard for its complexity? Should such ‘misreadings’ then be discarded, or at least called into question, as potentially depleting the richness of Hegel’s work?

Some interpreters do dismiss Kojève’s account almost entirely on the basis of this theoretical detour *per se*. There are reasons, however, why this ‘faulty translation’ can be said to have functioned ‘in a positive way’ with regard to the French reception of Hegel. One could argue that while Kojève’s reading might deviate from a literal presentation of Hegel’s text, it is nonetheless in accord with its most elementary intent³⁷. That is how Kojève understands his own approach: in his letter to Tran-Duc-Thao he explains that he «had the intention of making not a commentary of the phenomenology, but an interpretation», i.e., he «tried to rediscover the deep premises of the Hegelian doctrine and to construct it by logically deducing it from such premises»³⁸. Hence, aware that he is modifying the letter of the *Phenomenology*, Kojève at the same time believes he is doing justice to the book’s spirit.

Much ink has been spilled over the ‘real content’ of the *Phenomenology*, and a consensus is far from being within sight. The potential benefits of Kojève’s reading are certainly not as direct as in Allan Bloom’s characterization: «a model of textual

³⁵ Moreover, in «Structure of the *Phenomenology*», published as an appendix to *Introduction*, Kojève points out the moments philosophical consciousness intervenes in the experiential account of natural consciousness.

³⁶ Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, p. 15.

³⁷ Ivi, p. 17.

³⁸ Letter from Alexandre Kojève to Tran-Duc-Thao, 7 October 1948, in Jarczyk and Labarrière, *De Kojève à Hegel*, p. 64 (my translation).

interpretation [...] suffused with the awareness that it is of pressing concern to find out precisely what such a thinker meant»³⁹. Patrick Riley's ambivalent depiction is probably more appropriate: «Kojève, in short, truly illuminates some portions of the *Phenomenology*, and this is welcome because the work is so difficult and often so obscure. But he darkens some parts of Hegel; their brightness can be restored by reading them for oneself»⁴⁰. In reality, an indisputable positive effect of Kojève's (impromptu) translation to the blossoming of Hegelian studies is to have inspired generations of young philosophers to read Hegel for themselves – even if with the aim proving his interpretation wrong.

Beyond that, and in properly philosophical terms, a specific trait of Kojève's rendering of the 'master-slave dialectic' can be said to have produced a fertile *Wirkungsgeschichte*, namely, its focus on the viewpoint of natural, rather than on that of philosophical, consciousness. To the extent that he centred his interpretation on the experiencing consciousness rather than on the picture drawn by the observing philosopher from the heights of absolute knowledge, Kojève allowed – paradoxically against his own claims about the 'end of history' – for a reading of Hegel's text that is eminently open-ended and suffused with historical urgency⁴¹. By privileging how things appear 'for it' instead of 'for us', his rendition of the master-slave dialectic suggests that the perspective of the experiencing consciousness might be an insightful one, thus illuminating the potentially emancipatory tension that inhabits the relation of mastery and servitude. In this sense, Kojève's reading invites for a reconstruction of Hegel's philosophy in an original fashion: from the viewpoint of the subjugated consciousness' experience, which, at times, may be better positioned to reveal aspects of domination

³⁹ A. Bloom, *Editor's Introduction*, in Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, p. ix.

⁴⁰ P. Riley, *Introduction to the Reading of Alexander Kojève*, «Political Theory», IX (1), 1981, p. 19.

⁴¹ Georges Canguilhem notes that Kojève's book, whose existence is itself a 'historical moment', contradicts its own claim that history would have ended when Hegel wrote the *Phenomenology*: G. Canguilhem, *Hegel en France*, «Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses», XXVIII-XXIX (4), 1948, p. 288.

than both the oppressor and 'us' – the observing, 'neutral' philosopher. As two eminent figures in this *Wirkungsgeschichte*, for example, both Simone de Beauvoir and Frantz Fanon engage extensively with Hegel through Kojévian lenses: *The Second Sex* and *Black Skin, White Masks* can be interpreted as the restaging of the master-slave dialectic from the viewpoint of the lived experience of the woman and the black man. It is beyond doubt that, today, the impact of these two works is still far from being exhausted.

In conclusion, one can say that Kojève's lectures on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as well as his translation-commentary of Chapter IV.A, intend to introduce Hegel not only *in France*, but *into his present*⁴². As Michael Roth puts it, «Kojève's work in philosophy was molded, if not forced, by the exigencies of history»⁴³. Albeit 'traitorous', his interpretatively charged translation resonated with, and responded to, its own social and philosophical environment in a way that pushed Hegel's philosophy beyond the pure *grasping of its own time in thoughts*⁴⁴.

⁴² Cf. Jubara, *Philosophie als Translation*.

⁴³ Roth, *Knowing and History*, p. 83.

⁴⁴ G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. by A.W. Wood, trans. by H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991 (1817), p. 21.

Finito di stampare
nel mese di ottobre 2020
dalla Digitalandcopy S.a.s., Vignate (Mi)