

# Responsive Love

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*Love is described from the perspective of responsive phenomenology. It appears as a sort of pathos, as a doubling of one's own desire, as an experience marked by the alienness of oneself and that of the Other. Like any creative response love has to be invented. It means giving what one does not have.*

Keywords: phenomenology / ethics / love / pathos / the Other / response / desire / alienness

Love appears to be a great issue turning our life-world into a love-world. I shall approach it from the special perspective of what I call responsive phenomenology. That means focusing on our experience to the extent that it responds to the appeal of something or to the demand of somebody other. Concerning love I want to emphasize three main aspects: Love appears as a kind of pathos or affect which touches us. Loving means that our own desire is doubled by the desire of the Other. The process of loving takes place here and now, but arises from elsewhere. Arthur Rimbaud's saying "*La vraie vie est absente* – True life is absent" exhibits the fact that our whole life is impregnated by otherness. Lovers are never completely at home, *chez soi*, in place, love is marked by a certain *atopia*. Thus in his *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* Roland Barthes promises not to speak about love without addressing another: "Personne n'a envie de parler de l'amour, si ce n'est *pour* quelqu'un. – Nobody likes to speak about love unless *for* somebody." (88) Such a discourse takes on features of an indirect discourse situated between confession and treatise.

My reflections will proceed in six sections. The first three sections will deal with the pathos which touches us, with our response to that and with *diastasis* as a spatio-temporal displacement between both. Two further sections will deal with the doubling of our self and with the pathological splitting of our experience. The last section will indicate some ethical consequences. On the whole, we should not neglect the black shadows of violence and hate. Love is not seldom mixed up with antipathy, and all too often it passes into hate. I quote a verse from Goethe's *Harzreise im Winter* set to music by Brahms: "*Ach, wer heilet die Schmerzen des, dem Balsam zu Gift ward? Der sich Menschenhaß aus der Fülle der Liebe trank?* – Ah, who heals

the pains of someone to whom balsam changed into poison? Who drunk human hate out of the abundance of love?" Love, being overshadowed by alienness, does not live on an island of some happy few.<sup>1</sup>

## Pathos

I use the Greek word 'pathos' in order to designate something happening to us, something affecting us, or to say it in German, a sort of *Widerfahrnis*.

Examples can be found everywhere in our experience. Let us start from the realm of *senses*. Something becomes visible like the beam of lightning. Something becomes audible like a sudden noise or like the explosion from bomb attempts occurring more and more frequently in our streets. Or there may be a smell of snow in the air. Perception, which interrupts the monotony of the usual, starts by something striking us (*was uns auffällt*), and similarly inventions which deviate from the routine originate from something coming to our mind (*was uns einfällt*). "*Ein Gedanke kommt, wenn 'er' will, und nicht, wenn 'ich' will.* – A thought comes when 'it' will, not when 'I' will," as Nietzsche remarks, adding that on the level of creative thinking we would better say "*es denkt* – it thinks", the "old famous Ego" being only an exception (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 31). But let us go further. Take incisive *events in our personal life* such as birth, falling in love, being traumatized, or take *public events* which scan our history such as the nationalistic attempt in Sarajevo 1914, the breaking in pieces of Yugoslavia in 1992 or hard dates like New York, September 11 and recently Paris, November 13. These are dates which interrupt the historical calendar and from which one starts counting anew. Or take the recent stream of refugees in Europe which makes us nearly helpless. Such kinds of pathos which bother us manifest itself by extreme affects like *astonishment* or *frightening*. Thus Plato proclaims that philosophy is born from amazement, and Epicure takes philosophy as a remedy to overcome the fear of death. Yet things can also change by degrees and passing unawares like Nietzsche's ideas approaching on pigeon feet.

Let me add some linguistic explanations. The Greek word 'pathos' is rich of sense meaning at once passive voice, suffering and passion. The Greek tragedy is interspersed with various sorts of pathos from violence through ardent love up to madness. Listen to the hymn on love in Sophocles' *Antigone*

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<sup>1</sup> Concerning the alienness of love see the author's essay "Die Fremdheit des Eros" (1998, <sup>2</sup>2008) and his former volume *Der Stachel des Fremden*, (1990, <sup>5</sup>2012, Sloven. 1998). As to the larger perspectives of a responsive phenomenology see first of all the author's books *Antwortregister* (1994) and *Bruchlinien der Erfahrung* (2002).

(v. 781 f.): “Ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν, / Ἔρως δὲ ἐν κτήνεσι πίπτεις – O Eros, invincible in fight, / Who invades one’s own possession.” And Oedipus, deeply surprised by his own deeds, avows: “My deeds are more endured (πεπονθότ) than done (δεδορακότα).” (Oedipus at Colonus, v. 266 f.) Tragedies have more of a passion play than of a drama centred on actions. Finally, according to Lessing’s comment in his *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (396), the pathos of the ancient tragedy comprises everything “*was handelnden Personen verderbliches und schmerzliches widerfahren kann* – what can happen to acting persons as pernicious and painful.” The common German word ‘Widerfahrnis’ means literally a sort of ‘counter-experience.’ Similar to that the Latin word ‘affect’ should not be understood only as a subjective state or a private feeling, but rather as something ‘done to’ (see Latin verb *ad-ficere*).

Our first linguistic comment has to be reinforced by phenomenological explanations. The term ‘happening’ we are using does not refer to an *objective event*, grasped from the observer’s perspective, nor does it refer to a *subjective act*, accomplished by me or you. There are persons really involved into what is happening; however, they appear not in the nominative case of somebody *who* is acting, but in the dative case of someone *to whom* something happens or in the accusative case of someone *whom* something affects. We should be on our guard against the illusive idea of grasping what strikes or frightens us *before it really happens*. Listen to the ironical remark in Lichtenberg’s *Sudelbücher* (752): “*Sehr viele Menschen und vielleicht die meisten Menschen müssen, um etwas zu finden, erst wissen, daß es da ist.* – Many people, and perhaps most of them, in order to find something, have first to know that it is really there.” Thus they only find what they already know.

A short literary digression may illustrate what is at stake. I think of a famous distinction in Roland Barthes’ essay *La chambre claire*. Analysing the process of making something visible by photography the author distinguishes between *punctum* and *studium*. Initially, the stimulating ‘point’ that touches me remains uncoded. “*Ce que je peux nommer ne peut réellement me poindre.* – Something that I can name, cannot really prick me” (830). In German we may say: what bears a common name is no longer *bestechend*. However, the secondary phase of ‘study’ goes beyond the first impression by elaborating what has touched me. This process includes intentionality and understanding, i.e. the act of taking *something as something*, analyzed by phenomenology and hermeneutics and formalized by the process of logic and semiotic coding. Thirdly, returning to the beginning by a loop, the author adds: The ‘punctum’ manifests itself only afterwards, *après coup*. These three aspects are not restricted to the effects of photography. They characterize *mutatis mutandis* the triad of responsive experience we have in

mind. The first aspect corresponds to the pathos we just described and to which Barthes explicitly refers in his later lectures (*Le neutre*), the second and the third aspect refer to the two following motives.

## Response

Responding to what happens to us and what affects us means transforming it into something which can be termed, regulated, remembered and so on. In such a way we encounter a *logos* which is not self-contained, but born from *pathos*. But we have to distinguish between primary and secondary kinds of responding similarly to Freud's distinction between a primary and a secondary process of sense making. Secondary answers are something rather *normal*, they are part of our ordinary life. Take answers by which we reply to information questions like "How late is it?", "Where is my cap?", "What is your address?"; they all function as a sort of stopgap. The propositional content of the answer only fills in the blank opened up by the question. If examiners make use of multiple choice the answer has not even to be formulated, it is sufficient to make a cross on the right place. Such answers are reduced to something which is already more or less known. In the end the act of *giving* the answer gets absorbed in the content of the *given* answer; consequently it can be automatized by the use of a speech apparatus. To put it in linguistic terms, the act of saying tends to coincide with what is said, the *énonciation* tends to coincide with the *énoncé*. No wonder that answers or responses are so often looking rather trivial, not the least for philosophers who prefer to put questions and to check judgements instead of delivering what they know. Is it not true that Socrates appears as the master of those who question?

The situation changes as soon as we take into account primary and radical forms of responding. They are innovating and creative considering that they are provoked by what is alien and comes from elsewhere. If somebody asks me "Are you happy?", "Do you love me?" or "Will you help me?" the answer will never be completely at my disposal. On the contrary, the answer tends to certain forms of avowal or confession by which I do not simply give information about myself, but rather expose myself to the Other. Responding in its strong and radical sense means *speaking and acting from* (in French: *à partir*), i.e. *from somebody or from something Other, beginning elsewhere*. The declaration of love resembles the declaration of war as to its effects which change our mutual relations and situation in the social world.

At this point we have to distinguish between, on the one hand, being *affected by something* which touches us without addressing us and, on the

other hand, being *appealed by somebody* who addresses us (see Waldenfels, *Bruchlinien*, ch. III). In the first case of simple affects we are confronted with things which invite us to do something. Gestalt Psychologists like Wolfgang Köhler and Kurt Lewin used concepts like *Aufforderungscharakter* (demand character) or *Gefordertheit* (requirement) which James Gibson rendered by ‘affordance.’ I draw some examples from Köhler: “The beautiful weather, a certain landscape invites one go for a walk. A staircase entices the two-year old child to climb up and jump down; doors entice one to open them and shut them, little crumbs to pick them up, a dog to pet it; the sandbox to play in it; chocolate or a piece of cake to be eaten, etc.” (see Waldenfels, *Sozialität* 240–242) These examples should be completed by threatening situations which make us shrink from things like the burning fire, the approaching car or the dagger in the hand of the murderer – “things which carry with them the word as a germ” (Bakhtin 383). In the last case one may think of the axe in the hand of Raskolnikov or the digger in the hand of Rogoshin, i.e. things which become emblems and crystallisations of violence in Dostoevsky’s novels as Bakhtin shows in his interpretations of the Russian author.

The last example leads us to the second case of personal appeals which are more relevant in our context. In this case I am faced with somebody who does not only take effect on me, but addresses me personally. Responding to the Other means to be looked at and spoken to before seeing or speaking oneself. Virgil’s famous dictum “*risu cognoscere matrem* – recognize the mother by smiling” does not mean that there is little child able to respond to the mother’s face, but it rather means that the baby becomes oneself by responding to the Other. The smile functions as a sort of *Urantwort*, a primary response. This should not be reduced to a simple step within a general process of development. The little child becomes a *singular self* by responding to the *singular face* of the Other, and by becoming familiar with this one person it becomes simultaneously unfamiliar with other persons. In German we call this *Fremdeln*. Many studies on the phenomenon of hospitalism, beginning with René Spitz’ study *The First Year of Life*, show to what extent the birth of the self is inhibited if a steady relation to a significant Other is failing. Human children hear the pronoun ‘thou’ and they hear their own name before using it. We know ourselves by hearsay. Being deprived of the Other’s response means getting unable to respond oneself. In one of his fragments of a lover’s discourse, entitled *Without response*, Roland Barthes arises the question: “*L’interlocuteur parfait, l’ami, n’est-il pas alors celui qui construit autour de vous la plus grande résonance possible? L’amitié ne peut-elle se définir comme un espace d’une sonorité totale?* – The perfect interlocutor, the friend, is this not somebody who constructs

around you the greatest resonance? Is it not possible to define friendship as a place of total sonorousness?" (*Discours* 199) Obviously, the need for responsivity continues in the further life, and it revives whenever we make new experiences. The human being is not only a being who has a logos: a *homo sapiens*, but it is as well a being who gives answers: a *homo respondens* (Waldenfels, *Sozialität* 15–26).

These selective examples may be sufficient to show that we do not only respond by words, but by our whole body. Our body functions as a *bodily responsorium*, including our eyes, ears and hands, our actions and gestures and our libidinous life (Waldenfels, *Antwortregister* 463–538). Concerning our "erotic understanding" Merleau-Ponty states that "the desire understands blindly, linking one body to the other" (*Phénoménologie de la perception* 183). In extreme situations, preventing us from finding an adequate answer, we merely respond by laughing and crying as Helmuth Plessner shows in his famous anthropological study.

As we already mentioned, 'response' is not a common term in philosophy, and this holds true even more for the term 'responsivity.' I discovered it outside philosophy. I borrowed it from the German-Jewish neurologist Kurt Goldstein who directed long-lasting clinical research on brain injuries in Frankfort and Berlin before he was expelled by the Nazis and found refuge in the United States. On the background of his holistic and dynamic brain conception, he defines 'responsivity' as the organism's capacity to answer in an adequate way to the requirements of the milieu, and vice versa, he defines 'irresponsivity' as the corresponding deficiency (Goldstein 334). A second researcher who inspired me was Mikhail Bakhtin, the already mentioned Russian theorist of literature, who developed a polyphonic concept of speaking and writing. He uses the rare term *otvetnost'*, i.e. 'answerability' in order to characterize the inherence of the Other's word in one's own word, the resonance of the Other's voice in my own voice. This author in whose work the otherness of the Other plays an important role (see Pape's study) goes so far to stress that every word of our language is a "half-alien word" (185, 231, 233). On the whole, responsivity turns out to be a basic feature of experience precisely like intentionality and regularity.

## Diastasis

At this point we are faced with the question how pathos and response are related to each other. In this context I use the old term 'diastasis' in order to designate an original type of spatio-temporal shift or displacement. But before approaching this complicated phenomenon I shall interrupt the

course of reasoning again. Two examples drawn from literature may lead us into the world of love.

The first example confronts us with a most discrete form of engagement between two young people. This story of love is to be found in Theodor Fontane's novel *Der Stechlin* (ch. 25). There is a young officer, called Woldemar, being in search for a spouse. He is good friend with the family Barby in which two sisters live, Melusine and Armgard. One evening Woldemar takes leave from Armgard, the younger sister, with the words: "What a lovely sister, you have." Armgard is blushing and remarks: "You will make me jealous." Woldemar's reply: "Really, countess?" Armgard: "Perhaps... Good night." After a blank which takes only half an hour Armgard confesses to her elder sister Melusine: "*Ich glaube fast, ich bin verlobt.* – I nearly believe, I am engaged." Nothing more. The mutual promise runs through a third person who serves as a kind of 'Liebesblitzableiter,' a love lightning-rod, receiving the message *post festum* in a certain delay. One might characterize this strange to and fro as a dismembered moment, a *moment morcelé*. The distance which is part of every interpersonal relation is displayed, but not overcome.

With our second example we move from Berlin to Paris. Swann, one of the heroes in Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*, appears as a Parisian Snob behaving much more sophisticatedly than Woldemar, the simple member of the Prussian gentry. He goes some steps further in his adventure with Odette, a famous courtesan. As a lover he is, he tries to grasp the crucial moment *before* it happens and to keep it *after* it has happened. The complicated criss-cross looks and sounds like that, translated and emphasized by myself: "And exactly as he had tried, *before kissing her the first time*, to impress Odette's face on his memory, how it had been for him long time before the memory of this kiss would change it for ever, – so he would have liked, at least in thought, *whereas she still existed*, to take leave from that Odette who filled him with love and jealousy, who made him suffer and whom he would now never see again." (Proust, 378) The lover tries to overcome the time of love and to keep it too. Elsewhere I have tried to describe such an impossible attempt to keep in memory something immemorial under the title "The Belated Response" (*Deutsch-Französische Gedankengänge*, chapter 21).

Now let us take up the thread of our argument. Pathos and response from which we started are part of a *double event* which crosses a threshold without surmounting it. The most common threshold phenomenon we know is the two-side process of sleeping in and awakening. Both sides are at once separated and connected. The relation between pathos and response looks similar. There is no pathos, be it joy, love, pain or jealousy,



without provoking a certain response, and there is no response without a certain pathos to which it points back. Nevertheless, there remains a gap between both. Initially, there is excluded any synthesis, making sense and guided by rule. What happens to us may get sense and may be submitted to certain rules, but the event itself takes place without sense and rule, being beneath true and false, beneath good and evil. Sense and rule only originate from our response which has to be invented. So we may say: there is order, *il y a de l'ordre*, as Foucault puts it, but there is no order once and for all. Every order, being selective and exclusive, bears shadows of what is extraordinary (Waldenfels, *Ordnung im Zwielficht*).

Let us go more into the details. The spatio-temporal displacement we have in mind opens a gap between pathos and response. My basic argument runs as follows. Whenever something extraordinary happens to us, appears to us and affects us it always comes *too early*, compared with our normal expectations and precautions. Vice versa, our response comes always *too late*, compared with the surprising event. We are confronted with an original sort of precedence (*Vorgängigkeit*) and an original sort of posteriority (*Nachträglichkeit*). I call this special kind of time-lag diastasis, following Plotinus who speaks of a “diastasis of life – διάστασις τῆς ζωῆς,” what literally means ‘stepping asunder’ of life (*Enn.* III, 7, 11, 41). The first evidence for this irreducible delay is our birth which is adhering to us, without being or becoming completely our own. It refers to an “original past, a past which has never been present,” as Merleau-Ponty puts it (*Phénoménologie de la perception*, 280). The same holds true for the new birth of the self by love, for the outbreak of violence, for the establishment of a political order, for scientific inventions, and for any form of reformation or revival. What Husserl and Heidegger call *Stiftung* (foundation) can only be grasped afterwards by a series of *Nachstiftungen* (post-foundations). The beginning of the history, which is absent as the hidden part of a pre-history, will often be entwined with myths which *tell* in any way what cannot be *explained* by the logos. But myths tend to gloss over what Nietzsche calls an *origo pudenda*, a bashful origin. In reality, our life will never be totally up to date and our experience will never be totally our own. This original and creative dimension of experience gets lost if we reduce the course of time to a mere succession, one moment following the other. It gets lost as well when we try to recollect the work of time in a pure form of presence without fissure, which pretends to embrace everything that has been and will be. Experience contains a core of radical otherness or alienness. This alienness resists any kind of Hegelian *Aufhebung* which would reduce alienness to the mere result of a secondary process of alienation, confusing *Fremdheit* and *Verfremdung* with *Entfremdung* (see Waldenfels, *Verfremdung der Moderne*).



## The double self and the Other as double

The pathic and responsive traits of experience have certain consequences which change the status of the so-called subject as well as the role of the Other. First, the self turns out to be a *split* or *divided self*. I appear at once as *patient*, i.e. as somebody to whom something happens, and as *respondent*, i.e. as somebody who works up what is happening. This work of experience reminds us of Freud's mourning labour (*Trauerarbeit*) or of Barthes' *punctum* passing into a phase of *studium*. Everybody takes part in his or her own experience both as patient and as respondent, but both figures will never coincide. There is no unique subject playing only a double role, the one active, the other passive. Being touched by and responding to are interwoven. I respond as far as I am touched, and I am touched as far as I respond. Take as example the affect of anger. My anger is not something which follows the Other's offence like an independent event; being offended means responding to the offence in a special way, including expressions of our body like blushing in anger and clenching one's fist. Similarly, the feeling of love, which always includes certain elements of self-love and of self-affection, is realized in the beaming of one's gaze, in the smooth tone of one's voice and in the tender touch of one's hand. We do not put on feelings like clothes. The pathos, even the false pathos, can be grasped nowhere else than through our bodily response. There is no substantial ego, no *hypokeimenon*, behind our lived experience; by contrast, I become what I am by being affected and by responding in a certain way. Our living self is neither a substance which precedes our experience nor a transcendental subject which renders it possible. Our *embodied self* is deeply involved in what we experience with Others (see Waldenfels, *Das leibliche Selbst*). So Nietzsche's Zarathustra proclaims: "*Hinter deinen Gedanken und Gefühlen, mein Bruder, steht ein mächtiger Gebieter, ein unbekannter Weiser – der heißt Selbst. In deinem Leibe wohnt er, dein Leib ist er.* – Behind your thoughts and affects, my brother, arises a mighty master and unknown wise man – which is called Self. He is living in your body, he is your body." (40)

But such a deeply rooted self can be grasped only afterwards. Precisely due to this delay the self is not of a piece, *nicht aus einem Guß*. Seeing oneself in the looking-glass means seeing oneself from a certain distance and in a certain medium. Hearing oneself speak means being confronted with the echo of one's own voice. Moving oneself by marching or dancing means being carried away by a movement which seizes us, so that we are at once moving and being moved. Loving oneself does not mean an act of loving, through which loving and the loved *ego* are identical like the *ego* of the traditional Cartesian *cogito*. Loving oneself rather means being af-

fected by oneself or being extremely fascinated by oneself as in the case of Narcissus, but not being simply oneself. There is an internal fissure running through myself. This fissure finds its linguistic expression in Mead's distinction between *I* and *Me*, in Lacan's contrast between the speaking *Je* and the spoken *Moi* or in Freud's topical difference between *Ich* and *Es*. Paul Valéry clearly underlines the temporal character of this internal split: "Ce que JE suis, *instruit*, *étonne* ce que je suis. *Et il y a un temps entre moi et moi. Moi naît de moi.* – *What I am instructs, astonishes what I am.* And there is time between me and me, I am born from me." (*Cahiers*, I 1001)

Furthermore, the alienness of myself reflects the alienness of the other Self. The riddle of the Other cannot be reduced to the simple fact that there are many individuals who all have to be classified as human beings. The Other as Other does not arise as somebody or even as something given in my own world. The Other is somebody like me, "*mon semblable, – mon frère,*" as Baudelaire addresses the reader of his *Fleurs du mal*. The Other arises primarily as somebody who looks at me, listens to me, touches me, speaks to me, desires me, bothers me, violates me, and all this happens long before I am able to approach him or her. Our mutual contact does not mean that I see the Other exactly in the same way as he or she sees me, as if our senses were submitted to a sensual kind of Golden Rule. The mutual glance has its blind spot. Valéry describes it in this way: "*Ce qui me manque c'est ce moi que tu vois. Et à toi, ce qui manque, c'est toi que je vois.* – What is lacking for me, that's me that you see. And what is lacking for you, that's you that I see." (*Tel Quel* 490 f.) Merleau-Ponty integrated this idea of a *chiasma*, intertwining one's own and the Other's body, in his phenomenology of intersubjectivity and took it as a "labyrinth of reflection and sensibility," a sort of "sensible reflection" (*Signes* 294). This figure of *entre deux*, this between is asymmetrical in spite of the symmetry which we strive for by means of the third party which like the judge equalizes what is unequal. This "comparison of the incomparable" is one of the leading ideas in Levinas' ethics of the Other (Levinas 201 f.). The reciprocity of love arises similar problems as Jacques Lacan shows when he remarks: "*Jamais tu me regardes là où je te vois* – Never you will catch me in sight where I see you," and vice versa: "*Ce que je regarde n'est jamais ce que je veux voir* – What I catch in sight will never be what I want to see." (Lacan 118) In addition to that we meet with the otherness of others in a more or less anonymous way. The mother language through which we all have been once introduced into the world of speech first emerges as a foreign language spoken by others. Hence we have to learn even what is our own. The name to which I answer, I owe it to others who gave it to me. As masculine or feminine beings we are marked by the relation to the other

gender. Each Other through whom I discover and constitute myself takes on features of a double, a *Doppelgänger* who accompanies me like my own shadow. I am neither able to integrate the Other nor to disengage myself from the Other. Let us quote Valéry again: “*Autrui, un autre semblable, ou peut-être double de moi, c’est le gouffre le plus magnétique.* – The Other, another like me, or perhaps a double of mine, that is the most magnetic abyss.” (*Cahiers*, I 499) The magnet which the author invokes, refers to something that attracts me and sets me in motion, coming across from the other side, far from any centrifugal act I might achieve. Hence we are not so much astonished to learn that in French the magnet is also called *aimant*. At this point we approach Goethe’s *Wahlverwandtschaften* whose title alludes to the *attractio electiva* of chemical elements.

### **Pathogenic and pathological forms of splitting**

In what we are doing or saying we respond to something that challenges us. But our responding is by no means based on a pre-established harmony; it takes place as an unstable act of balance. The fissures, running through our experience and transforming it into a broken and fragile experience, are sources of a pathogenic or pathological splitting of our experience. Not the least love and hate are impregnated by polymorphic perversions which are the domain of psychoanalysis. Due to the basic tension between pathos and response this splitting runs into two opposite directions.

On the one hand, experience tends toward a *pathos without response*, provided that the pathos prevails and the responsive part is momentarily or permanently diminished. Generally, the effects of pathos are more or less suggestive, seductive and fascinating. Take first the extreme irruption of the shock. Even the amazement, the *θαυμάζειν*, initiating philosophy is presented by Plato as a bodily experience of vertigo which makes us lose the ground under our feet (*Theaetetus* 155c). In the Greek mythology it is the head of Medusa which petrifies the spectator. Such apotropaic signs have to be taken as incorporations of otherness. Descartes translates such effects into physiological terms, describing the astonishment as an excess of admiration which turns the body, as it were, into an immobile statue (*Passiones animae*, II 73). There are various kinds of fascination, not at least exercised by the passion of love, enforced by music as the “food of love.” Plato characterizes the erotic “pathos” as a sort of madness which makes the lover “step outside (ἐξίστάμενος) human endeavours” (*Phaedrus* 249c–250b). Such pathic phenomena cannot be identified with the pathological, but there are no clear-cut borderlines between both. Adoration of what

we esteem can always turn into idolatry, be it personal, aesthetic, religious or political. Definitively we enter the realm of pathology when we turn to cases of traumatized experience, caused by accidents or by acts of violence. Suddenly every sort of responding appears to be blocked. The patient is no longer the twin of the respondent. In the clinic sense the patient is fixed on what has happened and what does not cease to happen again. “*Und wenn der Mensch in seiner Qual verstummt, gab mir ein Gott zu sagen, was ich leide* – And when a human gets mute by pain a God gave me to say what I am suffering from.” This sentence from Goethe’s *Tasso* (V, 4) sounds like a motto for what therapeutics try to achieve. It is well known that Freud discovers the relevance of the temporal delay, the *Nachträglichkeit*, through mute after-effects of the trauma which first are hidden in corporeal symptoms and which are to be worked on by the talking cure. Sigmund Freud’s analysis of the Wolfsmann, known under the title *Aus der Geschichte einer infantilen Neurose*, was one of the inspiring sources for Derrida’s idea of *différance*.

But this is only one side of the medal. On the other hand, we encounter a counter-trend towards *responding without pathos*. Somebody continues to give answers, but these answers do no longer respond to the Other’s demand, they rather turn around themselves. They are not really given to the other, they are pre-given, pre-fabricated. I think of clinic forms of apathy and autism turning the Others appeal and demand into indifference. The Other does not really matter. Apart from clinic deviations our everyday life is full of stereotypes and ideological constructs. These reactions are to be understood as sorts of petrified or frozen answer, similar to Marilyn Monroe’s smile, reproduced by Andy Warhol like a mass-produced article. Ideological prejudices, which do not cease to disturb our public life day by day, could be defined as a kind of judging with closed eyes and ears, as an acting with closed hands. But closing our ears, eyes and hands is still a mode of responding. One responds by refusing to respond, by overlooking and neglecting the Other’s demand. Indeed, all acts of overlooking and neglecting, of *Wegsehen* and *Weghören*, presuppose that we see and hear to a certain extent even what we ignore and repress.

## Responsive ethics

Love and hate they are excellent phenomena or hyper-phenomena, marked by an excess of pathos or affect, surmounting the normal. Love responds to the *singular Other* who bears a name and has a face; it does not merely refer to *somebody* who plays a specific role or occupies a certain state. Hate on the contrary refuses such a response, reducing the Other

to *something* without face which one can use, exploit, consume or finally delete. The human enemy may be defined as somebody deprived of his or her face. However, by responding to the Other's appeal we perform a kind of saying-yes and doing-yes which precedes and exceeds the predicative alternative of affirmation and negation. What Freud calls *Verneinung* is not a mere negation, it is a sort of denial, of *dénégation*. Considering the fact that this radical, pre-predicative 'yes' and 'no' emerges already on the level of our bodily senses and drives we must admit that responsive ethics is deeply rooted in an ethos of the senses.

I shall conclude with a final remark. Responding to the Other's demand like the urgent demand of the refugees on our borders, is not only an affair of good will. We cannot not respond precisely as according to Paul Watzlawick we cannot not communicate. It is not up to us to decide whether we would like to respond or not. Even Bartleby's permanent refusal saying "I would prefer not to" which constitutes the core of Melville's story, is a sort of an answer. What is happening before our eyes, before our doors and in the daily news precedes our initiative. It is not in our hand *to which* we should respond, but it is in our hand *what* we respond. Ultimately, answers have to be invented, to be created, and to be elaborated. A paradoxical formula, going back to Anaximander and Plotinus, and taken up by Heidegger, Lacan and Derrida (12 f.), emphasized that loving means giving what one does not have. Similarly and more generally one could say that responding means giving an answer which one does not have.

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## Odzivna ljubezen

Ključne besede: fenomenologija / etika / ljubezen / patos / Drugi / odziv / želja / tujost

K tematiki ljubezni pristopamo z vidika responzivne fenomenologije. Ta različica fenomenologije se navezuje na patično razsežnost izkustva. Ključni pojmi so *pathos*, odziv in *diastasis*. – *Pathos* ali *Widerfahrnis* pomeni, da se nam dogaja nekaj novega. Presenetljive dogodke spremljajo močna čustva, kot sta osuplost in strah. Tudi zaljubljenost je eno izmed njih. – *Odzivnost* pomeni, da se zapletemo s tem, kar je tuje in kar uhaja našemu dojetanju. Ustvarjalni odzivi, med katere sodi tudi izjavljanje ljubezni, se razlikujejo od običajnih odgovorov, ki le zapolnjujejo vrzeli. Nekaj, kar se nas dotakne, se spremeni v nekaj, na kar se odzivamo. Ta proces

se tiče celotnega telesa, vključno z libidinalnim telesom. – Med patosom in odzivom je nepremostljiva razpoka, ki tvori posebne vrste zakasnitev, imenovano *diastasis*. Kar se nam zgodi, pride vedno prezgodaj; naši odzivi so vedno prepozni. Celo ljubezen med dvema se nikoli ne zgodi *pari passu*. – Tako je naš jaz razcepljen v tistega, ki utрпи, in tistega, ki se odzove: odzivam se na to, kar se *mi* dogaja. Tujost mene samega reflektira tujost Drugega, ki deluje kot nekakšen dvojnik. Tako se prepletata ljubezen do sebe in ljubezen do Drugega. – Patično je okuženo s patološkim. *Patološka žev* se razpre ali v smislu patosa brez odziva (šok, travma, zaslepljenost itd.) ali v smislu odziva brez patosa (apatija, avtistično vedenje, stereotipi). Odpira se prostor za različne spolne perverzije, ki mešajo ljubezen s sovraštvom. – Tako pa se odprejo poti za responzivno etiko, globoko zakoreninjeno v etosu čutov. Izumiti moramo, kako se bomo odzvali, ne moremo pa izumiti, na kaj se bomo odzvali. Skratka, odzivanje pomeni dajanje nečesa, česar ne vemo, podobno kot je ljubezen dajanje nečesa, česar nimamo. Fenomenološko analizo dopolnjujejo sklici na avtorje kot so Barthes, Goethe, Fontane, Lichtenberg, Proust, Sofokles in Valéry.