Introductory Essay: «Sob o mesmo céu». Listening and Dialogue as Ethics of Communication

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> *How is the vision of the face no longer vision, but hearing and speech?*
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> —E. Lévinas, *Is Ontology Fundamental?*

Abstract In the introductory essay I study the conditions by which it is possible to carry on an effective philosophical dialogue, finding in listening the characteristics without which dialogue is likely to become a monologue of the deaf.

First of all, I consider the difference between listening and hearing. With this distinction one needs to consider the early aspects of the activity of consciousness where one can individuate the presence of a primordial immediacy that, although not yet clarified in its essential constitution, exerts pressure against the I.

The most recent studies in both cognitive sciences and phenomenology have confirmed the importance of such an enigmatic presence, above all when one considers the processes of attention. On the first side, the cognitive sciences, it's important to consider notions such as vigilance, voluntary attention, and orientation; on the second side, Husserlian phenomenology, there is the crucial difference between primary noticing, secondary noticing, and thematic intending.

Keywords Models of attention • Primary and secondary noticing • Thematic intending • Fallacy of obliteration • Tutelage of the other • Fear and rhetoric of the other • The eventness of the encounter

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Philosophical Dialogue is the title of the international workshop organized in November 2010 at Tel Aviv University to celebrate Marcelo Dascal's 40th year of academic activities. On that occasion, in a calm and friendly style, scholars from all over the world were united by the desire to discuss together the many aspects of Marcelo Dascal's philosophic-scientific thought.[1]

Actually this first fact represents, in its simplicity, an important factor in understanding the contribution of the Israeli-Brazilian philosopher to the advancement of science. In fact, in a day and age wherein professional academic life drives scholars to narrower areas of specialization, Marcelo Dascal manages to be a scholar in the classic sense: with vast knowledge, many areas of expertise and infinite curiosity; and all these aspects converge in highlighting the virtue of listening.

The reasons to be thankful to Marcelo Dascal are not only profoundly personal but also intertwined with the professional careers of each of us. Despite this multiplicity, we believe there is a unique matrix able to embrace in a single gaze such benevolence: Marcelo Dascal is the one who taught us to listen.

Listening is not a vague virtue amenable to a sort of philanthropy, nor is it the distinctive sign of a privileged club. It rather represents a multilayered notion. Its physiognomy reminds us of a rhizome, a metaphor that has already been used in philosophy by Deleuze and Guattari and before them by Jung, to allude to the connection between areas apparently far apart, yet related meaningfully.

In this introductory essay, I would like to clarify, at least partially, although in the awareness of the difficulty of the task, the meaning of the listening I'm referring to. In this way, I could make more explicit the substantial reasons to be grateful to our Master.

The clarification of the notion of listening, first of all, will include the exploitation of the differences between listening and hearing. This first necessary step requires investigating, above all by reference to attention, the first reports of the activity of consciousness. Afterward, it will be clear that listening is connected with a particular way of acceptance and protection of an alterity never obliterable, and also that listening is directly implied with the notion of event. All these aspects converge to highlight the need for a renewed idea of reason. A resemanticized reason, therefore, perceives further – through listening – its representative horizon.

1   Hearing and Listening

There are different kinds of listening. A first level, indicated by the term *hearing,* indicates the perceptual threshold by which we perceive sounds. First of all, it is a characteristic attributable to the auditory system, via the pathways of sound perception.

The difference between hearing and listening has an equivalent in the difference between seeing and looking. However, as Gadamer reports, while we can look away

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from something, we cannot hear away. Hearing therefore is not subject to our will. On the other hand, the impossibility of escaping the flow of data sensations makes evident our implication with the world. As such, hearing can be an antidote vis-à-vis the theoretical approaches which privilege the formal and eidetic dimension, rescinding the bond with the facticity, the concreteness of lived experiences. For this reason too, hearing constitutes an indispensable level since its activation is necessary for the development of another faculty, listening, as confirmed by Gadamer himself (2004: 458): "Hearing is an avenue to the whole."

Listening indicates a disposition to pay attention to something presented in the flow of hearing, although not yet clarified. Already in Aristotle's *Ethics*, the term "disposition" refers to a consolidated capacity, a virtue obtained with efforts and sacrifices. In the case of listening, the requested training is aimed at not ignoring the particular element which is present in the consciousness. Listening therefore is a disposability toward a request of attention in the dark, independently from the occurred clarification of the identity of the claimant.[2]

We have to acknowledge the presence of an "other," testified by the hearing, and asking for our not indifferent attention. We are in the same condition described by Lévinas (1985: 89): "And me, whoever I may be, but as a 'first person,' I am he who finds the resources to respond to the call." Lipari specifies such an indication in the following way: "Listening . . . is essential to the ethical encounter – it is an invocation that can give birth to speech."[3]

In fact, it is *before* identifying and bringing back to our measure such an enigmatic presence, understood as "primordial immediacy that is prior to consciousness" (Lewin 2005: 377), that this not yet identified enigma presents itself as relevant for the I. The relevance of the enigma is reducible to its specific collocation in the flow of consciousness. It is present to the consciousness, but not yet identified by it. It, as it were, lives in an intermediate zone and from this position exerts an influence on the subject. The influence I am referring to corresponds to an involvement of the I, not episodic but substantial.

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[2]This indication seems to be confirmed by Lewin (2005: 375): "We first perceive intention, and only later discern whether the agent is human."

[3]The prominence of the pathways of sound perception as a condition of the possibility of listening should not lead us to believe that the other is only perceptible as a sound. The enigmatic dimension I am referring to can recall the meaning of Lévinas' words, "face of the Other." In this regard, Lipari (2012: 230) observes, "The face is neither figurative nor literal but is the expression of the demand of the other. Thus the face, like the face-to-face, is always dual. It is a relational and not an absolute term." Lipari again observes that "the revelation of the face is speech . . . . And yet quietly embedded in this assertion of responsibility – the ability to respond – lies the prior action of listening. It is hidden behind a face, despite the centrality of speech and speaking." With reference to the different ways in which the French phenomenology has understood the otherness, Dastur (2011: 165) has written: "For Levinas . . . this experience of the face of the other is the experience of a speaking and not in the first place corporeal presence. There are consequently three different ways of finding an access to the other: the *look* for Sartre, *intercorporeality* for Merleau-Ponty and the *face* for Levinas." In conclusion, we can say that the enigmatic presence of the other is not reducible to any specific sensory dimension. This conclusion – I think – is magnificently summarized by Lipari's words: "aural eye that listens."

In this situation, two attitudes become impossible, although for opposite reasons: on the one hand, ignoring the enigma by the I – in fact, given the existing involvement, ignoring the enigma would amount to a repeal of the same I – and on the other hand, trying to clarify the enigma. The eventual clarification of the enigma corresponds to making it thematic and eliminating the intermediate position occupied by it. In this respect, the eventual success, that is, the fulfillment of the thematization of the other, would be the greatest defeat. Exposed to the full light of consciousness, the enigma would dissolve like snow in the sun, so losing its non-soluble density by which it could influence the I.

For all these reasons, it is essential to examine the main approaches to the study of the attention.

In more explicit terms, is it possible that an identification of the enigma without such an identification becomes a homogenization?

An important reference in studies about attention is the famous quotation by William James:

> Every one knows what attention is. It is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence. (James 1890: 403–404)

This quotation has represented a milestone, although nowadays most of the studies move away from it.

If one considers Watzl's warning (2011: 848), according to which "cognitive science shows that there are various attentional processes that only share certain similarities, but lack any fundamental unity," then it is easy to realize how and why most recent studies have made a distinction between different kinds of attention:

1. Focal vs. global attention, where the former is directed toward a particular object or event, while the latter is distributed over a broader framework (Treisman 2006)
2. On-off attention vs. degrees of attention, where the difference consists in the idea that attention may or may not be activated in accordance with a gradualness (Depraz 2004: 14)
3. Voluntary vs. involuntary attention, where the former is controlled by the subject's intentions, while the latter is unintentional, activated by the relevance of some sensory stimulus
4. Exogenous vs. endogenous attention, where the former is controlled by the stimulus, while the latter is internally controlled (see Smallwood and Scholler 2009)
5. Perceptual vs. executive attention, where the former consists in giving priority to certain stimuli, while the latter is a central processing capacity (see Pashler 1998)
6. The process of attending to something vs. the event of shifting attention from one thing to another vs. the state the process results in (see Watzl 2010; Wu 2011)

All these approaches have updated the oldest theoretical positions. However, we cannot renounce looking at these positions, hoping to find already there a useful model for our needs. Broadbent (1958) has equated attention to a filter able to

act as a selective mechanism. The selection would be based not on the analysis of the meaning, but evaluating other information, including intensity. I think that this particular approach – although not updated – contains some interesting aspects because it individuates an area standing before the thematization as an integrant part of the attentional phenomenon.

Now, considering the main theoretical approaches to the topic of attention in the context of experimental psychology, Vermersch selects three main constituents of the attention:

(a) *Vigilance.* Vigilance, a state of awakening to the world, based on the activation of a diffuse nerve structure called "the reticule."

(b) *Orientation.* Based on a structure and upon distinct nerve pathways whose times of response are in the range of 20–40 ms. It corresponds to a characteristic of identification and permits the organism to respond in the most rapid way.

(c) *Voluntary attention* or *consciousness.* This constituent has times of responses in the range of 400 ms, "which is the time corresponding to a semantic identification . . . , thus a range of extremely slow measure (globally, a factor of 10) in relation to orientation" (Vermersch 2004: 53).

The main meaning of the previous schema consists in identifying the level of orientation, activated "without semantic identification" (Vermersch 2004: 52) and therefore once again with reference to a pre-thematic level.

Now, it remains to investigate what was the contribution of phenomenology to research on attention. In this regard, I will recall the §92 of the First Book of *Ideas* and then consider the *Vorlesungen über Bedeutungslehre Sommersemester 1908* (hereafter, *Vorlesungen*) (Husserl 1986) and finally *Experience and Judgment* (Husserl 1973).[4]

Starting from *Ideas* basically means that attention is not separated by the topic of intentionality. The merit of §92 of *Ideas I,* entitled *The Noetic and Noematic Aspects of Attentional Changes*, in fact reiterates this relationship of dependency.

In Husserl's words (1983: 224–225):

> Attention is usually compared to a spot light. The object of attention, in the specific sense, lies in the cone of more or less bright light; but it can also move into the penumbra and into the completely dark region. . . . The ray of attention presents itself as emanating from the pure Ego and terminating in that which is objective, as directed to it or being diverted from it.

Such indications, which already highlight that attention is dinamic, not static, phenomenon should be integrated by what Husserl writes in the *Vorlesungen*.

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[4]Recalling Husserl's ideas on attention is here made independently from the chronology of his philosophical production. I don't consider the contribution of *Philosophy of Arithmetic* in which Husserl introduces the criterion for distinguishing between a plurality and a group and this criterion consists in a certain kind of regard. In this way, we find some anticipations of the acts of grasping which Husserl will develop in the more mature phases of his philosophy.

In that context, Husserl, discussing the difference between the consciousness of meaning and verbal consciousness, distinguishes three levels of attention:

1. *Primary noticing*. It consists in attending in a privileged way to an object rather than to other objects perceived in the same time.
2. *Secondary noticing*. An object or group of objects becomes the background of the main observation and therefore present but in a subordinated way.
3. *Thematic intending*. It is a special way of attending to something. It consists in living in the corresponding theme.

The importance of the just mentioned schema is highlighted by Depraz (2004: 14, my italics):

> Whereas intentionality is a formal model of the structure of consciousness, whose openness lies in a linear directedness towards the object, attentionality as modulation furnished every act of our consciousness with a *material fluctuating density* due to its inner variations and its concrete changeability.

It is exactly the possibility of a variation of the density of what is presented through the attention that constitutes a source of interest for my analysis. The gradualness means, at least theoretically, the admission of a *not soluble density,* the most important feature of the other.

In *Experience and Judgment* Husserl talks about a form of contact with things, an act of grasping as a particular moment in the flow of consciousness, divided into three stages: a final stage of attentional grasp, also defined as the awakening of the I; an initial stage, without attentional grasp, which Husserl describes as pre-giveness (domain of passivity); between these two stages, there is a threshold.

Vermersch (2004: 68) observes:

> If there is a form of contact when consciousness stops on an object, clearly this contact is more or less light, either like an ongoing caress or like a light touch that ends as soon as it begins, or even like a grasp that immediately becomes a maintaining-in-grasp as it explores the thing.

As it is beyond the scope of this introduction, I would like to indicate here only that it is in this level that could be developed the difference between the voluntary aspect of grasping and the passive aspect in which a "prominence captivates the I and grabs hold of it" (Vermersch 2004: 69).

As stressed by Vermersch (2004: 60):

> The field of pre-giveness does not consist of an object (which in Husserl always presupposes intentionality), but of features, moments, parts, all of which are more elementary than an object and are joined together by laws of association, controlled by concordances and discordances, and by different forces of affection that compete to achieve awakening, to attract the tendency of the I toward the grasp.... From this field, an element detaches itself and becomes more prominent, attracts the I, and thus opens up the passage leading to consciousness, at least direct and still non-reflective consciousness.

In the conclusion of this first paragraph, all the reported findings, although included within different disciplines, offer a frame of plausibility to the notion of

listening as an effective and authentic place where the other can be approached respecting its radical otherness, independently from every temptation to reduce it to the subject's categories.

In extreme synthesis, enigma seems to have a chronological priority over our need of synchrony, of reconduction to our temporal order. In this respect, probably in listening, we could refer to an urgency of the enigma to indicate the persistence of an element which does not permit any indifference by us. Even before revealing this element, we have the feeling that it concerns and turns to us. There is inherence rather than indifference.

Listening can be understood as disposition to report an enigma that affects us, from a time before our own. In addition, it "enacts an infinite surplus of welcoming, invitation and reception, no matter what is said or heard. The listening, in contrast to the heard, is an enactment of responsibility made manifest through a posture of receptivity, a passivity of receiving the other into oneself without assimilation or appropriation. The listening is a process of contraction, of stepping back and creating a void into which the other may enter" (Lipari 2012: 237).

2   Enigma and the Fallacy of Obliteration

As we have seen in the previous paragraph, the main problem in the identification of the other consists in the fact that complete success in revealing the other would coincide with the abolition of the enigma itself. In this regard, one could paraphrase Ricoeur's thought when he observes: "The evil is the critical point of each philosophy. If one understands it, it is the biggest success. But evil understood is no more evil; it ceases to be absurd and scandalous. If one does not understand it, then philosophy is no more philosophy" (Ricoeur 1995: 13).

From this point of view, enigma and evil share the same destiny. In fact, the identified enigma is not an ascertained success, but a failure of thought itself, because it makes comprehension to be like homogenization, the act of reducing the otherness to our own categories. This process can be indicated as the fallacy of obliteration.

Faced with an enigma, should we remain helpless? Without conceptual and operative instruments?

It is a radical question, valid on two fronts: the first, with reference to what must be reported by consciousness and, the second, with regard to who should do the reporting, that is, the subject.

The identity of such a subject is eminently thought of as a representation of the real. Discussing such an identity means wondering about the validity of the representation as a unique dimension of the identity of the subject implied in relation to the enigma. Does the presence of the other, revealed by listening, need a different modulation of such an identity?

Independently from the outcome of this question, it is clear that what is at stake is the subject itself, its entire constitution and not only some cognitive determination. I think that this is the primary challenge when the question of the other arises.

3   The Tutelage of the Other

The attention requested by the enigma should preserve its specificity. The institution of such a tutelage, of which the subject implied in listening is responsible, assumes the features of an acceptance, taking responsibility for the being itself of the other. In this way, the subject tries to be prepared for the encounter as much as possible.

In figurative terms, we could say that if only a concave chest can house within it a convex shape, in the same way the identity of the subject should be able to create conditions for an effective hospitality. Taking seriously such an indication involves the change of the most common attitude toward the other.

Even the eventual indifference through which the enigma is declared unknowable is destined to transform itself in implication, with which we indicate the belonging together, the making space: "We *belong* to the matter addressed when the ethical call enters us and has become a part of us, when we have made a space for it, a home for it," Lipari (2010: 349) writes significantly, remembering Heidegger.

The change of our attitude toward the other is the first step in order that the alterity present in listening gives birth to an effective encounter rather than to indifference. Such a configuration of the subject is the authentic center of gravity in the relationship with the other, establishing the correct perspective from which to consider the things.

It is the other itself, its enigmatic presence and density, that is to become the constant focus of our gaze. Only if we will be able to make the other's place our anchorage point, then the relation to be instituted will be intended to be authentic.

In this regard, as Leibniz well understood (2006: 164), "The *other's place* is the true point of view." Our task – Leibniz continues – consists in the most accurate possible configuration of the other. It is a challenging task – as noted by Dascal himself – and it has a cognitive and also moral or political value.

Only when I prepare myself to be in the other's place then I can see the world in a decentrated way and without the logic of egocentrism.[5] It is exactly in this process that one can find the other's place. Leibniz therefore alludes to an exit from themselves. It is such a movement that permits us to "know our duty with respect to our neighbor," allowing us to stimulate "our thoughts." The other's place, therefore, is not some kind of magical place where one can get an enhanced vision.

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[5]As Lipari has written (2012: 228), "The self is always accompanied by a 'bad conscience' as to whether it has usurped the place of the other."

It is instead a process that, paradoxically, through the depowering of one's point of view, permits us to see the world with another's eyes and so to formulate different thoughts, precisely because they are produced in different conditions.

I think that such an emphasis of the procedural element, present in Leibniz's words, should be further developed. In this situation, the term "place" makes tangible the necessary eradication to acquire a different vision. The basic thesis, confirmed by Leibniz's words, sustains the inappropriateness of the reduction of the other to an *alter ego*. If the identity itself of the I can be achieved starting from an ecstatic perspective, that is, a perspective of decentralization, then what is at stake when we talk about listening is ourselves. For this reason, as Gadamer (2004: 355) observes, "In human relations the important thing is . . . the Thou truly as a Thou."

Only when this condition happens is the I not focused on oneself and can open oneself toward what is veiled. This openness makes effective human relationships: "Anyone who listens is fundamentally open. Without such openness to one another there is no genuine human bond." The attempt not to obscure the alterity of the Thou needs our best efforts.

4   Rhetoric and the Fear of the Other

Inside this process, two different but connected factors should be considered. They are the rhetoric and the fear of the other, two attitudes to be seriously taken and faced with realism. Both share the fact of not considering seriously the alterity.

Fear is a normal reaction when it springs from the warning of the risks that can derive from the exposure to the other. "Ex-ponere," root of the term exposure, indicates being outside one's self, being outside one's codified safeties, is a condition comparable to being on the open sea. The unknown of an alterity always on the verge of revealing itself exposes the I to some risk.

On the other side, the rhetoric of alterity is a way – even more devious – to avoid the encounter with the other. It represents a way of preventing, anticipating the real, and deciding for oneself the collocation of the other. The other brought back to the rhetoric is, it seems unnecessary to repeat, an other already reported, meaningless because it is subtracted from its own initiative.

Both the fear and the rhetoric of the other should be considered and should not be diminished. Thankfully, such impediments to a correct approach to the otherness are not able to subvert the order with which the other manifests itself in the chronology of lived experiences of the subject. From this point of view, they can be considered as second-level impediments rather than the anteriority of the choice which establishes the disposability of the subject. In other words, it is for subtracting me to the choice with which the disposability is established that I can take refuge in fear or in the false acceptance of the other, made possible by the rhetoric.

5   The Eventness of the Encounter

Obviously there may be numerous other obstacles to an authentic encounter of the other. They should be recognized and, as far as possible, avoided. One of these obstacles deserves special mention. It is what we would call *presumptive safety*. Basically it consists in the adoption of several forms by which the other is taken for granted. Taking something for granted means to presume, and therefore it corresponds to a depowering of the unfathomable dimension that can be considered the emblem itself of the other. The unfathomableness amounts to the will not to challenge the impossibility to predetermine in advance, that is, before the encounter itself, what the other is.

When such a threshold is passed through, then we subtract from the other its voice, overlapping our voice, naively believing that this approach is correct. In front of the other, such a way is not adequate because it reifies the other, artfully making it attributable to our measure. The so *anticipated* other, taken for granted, *presumed*, can't be authentically the other, but rather the other reduced to a thingly dimension.

Such a relationship corresponds to what Buber defined as an "I-it" relationship, in the knowledge that "without It man cannot live. But he who lives with It alone is not a man" (Buber 1958: 34).

These brief indications are intended to outline a sort of landscape, a set of conditions of possibility, in which one can eventuate the encounter with the other. The event is *par excellence* the unpredictable and not reportable. It is what makes us remain on the threshold of an imminence always renewing itself. The event indicates a personal infinity, that is, the unfolding of an action that never ends. This action absolutely inheres the one in front of which it unfolds. As such, the event indicates, but indirectly or in a negative way.

Inevitably, the event is an "object," in the sense that we should refer to it despite its ineffability. However, the specificity of its nature does not permit the ascription of any features. In fact, these eventual features or characteristics would demonstrate the occurred achievement of an action by the subject. Anyway what we have tried to indicate before is that the true encounter with the otherness is possible when the passivity of the subject is reached, not its protagonism consisting in the capacity of representing the world.

For these reasons, the status of the event is not at all obvious. As Morin (1972: 11) remembers:

> The event was removed to the extent that it has been identified with the singularity, contingency, the accident, the irreducibility, the experience . . . . It was removed not only by the physical-chemical sciences, but also from sociology, which tends to organize itself around laws, models, structures, systems. It even tends to be driven by the history that is, more and more, the study of the processes that obey to systematic and structural logics and less and less a cascade of sequences of events.

If one attributes value to the system, then what is singular and unique can acquire importance only to the extent that it can be functional to the system's survival. Such a survival should not be considered as an invariance. An event can be functional to

the system also when it contributes to the change of some features of the system, making it more suitable for the system's survival. From this point of view, therefore, event and system should not be considered as antagonists.

According to Morin (1972: 28), the event is framed within a temporal ontology, since time is a "coefficient of eventness" of everything. Furthermore, a pure event cannot be considered in absolute terms because it is always a function of the system.

Another observation of Morin's deserves to be briefly considered. There are events resulting from encounters between systems or between systems and perturbation of any origin. In neither of these two situations, however, the distinction between event and element, cited above, disappears: "The most developed systems are *structures of acceptance* more and more open to the event, and structures more and more *sensitive* to the event. Until now," Morin (1972: 29–30) continues, "human society is the organism whose sensitivity to the event is more open. . . . More sensitive systems have inside an antagonist bipolarity, i.e. a double *coupled circuit* containing and secerning the risk in itself, the event in the form of *alternative* possibility, chosen between two or more possible solutions, depending themselves from the intervention of internal or external events-factors."

We don't think that Morin's words specify something more of the event; they describe somewhat our need of reporting a phenomenon that otherwise would remain in its enigmaticy, labeled as negative and as such to be eradicated.

Carefully read, these words announce a scenario of prevision of what the event can imply. In a certain sense, they can be combined with the position of Jean Ladriére[6] who synthesizes four ways of depowering the event: (1) the explanation of a fact for subsumption under a law; (2) the explanation for reduction, or the indication of an element underlying the event; (3) the explanation through the origin; and (4) the optimization process, namely, the search for stable factors.

In other words, preparing a safety net to avoid unexplained situations is normal. This attempt, to which Morin does not escape, is inherent in the ascription of the event in the order of time. If something is, it eventuates in time. The necessary route to be followed by the event makes the event itself like an element. Such a reasoning seems very coherent.

Actually, what seems the biggest theoretical success constitutes the evidence of a defeat because it makes the reasoning itself fall into the fallacy of obliteration mentioned above. At least in the situations in which the other is an event, every abscription corresponds to a pejorative transformation. If that were possible, we should instead look for a process not finishing with the reification of the other, since such a conclusion is the proof of a failure of the entire process.

The otherness is intended to break every form that would contain the otherness itself: "The face of the Other," Lévinas (1969: 50–51) observes, "at each moment destroys and overflows the plastic image it leaves me."

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[6]See the voice "Event" in Boileau and Dick (1993: 147–164).

I think that the eventness of the other may be thought of, perhaps more effectively, like an endless activity. The episode[7] of the encounter between Saint Augustine and a child trying to fill a sandpit with seawater may perhaps be enlightening. In fact, regardless of the authenticity of the episode, its scope, consisting in showing an analogy between the infinitude of the task of the child and the attempt of the philosopher to think the Trinity, remains valid.

In our case, even if it seems paradoxical, the infinitude of the task to solve the enigma, preserving it, corresponds to its inexhaustibility. Thinking of the other as an event is impossible if one tries a different way between event and element. Instead, if one thinks of the other as one who asks us to go back constantly and infinitely near any attempt to think about him, without taking for granted the final results of our grasping, then the task becomes more practicable, although extremely difficult.

A different I, unable to be complete without the other, replaces the presumed self-sufficiency of the subject: "You are not the same after what has passed between you" (Kaplan 1994: 18). This solution permits us to confirm some conditions of the event: not regularity, not deductibility, not irreversibility. They are features that, according to Piattelli-Palmarini (1972: 207), constitute necessary but not sufficient conditions: "To obtain the necessary and sufficient criteria one could add the condition of jump of value. . . . When one says 'confused' by an event, we are referring precisely to an unexpected and unpredictable alteration of the values and opinions."

Each event, instead of being included in the order of time, establishes a temporal order. Each revolution makes the event from which it was born the beginning of its calendar, of its time. There are key events, and they have the same effect on the life of many people: "Each of us brings his zero-times, be it the death of a loved one, the marriage, an encounter." Furthermore, "homeostasis of the human spirit has an ambiguous relationship with the events, between incorporation and removal, catabolism and anabolism, classification and exorcism. The event is the driving force behind every psychic dynamism, but the excess of events would destroy the event itself" (Piattelli-Palmarini 1972: 208).

It is so, indeed. Giving up the event, not to recognize it, means to be installed in the seriality of time, sacrificing originality of a different gaze, living the monotony of situations that are repeatable. On the other hand, the event asks to be materialized in history, to become an encounter; and that, as we mentioned, cannot be done independently of the adoption of measures appropriate to the nature of what one is facing.

6   Representation and Reason

The lived experiences, the role of the enigma, and the event of the other are concrete aspects of reason if one exceeds the unilateral conception according to which reason should be considered only within a cognitive and abstract dimension. Actually the

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[7]The episode has been studied in Pillion (1908).

idea that the only admitted features of reason consist in pureness and abstractness constitutes an ancient heritage.

In the tradition of modern philosophy, for example, representation can be considered a metonymic dimension of the human, so representative of the human faculties that it summarizes them completely. The representation is par excellence the act of the rational faculty. In this regard, Heidegger's expression (2002: 68) is well noted, in which he defines modernity as the epoch able to reduce in image the world itself and whose culmination can be found in the fact that: "The being of beings is sought and found in the representedness of beings."

The entity is considered as opposed to a subject which attributes to itself the role of representing. As Corradi observed (2001: 21), "The correlative to the view of an independently existing domain of objects (generally equated with facts), is also the idea of an independently existing, non-contingent, non-affective subject."

The newness concerning the specific role of representation can be mostly evaluated if compared to the more dominant topics of earlier ages. In ancient Greece, for example, the world was considered an aggregate to the universe, and it could not be conceived outside of this primary relationship. Similarly, an autonomous subject separated from the universe, or a world independently represented by a subject, would be unconceivable. In the Middle Ages, there was also a different situation than that of modernity: in fact, the entity is considered an *ens creatum* and, as such, belongs to the order established by the Creator rather than existing within a representation.

References to the ancient Greeks or to the Middle Ages, despite their exiguity, provide evidence of a fundamental difference from the main characteristic of modernity, indicated by Heidegger as *persistence of the representation by a representing subject.* It should also be added that the ability to represent applies not only to the epistemological level but can be extended to cover additional areas. It is a much more general process, about which Ponsetto (1992: 26) observed:

> In pursuit of the autonomy of reason, Modernity aims to make man independent in relation to the world. The subjugation of the I to nature is progressively replaced by the acquisition of nature itself to the realm of reason. With this process one gets a more exact and detailed knowledge of the laws governing the different phenomena. Rationalization of the real and differentiation of individual spheres, in which it is articulated, reveal themselves as concomitant procedures and they rhythm to the progressing of reason in revealing in itself the mystery of things.
>
> As a process of differentiation, the emergence of rationality, however, tends to be seen as contrast between world and I, and it make assume to the I the role of constitutive principle of the truth and sense of reality.

The ultimate consequence of the process of representation is the derealization of the world, or the absence of the real character of what surrounds us.[8] The index of reality is replaced by a sort of artificial world, which consists of representations.

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[8]See also Guardini (1960, 1963).

If *ex parte obiecti* we can talk about a progressive derealization of the world, the correlate of such a process *ex parte subiecti* is an "unaffective approach to our own cognitive functions" (Corradi 2001: 21). This results in abstracting the index of reality of things and making constant such an abstraction. In other words, "we have learned to hold the world away from us, and to somehow constitute ourselves as 'superior' epistemic agents through a willed estrangement from it" (Corradi 2001: 22).

The world becomes "represented world" by a subject, understood in an abstract way starting from the representative faculty and prescinding from the entire meaning of the human being, only inside which the representation find its ultimate significance. Undue projection, abstraction, and removal of the entire meaning of the human being are serious reasons that however cannot give us the possibility to renounce representation but rather to find the correct way to insert such an essential function within the circle of life.

7 Listening as Recovery of Wholeness of the Human

The itinerary followed so far has shown some elements of the essential structure of listening, distinguishing between two levels in which this attitude can appear. The itinerary also showed "anteriority" as a main feature of the other in relation to any initiative of grasping by the subject. All these dimensions are included in the notion of enigma, and they require a completely different approach, appropriate to the nature of what is presented to the consciousness. We have therefore considered the process of representation viewed not only as connected to the identity of the subject but as the most important aspect of reason. For all these reasons, reflecting on listening is ipso facto reflecting on the possible forms of not obvious rationality, never definitively acquired and increasingly able to account for the complexity of reality.

In this perspective, listening leads to the completeness of the human – a goal which is not achievable unless exposing those processes mentioned in this introductory essay, which favored the removal of the complexity of the human being. At the end of this brief *excursus*, one may perhaps be more explicit as to the reasons for our gratitude to Marcelo Dascal, at the outset defined as the "Master of listening." Arguing that he taught us to listen, then, means to testify that, in all his scientific activities, whether regarding the theory of controversies, or Leibniz's thought or pragmatics, he has routed us to a new version of reason.

It is this general interest which guides us to make sure that the debt of gratitude does not concern only his many scholars around the world but the whole scientific community. In fact, if reason is the excellence of the human, then Marcelo Dascal taught us the respect for the other and the wise conciliation between facticity and eidetic dimension of thought. Dascal, in short, has helped us to find the courage of independent thought. To think otherwise.

From this point of view, listening is not an optional component of thought, but its most eminent form, as declared by Gadamer himself (2004: 360): "The art of questioning is the art of questioning ever further – i.e. the art of thinking."

8   Synopsis of Essays[9]

The 18 original contributions in this volume enter into dialogue with Dascal's own prolific and voluminous philosophical work. The first three articles focus on philosophical controversy, a key concept developed by Dascal in a series of articles. According to Dascal, philosophy evolves by way of controversy. Each of these articles manifests this idea, centering on a philosophical controversy (*Regner*, *Mishori*, *Schulz*) *or on the very idea of a controversy* (Senderowicz). The next three contributions are related with Dascal's identity as a renowned Leibniz scholar. Roinila's article deals with Akrasia, Naaman-Zauderer writes about Leibniz's notion of justice, and Serfati develops the idea of origin of mathematics according to Leibniz. The following three articles pertain to Dascal's contribution to philosophy of language and deal with the new phenomena of emoticons (Dresner and Herring), with Brandom's deontic scorekeeping (Riesenfeld), and with the pragmatic notion of speaker's meaning (Amel). The next three articles concern political philosophical issues; Rudolph's article presents a controversy within the Protestant Church in Germany regarding the idea of "homeland," Baruch tackles the concept of toleration as related to pluralism, and Morris-Reich's paper explores how German social scientists confront issues of anti-Semitism. Next, Scarafile's article deals with the uniqueness of the mind of a genius as portrayed by Diderot. Following, Thiebaut's paper attempts to analyze the roots and origin of norms. Pombo Martins writes about the idea of the unity of science as manifested in the encyclopedia. The last two articles in this collection deal with the connection between logical concepts and (traditionally) nonlogical ones, abduction and habit in De Andrade et al., and finally, Rahman's closing paper develops a dialogical approach to logic. As pointed out, some of the articles in this volume are directly connected to, and influenced by, philosophical themes, ideas, and concepts developed throughout the years by Marcelo Dascal, while others bare a looser connection to his work. It is, however, the remarkable and multifaceted philosophical persona of Marcelo Dascal which conjoins the rich philosophical dialogue taking place in this book.

In conclusion, we would like to mention the title, *Sob o mesmo céu,* of a famous song, written by Lenine, a Brazilian songwriter. Played at the 2011 carnival of Recife with the most famous Brazilian singers (Elba Ramalho, Marina Lima, Nena Queiroga, Karina Buhr, Pitty, Zélia Duncan, Maria Gadu, Isaar, Roberta Sá, Céu, Fernanda Takai e Mariana Aydar), it is a modern hymn to the Brazilian identity,

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[9]This paragraph has been written with Dana Riesenfeld.

and it recalls the mutual enrichment that comes from being part of a larger mission, overcoming all borders and flags ("Meu coração/Não tem fronteiras/Nem relógios, nem bandeiras").

The title of that song is an allusion to the courage of walking together to uncover the truth, to being continuously supported in this path and also to being part of a larger research community.

Marcelo Dascal has taught us to live *Sob o mesmo céu*, and we will never stop being grateful to him.

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