

Philosophy as
Experimentation,
Dissidence and
Heterogeneity

Philosophy as Experimentation, Dissidence and Heterogeneity

Edited by

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and Fernando M. F. Silva

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INTRODUCTION

Experimentation and *dissidence* are the meta-concepts that have guided the work of a group of international researchers, the majority based at the Centre for Philosophy at the University of Lisbon, over the last three years. The project “Experimentation and Dissidence” (<http://experimentation-dissidence.umadesign.com/>) was funded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (PTDC/FIL-FIL/1416/2014) and started officially on May 5, 2016. At the beginning, the project’s dominant authors were Johann Georg Hamann, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche and Guy Debord. As is often the case, the initial goals of the project did not remain wholly unchanged through its duration. In the four workshops that the group organized—almost always with the participation of invited scholars—several other authors were discussed, from the 18th century to the present day: significant examples were Kant, Jacobi, Friedrich Schlegel, Schelling, Mary Wollstonecraft, Marx, Cassirer, Heidegger, Jankélévitch, Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Judith Butler, Rancière, Badiou and Catherine Malabou. Moreover, a third meta-concept emerged especially during the third and fourth workshops (respectively titled “From Heidegger to Badiou” and “Questioning the Oneness of Philosophy”): this third meta-concept was *heterogeneity*.

The meta-concepts of experimentation, dissidence and heterogeneity—as well as their philosophical productivity—deserve a brief discussion in this introduction to the present volume. The three concepts can be seen as developing their movements on the same “plane of immanence,” and acting as forces that not only mutually converge in similar directions but also, to a certain extent, conflict and crash into one another in their living forms of existence. Thus, the combination of the three concepts is not simply cooperative, but it is multimodal and involves partially contradictory movements.

Beginning with experimentation, it is relatively obvious that the kinds of facts involved in this concept have an important relation to discursive phenomena. Philosophy develops its activity by means of written or oral discourse, and the history of philosophy and its transformations is, to a large extent, the sequence of discursive inflections and deflections that are

responsible for the development of new trends, some of them more widespread and some more restricted. Such discursive inflections and deflections result precisely from the more or less unexpected introduction of novelties, that is to say of differences in style and vocabulary, which have an *experimental* character not only in the sense that they diverge from what is philosophically already acquired or established, but above all in the sense that they risk formulations or forms of expression that very often are—at least at the moment of their birth—deprived of any guarantee. This attitude of risk is simultaneously aesthetical and ethical. It is aesthetical because it imitates the artist who has to execute something before she can evaluate the result of her execution. It is ethical because it totally defies the immobility of preconceived truths, prevalent ideas, pre-established forms and the un-interrogated *doxa*, and in so doing it puts into play the kind of dialogic courage that Foucault underlined in some of the types of *parrhesia* he studied during the last years of his philosophical activity. But above all this attitude is poetical, since it generates a *poiein* that to a large extent depends on the creative force of rhetorical, stylistic, lexical and expressive experiments.

Our reader will easily understand that when dealing with the meta-concept of experimentation we could not avoid entering, at least partially, into the field of dissidence. In fact, the subject of experimentation shows immediately to what extent the experimental discourse exerts a set of acts of dissention. This means, as we have pointed out above, that the two meta-concepts interfere with one another; we will see further on that this interference is not only a positive convergence.

Dissidence has more than a fundamentally discursive characteristic. Indeed, dissidence is discursive, but it is also—and perhaps above all things—political. As many authors have pointed out, at least since Feuerbach, every set of philosophical propositions indicates a direction of thought with political consequences. If we take into consideration—within the framework of philosophical discussions—that dissidence should be considered as a deviation from mainstream forms of thought, then it becomes quite obvious that the topic of dissent fundamentally relies on profound *differences* at the level of the political consequences of philosophical endeavors, and that these differences always exist between forms of thought that are socially prevalent and forms of thought that evolve from the perspective of minorities. Dissidence, then, signalizes forms of thought that are generated by means of a force that contradicts majorities and puts into play the mechanisms typical of what Derrida has called the “margins of philosophy.” Such marginality implies not only the

notion of minority, but also one of singularity. The problem here is one of difference, but not of a trivial difference, and perhaps of a nature that would have to be sharply contrasted with the well-known Heideggerian “ontological difference”; the type of difference that interests us here is definitely “ontic”, in that it is to be found primarily in concrete acts of thought of an individual who differs in her way of thinking from the position of a majority or of several defined and antagonistic majorities, and in this sense it takes the side of one or even of several minorities. But by adopting the position of one or more minorities, the dissident philosopher does not lose her singularity; on the contrary, she becomes a singular and unusually free subject who can choose any small alternative of thinking outside of the scope of political majorities or minorities. And naturally this choice that—in its “tiny difference” or “tiny perception” (to refer here to an expression used by Leibniz)—can move in many previously undetermined directions takes place in front of an *a priori* infinite span of possibilities. In this sense, dissidence, in spite of cooperating with experimentation, also clashes with it, since the discursive character of experimentation establishes limits before its possibility of productive or creative “repetition” which consequently is not infinite.

Arriving now at heterogeneity, we can begin by underlining the way in which this meta-concept identifies with infinity. Heterogeneity is not to be mistaken with diversity, plurality or multiplicity. The metaphor of an explosion can suggest a way of thinking about heterogeneity; in an explosion, particles diverge completely in undetermined ways and in a potentially infinite number of directions. This is what happens at various levels of philosophy, as we shall see in a few moments. But first let us retrace the construction of the meta-concept of heterogeneity as it took place in our work that started from some relative insufficiencies of the concepts of experimentation and dissidence.

Experimentation and dissidence, as we have seen, explain important characteristics of forms of philosophical thought that profoundly diverge from mainstream endeavors. However, these two meta-concepts do not cover the totality of such divergences; it is not impossible to imagine that a philosophical practice can evolve completely outside of the mainstream engagements and not fundamentally show any traits of experimentation and/or dissidence in the sense that we have presented these concepts. This means that a third meta-concept is needed to help us enhance the range of effectiveness of the two former concepts. Deleuze and Guattari have used the concept of multiplicity (together with the metaphor of the rhizome) in order to ascribe an enhanced efficiency to the description of the phenomena

of territorialization and deterritorialization, but they paid little attention to heterogeneity. In our research trajectory, our attention was called to philosophical phenomena that cooperate with experimental acts and dissident attitudes and that, nevertheless, exemplify a wider range of thought actions that are extremely deviant in their multifariousness; we subsumed these phenomena under the meta-concept of heterogeneity. Some examples of these phenomena are: (1) the heteroclitic and disseminated ways of thinking in the writings of one and the same thinker (as in the cases of Hamann, Goethe, Friedrich Schlegel, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard or Wittgenstein); (2) the adoption of fragmentary forms of thinking-writing with the consequent openness to a heteronomic multitude of thought articulations (as in the cases of Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, Nietzsche, and several Dadaistic, Surrealist or Situationist thinkers); (3) the heterodox use of a verbal concept like “becoming” (*werden, devenir*) without any kind of a linguistically expected or grammatically mandatory complement (as in the cases of Kierkegaard and Heidegger among several others); (4) the heterotopic use of a concept “under erasure”—“*sous rature*”—, meaning that the concept *is* and *is not* at the same time, or *is only to a certain extent* (as in the case of Heidegger, Derrida and other thinkers); (5) the heterogeneous use of a conceptual metaphor with an *unrestricted* number of possible applications and consequently with an open capacity of differencing connected or unconnected levels of philosophical analysis (as in the case of the “rhizome” in Deleuze and Guattari).

Heterogeneity not only encompasses the use of all these forms and many others. It also explains the necessary multifariousness of forms of thinking over the course of time. Without a concept like heterogeneity, the history of philosophy and above all of its unexpected transformations would be reduced to a false continuum of predictable connections—as, in fact, happens in most works that deal with historical topics in the area of philosophy. A history of philosophy that does not accept the heterogeneity of the deflective and inflective character of its transformations is nothing but a pseudo-history based on an unacceptable notion of phenomenal continuity.

It then becomes clear that the meta-concepts of experimentation and dissidence are deeply intertwined with the meta-concept of heterogeneity. Heterogeneity not only expands the fields of action of experimentation and dissidence, but it also exhibits the active and productive complementarities and contradictions of those meta-concepts. Contradictions like the one of finiteness and infiniteness that we pointed out above, when they are

appropriated under the meta-concept of heterogeneity, tend to become, in their game of territorialization and deterritorialization, integrated oscillations within the self-sufficient activity (or “living nature”) of the same plane of immanence.

The texts in this volume result from the papers presented and respective discussions at the *International Conference on Practices of Philosophy as Experimentation and Dissidence* held at the University of Lisbon on February 6, 7 and 8, 2019. They should be considered under the auspices of the efficiency of the meta-concept of heterogeneity. The texts not only deal with some or all three meta-concepts we have tried to illuminate above, but also interfere with one another in extremely variegated manners. The works are voluntarily heterogeneous. And we believe that this heterogeneity deeply contributes to a richness that is relatively uncommon in philosophical discourse, but that should be more exploited in our times of prevailing narrowness and fixity, two characteristics that are far from being critically overtaken by the sporadic emergence of emphatic, self-indulgent, predominantly irrational discourses that do nothing but reenact old beliefs in forms of totalitarian foundationalism disguising them in the festive—but in fact rather gloomy—garments of pseudo-deepness.

José Miranda Justo opens this collection of essays with a broad discussion of heterogeneity in its connection with experimentation and dissidence, in particular from World War II to the present. **Giuseppe Moro**, in his chapter “Language as practice of experimentation in early Giambattista Vico’s works,” offers the reader a reflection on Vico’s experimentalism with language—namely, a transformation of the practice of rhetorical communication through aspects of oratory and writing. **Gualtiero Lorini**, in a contribution entitled “Problematic Spinozism as a Significant Mediation Towards German Idealism: The Case of Salomon Maimon,” critically analyses the importance of Spinozism in general, and the complex Spinozism of Salomon Maimon in particular, as a fundamental antechamber of German Idealism. **Monalisa Maria Lauro** and **Saulo de Freitas Araujo** have written “Experimenting with Philosophy: Tetens and the application of Newton’s method in the analysis of the human mind,” which aims at reviving the importance of Johann Nicolaus Tetens as a philosopher and psychologist, with special focus on the author’s concept of empirical psychology through which he attempted to re-found philosophy and metaphysics in the German tradition. **Fernando M. F. Silva**, in his chapter “‘Searching for One Principle would be like the attempt to square the circle.’ Novalis and the (im)possible act

of philosophizing,” aims at reassessing the difficult relation between the German poet and philosophy: one where philosophy arises as the cause and solution for its own problem, and philosophizing, as such, stands as an (im)possible, (in)finite ideal. The chapter “Eternity’s Magic Lantern: The Aesthetics of the Eternal from Spinoza to Kierkegaard,” by **Carson Webb**, takes the reader through the history of Spinoza’s reception, focusing on Kierkegaard’s original dialogue with the latter, as portrayed by the image of a new aesthetics of the eternal. In turn, **Oscar Parcero Oubiña**’s contribution, “Beneath Philosophy: Kierkegaard’s Poetics,” proposes to analyze Kierkegaard’s “Socratic task,” one which according to the author is poetic by nature and lies at the very heart of Kierkegaard’s philosophy and theology. **Elisabete M. de Sousa**’s essay, “Kaleidoscopic Creators: Robert Schumann, Søren Kierkegaard and Fernando Pessoa,” is a critical approach to the relation between heterogeneous authorship and the creation of a critical reader and/or listener, as portrayed in the works of the three creators. In his contribution “The Appropriation of Kierkegaard’s Themes in the Discourse of Liberation Theology in Latin America and Brazil,” **Marcio Gimenes de Paula** shows how some of Kierkegaard’s theses, especially those in *The Works of Love*—such as loving one’s neighbor and having respect for alterity—were appropriated by Latin American and Brazilian liberation theologians, and ascribed new multicultural and societal meanings. **Victoria Mateos de Manuel**’s chapter “Unravelling the Ecstasy: on two meanings of the Dionysian experience by Nietzsche” presents a new reading of the polysemic and ambiguous nature of Nietzsche’s concepts of ecstasy and inebriation, as found in *The Birth of Tragedy* and *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. **Sven Gellens**, in his essay “‘Amor fati’ as an Experimental Philosophy: How Nietzsche’s Formula for Learning to Love Necessity Became a Principle for Human Thriving,” aims at analyzing Nietzsche’s “amor fati” as an experimental philosophy that transforms individuals into distinctive beings, and, by the same token, regards Nietzsche’s works as products of an experimental attitude towards life. **Laura Langone**’s contribution, “Subjectivity as Experimentation of Instincts in Nietzsche and Emerson,” proposes to analyze Nietzsche’s concept of the body as an endless set of instincts—that is, a new concept of subjectivity that marks a radical break from the metaphysical tradition and which, according to the author, was inspired by Ralph Waldo Emerson. **Tiago Clariano**, in the chapter “The Luck of the Decadent Draw: de Nerval, Wilde, Pessanha,” discusses the topic of experimenting with the “ethical unknown”, as portrayed in the life and artistic actions of the dissidents Gerard de Nerval, Oscar Wilde and Camilo Pessanha. **Bartholomew Ryan**, in his contribution entitled

“Ecological-Artistic Interpenetrations on a Damaged Planet: Invoking James Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*,” proposes reading James Joyce’s masterpiece from a new and long due viewpoint: the articulation of the novel with contemporary ecological thought. **Nélio Conceição**, in his essay “Practicing and Experimenting: on Walter Benjamin’s method,” brings to light the “detoured method” of practicing/exercising, encapsulated in the term “Übung” as a fundamental concept not only throughout Walter Benjamin’s work, but also as a useful tool for identifying the experimental nature of thought in the 20th century. **Alexandra Dias Fortes**, in the chapter “Styles of thinking, ways of writing: Wittgenstein and Maggie Nelson,” attempts to prove Wittgenstein’s style of writing and his whole work as an image of his apparently non-linear—yet ultimately coherent—way of thinking: a connection apprehended and embodied also by Maggie Nelson. **Mario Spezzapria**’s contribution, “‘War with words against words’: Utopian Tensions in Michelstaedter’s Writing,” proposes to show the Italian philosopher’s bitter reflection on how societies and institutions embody the absurd nature of our existence, which is rendered visible in a double—both rhetorical and persuasive—insufficiency of language. **Elisabetta Basso**, in her innovative research “Foucault in Münsterlingen: Foucault and the Carnival of Fools. Münsterlingen, 1954,” sheds a renewed light on the thought of the younger Michel Foucault—namely, the original developments of his anthropological and psychopathological theories brought about by his joint work with Roland Kuhn and Ludwig Binswanger at Münsterlingen. **Carlos João Correia**, in his essay “Georges Bataille and the Inner Experience of the Sacred,” focuses on the problem of a scientific—outward and therefore insufficient—rendition of reality, as opposed to a more intense and intimate—according to Bataille “erotic,” and therefore sacred—inner experience. **Henrique Jales Ribeiro**, in the chapter “Who Is and Who Is Not an Analytic Philosopher: a Kuhnian Approach to Analytic Philosophy,” proposes a reflection on Thomas Kuhn’s conception of scientific communities, as presented in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, and its possible application for analytic philosophy from the second half of the 20th century to the present. **Paulo Lima**’s “Foucault’s Experimentation With the Ancient Cynics” is an analysis of the French philosopher’s views on Ancient Cynicism and focuses on the possibility and potentiality of experimental (extra-discursive and dissident) forms of truth production, as well as modes of thought which, once applied to the modern subject, allow for singular thinking. **Gianfranco Ferraro**, in his contribution “Experimenting With the *bios*: A Foucauldian Approach to the Utopian Techniques of the Self and the World,” analyzes Foucault’s proposed autonomous forms of

philosophical existence, *parrhesia* and *epistrophē/metanoia*, and identifies them with specific techniques of modern “disquietude,” such as “utopia” and “heterotopias,” or his own “reflected practice of freedom.” **Marta Faustino’s** “‘Philosophy as a Way of Life’ as a Practice of Dissidence and Experimentation” focuses on Pierre Hadot’s and Michel Foucault’s claim that philosophy is a “way of life,” or a “care of the self,” as opposed to the current academic and institutionalized practice of philosophy. In the article “The Image is a Gesture. A Defence of the Visible and the Speakable,” **Maria Filomena Molder** reassesses the experimental character, as well as the possible misconceptions of a hierarchy of the speakable and unspeakable, the visible and invisible, while proposing the image as a gesture throughout the works of Hamann, Nietzsche, Benjamin, Wittgenstein and Carlos de Oliveira. **José Manuel Martins**, in the chapter “Why precisely Cinema? On the Film’s Negative or Guy Debord’s Cinema without Spectacle,” focuses on the singularity of Debord’s work “Hurlements en faveur de Sade” which, according to the author, is a piece irreducible to all forms of the theological, philosophical or artistic, in a word, “cinema” once devoid of all questions of essence, apparatus, spectatorship or agency. **Nuno Fonseca**, in his essay “John Cage: The Liberation of Listening through Experimentation and Dissonance,” deals with John Cage’s “4’33”’s *attempt to overturn our traditional relationship to music*. Dwelling on the composer’s experimenting and dissident views on music, the author reviews John Cage’s life, career and plight against the tradition of (classical) western music. The chapter by **Alison Assiter** and **Maria José Binetti** “An Actual and Universal ‘Woman’” aims to reassess the role of “woman” against the background of its recent reduction and insertion in the domain of cultural studies. This implies, according to the authors, the proposition of “a minimal concept for woman determined by her material, self-differing and nascent becoming.” **Laura Llevadot’s** contribution, “Deconstructing Sexual Difference,” shows the insufficiencies and also injustices of both a feminism of equality and a feminism of difference. Upon reconsidering the concept of woman between both extremes, with an anchor in Derrida’s concept of “différance,” Laura Llevadot proposes a “différent” feminism, thereby promoting a deconstruction of sexual difference. **João Eça’s** contribution, “Techno-bodies in the Age of Pharmaco-porn Capitalism: an Essay on Paul B. Preciado,” dwells on Preciados’s denouncement of the third stage of capitalism, the pharmaco-pornographic regime, as well as the author’s proposition of dissident experiences of subjectivity as positions of non-conformity to the actual standards of normality that rule our world. **Tomás N. Castro**, in the chapter “Challenging Bodies: Presence as

Experimentation and Absence as Dissidence,” draws on Longinus’s account of a fragment by Sappho, as well as the objects of relics, in order to analyze the topic of the presence or absence of bodies and how the spatial or temporal framing of such bodies either lessens or exponentiates their respective phenomena.

In conclusion, we wish to thank all of those who made this enterprise possible: all of the participants in the abovementioned International Conference and all of the contributors to the present volume, especially those who helped in the accomplishment of the Conference and in the first steps of the preparation of this volume, Dr. Lavínia Pereira, Dr. Vasco Marques and Dr. Paulo Lima; the members of the Scientific Committee who revised the articles; the Research Centre for Philosophy at the University of Lisbon (CFUL), which interpreted with enormous efficiency the role of scientific host of the project E&D; the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), which funded the entire project and the initial moments of the preparation of present collection of essays; the Cambridge Scholars Publishing, which accepted to publish the volume; Dr. Sara Ellen Eckerson, who put all her friendship and knowledge at the service of her revision of this volume; Ms. Rebecca Gladders, Mr. Adam Rummens, Ms. Sophie Edminson and Ms Amanda Millar who accompanied attentively the successive stages of the preparation of this volume.

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INCIPIT

HETEROGENEITY, EXPERIMENTATION AND DISSIDENCE IN A CONTEMPORARY UNDERSTANDING OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

At least in the last seventy years the multifariousness of practices in philosophy has expanded in a totally unprecedented manner. To my knowledge this situation has not yet been sufficiently described in its predominant traits, and evaluated in its full consequences. It seems to me that it is currently treated as a mere sign of the times, and accepted as a “natural” matter of fact not deserving any specific discussion and conceptualization.

Starting with a brief assessment of the causes, scope, and main modalities of such expansion, I shall proceed by trying to demonstrate that this state of affairs is not a “natural” phenomenon merely enhancing previous tendencies. On the contrary, I see it as a total change of paradigm that corresponds to an authentic explosion of the coordinates in effect before World War II. In its constitutive heterogeneity the new paradigm, which continues to expand at an uncontrollable and almost ungraspable rate, implies at least four major dimensions which deserve attention: 1. the detection of the relations between the velocities of present transformations and some *exceptional preceding philosophical interventions* that up to a certain point paved the way for the new paradigm; 2. the mapping of the *particular kinds of transformation* that have taken place since World War II; 3. the exam of the specific characteristics of present-day *heterogeneity* of philosophical tendencies and endeavors in contrast to past examples of mere *diversity* or *multiplicity* of distinct philosophical procedures; 4. the contemporary attempts of restoration of unified models of philosophy in opposition to individual or collective positions that *put in question the actual possibility of a oneness of philosophy*.

The treatment of these four dimensions—which in the circumstance of this paper I can only briefly outline—implies the repeated exam of the plurality of roles played by the two dynamic factors that have guided the research project that I had the honor of leading in the Centre for Philosophy at the University of Lisbon: *experimentation and dissidence*.

Keywords: Heterogeneity, Experimentation, Dissidence, Hamann, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, against the oneness of philosophy

This essay will deal in general with the heterogeneity of philosophical endeavors in the second half of the 20th century up to the present-day situation. The two other concepts mentioned in the title—experimentation and dissidence—will occur here as discontinuous leitmotifs, in the quality they were present for the duration of the research project “Experimentation and Dissidence,” i.e. as exploratory concepts that can allow for the detection and characterization of practices situated more or less near to the borders of the mainstream—or mainstreams—of philosophy.

As it seems obvious, a multifariousness of perspectives inside the territory of philosophical practices has always existed. Philosophy owes its very existence to dispute, and dispute implies a constitutive difference of perspectives. What is new—approximately since the end of World War II—is the enormous, almost untraceable proliferation of that multifariousness. This paper will deal with this extremely dispersive development of philosophy in the last seventy years by examining the four main aspects of the problem roughly enunciated in my abstract: 1. The exceptionality of some preceding philosophical interventions, which—to a certain extent—paved the way for the proliferation of philosophical directions in the last decades. I will comment on Hamann’s, Kierkegaard’s and Nietzsche’s roles; 2. The dispersive directions of philosophy since World War II fundamentally involve the movement proper to a large set of transformational actions. I will outline a mapping of the specific kinds of transformation that have been in action more or less recently and that continually enhance the dispersion mentioned above; 3. Insofar as I consider the present-day situation of philosophical transformations and dispersion to be a matter of heterogeneity, this last philosopheme has to be firmly distinguished from mere diversity or multiplicity. This distinction will be treated as the fulcrum of the detection of a new paradigm in philosophical change; 4. The last section of this paper will have to deal with a very contemporary problem. In the last fifteen years some tendencies have appeared and developed that try to redirect philosophical endeavors to a certain type of oneness, under the banner of a return to

Hegel and under the designation of a “speculative turn.” This new tendency deserves a specific criticism in the sense that it tries to deal with the prevalence of heterogeneity by simply drowning it in an authentic sea of reductionism.

As it will be easy to understand, due to the dimension limits imposed on this paper, I will not be able to develop the aforementioned topics in any kind of completeness. Thus, this paper will have to be understood as a relatively brief outline of a work I am slowly preparing for another type of opportunity.

1. Hamann, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche as predecessors of heterogeneity in philosophy

The names I have chosen to exemplify cases of preceding moments in the history of philosophy (moments that announce the types of multifariousness that pave the way for what I will treat below as a new paradigm proper to the exultant dispersion of the last decades) can all be—and indeed they have been—interrogated as to their effectiveness in belonging to the territory of philosophy.

Hamann did not consider himself to be a philosopher, but rather a “philologist,” as it is clearly expressed in the title of an anthology of writings of his published in 1762—*Crusades of the Philologist*¹. Hamann, nevertheless, not only dealt with philosophical topics, he did so in a creative manner. Let me just remind my readers that in his *Aesthetica in nuce* he wrote:

(...) all we have left in nature for our use are jumbled verses and *disjecti membra poetae*. To gather these together is the scholar’s modest part; to

¹ (Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, II, 113-246) On the interpretation of Hamann’s self-designation of “Philologe” (philologist or philologistian), see G. G. Dickson *Johann Georg Hamann’s Relational Metacriticism*, 77-78, in particular note 11, where she soundly criticizes the interpretation contained in Hansjörg Salmony’s *Johann Georg Hamanns metakritische Philosophie*, and resumes Volker Hoffmann’s position in *J. G. Hamanns Philologie zwischen enzyklopädischer Mikrologie und Hermeneutik*, against William Alexander’s *Johann Georg Hamann. Philosophy and Faith*.

interpret them, the philosopher's; to imitate them—or bolder still! - - bring them into right order, the poet's.²

In this passage, Hamann's reference to the philosopher's task is creative in what regards philosophy and its activity. The verb translated here as "interpret" is in the German original "auslegen." Etymologically "auslegen" means something like "separate," "disentangle," "analyze." Hamann, who is an enemy of separative thinking, points out the analytic job of philosophy in opposition to the unifying role of poesy. But the two roles are undoubtedly complementary in that both correspond to kinds of interpretation, especially if we start by thinking of interpretation in the musical sense and then consider thinking about it in the current sense of reading.

What I intended to show with this example is only that Hamann has contributed to what specifies philosophy, i.e. its creation of concepts. In this respect I follow closely Deleuze's position in *What is philosophy?* and other writings. But I could have brought up several other texts by Hamann for the same purpose, namely those that deal more fully with philosophical themes like the *Metacritique on the Purism of Reason*.

I shall proceed now by approaching Hamann's heterogeneity. In this regard, what interests me more is not exactly the proliferation of so-called "masks" that the Magus of the North has used, which would already be an argument in the direction of an active dispersion of voices in the author's oeuvre. More substantial than that, however, is perhaps the fact that Hamann's efforts in writing were dispersed in directions that go from theological and religious themes to philosophical commentaries passing through literary and esthetic reflections, important philosophical positions on language and the role of analogy, political and cultural statements, serious thoughts on sexual relationships and marriage, ethical and moral developments, matters related to the concept of history and the practice of historiography, and even economical and commercial topics. In a sense, we can say that nothing escaped his attention and interests. As I often say in order to turn this multifariousness more visible: Hamann shot in all directions. But still more important than this type of global thematic dispersion is the way in which such dispersive activity combines intimately with Hamann's style of thinking.

² (Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, II, 198-199) I use Haynes' translation, only slightly modified concerning the punctuation. See Hamann, *Writings on Philosophy and Language*, 65-66.

Hamann's style can be called fragmentary, in the sense that his writings are very often marked by the presence of lines of discontinuity that are also lines of flight; this is to say that they are not only thematically dispersive, but also give rise to topics of reflection hitherto totally unexpected. This fragmentary style cannot be envisaged only as a literary device; much more than that, it is a prolific manner of thinking—a style of thinking—that experiments with alternative ways of considering themes and dealing with them. Besides that, Hamann's fragmentary style is interwoven with rhetorical figures such as the so-called *cento*, metaphor, metonymy, parataxis, and above all analogy, that immensely enhance the texts' capacity to produce new conceptual realities and to evolve in uncountable directions, namely at the borders of the traditionally established realm of philosophy, thus creating situations of dissidence that are simultaneously instances of heterogeneity.

As it becomes clear, the Hamannian type of multifariousness is not common in the territories of philosophical endeavors or similar undertakings. It will be necessary to wait for another “outsider,” who will produce his first important works during the 40's of the subsequent century, to find a comparable legion of artifacts directed toward a kind of heterogeneity as significant as that of Hamann, however different in some important respects. I am referring here to Søren Kierkegaard.

Similarly to what happened with Hamann, Kierkegaard has been considered for a long time and by many commentators a “religious thinker.” His works were approached under the light of a pseudo-autobiographical text written in 1848, but only published posthumously by the author's brother Peter Christian in 1859: *The Point of View for My Work as an Author*. In fact, Kierkegaard, who had the deepest reservations about publishing this book, wrote statements in it like this one: “This is how I understand myself in my work as an author: it makes manifest the illusion of Christendom and provides a vision of what it is to become a Christian.”³ Based on this claim and ones like it, the majority of commentators have extracted the conclusion that the whole of Kierkegaard's oeuvre should be understood as a long and diversified exploration of the concept of “becoming a Christian” and its most intricate consequences. In this sense, Kierkegaard's oeuvre would not have a preeminent philosophical interest, except perhaps for the fact that in various writings the author activated a specific reception of Hegel that would give him a place in the vicinity of the Hegelian Left. From my perspective this appraisal strongly needs to be contradicted.

³ Kierkegaard, *The Point of View*, 88.

At least since 1989, several authors have developed a radical criticism of this view. In that year, Joakim Garff published the Danish version of his article “*The Point of View and Points of View on Kierkegaard’s Work as an Author.*”⁴ Garff conducted a meticulous work of de-articulation of the preemptory Kierkegaardian declaration of a singular direction for the whole of the oeuvre that had the complete treatment of the “becoming Christian” as its first and foremost finality. Such dismantling of the central issues at work in the posthumous book opened new perspectives for the consideration of Kierkegaard’s works from a philosophical point of view. Many scholars and philosophers have since then adopted alternative positions towards the Danish writer, which are much more centered on the philosophical issues Kierkegaard raised.

Of course, it is well known that long before Garff’s article, different philosophers have underlined certain philosophical consequences of Kierkegaard’s thought. But such references did not have the explosive effect that I detect after Garff’s intervention. I will mention just a few of those early interventions. Heidegger had made three brief, but philosophically relevant, references to Kierkegaard in the footnotes of *Sein und Zeit*. For instance, he declared (§ 40) that Kierkegaard “was the one (...) who penetrated more deeply in the analysis of the *existenziel* phenomenon of the instant, what does not already mean that he correspondingly succeeded in the existenzial interpretation (...)”⁵. Wittgenstein wrote that Kierkegaard was the most important thinker of the 19th century, but this private note—as well as many other vestiges of Wittgenstein’s interest in Kierkegaard—only came to light much later⁶. Karl Jaspers published his first article on Kierkegaard in 1951, already claiming the importance of the philosopher for an updated philosophical view of ethical and sociological problems of the present. However, in this particular instance, Jaspers’ resonance does not seem to have been very wide, except for some German-French cooperation in the area of Existentialism. Sartre—and several existentialists along with him—knew Kierkegaard’s writings well, and unequivocally brought the Dane to the field of philosophy; but the existentialists were not able to produce a significant turn in Kierkegaardian studies. Gilles Deleuze, in his *Difference and Repetition*, published 50

⁴ See Rée and Chamberlain, *Kierkegaard: A Critical Reader*, 75-82.

⁵ (Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 338, n.)

⁶ For such vestiges the most productive research nowadays must take into consideration not only the *Tagebücher* but also the so-called *Wittgensteins Briefwechsel elektronisch erfasst*: <https://www.fwf.ac.at/de/wissenschaft-konkret/projektvorstellungen-archiv/2002/pv200211> (accessed December 2018).

years ago, wrote extensively on Kierkegaard's significance for the treatment of the two concepts at stake in his book. But, in this particular aspect, Deleuze's book did not have a decisive influence until much later. Derrida wrote a splendid book entitled *Donner la mort* (published in English as *The Gift of Death*) where Kierkegaard is considered a central figure for the treatment of this Derridean (mostly) ethical theme. But this book was only published in 1999, and perhaps we can say that it is already part of a new wave of re-evaluation of the Danish philosopher.

To approach the way in which Kierkegaard was a major example of heterogeneity that, to a certain extent, paved the way for today's multifariousness I will begin by a brief reference to his pseudonymity and his cultivation of "indirect communication." This reference will be as brief as possible because I wish to underline other aspects of the problem of Kierkegaard's heterogeneity that are normally left out.

As a prolific author who wrote under his own name and also under the names of at least 19 pseudonyms (besides another 8 projected pseudonyms that were not actually used), it is obvious that Kierkegaard cannot be reduced to any type of oneness, be it a stylistic one, a conceptual or a literary one. The important thing about the proliferation of Kierkegaard's pseudonyms is not that they could have functioned as a way of saying something that he himself did not admit to or that such pseudonyms served as a manner of enunciating parallel and concurrent lines of thought. These are the traditional views on pseudonymity, but things are quite different in Kierkegaard. What the author put into action was a complex machine, a highly complicated mode of exploring an extremely large number of divergent possibilities of thought based on differences—some of which are easily observable differences and others are understood as tiny differences with important consequences—that have to be observed from a stylistic or rhetorical point of view, but simultaneously from other points of view: political, sociological, historical, religious, ethical, cognitive, i.e. philosophical points of view, in the largest sense of the expression.

When we come to this point, we already enter into the discussion of the type of heterogeneity that is peculiar to Kierkegaard. I would like to start by quoting a passage from the first draft of the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (in fact, I prefer to say *Philosophical Crumbs*). The passage in question was later substituted for another, but the published version does not alter the meanings that I wish to highlight. The passage runs like this in Howard and Edna Hong's translation:

Finitely understood, of course, the continued and perpetually continued striving toward a goal without attaining it is to be rejected, but, infinitely understood, striving is life itself and is essentially the life of that which is composed of the infinite and the finite. (...) [T]he subject is an existing subject, consequently is in contradiction, consequently is in the process of becoming, and if he is, consequently is in the process of striving.⁷

I must confess that I have commented on this passage more than once, but I still find it so rich with respect to its consequences that I keep coming back to it again and again, always discovering new possibilities for analysis. The two parts of the passage are intimately connected by the concept of “striving.” But the first part contains a very important element, which is the conception of the one who “is composed of the infinite and the finite.” And the second part contains a concept which is also of central importance, the concept of “becoming”; this is not the unilateral idea of “becoming Christian” but something quite different: a *concept* of becoming, in the genuine philosophical sense of “Werden,” “devenir,” “devir” or in the Late Latin meaning of “devenio,” that is to say, a philosophical creation that can establish connective and active relations inside a plain of immanence, i.e. the opposite of a reductive determination and the antipode of a mere generalization. Kierkegaard (or rather Climacus) speaks here openly about “the process of becoming” and this does not allow for the question: “Becoming what?,” simply because the concept in question—precisely as a concept—does not wish to be neutralized in its unlimited range of possibilities for combinations through a sterilizing what-question.

For the present purposes, however, the important matter will be the combination of the pair finite-infinite with the concept of becoming. When something—or someone—is said to be “composed of the infinite and the finite” what is to be stressed from the beginning is the openness of the infinite. This absence of limits that the notion of infinite conveys immediately points to not one single direction that can be prolonged indefinitely, but on the contrary to a potentially infinite number of directions that can be taken up by the one who is “composed of the infinite and the finite.” Now, if this type of multifariousness of directions emerges—as is the case—in a combination with the concept of becoming, it is clear that heterogeneity attains an extraordinary degree of effectiveness: the effectiveness, so to say, of an ultra-infinitized infinite. Kierkegaard not only practices heterogeneity at a very high level, but he

⁷ Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, II, 35.

also gives us the instruments needed to think about heterogeneity in its supreme forms. From this point of view he is not only a dissident, distinctively situated at the borders of mainstream philosophical activities, but he also offers philosophical tools that we need in order to think the heterogeneity of our present.

Coming now to Friedrich Nietzsche, I will avoid the same type of discussion that I introduced above at the beginning of my brief treatment of Hamann and Kierkegaard, i.e. the discussion about the time it took to locate such authors in their peripheral but nonetheless (philosophically) relevant “margins of philosophy,” if I may use this Derridean expression for my own purposes. And there is one main reason for not starting with that type of assessment: I will not do it because at the present moment of my research I still cannot see a way of dealing with the topic of Nietzsche’s reception that is better than the one developed by Arthur C. Danto in his *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, and in the texts added to that book in its expanded edition. Not only has Danto completed a meritorious work in the defense of “Nietzsche as philosopher,” but he also provides (in brief but significant phrases written namely in the “Acknowledgments” and the Prefaces collected in the 2005 edition) an outline of the vicissitudes that face incorporating Nietzsche in the realm of philosophy, in particular from the point of view of analytical philosophy. We can be grateful to Danto for many deeds. And among these, his work on Nietzsche was certainly not the least important.

Thus accordingly I will pass immediately to the emergence of heterogeneity in Nietzsche. The first aspect to be treated will be, once again, the dispersion of voices. Nietzsche did not use pseudonyms, like Kierkegaard, and I sustain that he also did not use the so-called “masks,” like Hamann. Nietzsche activated what I would like to call—using a Deleuzian expression, although out of context—philosophical *personae*. When we enumerate them, we have Dionysus, Ariadne, Zarathustra and—of course—all the other figures occurring in crucial moments of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, and—to a certain extent—the Anti-Christ and the “I” of *Ecce Homo*. This gallery is not comparable to the one we mentioned above when talking about Kierkegaard, but that does not mean that Nietzsche’s *personae* are deprived of multifariousness. A complex case to be examined would certainly be the one of Dionysus’ various stylistic fluctuations in the Dithyrambs. But I will only take into consideration, for a brief moment, the case of Zarathustra. Along the four parts that the book is comprised of, the figure of Zarathustra undergoes many changes: the *persona* appears at different places, in different ages, involved in quite

different discussions or teaching situations, assuming multiple attitudes and even defending points of view that can be considered divergent if not contradictory. At first sight these facts can seem to have little philosophical interest. But from my point of view—the one of heterogeneity—this is not the case. Zarathustra's *persona* is in itself a negation of oneness; Zarathustra is in fact a name under which the most different philosophical facts take place, and Zarathustra's name is far from reducing that immense set of differences to any type of unification. Due to a lack of space, I will not demonstrate it on this present occasion, but I am convinced that the divergent lines of thought that the *persona* subscribes to are eminently divergent in the sense that they move in directions neatly distinguished by a kind of difference that is manifestly ontological and not merely ontic.

The difference I have mentioned and the divergent lines of thought that I have invoked in the *persona* of Zarathustra also mean dispersion from the point of view of what I have called above the styles of thinking. That is why I wish to end my observations on Nietzsche's heterogeneity with a reflection on some of the author's declarations on his own prolific style and its different directions. I quote a passage from *Ecce Homo* (paragraph 4 of the section "Why I write such good books"):

At the same time, I will say a general word about my *art of style*. To *communicate* a state, an inner tension of pathos, with signs, including the tempo of these signs—that is the meaning of every style; and considering that I have an extraordinary number of inner states, I also have a lot of stylistic possibilities—the most multifarious art of style that anyone has ever had at his disposal. Every style that really communicates an inner state is *good*, every style that is not wrong about signs, about the tempo of signs, about *gestures*—all laws concerning periods involve the art of gesture. My instinct here is unailing.—Good style *in itself*—this is *pure stupidity*, just 'idealism,' somewhat like 'Beauty *in itself*,' 'the Good *in itself*,' the 'thing *in itself*...' Always supposing that there are ears—that there are people capable and worthy of a similar pathos, that there are people you *can* communicate with.⁸

What is an "unailing instinct" in the act of evaluating "good style"? It seems it can only be an instinct that never fails to separate good style from bad style precisely because such an instinct relies on an "extraordinary number of inner states" (i.e. a potentially infinite number of such states) to form a decision between good and bad style. In this context, infallibility

⁸ (Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, Band 6, 304) Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols*, 104.

and infinity seem to have a very strong relation: the instinct is unfailing in the sense that its infallibility is a consequence of the infinite character of the inner states, which are precisely *instinktmäßig*. Now, if we bring together, on the one hand, the multifariousness of philosophical and stylistic differences of one *persona* (in this case Zarathustra) and, on the other hand, the potentially infinite “number of inner states”—in this case of the *persona* “I” in *Ecce Homo*—, then we will face a type of heterogeneity that was previously unheard of: the double (and, let us say, absolute) heterogeneity of a human being—supposing that a *persona* has the main features of a human being—who besides being able to produce an infinite number of lines of thought can also infinitely pass judgment on good or bad style; and, moreover, both instances—that of the produced lines of thought and that of the expressed judgments—can be contradictory in their own realms, and still coexist. In the sense that I give to the term, this positioning is not only “dissident,” but also highly “experimentalist,” since the “I” of *Ecce Homo* can never know beforehand where the infinite process will lead him.

With Hamann, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche we have seen modalities of heterogeneous proliferation that, as I said, paved the way for the contemporary heterogeneity of philosophical endeavors. But in general the new paradigm of heterogeneity is far from directly reproducing the types of multifariousness that we could detect in Hamann, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. What happens is that authors such as those that we have briefly examined so far decisively destroyed the inner and outer barriers that had impeded not only the exponential multiplying of new philosophical areas or concepts but also sometimes unprecedented kinds of treatment of old philosophical topics.

It is obvious that the transformations philosophy has undergone over the course of the second half of the 20th and into the 21st century did not have only internal causes. (I will come to that problematic in the next part of this paper.) But the dominant trend in the treatment of philosophical transformations seems to pay attention to external causes only, namely those that have more or less social characteristics, forgetting that the type of explosion that has occurred was too vast and too full of consequences to be envisaged primarily from a sociological standpoint. What I wish to put forward is that something profoundly *immanent* must have happened—and must still be happening—that is responsible for the immense fragmentation of philosophical interests we are confronted with.