

Abstracts

GIANLUCA SOLLA

The Random Power of an Instant

Baudelaire compares the appearance of the passerby to “a flash of lightning”. The unforgettable feature of the encounter is all here: the poem is born in order to find a word capable of witnessing the event, which precedes any expectation and which otherwise remains nameless. When Walter Benjamin crosses this motif in his analyses of Baudelaire’s poetry, his reflection allows us to give contingency a different value from the one commonly attributed to it. It is no longer a matter of fortuitous circumstance, but of the tangency of bodies and gazes that emerges as the destiny of which life is made. Contingency is revealed as a singular cum-tangency of bodies, which is all the more decisive the more it remains inappropriate and unpredictable.

Keywords: Encounter, Contingency, Transience, Gaze, Elsewhere.

CRISTINA GUARNIERI

Encounters. Walter Benjamin, Rachel Bepaloff, Franz Rosenzweig

In this article, the question of the “contingency of the encounter” is addressed through three great Jewish philosophers of the early 20th century: Walter Benjamin, Rachel Bepaloff and Franz Rosenzweig. The image of the dialectical “constellation” of Benjamin’s *Theses on the Philosophy of History* allows us to focus on the logic of *après-coup*, i.e. the peculiar subversion that each encounter produces on the relationship between past and present. Bepaloff’s “poetics of the instant” illuminates the new status of a creative present, entrusted to a singular ethical act, each time different, and emphasizes the indissoluble link between contingency and poetic language. Finally, the contingency of the encounter is read through the “grammar of eros” of the *Song of Songs* developed by Rosenzweig in *The Star of Redemption* (with its verbal modes and tenses). The language of love manifests itself as the place par excellence of the encounter culminating in the *vocative* calling the proper name.

Keywords: Time, Creative Present, Instant, Poetry, Grammar of Eros.

FEDERICO LEONI

Mystical Basket. Essay on Tyche

The event of the encounter poses a structural challenge to philosophy. If philosophy is transcendental, as it is by tradition and perhaps vocation, the possibility of the encounter is reduced to the encounter with what the transcendental will have anticipated. Hence the idea of questioning the hypothesis of another philosophy of the *tyche*, investigating that haptic dimension which alone seems to be able to bypass the reduction of the encounter to the anticipable without operating an analogous reduction of the encounter to the unanticipable. The main interlocutors of this hypothesis are Roland Barthes and his study of the amorous discourse, Jacques Lacan and his idea of the *objet petit a*, and a youthful, openly orphic Aristotle, rarely questioned as a philosopher of the strange knot that binds *tyche* and *thigain*, touch and fortune.

Keywords: Tyche, Touch, *Objet petit a*, Transcendentalism, Mystical Basket.

LUCIANO DE FIORE

Temporalities of Encountering

Bill Viola's video *The Greeting* is initially shown as an example that the lived duration of an encounter is not a question of length, but of depth and feeling. Surprise is the infallible sign of every true encounter. There is no season of encounters, all our lives we are exposed to their transforming power. Remembering does not so much mean reproducing what has already happened to us, but building with what remains of memories an unedited version of one's own history. The world is not a collection of things, but of related events. For each of us, many of the most significant of these are encounters. Our life is a succession of encounters, many of them realised, others failed. Everyone becomes himself in relation to others and determined by a set of relationships. Whoever accepts to come to terms with democracy, a very difficult reality made up of other individuals each with their own needs and desires, often different and colliding with ours, will be continually called to that examination of reality to which, after Freud, we should all subject ourselves.

Keywords: Encounters, Bill Viola, Temporalities, Relationships, Memories.

KURT APPEL

The Contingency of the Encounter. Mary Magdala and the Encounter of the Absolute

This article explores the contingency of the encounter between Jesus of Nazareth and Mary Magdalene that occurs at Jesus's tomb. This article interprets two important passages from the *Gospel of Mark* (Mk 16, 1-8) and the *Gospel of John* (Jn 20, 11-18) to reflect more deeply on this encounter. In Mark's Gospel, the result of the encounter is the reference to a never-derivable and unrepresentable beginning, on which the text of Mark is built. The Gospel of John, which refers to Mark, concretizes this as the beginning of love and the covenant partnership between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, which becomes representative for all those who encounter Jesus. It is a contingent encounter because there is no external necessity. We can never realistically expect to meet a dead person again in this world,

but the encounter between Mary and the risen Jesus exemplifies a contingency that ends in the freedom of love.

Keywords: *Gospel of Mark* 16,1-8, *Gospel of John* 20,11-18, Resurrection, Encounter Jesus and Mary of Magdala, Encounter and Freedom of Love.

ISABELLA GUANZINI

Thinking and Feeling in the Proslogion of Anselm of Aosta

The question of God addressed in Anselm of Aosta's *Proslogion* has been in the long history of the text's reception hijacked by chapters II-IV presenting the well-known proof of God's existence, then named the "ontological argument". This contribution intends to consider the entirety of the text, emphasizing in particular the chapters XIV and XXV, which represent a real change of discourse with respect to the linearity of rational argumentation. The aim is a systematic interrogation of the interaction between rationality and affection within the framework of the *Proslogion*, showing how the cogency of rational argumentation is both challenged and fulfilled by the contingency of the encounter with the God-event, which must be felt and not merely thought. Indeed, the mystical openness of thought towards the inconceivable and unrepresentable divine reality is accompanied by the Anselmian demand for an experience of God that happens in the life of the bodies and in the fundamental affections of existence.

Keywords: Affect, Interruption, Question of God, Faith and Sensibility, Rationality and Affection.

DANIEL BARRETO

System and Contingency. A theological-political Reflection starting from Iván Illich

Iván Illich's research on the theological origins of the idea of instrument in Hugo de San Víctor indicates the importance of contingency to understand the modern notion of system. This in turn depends, according to Erich Voegelin's reading, on a secularized gnostic heritage. The theological presuppositions that produced the new understanding of contingency confirm in Illich's thought a reaffirmation of creation, the word and the body in the form of a radical critique of the era of modern service systems and institutions. Illich's notion of instrument criticizes modern technology. And that brings him closer to the approaches of Günther Anders and Alfred Sohn-Rethel. Likewise, the antignostic starting point for creation and the flesh clarifies the theological contents that still hold the notions of "birth" and "unavailability".

Keywords: Contingency, Instrument, System, Iván Illich, Birth.

PAOLO PECERE

The Encounter with the Other: Three Philosophical Stories

In this paper I examine three philosophical stories of “encounter”, in order to make the case that similar prejudices are involved in our experience of the mind of others. I start from the history of the encounter of the Europeans with the “savages” of the Americas, arguing that this provides an exemplary case of the kinds of misunderstandings that concern our encounter with other persons and the challenge of understanding their difference. Second, I examine the case of other minds in animals, arguing that contemporary investigations in ethology and philosophy of animal minds have confirmed the need to distinguish between the projection of our ideas of mind and self and the specific difference of other minds. Finally, I turn to self-knowledge, arguing that – contrary to common sense – our own actions and thoughts are yet another case of interpretation, as the “otherness” belongs to ourselves.

Keywords: Other, Self, Mind, Brain, Interpretation.

CRISTINA GUARNIERI

Interview with Massimo Recalcati

In this interview, Cristina Guarnieri interrogates Massimo Recalcati, one of the best-known Italian psychoanalysts, on the question of the contingency of the encounter posed by Jacques Lacan in *Seminar XX*. The theme of contingency is interrogated through the various books that make up Recalcati’s intellectual research and modulated in its different dimensions: from the status of the subject in its path of sexuality to the impossible relationship and love as *a-mur*, from the father-son relationship to the transfert relationship, from the artistic act to the gift of grace.

Keywords: Contingency, Encounter, Witness, Art, Grace.