

Welcome implies an opening, an in-between ground and form.

(English text based on recorded interpretation)

My presentation is dedicated to my master of thought and friend Henry Maldiney who, at the age of 97, is still working to translate the unsayable human mystery.

Welcome, Willkommen, Bienvenue to this opening session which I hope will be able to admit both our differences and common affiliations to generate the synergy that is indispensable to our research and learning.

As organizer of this congress, I took a great deal of time to think about the question underlying the present lecture. I took the time to sketch the outline of an essential sharing. After 30 years of clinical and phenomenological development, I asked myself whether finally an event-advent had occurred.

Obviously, there were a host of stars in my existential dome, the Pleiades: the Meeting, listening, sensitivity, thought, my relationship to being, my openness to the world, the mystery of otherness, the unfolding of presence, the advance of awareness... These points of light, numerous points of light, form the milky way of my human trials but I wish to go back to the source, to the origins. What is the phenomenon which within me opens a world which contains the possible? In me and us!

Imperceptibly, a guiding star detached itself from the darkness: welcome! What opens a world: the feeling of being welcomed. Before all awareness for the formation of language, for thematisation, we experience our first feelings or sensations in the light of a degree of depth and a degree of openness of human presence. Observe a birth from the world of nature.

From the protozoar to the mammal, we see a remarkable evolution : the quality of protective behaviour providing safety, the parent protecting the child, a series of fundamental stages which lead the entity to become human, to exist. That is what Diotime rightly says in Plato : that is "the point of view from which for a man it is worthwhile to live", the moment when he feels "other" than himself.

Arms that open without closing to enter into presence, eyes that soften represent an openness to the unexpected, a readiness to recognize what it was not yet, a word creating a foundation for meaning with a warm voice unfolding the inexpressible signification or the moment-event when a hand reaching out the entity that we are reveals the Being within us. These are testimonies of the Dasein which enables our identity to transcend what it is in order to feel that it is bound to be, transcending that to which we reduce ourselves to make horizon unlimited.

Possible can only appear to people who feel there are others than themselves, who do not lock in a said identity.

One afternoon in October 1979, I saw somebody entering the room, with a gentle voice, humble bodily presence, retiring ego. He was there because of the suffering of his patient and what he felt about that. Psychiatry gained a face ; a diagnosis which went beyond a label, implying a world that we had to see in all its subtlety. Finally a sharing, a transmission of knowledge, a "*savoir-être*" rather than a lecture based on self-infatuated knowledge. This man welcomed us, accepted us in the most essential part of ourselves : our ability to reveal the human experience. His presence, his way of being in the world incited us to stop enclosing people in judgement, so reducing them to deficits, but instead to go out to meet them, meaning maintaining with them a space of sharing, a space of intersubjectivity which meant putting ourselves out in danger. He invited us to think the human being, his life, his existence in the light a thinker philosophy rather than a theory, in the light of evolution rather than knowledge. This man is called Paul Jonckheere. And there are a few of us that day that felt welcomed, received the openness and awareness that demanded of us that we should exist these worlds and make possible this new direction of meaning.

Phenomenology invites us to revise our senses, our judgements, to no longer consider as an absolute truth what we think that we have mastered but instead to stay afloat in the flows of phenomenality. That is why initially, as we listen to these presentations, we need to ask ourselves : are we welcoming, are we receptive, are you, ladies and gentlemen, colleagues, and perhaps sometimes we need to answer very humbly "no".

Sometimes concepts can unfold several worlds and one of them will give us at least the illusion of being in control of all the others. But in fine we never welcome, we never envelop we can only spend our lives working towards that attitude.

Let's try together this morning to spend a few minutes looking at this essential dimension of the human experience : welcoming, opening up. Let us think about

its deep meaning : what experience does it describe and what do you feel first : the experience of welcoming or being welcomed ? Note that the verb is ambiguous and it contains within it the active and the passive voices which are intertwined: welcoming, receiving, means two entities who welcome each other, who receive each other. Can I welcome somebody who does not desire that experience? Can I remain welcoming when I am faced with indifference or aggression ? We can see where the cracks of this issue lie: opening oneself up to the closed, receiving the difference, being sensitive, open to the unforeseeable. That implies for the human being the modification of conscience and awareness, a new positioning within the world where the person is no longer a conqueror, the owner of truths but moves towards the periphery of the signifiable, on the splitline between "there is meaning" and the Open, the undetermined...

As in the philosophy of Nishida "the awareness of the between –Aida - emerges from a perception of distance or division, a kind an aesthetic awareness arising from a crack, from a hole" ¹. This place between ground and form cannot be attacked like a fortress, it can be experienced in the very heart of the human experience.

Welcoming is reflexive transitivity. It contains a permanent tension between receptiveness and meaningfulness, between minehood and otherhood, between emptiness and fullness. Welcoming suggests the other and myself to an intertwining of the most subtle kind, where neither of us can claim the privilege of being there but where both keep for themselves in reciprocity an infinite sketching of potential metamorphosis. One can only welcome the Being, not the entity, or to be more precise : one can only welcome an entity withdrawing from Being, whose entityness does not crush the Being, the substance, the possible, and only someone who reveals that humanness can welcome or only a work of art can welcome, not an artistic production but that which strives to remind us of what is other than ourselves, that pulls us out of our own entityness (beingsness) which is too often sovereign. Only that which opens a world can welcome.

Intertwined with welcoming, we have to be-receptive. During a « *Chi Qong* » exercise, I remember a teacher who was urging us to hold out our hand in a way that was neither relaxed, too lax or too tense but extended. Hold, that is one of the keys of be-receptive or being subject : the body posture. Getting that right takes some time. I used the word "*pâtir*" in French (be-receptive) which I distinguish from *subir*, undergoing. It is not a natural obvious attitude, not an easy one. It requires a readiness to be afflicted or tested by something at one's own peril; it requires a turning towards a direction that paradoxically is of no

¹ Marcello GHILARDI, *Between Aesthetics and Ethics, The experience of Seeing in Nicholas Cusanus and Nishida Kitaro*, *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy*, 3 – Nazan 2009,

importance, turning towards the possible. I consent, I open myself to each of these experiences which contribute to the continual transformation of my being-in-the-world. Both welcoming and suffering are not part of everydayness, of a common understanding, no more of *Vorhandenheit* than of *Zuhandenheit*. They stem from hermeneutics *Da-sein* where the "*Da*" expresses all the mysterious phenomenality "of the human being in his relationship to Being, meaning Being and its truth in its relationship to man"².

Heidegger opened up to the West a road which, like the Tao, suggests a confrontation with the world and with ourselves where "the word is never a representation of a thing"³, where "the thought is no longer a representation"⁴. It is during one of the most intense period of suffering in his history that Heidegger wrote in his hut, ostracized, far from the world, he wrote "*Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*" which French (or English) translation never suggests the complex meaning of "*Er*" : the experience, the crossing, the testing of thoughts, this thought which he identifies with "serenity turned towards free Expands"⁵. In a poetic style, which is unusual for the philosopher of Messkirch, he expresses the relationship between his being-in-nature and his being-to-self.

*When in summer a butterfly
stops on a flower and, with
closed wings, sways with it in
the wind of the meadow*

*in thoughts everything
becomes solitary and slow.*

who thinks greatly must wonder greatly..⁶

Solitude, wondering, slowness.

In 1947, in the core of the storm where the thinker of Being was confronted with immense suffering, incomprehensible suffering, a thought of immense depth is born. From *Sorge* to *Gelassenheit*, leading in early 60's to the unrepresentable concept of *Ereignis* demanding from his readers an openness of welcoming receptiveness which transcend the ontic-ontologic dialect to put in a particular space-time which Heidegger found hard himself to explain. And it is this very

²: Martin HEIDEGGER, *Lettre à Richardson*, 1962, Gallimard Tel Question III-IV, p. 346

³: Martin HEIDEGGER, *Pour servir de commentaire à Sérénité*, 1945, Gallimard Tel Question III-IV, p. 160

⁴: Ibidem, p. 158

⁵ Ibid., p. 165

⁶: Martin HEIDEGGER, *L'expérience de la pensée*, 1947, Gallimard Tel, p.31

point that professor Dastur explained last year in this very building where we had a study day about the philosopher.

The same applies to Merce Cunningham⁷ which did not become a classic dancer but, as he says, he has always danced. Suffering of being subject meant for him an original type of openness of welcoming which set him apart off the natural sign of the world. From an infinity of possibilities generated by the trio of Cunningham the choreographer, John Cage the composer, and Rauschenberg the creator decorator, has emerged a new space-time completely different from the natural, the socially presentable, the directly comprehensible, which at the time required from the audience a being subject, an authentic welcoming one between substance and form. Despite the disapproval, the rejection, the humiliation and consequent total isolation, they continued to transform their *patie* intuitions so until one day they were recognised as the pioneers and masters of modern dance.

In an article by Binswanger dated 1924 "*Vital function and internal history of life*" we see a similar approach but a more clinical one : St Augustin's life illustrates our own developments. The illustrious begger suffers from recurrent caughing and some chest pain. Binswanger notes that somenone other might have developed "hysterical psychosis with denial or repression of the situation or afore this situation or commit suicide or even make money or go to court"⁸. No but St Aug does not do any of that. He accepts and suffers this experience, he integrates it and opens himself up to a world that he would never have suspected before having opened it, where he excelled and unfolded.

Heidegger, Cunningham and St Augustin : we can see how the path of their life, a developments throughout their life, created new light for humankind This welcomness-subjectness which lead to *transpassibility*⁹, the final stage of a human capacity to be open to the unforeseeable at his or her own peril, this transpassibility is in no way similar to a selfish approach but, to the contrary, it enables the suffering person to re-establish contacts with his most deeply buried potential. *Presence* supports the patient in a liberating fashion. The clinician has a duty above and beyond any type of knowledge or discourse : to feel and to move forward in the unfolding of the founding elements of human life.

Life is not a long still river. All of us sooner or later will have to confront with the things we have premonition about but reject or deny with all our strength. Being upside of the norm, being entity upside of the norm which may sleep within the patient, we meet the one who moves towards the opening-suffering

⁷ : To find out more, *The Dancer and the Dance*, Merce Cunningham in conversation with Jacqueline Lesschaeve, 1985, Marion Boyars New-York-London

⁸o: Ludwig BINSWANGER, *Introduction à l'analyse existentielle*, 1947, Ed. Minuit, p. 66

⁹ : Concept created by Henri MALDINEY explained in *Penser l'homme et la folie*, 1991, Millon.

breaks with constrained destiny to open up to a choice fate, a fate based on choice which could not be imagined before it was accomplished.

These beings radiate a humble power of metamorphosis. As Malraux wrote "these people, these beings act upon us through a power that all possess but none of them conceived, it's a special power, a special force that reveals a mysterious trace of human kind"¹⁰. Trace like the one imagined by Levinas -no residue of presence- opens up the way to greatness, which, as Jaspers says, "is in the place where in respect and perceptiveness we perceive that true which we ourselves become better"¹¹. And this is so different from the entertainment stars we see so many of today with whom our young people identify themselves because they do not know this other possibility.

That's where phenomenology and Daseinsanalyse have led me through my own clinical developments : to this splitline between the entity and the Being, between signification and significance, forced by human suffering to look for a way forward through art, thinking ceaselessly about the ethics of development, feeling what "being a man" means, being "there" and silently provoking otherness.

Over the past thirty years, the field of mental health has been turned up side down by scientific progress and anarchic proliferation of different forms of treatment. All this has tended to leave clinical phenomenology rather in the shadow. We are little known, sometimes ignored, relegated to the oubliettes of history.

And yet I can only express my gratitude to all the people that I met along my way : Paul Jonckheere, Jacques Schotte, Henri Maldiney, Roland Kuhn, Gion Condrau, Hubertus Tellenbach, Françoise Dastur... All of them have striven so that the thinking of the Being, the thinking of the pioneers Husserl, Heidegger, Binswanger, Boss, maintain the human being in the openness of the Opening in that way, he can create links, break links, signify, deconstruct so that no truth may become totalitarian, so that the human being as an individual does not usurp a space that he cannot occupy but of which he is the sentry, so that his life, life itself does not dissolve into evident truths but exist as a perpetual metamorphosis of what it is on the day in function of meetings, encounters in order to "become responsible for what he has not yet opened up"¹².

¹⁰ : André MALRAUX, *Les voix du silence*, 1935-52, Galerie de la pléiade, p.627

¹¹ : Karl JASPERS, *Les grands philosophes*, 2009, in three volumes with Pocket Plon, Volume I, p.22

¹² : Henri MALDINEY. Dialogue avec Henri Maldiney in *La rencontre existe le fond*, Ado Huygens in Henri Maldiney, une phénoménologie à l'impossible, collectif, le cercle herméneutique, 2002, cité par Ado Huygens in « Penser l'existence, exister la pensée », Encre marine, p. 292

In conclusion, may we always be able to hope that a man or woman will awaken from torpeur to awaken the world and, as the era of Gandhara closes the eyes of Apollon to incarnate the wisdom of Buddah in stone, let us hope that somebody will come along who will be able to give significance to an ephemeral world.

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