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General Model of the Psychic Being within a Transformative Theory of Rationality

Summary:

This paper presents a model of psychological relationships within the framework of transformative rationality, as being embedded in Hegel's philosophy of mind. It is based on Laplanche's fundamental anthropological situation with the enigmatic message of the Other, and the translation of these contents from the enclaved unconscious into the conscious mind, including the repression of unbearable contents in the repressed unconscious. The precision of this model is increased in various ways: The translation is represented more precisely with the tools of Bion's transformation theory; and, the enclaved unconscious is determined by the Lacanian register of the Real, especially with the position of the thing and object a. The entire model is built around the concepts of matter and idea, real sensation and phenomenal thought, as well as the Imaginary and Symbolic. The embedding of the transformativity of the mind in Hegel's philosophy shows that the psychoanalytic idea of translation can be supplemented by Hegel's idea of sublation. Thus, an increased capacity to transform what is not represented leads to a transformation of the personality in the sense of personal growth.

Addition vs. Transformation: Theories of Psychic Being

In psychoanalysis, the anthropological question of what determines a human being has been of fundamental importance since Freud's early writings. At the dawn of the modern era, for example, Freud developed a series of topological models standing in the great Aristotelian tradition of the *scala naturae*, including the main question of how body, mind, psyche, and life intertwine. In a more recent publication on the philosophy of mind, Matthias Wunsch (2018) speaks of "models of being human" (p. 471). He cites four models: The addition model, the internal model, the privation model, and the transformation model. Two models – or theories – stand out today: The addition theory, which predominates above all in the natural sciences, but generally determines today's philosophy of mind, and the transformation theory (Khurana, 2017, p. 354), which is mainly used in more recent psychoanalysis (Fonagy et al., 2004; Laplanche, 2011; Stern, 2005; Bion, 1965).[1] In this paper, I agree with Bion's distinction between a "theory" that is very abstract and a model that is more oriented towards clinical thinking (Darmstädter, 2001, p. 10). In the main part of the paper I will present a transformative model of rationality intended to map the relationships of psychological being and functioning against the background of transformation theory. With this model, I will mainly keep to the fundamental anthropological situation of Laplanche (2011) and Dejours (2001), but with the addition of further transformative elements from Bion, Lacan, and, especially as a philosophical reference, from Hegel. This new model clarifies the possibilities and limits of mental transformation in an intersubjective field. Supplementing Lacan's triad of the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic with the

register of the “phenomenal atmosphere” (or “phenomenal thoughts”), it is embedded epistemologically in Hegel’s transformative theory of mind. First, however, I will outline the two most important theories of today’s philosophy of mind – additive and transformative theory – in order to develop the aforementioned psychoanalytic model against this theoretical background.

Central to the addition theory, according to Wunsch (2018, p. 472), is the notion that the concept “human being” results from a synthesis of the concept of “animal” and the concept of something additional: Animal + X = human. “Reason”, for example, can be used for X. Following from this, “man is a rational animal”, or a living being with intellect, reason or understanding (as a “???? ????? ?????”, *zoon logon echon*). The notions of “consciousness” or “self-consciousness”, or in psychoanalytical terms, the “alpha function”, can be used as additional skills for X. Here, the organism’s basic capacities – e.g., perception – remain unchanged, and are merely supplemented by higher mental or cognitive abilities. From an additive point of view, mental capacities are second-order capacities. As typical proponents of additive theories, Evans (1982, pp. 158-159) and Velleman (2000, pp. 11-12) describe two central components of our ability to engage as rational creatures with the world around us:

- (1) a more “primordial system” which we share with non-rational creatures, e.g., a perceptual system that adjusts our behavioural dispositions in response to changing sensory inputs; and a motivational system, which translates desires into behaviour directed towards the pursuit of these desires,
- (2) a “reasoning system” that “monitors” the activities of the more primordial system, “assesses” the rational warrant for these activities, and “regulates” the activities in response to its evaluations. (cf. Boyle, 2016)

Unlike the addition theory, the transformation theory does not contain any further additions that define human beings in contrast to animals. In the transformation theory, the basic anthropological determinations are taken to mean that a human being’s entire life is permeated by these determinations. Humans and animals are thus different kinds of living beings (Wunsch, 2018, p. 482). The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) is considered to be the founder of transformation theory. In contemporary philosophy, John McDowell (1994, 2013) and Matthew Boyle (2016) are important proponents of a transformative theory of rationality.

McDowell (1994, 2013) postulates that our perception is conceptually determined by rational thinking and judgement. In this respect, according to McDowell, the content of our perception is itself “conceptual”. Perception determines conceptual thinking, and thinking, conversely, determines the act of perception as a conceptual one. In his work *Mind and World* (1994) in particular, McDowell argues that the perceptual aspect of our animality is permeated with rationality. He sums up his position with two statements: Firstly, our perceptual experiences have conceptual content; and, secondly, these perceptual experiences are themselves actualizations of conceptual capacities:

If we share perception with mere animals, then, of course, we have something in common with them. Now there is a temptation to think it must be possible to isolate what we have in common with them by stripping off what is special about us, to arrive at a residue that we can recognize as what figures in the perceptual lives of mere animals... But it is not compulsory to attempt to accommodate the combination of something in common and a striking difference in this factorizing way: to suppose our perceptual lives include a core that we can recognize in the perceptual life of a mere animal and an extra ingredient in addition... Instead, we can say that we have what mere animals have, perceptual sensitivity to features of our environment, but we have it in a special form. (McDowell, 1994, p. 64)

To go one step further: Conceptual capacities are already present in the sensory experience itself (e.g., through the classification of the perceived world). It is not the case that these conceptual capacities are only applied through judgement. Khurana sums up the idea of ??transformativity as follows:

Accordingly, rational animals or self-conscious life are not animals plus rationality, life plus self-consciousness, but animals of a completely different kind that lead lives all of their own. [...] Rationality is therefore not constituted by a second stratum of capacities that simply joins onto the first stratum... (Khurana, 2017, p. 356)

Figure 1 gives an overview of the additive and transformative theories:

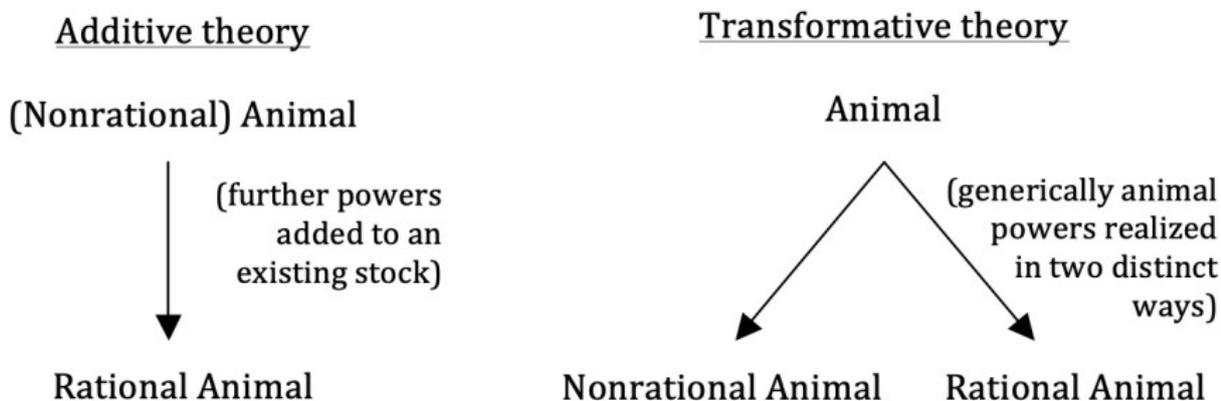


Figure 1: Additive und transformative theories (Boyle 2016)

If Herder is regarded as the founder of a transforming view of man, Hegel (1770-1831) proposes his own variant of the transformative view: In the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, he stresses that it is not just the rational conceptualization of humans, but also their perception or desire/motivation that is permeated by thinking:

Just as thinking makes up the substance of external things, so it is also the universal substance of all things spiritual. Thinking is inherent in all human intuiting. Similarly, thinking is universal in all representations, memories, and generally in every spiritual activity, in all willing, wishing, and so forth. The latter are one and all merely further specifications of thinking. When we construct thinking in this way, it appears in a different context from when we merely say that among and alongside other faculties such as perception, representation, willingness, and so on we also possess the faculty of thinking. When we consider thinking as truly universal in everything natural as well as everything spiritual, then it extends over all of this and is the foundation of everything. We can use this conception of thinking in its objective sense (as *nous*) as a starting point for explaining what thinking means in the subjective sense. To begin with, we say that humans think – and yet at the same time we also say that they perceive, will, etc. Humans think, and to be human is to be something universal. (Hegel 2010, p. 59, § 24, Z1)

Even with Hegel, the rational capacity transforms the non-rational capacities. The leap from a merely sensitive (in German: *empfindsam*) animal to a self-consciously living one does not take place through the mere addition of an accompanying self-consciousness that monitors or regulates the animal functions. Rather, self-consciousness captures animality, i.e., the functions of sensitivity (*Empfindsamkeit*) itself (Khurana, 2017, p. 357). It is a transformation that will never be completed or finished. Instead, as we shall see, it forms a process-like and constitutive activity (Khurana, 2017, p. 359). The subject gains its self-consciousness only through the consciousness of life "...in retreating, in exceeding and in the transformation of living unity" (Khurana, 2017, p. 361). For Hegel, therefore, self-consciousness exists as consciousness, i.e., as knowledge of something else, so that, regarding self-consciousness, "The whole expanse of the world of sense is conserved as its object." (Hegel, 2001, p. 61). I will now turn to the General Model of the Psychic Being, which proceeds from Laplanche's considerations on the basic anthropological situation and the modes of psychic processing of this situation. Hegel's transformation theory will continue to serve as a

philosophical reference.

The Psychic Being: Laplanche's Fundamental Anthropological Situation

Within the framework of his “general theory of seduction”, Laplanche’s “fundamental anthropological situation” (*situation anthropologique fondamentale*) provides insights into the psychological functions of transformative translation of the subject (Laplanche, 1997; Laplanche, 2011, pp. 99-114). His basic idea is that sexuality is brought to the child from the outside, by the “Other”, i.e., the adult, in the form of “enigmatic messages”, through demands and desires that imply a seductive effect. This situation may be universal and need not necessarily be pathological. In any case, this implantation takes place in the form of a message that is determined by the adult’s repressed preconscious or unconscious and therefore seems puzzling and confusing. The child now has to translate the (sexual) messages into his language. At first, the message of the “Other” in the child’s psyche is only scratched at the surface and held below a thin layer of consciousness. The whereabouts of this inscription is the enclaved unconscious (*inconscient enclavé*). The content is not yet represented; in Lacan’s terminology, it is “real” (2021, p. 6 ff.). These experiential realms are like “...foreign bodies that cannot be jettisoned, constant sources of excitation which will be reactivated and intensified by all the other interhuman exchanges of the same order” (Scarfone, 2013). We may speak of where these messages are stored as the “enclave of the real unconscious”. The child is now faced with the task of translating these enigmatic messages into its language. It is a translation – or transformation – of more-or-less enigmatic experiences into the preconscious, and then conscious, now verbal, content, which is equivalent to a new creation. The ego is the translated part of the message. But it is also possible that such “translations” must be repressed again, i.e., end up in the repressed unconscious. Laplanche (2004) illustrates his model using a diagram (see **Figure 2**) taken from Dejours’ *Le corps d’abord* (Dejours, 2001).

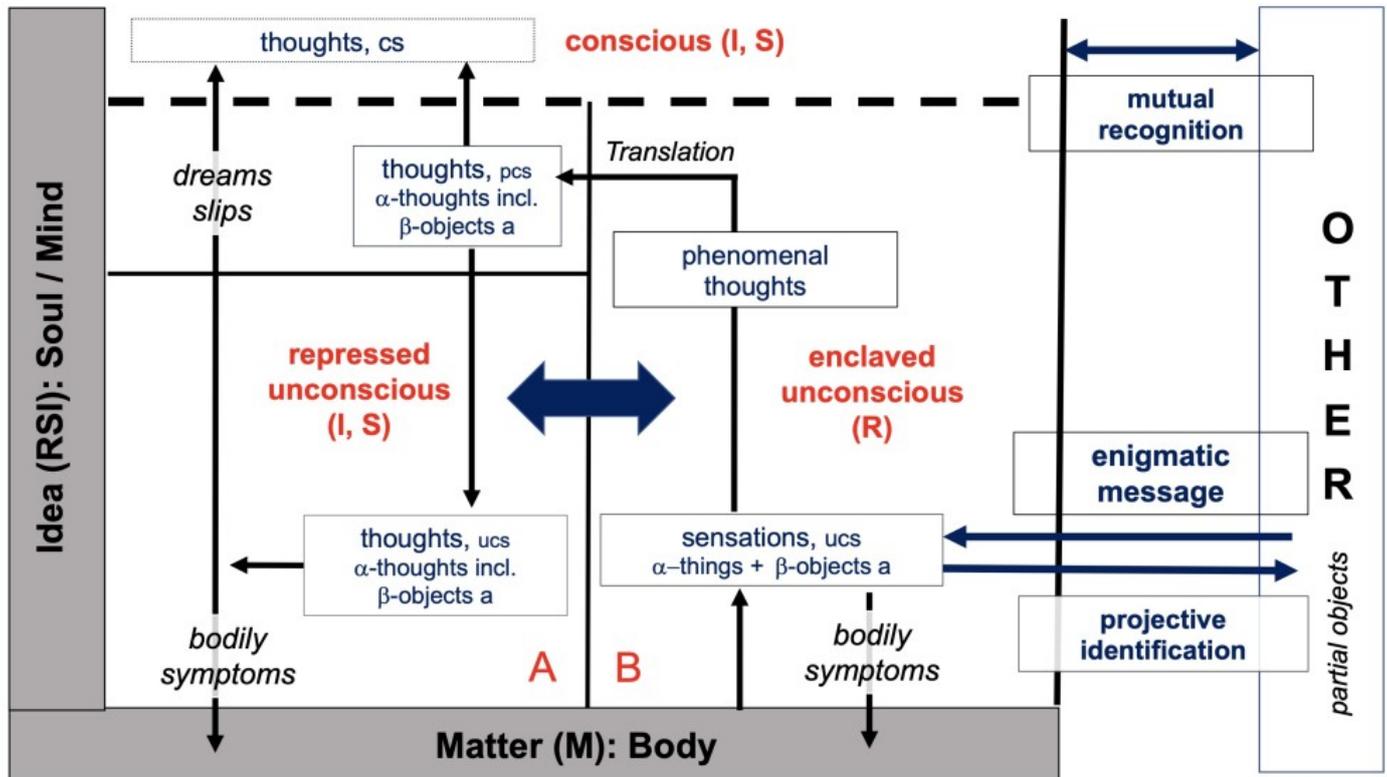


Figure 2: The General Model of the Psychic Being

As shown in **Figure 2**, the psychological apparatus consists of two parts (A and B) which are both divided and also connected by the transition zone. The transition is maintained by a translation of the real unconscious (B) into the preconscious (A), just as the preconscious or conscious contents can affect the Real. In the case of a mature, more highly structured neurosis, part A is much more extended than part B. In borderline cases or psychoses, part B can even predominate. In **Figure 2**, however, a number of supplements are already inscribed, which adds several aspects of Lacan's and Bion's psychoanalysis to Laplanche's model and takes Hegel's transformation model as a philosophical reference. In the following sections, the "General Model of the Psychic Being" will be explained in more detail.

Matter and Idea

First of all, I would like to take up one of Hegel's considerations, from the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Part 3. In the section on anthropology, he speaks of "sensations". These are the starting point of any transformation, and figuratively speaking are in the ontological vicinity of matter, i.e., of the excitations of the perceptual system:[2]

Sensibility (feeling) is the form of the dull stirring, the inarticulate breathing, of the spirit through its unconscious and unintelligent individuality, where every definite feature is still 'immediate' – neither specially developed in its content nor set in distinction as objective to subject, but treated as belonging to its most special, its natural peculiarity. The content of sensation is thus limited and transient, belonging as it does to natural, immediate being, – to what is therefore qualitative and finite. *Everything is in sensation* (feeling), if you will, everything that emerges in conscious intelligence and in reason has its source and origin in sensation; for source and origin just means the first immediate manner in which a thing appears. Let it not be enough to have principles and religion only in the head, they must also be in the heart. (Hegel 2012, p. 21, § 400).

In contrast to the body, i.e., material nature, Hegel already rates sensation, which is unconscious, simple, natural, pre-positional, and real, as "immaterial" and "ideal" (in German: *immateriell* and *ideell*). It forms the ideal side of matter, that is, of the body and the excitations that arise in the body (as well as in the brain): "The soul is no separate immaterial entity. Wherever there is Nature, the soul is its universal immaterialism, its simple 'ideal' life" (Hegel 2012, p. 12, § 389).[3] As Wolff (1992) explains this passage, one speaks of "ideality" (or "ideal") when something "...is only available for the point of view or in the perspective of a certain observer" (p. 46). Being ideal means, for example, that a thought only exists from the perspective of an observer. Wolff (1992) thinks that this observer can only be the individual person. Hegel speaks of a theoretical process or the standpoint of sensation that allows us to perceive the Immaterial of materiality (both from the perspective of the Other and of the subject). In any case, both excitement (material side) and sensations (ideal side) result from the confrontation with the Other's message or enigmatic signifier. The excitations form the physical-sensory reaction. The sensations, however, are the prelinguistic, unconscious, de-signified reaction or response to this message. The latter, that is, the sensations, organize themselves as unrepresented "things" (as Lacan terms them). A "thing" is a set of de-signified sensations related to the Other's message. Lacan completes the ideal with the registers of the Imaginary (i.e., the pictorial representations) and the Symbolic (i.e., the linguistically composed thoughts). This "wholeness", which is composed of matter (M) and the Ideal, i.e., the Real, Imaginary and Symbolic (R, I, S), is illustrated in **Figure 3**:

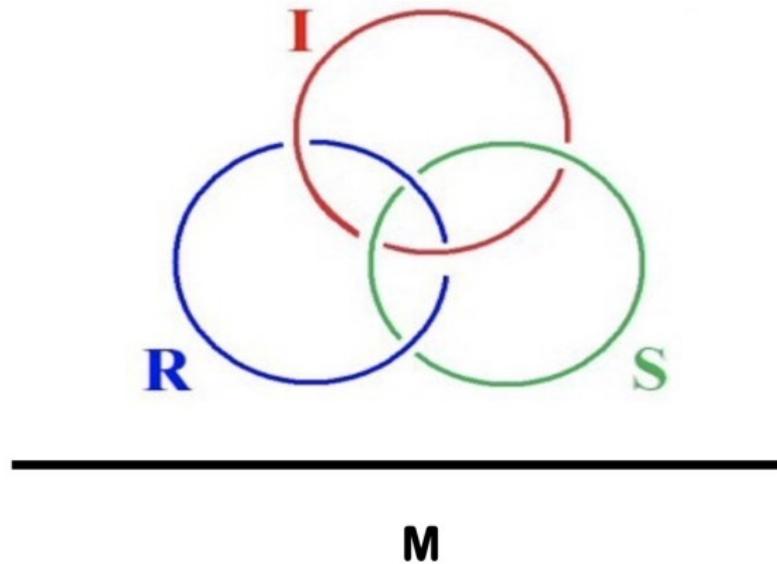


Figure 3: Matter (M) / ideality with the registers of the Real (R), Imaginary (I) and Symbolic (S).

The physical processes take place on the level of matter (M), e.g., the excitations in the neural, peripheral, and central networks. The ideal side consists of the unconscious sensations (R) and preconscious/conscious thoughts (S, I). At first glance, the sensations are the responses to sensory perception, being part of the Real register. Thoughts are the (pre)-conscious determination of these sensations. These thoughts belong to the imaginary or symbolic register, and the unrepresented contents of the Real sensation are translated into the register of the Imaginary and Symbolic. “Determination” (*Bestimmung*) in this context is to be understood as the content of sensations, which in the Real remains verbally and pictorially undetermined, and is now determined in the Imaginary-Symbolic register by pictorial ideas and language. This determination gives the contents of the sensation the form of a thought. In the following picture (from a qualitative research project with somatoform pain patients, see Ruettnner et al., 2021) the imaginary-pictorial and symbolic-linguistic determination of the gaze, is shown, using the words *Herzlichkeit* (“warmth of feeling”) or *Hass* (“hatred”). In the qualitative interview, the patient was talking about her father’s traumatic gaze. The ideal and real sensation of this gaze, of course, as well as the material excitation, is cancelled out in the picture (**Figure 4**):



Figure 4: Imaginary-pictorial and symbolic-linguistic determination of the sensation of the father's gaze (Ruettnet et al., 2021).

In Hegel's philosophy, the sensation is negated; It disappears, is cancelled out in pictorial and linguistically composing thoughts in the form of a "determinate negation" (Hegel, 2001, p. 30; in German: *als bestimmte Negation*; Hegel, 2017, p. 74), from which a new form immediately arises. Hegel uses the term "sublation" (*Aufhebung*) in the sense of change and preservation. Through the determinate and thus determining negation, the Real sensation becomes the Other: a pictorial or linguistic thought.

Transformation and Non-transformation

The message stored in the Real unconscious is initially like a foreign body that may be assimilated over time. In this respect, an understanding is only added to the message afterwards. There are now two modes of translation, which are inscribed in "afterwardness" (*après-coup*); the Real sensation only becomes meaningful in retrospect as a result of the translation (Laplanche, 1999, p. 5-260). The second form of retrospect consists of the choice of the imaginary-symbolic meaning or the corresponding translation variant; in both cases, it involves a new creation, something new and different. Thinking, i.e., the application or practice of "thinking-determinations" (in the Hegelian German: *Denkbestimmungen*)[4], is the capacity to constitute the content of a sensation in a pictorial (I) or linguistic (S) form, which we call mental

representation. This conceptual capacity enables us to constitute sensations as thoughts. Sensations actualize the capacity to think themselves. Where this capacity to think (in Bionian terms, the alpha function) is limited, it is not possible to produce a thought. The sensation remains an object a (or at least an alpha thought with a big beta core). As Fletcher (2017) says, “Something is too hot to handle, something either refuses or is refused translation, something drops out and is remaindered” (p. 111) If the transformation is successful, however, the thought can be associated with other thoughts or judgements. In this case, alpha thoughts formed in the preconscious would be capable of appearing directly in the consciousness. In another case, these alpha thoughts will be repressed again, for example, due to ethical norms, under the rule of the superego (cf. Laplanche, 2004; Laplanche, 2011). This repression, in part A of Laplanche’s model (see **Figure 2**), produces a new, repressed unconscious with imaginary or symbolic mental contents. These contents may reach the subject’s consciousness indirectly as dream images, symbolic bodily symptoms, or Freudian slips. As Colette Soler (2014, p. 25) affirmed, there are two forms of the unconsciousness: On the one hand, the real unconsciousness (part B), and on the other hand the repressed, symbolic-imaginary unconsciousness consisting of words and images (part A).[5]

Some aspects of these messages, however, especially traumatic ones, cannot be translated. Their sensations cannot be represented; they cannot be grasped by the symbolic, and are like resistant remainders. Lacan (2016) referred to these as “objects a” (p. 230 ff) that occur on the oral, anal, phallic, and scopic levels as well as on the level of the voice. It is the maternal milk, the gaze, and the voice or the corresponding organs: the nipple, the eye, and the mouth in the shape of “partial objects”. Some real sensations are like “things” (in a Lacanian view), i.e., the sensations related to partial objects that can be translated in the Imaginary and Symbolic. However, certain, usually traumatic, aspects evade this determination, refuse to be “symbolized” or “mentalized” and remain in the enclave of the Real unconsciousness. Bion (1992) differentiated between alpha and beta elements. Regarding the unconscious stage of sensations, a distinction could be drawn between alpha and beta sensations. Alpha sensations can be translated. At an intermediate stage of transformation, alpha elements are the basis of pictorial ideas and linguistically composed thoughts. Beta elements cannot be transformed. In the subject itself, according to Bion (1992), these beta elements gather on a “beta screen”, until they are banished into the Other (by projective identification), into the body (by somatization) or into motoric discharge (as action, *passage à l’acte*). Both alpha and beta sensations are real; the former, however, relate to representable things, the latter to non-representable objects a. Put differently, in the enclave of the Real unconscious, alpha sensations are real but translatable and representable things; beta sensations are also real, but non-translatable and non-representable objects a. From my point of view, Bionian beta elements cannot be converted into alpha elements. It is precisely this impossibility of transformation that determines the nature of beta elements (Goetzmann, 2020). Hence, there are states with non-conceptual content that cannot provide any reasons for a reflective subject (McDowell, 1994, p. 46-47).[6] An individual’s judgement might in some way “correspond” to such non-conceptual beta content, but the experience of such content itself could not be the actual reason for this judgement (Boyle, 2016). On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that the translation of the alpha sensation into a pictorial or linguistically composed thought is never complete. Certain unrepresentable remnants always remain as a beta core within either the alpha sensations or within the things, respectively. Objects a are therefore real beta-sensations as well as the beta core of alpha sensations, where the symbolization fails.

A third point (in addition to the first two points of the successful or failed transformation, starting from sensation to thought) is the transformation of the sensation (R) under the impact of thinking or thought-determination (I, S). According to the transformation thesis, thinking influences both perceptions and sensations by converting them into conceptual approaches to the world. Self-consciousness returns to the living. The symbolic capacity changes the alpha things to the proto-conceptual forms. I believe that thinking (i.e., self-consciousness) opens up a space (like a Bionian container, maybe more of a heavenly tent than a rubbish bin) that enables an alpha perception of the world, producing translatable alpha sensation. But rubbish can also fulfil this function. Without this conceptually functioning space, only beta sensations (as objects a) will arise. The model developed so far, however, has a significant shortcoming – it concerns feelings that are neither real nor imaginary-symbolic. In the following section I will introduce feelings as

phenomenal terms, thereby complementing Lacan's RSI paradigm on a fundamental level.

Sensations – Feelings – Thoughts

As we know, a sensation is caused by a perception. A sensation, for example, is the experience of a brutal blow, but also the reaction to this experience. In this regard, there are first- and second-order sensations; the first-order sensations include the real, unconscious experience of being beaten, while the second-order sensation includes the experience of fear, anger or helplessness. The question is how these feelings relate to both the real sensations and the symbolic-imaginary thoughts or symbolic concepts. Demmerling (2021, p. 359) takes the view that feelings are “non-linguistic and non-propositional, but conceptual phenomena”. [7] If we compare the content of statements or judgements with the content of feelings, the following seems clear:

A judgement is conceptual in the sense that its content consists of concepts. A judgement, therefore, presupposes concepts. Someone who does not have concepts cannot render a judgement. This is not the case for emotions. Emotions do not consist of concepts, just as chocolate gateaux and Christmas angels do not consist of concepts. Emotions thus do not presuppose concepts, at least not concepts in the demanding, judicatory sense. (Demmerling, 2021, p. 302 f)

There are further different forms of content: According to Demmerling (2021, p. 303), content can be grasped either diffusely or explicitly. The statement “I feel fear” is an explicit grasping of content; however, we also find a more diffuse grasping of content:

The emotion is, however, there; one has it as soon as the content is grasped (or felt) diffusely based on bodily impressions and in the form of phenomenal qualities. A high pulse, a pounding heart, a dry mouth, weak knees, trembling, the pressing in of space, the impulse to run while simultaneously being rooted to the ground, the inability to coordinate thoughts and movements: that is the condition of someone afraid, and someone in that condition is grasping a content – in our example something dangerous and menacing – in a diffuse manner. (Demmerling, 2021, p. 303)

These are sensations that tend towards conceptual awareness but are prelinguistic. Demmerling (2021, p. 303) speaks of “phenomenal concepts”. Such concepts refer to phenomenal experiences: “Something feels like or something looks like this or that.” Thus, phenomenal concepts are non-linguistic and non-pictorial, but are felt contents. The same content can be grasped in different ways. An explicit grasping is intellectual (using judicatory terms), a diffuse grasping is phenomenal. Phenomenal, i.e., felt concepts arise in the field from the Real (sensation) to the Imaginary-Symbolic (pictorial-linguistic thought). Hermann Schmitz (2014, p. 30), founder of the New Phenomenology, describes feelings as atmospheres (“spatially poured atmospheres and bodily grasping powers.”)[8] Moreover, there is a further differentiation between a perception and the grasping of perceptual contents. Demmerling illustrates the difference with the following example:

Someone who is familiar with the rock face and knows that one can fall in the ascent recognizes the danger intellectually. He can make relevant judgements about the rock face without its being present in his field of perception. It is also possible to grasp the danger of a rock face one sees without being afraid of the menace it poses. That would be a perceptive-phenomenal grasping of the danger. When one sees the danger the rock face exudes and is afraid of it, then one grasps it in an affective-phenomenal manner. The rock face causes fear because, in the eyes of the mountaineer, danger or menace are phenomenal properties of the rock face. In the emotion of fear, the rock face presents itself to the mountaineer as menacing. In contrast to an actively made judgement, “The rock face is menacing,” phenomenal experiences are made passively, something happens to us, something which we cannot, at least not readily, elude. (Demmerling, 2021, p. 304)

From a psychological point of view, the Other's gaze or voice, etc., can easily be compared with the rock face. A gaze (or some other enigmatic message that is received through a sensory perception) causes fear because it seems to be dangerous or threatening in the child's perception. In the feeling of fear, the gaze presents itself to the child as threatening (or as seductive or seductive-threatening). The critical judgement is actively made when the child – or later the adult, for example in an analytical setting – says, "This gaze was threatening" and, together with the analyst, establishes a connection with the formation of a (threatening) superego. Phenomenal feelings are conceptual because they can differentiate, for example, between fear and joy (see above for how a baby can very early on distinguish between different categories of objects, i.e., living and non-living). The phenomenal concepts of feelings can already be understood as thoughts, but they are not yet figurative or linguistic. Alpha thoughts (or concepts) are thus phenomenal (felt), imaginary (pictorial), or symbolic (linguistic). Hence, we have the capacity to grasp sensations as thoughts. We can think sensations by linking phenomenal thoughts with a cognitive judgement to a new unit. On the one hand, both phenomenal thought (as feeling) and cognitive judgements are sublated into the (pre)conscious linguistic signifier. On the other hand, the phenomenal thoughts and cognitive judgements can also be sublated into dreams (or other symptoms of the repressed unconscious, such as bodily symptoms or Freudian slips), which facilitate the representation and regulation of affects (Jiménez, 2012; Moser, 2016, p. 63). This phenomenal dimension is missing in Lacan's model of the Borromean knot. I don't think, however, that it makes sense to introduce another Borromean ring here (especially since the fourth ring is reserved for the Sinthome). Rather, we might imagine that the Borromean knot is immersed in a "phenomenal atmosphere" emanating from the ring of the Real, i.e., from both the subject's alpha and beta sensations. This phenomenal atmosphere sets in motion both the transformation into pictorial and linguistic alpha thoughts and the expulsion of the beta elements.

Figure 5 displays the Borromean knot, embedded in the phenomenal (affective) atmosphere as a further register of the psychological reality:

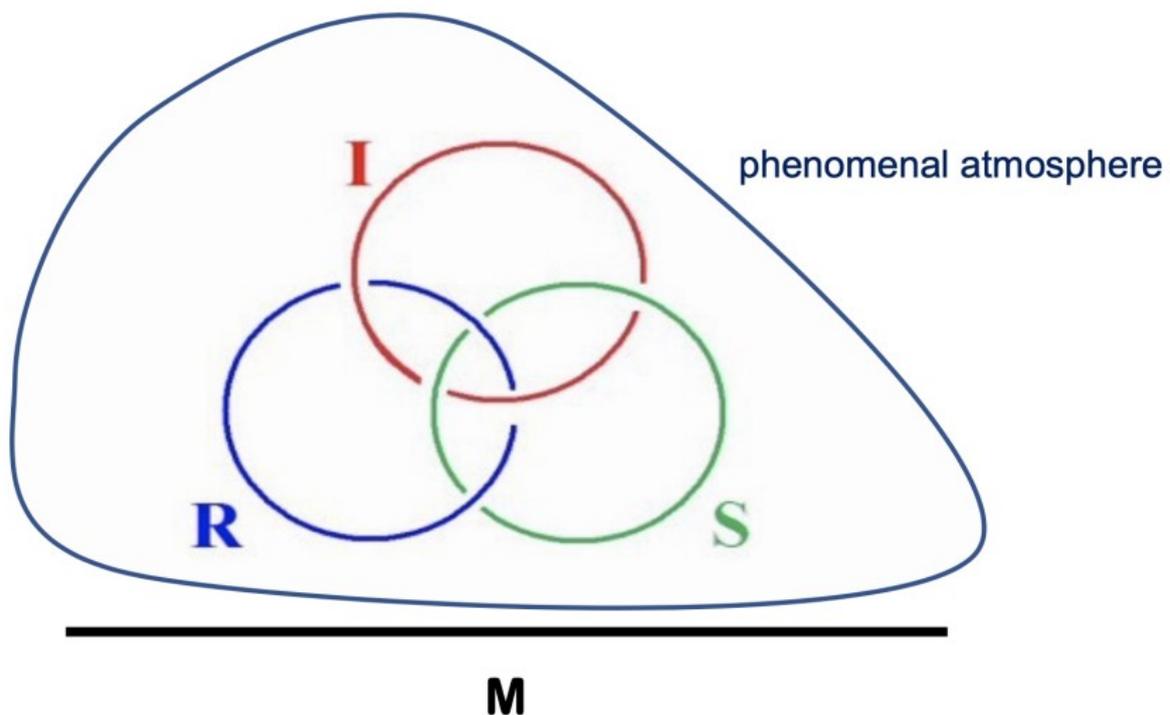


Figure 5: Lacan's Borromean knot, embedded

in the affective phenomenal atmosphere.

Self-consciousness, Intersubjectivity and the Real Living in Psychoanalysis

Hegel's transformation is never completed, but rather manifests itself as a process-like and constitutive activity (Khurana, 2017, p. 359). This work, performed by the psychic apparatus, is both a dialectical opposition (in the sense of a contradiction) as well as a union (in the sense of something new, in which the opposing sides are sublated):

Hegel's ambition is to develop the unity of our abilities dialectically. It therefore gives the opposition between our animality and our self-consciousness a positive meaning, since the unity of our abilities results from this opposition and not from an anticipated harmony of life and spirit. (Khurana, 2017, p. 361)

All psycho-somatic pairs, the Material and the Ideal, the Real and the Phenomenal as well as the Phenomenal and the Symbolic/Imaginary, stand in opposition to one other. They are in each case "the Other", to then re-form into a new unity. Thus, the excitations (M) and the sensations (R) as well as the sensations (R) and the thoughts (I / S), including the Phenomenal, are the opposite of each other before they are transformed or sublated into a unit. In this respect, we find a "progression of forms of consciousness" (in German: *eine Progression der Bewusstseinsgestalten*; Khurana, 2017, p. 361) from the unconscious sensations (R) in area B (see **Figure 2**) to the conscious, linguistically composed thoughts (S) in area A. This transformative progression also includes the loops via the repressed unconscious in area A. However, consciousness faces the Living, i.e., the sensations. From this encounter (of the mind with the opposite sensation), the phenomenal, non-figurative and non-linguistic thoughts emerge as a felt thought or phenomenal feeling. This Phenomenal might be something like the Hegelian "appearance of the living", in which the consciousness found itself (Khurana, 2017, p. 364). From a psychoanalytical viewpoint, the phenomenal would serve as the shell of the alpha elements, as a kind of "envelope" for the alpha sensations. This phenomenal shell or envelope is conveyed by the primary object (as a "message") and internalized by the child (Goetzmann, 2020; Kristeva, 2002). The form in which self-consciousness realizes this experience therefore implies a dialectical opposition of "self-consciousness" and "life", which simultaneously makes it clear that "life is as essential to it as pure self-consciousness" (Hegel, 2001, p. 67). Lacan carried out this movement by turning back to the Real in his later writings. Consequently, he saw the true aim of analysis as arriving at the Real which no longer has any pre-positional meaning. This return to the Real, however, also implies that the core of the self-consciousness is empty. At the end of this paper, I would like to come back to an initial thought, namely, Laplanche's idea of the enigmatic message implanted in the enclave of the Real Unconsciousness.

In the course of the transformation, the subject gains the ability to leave behind the archaic modes of desire, i.e., the implantation (of the enigmatic message) and projective identification (of indigestible beta-sensations), now relating with the Other on the level of intersubjective and mutual recognition. This "mature and mutual recognition of self-conscious subjects" (Khurana, 2017, p. 377) is marked in **Figure 2** with the bidirectional arrow between the subject and the Other. Hegel, however, assumes that this recognition of self-consciousness proceeds in the same way towards the Real Living by recognizing this intrasubjective Other. Freud (1923a, p. 23) already spoke of "the other part of the mind" ("*das andere Psychische*", see Freud, 1923b, p. 251), emphasizing the otherness of the unconscious Id. Thus, we find a double gesture of recognition – the social Other, as well as the Other in one's own Real, is recognized (cf. Khurana, 2017, p. 376). At this point, two levels of meaning for the psychoanalytical term "transformation" can be merged: The Real is transformed into self-consciousness, which finds itself again in the Real or in the Real Living. Due to these circular processes, a transformation of the personality takes place, that is, the growth of the personality in relation to itself, the body and the Other.

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Notes:

[1] Two other theories are only briefly outlined here: In the “internal theory” (*Binnentheorie*), being human is determined *without* recourse to a comparative variable such as “other living beings”. The focus is on human existence itself, on its fundamental accomplishments and general horizons, to reveal what being human means (Wunsch, 2018, p. 474). The most important representative of the internal model is Martin Heidegger. One of the strengths of his model is that people are already determined by “being in the world” and “being with others” (Wunsch, 2018, p. 476). The fact that the “world” no longer has an independent meaning is seen as a disadvantage. Another theory is Arnold Gehlen’s “privation model”, which goes hand-in-hand with the anthropology of lack. Gehlen’s basic assumption is that humans are more-or-less deficient beings. He presents an “anthropology of compensation”, i.e., the deficiency must be counterbalanced by actions or the creation of culture (Wunsch, 2018, p. 479).

[2] In the English translation, the terms “sensibility”, “sensation” and “feelings” are used synonymously for the Hegelian term *Empfindung*. The term *Bestimmtheit* (in the sense of “determination”) is translated as “definite feature”. Because a distinction is made in this article between phenomenal feelings and unconscious, pre-positional sensations, I will only use the English term “sensation” for *Empfindungen*.

The corresponding German passage reads as follows: “Die Empfindung ist die Form des dumpfen Webens des Geistes in seiner bewusst- und verstandlosen Individualität, in der *alle* Bestimmtheit noch *unmittelbar* ist, nach ihrem Inhalte wie nach dem Gegensatze eines Objektiven gegen das Subjekt unentwickelt gesetzt, als seiner *besondersten*, natürlichen *Eigenheit* angehörig. Der Inhalt des Empfindens ist eben damit *beschränkt* und vorübergehend, weil er dem natürlichen, unmittelbaren Sein, dem qualitativen also und endlichen angehört. *Alles ist in der Empfindung* und, wenn man will, alles, was im geistigen Bewußtsein und in der Vernunft hervortritt, hat seine *Quelle* und *Ursprung* in derselben; denn Quelle und Ursprung heißt nichts anderes als die erste, unmittelbarste Weise, in der etwas erscheint. Es genüge nicht (sagt man), daß Grundsätze, Religion usf. nur im Kopfe seien, sie müssen im Herzen, in der *Empfindung* sein.“ (Hegel 2016, S. 97, § 400)

[3] “Die Seele ist nicht nur *fu?r* sich immateriell, sondern die allgemeine Immaterialität der Natur, deren einfaches ideelles Leben.” (Hegel 2016, p. 43, § 389)

[4] Hegel describes the thought-determinations in the first part of the Encyclopedia, “When it is said that thought as objective thought constitutes the core (*das Innere of the world*), it may seem as if, by this, consciousness is supposed to be attributed to natural things. We feel a certain resistance to construing the inner activity of things as thinking since we say that human beings distinguish themselves from all natural things through thinking. We would therefore have to speak of Nature as the system of unconscious thoughts, a ‘petrified intelligence’, as Schelling puts it. Instead of using the expression *thoughts*, it would thus be better to speak of thought-determinations, to avoid any misunderstanding. In general, from what has been said so far, the logical dimension is to be sought as a system of thought-determinations for which the opposition of the subjective and the objective (in its ordinary sense) falls away.” (Hegel, 2010, p. 58, § 24). In German: “*Wir fühlen ein Widerstreben dagegen, die innere Tätigkeit der Dinge als Denken aufzufassen, da wir sagen, der Mensch unterscheide sich durch das Denken vom Natürlichen. Wir müssten demnach von der Natur als dem Systeme des bewussten Gedankens reden, als von einer Intelligenz, die, wie Schelling sagt, eine versteinerte sei. Statt den Ausdruck Gedanken zu gebrauchen, ist es daher, um Missverständnis zu vermeiden, besser, Denkbestimmung zu sagen. – Das Logische ist, dem Bisherigen zufolge, als ein System von Denkbestimmungen überhaupt aufzusuchen.*“ (Hegel 2017, p. 81, § 24)

[5] Soler (2014) differentiates between the language (*la langue*) of the repressed unconscious and the language of the Real unconscious (*lalangue*), such as the Real of the voice. *Lalangue* is “a multiplicity of differences that have not taken shape” (p. 25 ff). It is “astructural” and remains “essentially unknown” (Soler, 2014, p. 26).

[6] In his essay *Avoiding the Myth of the Given*, McDowell (2009) differentiates between a discursive and a nondiscursive-intuitive form of the perceptive content. Discursive content is articulated with the help of linguistic utterances. Nondiscursive-intuitive content is not (yet) articulated. It is, however, already understood conceptually (cf. Demmerling, 2021, p. 356). These contents are “suitable”, i.e., they are ready for processing with the help of concepts. If we assume that beta sensations cannot be transformed but instead need to be emitted, the third form of content is presented here: Beta sensations (or objects a) have no potential for discursive activities; they are “impossible” as real objects. Alpha sensations, on the other hand, are nondiscursive-intuitive but suitable for discourse by linguistic thoughts.

[7] Demmerling (2021, p. 356 ff.) differentiates between the linguistic and non-linguistic, the propositional and non-propositional, and the conceptual and non-conceptual. Language includes written, spoken and thought sentences or sentence fragments (if these are not purely imaginary). A proposition means the content of a statement or a thought. Propositions are structured in a meaningful way. Non-propositional contents include practical knowledge (e.g., swimming) or the immediate familiarity with something (e.g., the taste of coffee, one’s states of feeling). What is structured propositionally must be linguistic. On the other hand, not everything linguistic is propositional (e.g. exclamations like “ugh”). Concepts (*Begriffe*) are skills of classification, i.e. of differentiation and reasoning. What is non-linguistic can still be conceptual. Linguistic skills are a prerequisite for being able to use terms critically. Thus, feelings, too, insofar as they have classificatory functions, can be phenomenal concepts.

[8] In German: “*Gefühle sind räumlich ergossene Atmosphären und leiblich ergreifende Mächte.*”(Schmitz, 2014, p. 30)

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