

CONVERSATION ABOUT THE CONCEPT OF SPIRIT

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ABSTRACT

The following dialogue is an excerpt from a longer conversation in Piran (Slovenia) between Andrej Ule (University of Ljubljana) and Matthias Varga v. Kibéd (LMU Munich) on April 19, 2015 regarding Ule's concept of spirit.

KEY WORD

concept of spirit

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INTRODUCTION

Matthias Varga v. Kibéd (*M*): Dear Andrej, talking about the concept of spirit here, you mention three different levels: A level of experience, a level of individual thoughts and a trans-individual level [1, 2]. Could one put it like this?

Andrej Ule (*A*): One could.

M: What I would like to ask you first is whether, in making such a distinction, you do not somehow commit a reification of a kind that you could not from a Wittgensteinian point of view?

A: Yes, there is a danger. I see this risk clearly, yet I do not commit a reification, but rather a sort of integration of the concept of spirit into the form of life of human beings, to be more precise: into the human form of life. For with regard to a situation I am speaking of the implicit entirety of all communication, all joint action, all shared intentions – and I regard this entirety as the most fundamental sort of spirit. This ‘spirit of the situation’, as I call it, is not a spirit per se but rather analogous to an adjective, something that accentuates a certain trait of situations. The situations this concerns are, for example, conversations between two people, or interpersonal situations in general. Of course, besides such informal situations there are also institutional or inter-institutional ones of this kind. Naturally, in the sense of such situations that go beyond the merely interpersonal, there also are higher kinds of a spirit of a situation.

M: It seems to me that for you, then, the point is not to say that there is a spirit, or that this or that form of spirit exists, or such and such spirits, but rather, that there is a spirit of a specific situation, for each situation [1, 2].

A: Yes, that is my proposition. All other propositions one could make about the spirit are in my view schematic or symbolic.

M: As I am not yet convinced so far of the adequacy and usefulness of this notion, let me ask you the following question: So far I do not believe that speaking of the ‘spirit of a situation’ enables me to state anything that I could not say about this situation just as well and perhaps with fewer unnecessary assumptions without using this wording. So what are the statements or what are the applications of this idea of the ‘spirit of a situation’ those, in your view, show that thereby something essentially new can be conveyed? Thus, statements or applications that are adequate to defend the wording, and not just using it as a phrasing that in principle is superfluous?

A: I think the first new possibility is that one speaks of the implicit entirety of the conjoint meanings, rules, meaningful actions etc. in some sort of unified sense. And for me this implicit entirety is a real aspect of what is actually happening [1]. If the people involved in a situation do anything cooperatively or together, then a process occurs that connects them more deeply than in a merely arbitrary relation. This kind of engagement can implicitly be continuously effective. If those people are in a similar situation again later, it is quite possible that they will swiftly be able to continue with what had begun, without requiring many prerequisites or preliminary talks. They will know from the outset how this is done. Such kinds of commonalities arise by, as I call it, “the objective spirit of the situation actualising itself”.

M: Insa Sparrer¹ would call this ‘a relationship’, not an object. They have stepped into another kind of relationship.

A: Not only relationship. They can already enter a relationship before this. If they meet again, apparently this implicit entirety is already there: as a conjoint readiness of theirs. The spirit of the situation is not a thing besides the situation or beyond it, but rather a trait of the situation. Such a trait consists, for instance, as a conjoint willingness of those involved to collaborate in a certain meaningful way [1]. Of course, strictly this applies only to simple situations, e.g.

simple cooperation's or conversations. In more complex situations one needs tangible representatives of the spirit such as symbols, images, regulations, or norms. There I like to use Nicolai Hartmann's term: One needs certain 'objectifications' (Ger.: Objektivierungen) of the spirit [3]. They enable us to retain the implicit entirety of the objective spirit (in a certain situation) and if necessary to refresh the spirit in new, similar situations.

M: But nevertheless you proceed on the assumption that this trait of the situation has some endurance; that it persists in some form, independently of whether the people remain together.

A: Yes, but under certain conditions it can also get lost.

M: So, we had the question how the spirit of the situation for a specific situation can be comprehended. The notion of 'taking a content' in your sense was to be understood as a generalised concept that encompasses, e. g. the ideas of 'considering the content of a message', 'understanding a schema for following a rule', 'sharing and understanding an attitude or a value', etc. You tried to explain the spirit of a situation to me through the concept of 'taking a content' [1], and I found the term 'taking a content' difficult because much would be subsumed under this term that would, usually at least, be regarded as 'non-contential' e.g. not based on contents being given beforehand, as rather belonging to the realm of structure, patterns and rules. Hence I would have understood it better if you would spoken of referring; yet referring can occur towards structures, patterns and rules as well as towards processes and objects.

Yet maybe you also mean something else. Let's try another way. If you speak of the spirit of a situation, hitherto my attitude to this would be that it is only a manner of speaking and that if used in this way the term is in fact superfluous. Furthermore, it seems to me that we can develop the topic without such erroneous notions. On the other you stated the hypothesis of this term having its own value, as it is able to endure over time, so that if in a situation between two people a certain spirit of the situation is there, one can so to speak tie in with the spirit of this situation. Am I representing your notions correctly thus?

A: Yes, it is something like this.

M: And this was why I wanted to connect it with Korzybski. For according to Korzybski's idea of 'time binding' there should be something that guarantees this continuation or makes it more probable [4]. So, again: If the spirit of a situation is lasting in such a manner, then I would compare this to the idea that certain, specifically human learning processes are possible only through model creation. Models or rather maps in the Korzybskian sense are in particular models created linguistically. Nevertheless these linguistic models also have a physical reality – likewise as one never has a sign as a pure type but also needs a token. This is something fundamentally different than if, for example, three people stand in a triangular configuration instead of in a straight line and the next time they stand in a triangle again. Then the question where the triangle had been in the meantime would obviously be an absurd question. I am almost as unconvinced by the circumstance that a spirit between three persons re-emerges, hence, that it, as it were, has existed in the meantime – except if one makes it a sort of entity, at least something like a model, which in its physical correlate also contains a corresponding entity [5]. So, where is this idea of the spirit to be found? Is it only the triangle? Then the idea of its existing in the meantime is absurd. Is it something like a model? Then one has to ask: With what physical substrate? And if it is of some third kind – how can there be such a third kind?

A: Yes, I am considering here a third kind of analysis. If a social situation is so binding that the people who are interconnected within it can somehow continue to follow this and if they have somehow 'incorporated' this situation.

M: Unfortunately I do not understand this.

A: This means, if they have acted accordingly in a situation, and if this situation, this acting, has had such a deep effect in them that if they get into a similar situation later, they will (one says ‘unconsciously’) find it easier to act similarly or in accordance with this (see [1]).

M: Insa would compare this to the notion of memory.

A: Not just memory, not necessarily memory; it may or may not be memory. Either way, they have effectively incorporated this. This is about conjoint actions, especially cooperative actions, experiences that are related to it – all this can happen in many different ways.

M: The difference is simply that with a model it can be three different people, and they can go into this constellation again because of an image, a photo for example.

A: Of course this can come to pass more easily through a shared model that one regards as ‘binding’ in a situation. Yet I believe it to be sufficient if people are so deeply settled in a situation, so familiar with their shared practice – then their shared rule-following potentially lives on in them and can be re-actualised in another analogous situation (see [1]).

M: It seems to me you just now understood my question in another way than I meant it. My question was: Three months later, three people, if these are the same people once more, can constellate precisely as before because they have a memory. Of course there are different forms of memory, with all of this being realised physically; but that is not what is interesting, for in this case there is a model. For this type of models we have quite extensive research on memory. But what is interesting is exactly, if these are three other persons, if there really is anything objective about the spirit, then three other persons should also be able to react to it in some analogous way.

A: This of course is something else that occurs. This can happen, but for this there needs to be something like an objectification (Ger. *Objektivierung*) of the spirit, according to Hartmann [3]. So this practice really needs to be objectified in an object – in a script, an image, a book maybe; there must be something of the sort. And now if three other people arrive and see this image and understand it accordingly, then this spirit of the situation actualises. It does not work in an ‘abstract’ way, with something ideational transmigrating from one group in another, I do not believe that.

M: Well, at the moment I do not yet see anything about your term of the ‘spirit’ to be necessary beyond the notion of memory.

A: If three other persons arrive ...

M: Regarding the first case.

A: All right. I see, if the same people arrive, then arguably one can describe the phenomenon of their recurring activities as an extended memory. Yet if you describe how these people have in some manner materialised their experiences, for example in an object, written it down, and then three other people arrive who are not at all informed about this first situation, yet who understand what the first three did and what they need to do in an analogous situation, then I speak of them having re-actualised this objective spirit of the situation (see [1, 2]). This is possible in such a way without memory. The shared understanding of a specific form of life is sufficient.

M: I would say it succeeds via model creation. Memory and model creation are very simple notions.

A: Yes, in a sense here I am interested in generalised forms of memory and of model creation. This actually has something to do with my conviction that we begin with connection; that all human actions are in some sense connected to the other human being; it is like this from the outset and in principle.

M: Yes.

A: We always begin in this connectedness; in a way there is no separate act of connecting. I believe that thus we can comprehend how to act in a situation well if we have incorporated the pertinent shared human form of life. This means not only language, but also culture and so on. Then our three people can do or understand things in a similar situation in a quite similar manner to three entirely different people from the same form of life. And I believe that these sorts of commonalities arise from this fundamental kind of connectedness that is before any separateness. So in this sense I speak of the spirit of the situation.[1, 2]. This means a precedence of cooperation or connectedness as opposed to separateness.

M: I fully agree to you regarding this primacy of connectedness. Now if we speak about two different situations, then one should also be able to speak of different spirits of these situations. For example, the one could have been a situation where two people were in a spirit of collaboration, and in another they were in a spirit of distrust.

A: It can be like this.

M: Now I would prefer to say that in the one case they collaborated with trust and in the other they were distrustful. Why do I need to transition from the statements “They trusted each other” and “They were distrustful” to the new entity ‘the spirit of trust’ or ‘the spirit of distrust’? Does it not suffice to say that they trusted each other or were distrustful, and is this not, spoken in the sense of Ockham’s razor², the more elegant solution?

A: Yes, at first glance it is thus. I was content with this for a while, but ceased to be in the long run. I considered cooperation etc. intensely, and every time I reached a point where I had to assume that one cannot understand cooperation, mutual understanding, rules of the game etc., and this means in principle nothing from out of separatedness, beginning with a separate human being, a single agent alone; in all this one always needs to presume a fundamental commonality [1]. Now what is this commonality? I have tried out different terms and at the end arrived at the old-fashioned term of ‘objective spirit’ or ‘the spirit of a situation’. In this I felt encouraged by Nicolai Hartmann and to some extent the later Wittgenstein and his term of a shared ‘form of life’ [3, 6]. All this gave me the impression that in a certain sense I just have to use another way of categorising human actions, namely on the one hand actions of individuals without reference to others and on the other hand actions of individuals and groups occurring in a social situation and referring to others who are involved in this situation. I regard these generalised actions as actualisations of the (objective) spirit of the situation. I realize that this is a risky phrasing, as one very quickly ends up in bad metaphysics. Nevertheless I believe that there is an important step in this for which at present I do not see any imaginable substitute (see [1]).

M: Let us take the two of us and our friendship. Would you say that our friendship is something that exists independently of the two of us?

A: Ha, independently. Yes and no. A big yes-and-no.

M: So it is independent in the sense that for example something of the way in which we are friends can be perceived by someone else and in this sense also has an effect on this other person?

A: Yes.

M: Do you believe that this effect subsists independently of any memories and reports? Only then, I would say, you have an objective spirit. Otherwise you only have a passing on of good or not-so-good traits.

A: Yes, that is how I see it. At a stage where we have been friends for so long that many people know us as friends, then at us – not only between us and in us – an implicit disposition

emerges to regard ourselves thus. I believe this to be more than something in our memory or whatever. I believe there is an implicit readiness, a potential field, a potentiality for this way of seeing it.

The ‘something in us’, the experiences of commonality, that is: the becoming aware of our commonality. The ‘something between us’, this is the commonality inasmuch as it connects us personally. It can also be our speech, the thoughts or evaluations that we create during our conversations. The ‘something at us’, those are the thoughts or evaluations that we share with each other and that characterise us as ‘human beings in the common-unity’³ (as a specific kind of human form of life). And besides there probably is ‘something above us’, that is everything to which maybe the two of us feel connected.

M: Beautiful – this sounds intriguing. One question first: How exactly do you mean that the shared thoughts are neither in us nor between us?

A: It is difficult to say how they are. I speak of them being neither ‘in us’ nor ‘between us’, but ‘at us’.

M: So they can be in us, between us or at us.

A: They can be at us if in a particular situation we do something with them, i.e. with these shared thoughts that characterises us as conscious and responsible people. And what I take to be the spirit of the situation is something that in this ‘prevails’ around us or maybe above us.

M: Well, then I would say that I find this typology of ‘in us’, ‘at us’, ‘between us’ and maybe ‘above us’ much more consistent and more suitable according to Ockham than any talk of different forms of spirit and spirits of a situation and so on. I would like to develop this ‘in us’, ‘at us’, ‘between us’ and ‘above us’ further. Then one can say retrospectively that people formerly tried to express this in a such-and-such manner. This would be a similar way of proceeding as if for example one says that under such conditions something can become conscious instead of defining consciousness as an object.

Then to render this into something like the spirit of the situation and the objectified spirit is something I basically still regard as a drastic transgression against Ockham’s principle.

A: Maybe it seems to be, but let us take another example: We are in a concert together, and we are trying to somehow grasp the music. What is this grasping – is it only my separate experience? Is it only something separate, purely individual, something in me or at me? Probably it is something between us, at us and even above us. I say, “We have understood the spirit of this music.” This is a special kind of situation ...

M: Yes, and is not it sufficient to just use the terminology ‘between us’, ‘at us’ and ‘above us’?

A: I am not able to find a more suitable word than the ‘spirit of the music’.

M: Yes, look, is not it sufficient then to use a non-substantialist manner of speaking? If for instance one says: “Since then, I have always had the scent of the rose around me.” The scent of the rose is a beautiful image, but it is not that therefore I would speak of an individualised scent, a collective scent and the objective scent, but I use this phrasing, as something that is poetically clear, especially at a point where further reifications would lead to absurdities. Think of the traits of a face. Now list them! – Is that, there, the same trait? Where does the one trait turn into the other? Does this trait still exist if the person momentarily has another facial expression? I get the impression that one introduces many pseudo-questions by this and similar reifications.

Yet by rendering the spirit into something that is so distinguished from the traits of a face and more similar to cups and plates, that is: to things, one generates meaningless questions. And as with things, we humans have a strong tendency to develop, Buddhistically speaking,

attachments, then ownerships are formed, and, one could say: new sins arise. Therefore I think, like Wittgenstein when he speaks of regretting his sins [7], that here something like a logical sin would be committed. And it simply seems to me as if you have already been a bit more virtuous there, and now again you are beginning to advocate a more 'sinful' version of philosophy.

A: That may be; but on the other hand I think, spirit is the entirety of the potentiality, wherein I emphasize that this is an implicit, never an explicit entirety (see [1]). This means that the spirit is never like a thing.

M: Well, I like to speak of the space of possibilities ...

A: OK, space of possibilities, but space of possibilities always is an implicit space, that is, it is interconnected in itself, or better, integrated, so that one cannot separate it into single 'parts' or 'points'. We can say only formally or abstractly, "In it there is implicitly or potentially this and that," but in a way this does not mean anything. Only in the process of actualisation of the potentiality 'there are' possibilities, only there we can say, "This or that is possible."

M: That with which you fill the space of possibilities can be separate, but the space itself is always connected. This is comparable to a scale or a yardstick – you cannot take the single gradation mark out of the scale (see [8; p.76]).

A: This is right, if one views the space of possibilities in this way. It can also be the entirety in the potentiality (see [9]).

M: Concerning Wittgenstein's definition of form as the possibility of structure [10; 2.033] (and structure as the way in which they are connected, [10; 2.032], I differentiate three notions of possibility, all of which should be regarded as co-intended in the text of the *Tractatus*: possibility as space of possibilities, i.e. the simultaneous (so to speak, spatial) consideration of all these possibilities; possibility as tree of possibilities, i.e. the sequential (so to speak, time-wise) consideration of the possibilities (as e.g. with decision trees); and lastly the possibility in principle, i.e. the circumstance that possibility is given. 'Possibility in principle' may be comparable to your notion of what is potential. So if one only regards the simultaneously given entirety, the space of possibilities, and here misapprehends entirety as the result of forming a set, then nonsense is the result, because we have, so to speak, left out the relevant interconnectedness of the possibilities within the space. That, of course, is one of the reasons why Wittgenstein did not like the notion of 'set'.

A: Yes, another intuition, from quantum physics, is important to me here. Namely, before observation occurs, that is, any kind of measurement, there is no probability but only potentiality. The potentiality is mathematically depicted by the complex function, the psi-function. But probability, or even the space of probabilities, emerges only with observation. It is observation that transforms potentiality into possibilities [9]. In this sense I speak of implicit or potential entirety of the spirit [1, 2]; for me there is a fundamental analogy. I suppose there is something similar in the macro-world also, e.g. in the processes of life. There we can talk about certain process potentialities, yet these can be realised as particular possibilities, that is, as actualities, and this happens only through action. In my opinion something similar occurs in a social situation where a number of people live, work, think or feel in accordance with it. One can say that for example with their actions, their speech, their thinking and feeling, the mutual understanding of many shared 'contents' also is potentially included. I want to emphasise that this commonality can be there only implicitly, namely as a potentiality. It 'actualises' in the real deeds etc. of those involved, acting in accordance with the situation. One can also say that, through this, particular possibilities of action were realised, but only the actual readiness of those involved, their wish to comport themselves according to the situation, 'transforms' mere potentiality into real possibilities of social behaviour in which some of those possibilities are realised. I know it is difficult to

express all this logically and semantically correctly, yet for me this fundamental intuition fits better than any of the other conceptual alternatives I know.

M: Why do not we try to find a wording that can be comprehended on a level that is before quantum physics? We can think for example of the idea that first Carl F. v. Weizsäcker and then Michael Drieschner pursued, namely the representation of quantum physics via so-called ‘spaces of alternatives’ with a different concept of probability [11, 12]. Maybe you see each possibility on the level of probabilities, analogous to a space of possibilities being built via possibilities, via alternatives, as separate particulars that are in principle independent of each other. Then here, potentiality at first might be something like the possibility of various distributions that can develop. We do not have something like probability distributions over probability distributions. I believe here lies something like one of the ways into the question of what freedom is. Heinz v. Foerster expressed this in the peculiar form that we can decide only what is in principle undecidable; for so to speak only what cannot in principle be decided mechanically can become the object of a human decision [13]. If now one says, “Potentiality, by observance, becomes probability”, then one can also say, “Potentiality, by acting, becomes possibility.”

A: Yes.

M: What is it that you would ultimately like to achieve by making such statements concerning the spirit that can, as we saw in our discussion, so easily be misunderstood?

A: It is because I believe that it is a mistake of humankind to have lost our sense of the spirit of the situations. Simply stated, we have lost the spirit.

M: And how would one notice that we have rediscovered the spirit or the sense of the spirit?

A: Ah! Precisely inasmuch as we are aware of something truly significant happening in particular situations and of us being responsible for it; that we feel responsible for it. Something like this.

M: What does ‘here’ mean? On earth?

A: Yes, of course.

M: In general?

A: Yes, in general also or in particular, this can be a particular situation.

M: Then spirit would be just something like the perception of significance or essentiality?

A: Well, if one strictly reduces it to certain situations, then something like this. But significance that in one situation is deeply meaningful to us, so to speak, has a transcendent bindingness.

M: So if in Wittgenstein’s Tractatus it says, “The form is the possibility of structure,” [10; 2.033] then in your sense he is talking about a potentiality. Only we can not very well say, “The form is the potentiality of structure,” for then it sounds as if structure has something special, a potentiality; so one should rather say, “The form is the potentiality of the occurrence or of the forming of a structure”.

I think Wittgenstein is referring to the separate possibilities where he explicitly speaks of possibilities in the plural, for example when he says, “and all possibilities are its facts” [10; 2.0121]. But if he says that the form is the possibility of structure, then I believe he is primarily talking about this sheer potentiality, of which maybe one could say: This is spoken on the level of logical space in itself, not yet of the logical space being filled with any points as if with concrete points of matter. So this too is on the level of what we at times called protological negation, i.e. the theory of bipolarity; it occurs on this level of possibility.

A: This is a good example of potentiality in the sense I use it, but one needs to bear in mind that this potentiality would remain empty if there were no beings that were able to create pictures, or, better, logical pictures.

M: So your question was whether nowadays it might be favourable and maybe even necessary to shed new light on the term 'spirit' and if so, why. Regarding this you said that this is about differences and relations, hence about the distinctions and mutual dependence from each other of the concepts of consciousness, mind, and spirit. If now you ask whether it would be favourable to shed new light on the term of spirit, then from my point of view one needs to ask, favourable for what? So, in what context do you ask this question?

A: Yes, the first context is to regard it historically, culture-historically. For it is here that I see the real lack of spirit, spoken in a metaphorical sense. For many, even very intelligent people are somehow curtailed in their experiencing, in their actions. They understand action in a manner that is too simple, too separate, too focused on particular circumstances. They do not see the binding connections between people, nor those between different situations. This means their acting is in some sense skewed.

M: I do not understand sufficiently what you mean when you say that they do not see the connections between people and between actions. What do you mean by this?

A: If for example in a situation you need to act somehow ethically, then these days one very often interprets this as being only about the concrete particular circumstances, and that if one loosely meets the requirements of this situation, to many people these days this seems to be everything that is going on there. But actually, if one is not conscious of having acted in such a manner that by this one has affirmed my, your, our humaneness (or even somehow saved it), then one does not have a real ethical stand on this situation. One has understood the situation in a curtailed manner. And then there is a danger of conceiving of one's whole life in such an atomized sense. You comprehend the one situation like this, the other like that, you do not really understand what it is about. One consequence of this is that life has become so shallow. Human acting is ethical only if one sees the binding connections between actions, situations of acting and the humaneness of those involved in the situations, so, only if this is with reference to (i.e. with an understanding of) the spirit of the situation and if by this understanding something valuable happens. If it is not acting in this sense, it might perhaps be morally correct, yet it cannot be ethical.

M: It is meaninglessly fragmented, as it were. Do you imagine that a newly conceived, clearer term of 'spirit' might contribute to us more easily comprehending the ethical meaning of a situation and our duties in it?

A: I believe this, and also that this would mean a sort of minor 'constructive' cultural revolution.

M: The other option would be to say that one gives up the illusion of being able to approach those terms through naming, and instead understands that one needs to look beyond what can be named. So, if Pinchas Lapide says that "Love thy neighbour as thyself" actually should rather be translated as "Do deeds of love towards your neighbour," thus shifting everything away from emotion into the realm of action [19]. Then the hardly fathomable term 'love' can be replaced by the perfectly tangible notion of deeds of love. I can understand that when someone is hungry in some way, to give them something to eat is a deed of love, even if I do not have a shared notion with someone else regarding the difficult term of love.

A: Yes, I see. Kierkegaard also underlined the internal connectedness of true love with corresponding deeds. However, in his prayer at the beginning of his Works of Love [14] he warns us that in the heavens no action is pleasant except a work of love, yet this means: sincerely done in self-abnegation, in the urge of love, and thus without any aspiration to meritoriousness.

At the end I still have to say something important regarding the notion of spirit: In order to understand a spirit or create pictures of phenomena concerning the spirit, one needs to have some kind of subjective or ‘experiential’ perspective [9, 15]. Then there need to be beings who comprehend their subjective perspective or at least are sensible to it. So one needs to ask what beings have this and what beings don’t yet. Or: Where does ‘subjectivation’ begin?

M: This reminds me firstly of the prerequisite of a point outside the picture from whence the picture depicts what is depicted; this is called the ‘representational form’ (Ger.: Form der Darstellung) according to the Tractatus [10; 2.173, 10; 2.174]; on the basis of the pictorial form (Ger. *Form der Abbildung*) [10; 2.15, 10; 2.151] alone the picture would lack a subjective perspective and thus its applicability. Yet what do you regard as the necessary conditions for the development of such a subjective perspective in experience?

A: For higher kinds of perspectives in experience at least, firstly a public rule following is necessary, and for more highly developed kinds a form of discursive thinking is also needed, and with it some sort of logically differentiated kind of language [2, 9, 15]. With humans, the practice of rule following is something long-term, steady, something that belongs to one’s form of life. I believe this steadiness of the human practice concerning rules has to do with the thought form and linguistic form of the subjective perspective, that is, with one’s awareness of oneself.

M: I need to think some more about this connection of the notion of spirit with the necessity of a subjective perspective, but in any case it seems promising to me. Nevertheless it would still be fascinating for me to develop the notion of Korzybskian time binding in such a way that the development of a subjective perspective can be seen as a mandatory element; this might be possible through self-referential maps [5], e.g. by extension of Smullyan’s selfreferential languages [16, 17] in the style of Blau’s Logic of Reflection (Ger. *Reflexionslogik*) [18].

A: Yes, maybe – this still has to be clarified.

M: In any case I have the impression that because of you I once more see something fundamental from a surprising new perspective. It seems as if you may have found a sort of logical place of the spirit. And if through a conversation I begin to regard something in such a new way, for me this precisely shows the good spirit in which our conversations have already taken place over such a long time!

REMARKS

¹Insa Sparrer, psychologist and psychotherapist, Matthias’ partner [20].

²It would seem that Ockham never formulated the famous saying in the form that is commonly attributed to him. In his writings one finds statements such as: as *numquam ponenda est pluralitas sine necessitate* (Plurality must never be posited without necessity). But the following statement: ‘*entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatem*’ (entities must not be multiplied beyond necessity) was, as it turns out, a later addition [21].

³Susanne Kessler’s new English expression “common-uality” mimicks Ule’s new German word *Gemeinsamtheit* as connection of the three concepts: commonality (Ger. *Gemeinsamkeit*), totality (Ger. *Gesamtheit*) and unity (Ger. *Einheit*).

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