

Hartmann versus Heidegger

A Re-Evaluation of the Gnoseological Relation

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ABSTRACT The intention of this paper is to question Heidegger's criticism of Hartmann's approach to the gnoseological relation and to show that his interpretation of what the Baltic-German philosopher had in mind in his first major work, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, was biased. I start by presenting the context of the Heidegger-Hartmann debate on the subject-object relation. Secondly, I briefly reconstruct Heidegger's approach to the gnoseological relation and explain why, according to him, Hartmann's stance is subject to his criticism of the subject-object relation. I then present the main features of Hartmann's conception of the gnoseological relation and his peculiar idea of representation as projection as well as his gnoseological stance of human subjects as eccentric beings. Finally, I state a criticism of some of the main features of Heidegger's conception of *Dasein*, and I argue that Hartmann's idea of the subject-object relation is more accurate in describing and apprehending our reference to the world.

KEYWORDS gnoseological relation; Hartman, Nicolai; Heidegger, Martin; subject-object relation

But in certain regard, our analysis of the phenomenon of cognition deviates from that of the phenomenologists. The latter exclusively abide by what is immanent in the phenomenon and they do not allow for the transcendent to speak in its own way of being. This is not so much an inconsequence of the method as a one-sidedness of their interest for the phenomenon, more precisely, the remnant of a prejudice of perspective. So far, phenomenology has been hindered in its own development by the spell of the *philosophy of immanence*, which in the end rests on an idealistic prejudice.

Nicolai Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* (1949a, 77)

1. INTRODUCTION

The following ideas are focused on Hartmann's first major work, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* (1925, 2nd ed.), and are aimed at defending his approach against Heidegger's criticism regarding subject-object relation of being (*Seinsverhältnis*). In *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger expressed his disagreement with Hartmann's metaphysical grounding of cognition. In the final footnote of § 43 he states:

Following Scheler's procedure, Nicolai Hartmann has recently based his ontologically oriented epistemology upon the thesis that knowing is a "relationship of Being." Cf. his *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, second enlarged edition, 1925. Both Scheler and Hartmann, however, in spite of all the differences in the phenomenological bases from which they start, fail to recognize that in its traditional basic orientation as regards Dasein, "ontology" has been a failure, and that the very "relationship of Being" which knowing includes (see above, H. 59 ff.) compels such "ontology" to be revised *in its principles*, not just critically corrected. Because Hartmann underestimates the unexpressed consequences of positing a relationship-of-Being without providing an ontological clarification for it, he is forced into a "critical realism" which is at bottom quite foreign to the level of the problematic he has expounded. On Hartmann's way of taking ontology, cf. his "Wie ist kritische Ontologie überhaupt möglich?," *Festschrift für Paul Natorp*, 1924, 124 ff. (Heidegger 1962, 493)

In this fragment, Heidegger asserts that Hartmann's methodological procedure fails because it is not a radical revision of the principles of ontology, more specifically the ones regarding the subject-object relation. Besides, according to Heidegger, the Baltic-German philosopher apparently remains within the conception of being as present-at-hand (*Vorhandensein*), i.e., the conception of being as presence (*Anwesenheit*). However, a careful reading of Hartmann's treatise reveals that he proposes to begin not from what we are looking for (namely, the principles), but rather by asking how, in fact, the subject apprehends being. Ontology should not start by establishing ontological principles, because if we want to discover the principles of being, we must first clarify how subjects, in general and not only theoretically, have an *apprehending* relation with *being*.¹ This is Hartmann's

1. It must be remarked that A. Vigo has acutely pointed out the way in which Heidegger distances himself from the traditional conception of ontology as a science of first causes and principles (ontology as *archaeology*) and proposes a new approach: ontology as *alethiology*

critical reassessment of the ontological status of knowledge and, to accomplish it, he is compelled to reevaluate the experience of cognition. For him, experience does not start with knowledge, but rather knowledge is already immersed in experience. In *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, Hartmann asks: “Is it not rather the case that the knowing consciousness is always and everywhere embedded in a certainly unending empiria, from which it can never detach itself?”²

However, it must be also admitted that the experience is simultaneously affected by knowledge. This prompts Hartmann’s reason for proposing the analysis of the gnoseological relation—the subject-object relation—as the starting point towards a revision of the foundations of ontology. This revision is aimed at showing the foundations of cognition in experience in a broad sense of the latter term. By contrast, Heidegger’s general approach, based on the analysis of *Dasein*, intends to present the foundations of the understanding of being without asking about knowledge, because he regards it as a secondary fact—as an abstract and purely theoretical relation, which is not originally embedded in facticity. For Heidegger, in general, there is no cognition in understanding being. However, from Hartmann’s perspective, our everyday experiencing and understanding of being is also determined by the activity of cognition and its structures. Therefore, to obtain a more exhaustive description of the everyday understanding of being, it is necessary to thoughtfully consider the ontological structure of subject-object relation.

To begin with, this article presents Heidegger’s reasons for claiming that the human being exists transcendently as a Being-in-the-world and for depicting knowledge as derived from an original horizon: the world of involved engagement that is correlative to everyday practical behavior. Secondly, from the perspective of the existential analytic, it addresses Heidegger’s criticism of the theoretical conception of the subject-object relation. In his view, this conception implies that the subject is primarily enclosed, distant from the world. Supposedly, each and every explanation

(Vigo 2008, 117–18). Hartmann’s perspective, as presented in “Wie ist kritische Ontologie überhaupt möglich?,” could be included under this archaeological conception (which can be traced back to Aristotle), but only after acknowledging his criticism of the way in which the inquiry into the ontic principles has been undertaken (Hartmann 1924, 133). Until the contemporary ontological discussion settles the deep and finely balanced dispute over the metaphysical assumptions behind each model of the “science of being,” it must not be taken for granted that one of these approaches is more accurate than the other.

2. “Ist es nicht vielmehr so, daß das erkennende Bewußtsein immerfort und allseitig in einer freilich langwierigen, nie abreißen Empirie begriffen ist?” (Hartmann 1949a, 112).

of our relation to the world drawing from the subject-object relation implies an insurmountable abyss, and that criticism is also valid for Hartmann's metaphysical approach. In contrast to that, Heidegger intends to prove that the being that we are, the *Existenz*, is not an enclosed entity and, consequently, that it is false to claim that the human being can eventually "reach the world."

After presenting Heidegger's approach, instead of taking his criticism as accurate, the subject-object relation will be considered based on Hartmann's own theses.³ The key to his stance is the non-traditional way in which he considers the idea of a relation of being (*Seinsverhältnis*). It will be clear that Hartmann neither holds the subject to be an enclosed entity nor believes that knowledge has ontological prominence over experience in our access to the world. Instead, we seek to demonstrate that one achievement of Hartmann's *Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* was to illuminate the ontological constitution of the activity of cognition and, more precisely, the role that representation plays in the task of apprehending the world as it is. The key to understand the role of representation is what Hartmann conceives as *projection* (*Projektion*). By considering such projection, it can become clear how it is that the subject-object relation need not necessarily imply an supposedly insurmountable abyss. Given this, Hartmann's conception of the gnoseological relation will be presented from an empirical point of view: the *eccentric stance* (*exzentrische Stellung*) of subjects being understood with reference to a primary common world. In the closing discussion, Hartmann's ideas about projection and the eccentric stance will then be contrasted with Heideggerian ideas as these relate to the connection of *Dasein* and world, and the alleged transcendental unconcealing capacity (*Erschlossenheit*, ἀλήθεια) of Heidegger's idea of the understanding of being will be put in question. Finally, Hartmann's own conception of ἀλήθεια, based on his idea of the eccentric stance, will be briefly sketched.

3. Steffen Kluck has pointed out the one-sidedness, and its unavoidable omissions, that has been repeatedly developed under the Heideggerian perspective regarding Hartmann's approach (Kluck 2012, 196, note 6). In this article, we acknowledge the influence of Kluck's work, especially regarding his attempt at a historic and theoretical rectification of Hartmann's philosophemes. Nevertheless, this research has as its point of departure in a questioning of Kluck's assessment of Heidegger's supposedly convincing criticism of the subject-object relation (Kluck 2012, 215).

2. FROM *EXISTENZ* TO *DASEIN*: THE TRANSCENDENTAL CHARACTER OF THE PRE-ONTOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF BEING⁴

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger claims that to answer the question of the meaning of being “we lack not only most of the words but, above all, the ‘grammar’” (Heidegger 1962, 63). One of Heidegger’s intentions is to reform the conceptual tasks of philosophy by reformulating the basic question of ontology. Accordingly, the question of the meaning of being, and not of what being is, has a double intention: (1) to rescue the inquiry of being from the forgetfulness in which it has fallen due to the impossibility of defining being in the manner of traditional logic (Heidegger 1962, 23); (2) to make fruitful, for the purposes of ontology, the natural and obvious understandability of the word “being.”

The natural understanding of being lies in the entity that has the possibilities of “looking at,” “asking for,” and “conceiving as.” Heidegger asserts: “this entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term ‘*Dasein*’” (Heidegger 1962, 27). It must be noted that Heidegger uses the expression *Dasein* in an uncommon way. *Dasein* demands to be interpreted with a different grammar to the one used to name other entities: it must be understood solely as an expression of being. *Dasein* is the fact related to the possible ways of taking care of our being (Heidegger 1962, 67). In this sense, Heidegger’s existential analytic is an attempt to compensate for what is missing in the traditional interpretation of being: an adequate conception and grammar of the being that we are and, on these grounds, a new conception of our possibilities for understanding being.

Heidegger is cautious enough to distinguish our pre-ontological character of being (*Dasein*) from our ontic mode of being (*Existenz*). He claims that the “essence of *Dasein* lies in its existence” (Heidegger 1962, 67). For him, existence is “having-to-be” (*zu-sein*), which means that its being is a task for itself: “That kind of Being towards which *Dasein* can comport itself in one way or another, and always does comport itself somehow, we call ‘existence’ [*Existenz*]” (Heidegger 1962, 32). In Heidegger’s approach,

4. Following Ángel Xolocotzi’s remarks, “*Being and Time*” can be understood in three senses: (1) the treatise as it has been published, (2) the plan sketched in § 8 and (3) the exposure of the mutual belonging of being and *Dasein* through the transcendental horizon (temporality) (Xolocotzi 2004, 22–25). In what follows, I understand “*Being and Time*” as Heidegger’s comprehensive efforts to develop the idea of the mutual belonging of being and *Dasein* through the transcendental horizon of temporality. I take this project to be the same as the project of the early teachings from Marburg and Freiburg until 1928. Therefore, I rely on Heidegger’s ideas from both the treatise *Being and Time* and the early teachings from Marburg and Freiburg, without seeking to distinguish sharply between these.

human existence stands out from the rest of entities because in it occurs an understanding of being. This is the pre-ontological determination of our existence. This pre-ontological determination plays a decisive methodical role in Heidegger's approach, because the existential analytic of human *Dasein*—the describing of its manner of understanding being—can become the core and the legitimate matter of ontology only insofar as *Existenz* goes beyond itself. Therefore, *Dasein's* understanding of being must be shown in its transcendental character.

The key concept when it comes to accounting for the transcendental feature of the pre-ontological understanding of being is what Heidegger calls facticity (*Faktizität*). The facticity of existence, i.e., in each case mineness (*Jemeinigkeit*), is exercised in a world of involved engagement, in a work-world. Heidegger defines the concept of the facticity of human existence as follows: "The concept of 'facticity' implies that an entity 'within-the-world' has Being-in-the-World in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its 'destiny' with the Being of those entities which it encounters within its own world" (Heidegger 1962, 82). On the grounds of this concept, the distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity (*Eigentlichkeit-Uneigentlichkeit*) becomes intelligible in its ontical sense: what is at stake is the possibility of the human's having to choose itself or lose itself (Heidegger 1962, 68). The alternative is to understand our possibilities either from oneself or from a different entity. The *Existenz* can understand itself in its own possibilities from its own being or can fall from itself to understand its possibilities from the entities that appear within its world (Heidegger 1962, 85).⁵

Following the notion of facticity, it is evident that the *Existenz* is involved with entities that differ from its own way of being. This involvement occurs within a previously disclosed familiar context of significant references. In this context, things are what they are only in a totality of involvement (*Bewandtnisganzheit*). This totality is disclosed for-the-sake-of (*Worumwillen*) *Dasein's* being. The previously disclosed context is that upon-which (*Woraufhin*) the entities appear as they do: this is the structure of meaning (*Sinn*) (Heidegger 1962, 193). The wherein of the act of understanding where it previously lets the entities appear for the sake of *Dasein's* being is what Heidegger names world (Heidegger 1962, 119). This is to say that

5. On this matter, in his contributions to a Spanish companion to *Being and Time*, César Pineda has pointed out the singularity of human *Dasein*, which consists in having this possibility of choosing or losing itself. No other entity, no animal or tool, has this possibility growing from its own being (Pineda, 2019).

Existenz exercises itself within a world in a transcendental manner: by freeing the involvement of things for the sake of its own being. For Heidegger, *Existenz* is primarily a Being-in-the-world. For inasmuch as the human being is a Being-in-the-world, its *Dasein*, its understanding of being, consists in an *a priori* disclosure of a significant-world, a totality of meaning. And this is to say that: “whenever we encounter anything, the world has already been previously discovered, though not thematically” (Heidegger 1962, 114).

At this point, the investigations of *Being and Time* reveal the transcendental constitution of *Existenz*. Only because of this transcendentality can the analytic of existence be considered acceptable starting point for a fundamental ontology. On these grounds, Heidegger contrasts the primary and pre-theoretical way of dealing with meaningful entities with a secondary, thematizing behavior that consists in a distant pure-looking-at present entities, such as occurs in the act of world-knowing (*Welterkennen*). According to him, his phenomenological approach escapes from the false problem of transcending the closed sphere of the subject in the direction of the world as is demanded by the modern theoretical subject-object model. That is because while this model draws on the necessity of proving access to the world, the phenomenological description of the everyday world instead needs no explanation of such access: any pragmatic dealing with something already discloses the world as meaningful. Being involved and engaged with something is a primordial form of access. Taking this into consideration, we will see why Heidegger claims that the gnoseological relation is a deficient starting point for describing relations between humans and the world.

3. HEIDEGGER’S CRITICISM OF THE SUBJECT-OBJECT RELATION

As mentioned earlier, *Existenz* can fall and understand itself according to an entity that is not itself. This inauthentic understanding, this falling (*Verfallen*), occurs because *Existenz*, in fact, transcends and discovers a meaningful world. Inauthenticity means that, in the work-world, the pre-understanding of being overlooks its primary character of caring (*Sorge*) its own being. In fact, it is absorbed by what is discovered as an intentional-objective pole of its everyday behavior: the entity that is ready-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*). Due to the falling tendency of everydayness, the previous disclosure of the world for the sake of *Existenz*’s being remains hidden, both immediately and regularly. This “unknowingness” results in the fact that the subject-object relation comes to be immediately assumed when interpreting the bond between “soul” and “world.” Within this obliviousness,

subject-object relation is conceived under the traditional idea of being present-at-hand (*Vorhandensein*), whose temporal qualification is presence (*Anwesenheit*). Presences entail that being is unmovable, atemporal. Accordingly, Heidegger points out that “like any other entity, *Dasein* too is *present-at-hand as Real*. In this way ‘*Being in general*’ acquires the meaning of ‘*Reality*’” (Heidegger 1962, 245). Hence, according to the idea of “reality,” the specific mode of being of *Existenz* as exercise (*Vollzug*) and the entity’s primary form of being within the world (*Zuhandenheit*) are distorted; the temporality of the bond of soul and world is devaluated. On these grounds, theoretical approaches are prone to conceiving of both subject and object as subsisting entities enclosed in themselves and, consequently, those approaches seek to demonstrate how the subject can reach the external world—or even how communication between substances is possible. According to Heidegger, all theoretical attempts to understand the relation between the subject and the world “presuppose a subject which is proximally worldless or unsure of its world, and which must, at bottom, first assure itself of a world” (Heidegger 1962, 250). In this situation, knowledge becomes a quest to obtain *certainty* about access to world. While certainty is required, the subject-object relation is most properly understood from the perspective of a theoretical framework, remote from our *everyday experiencing of the world*.⁶ By interpreting knowledge as primary access to the world, our everyday behavior is degraded and disfigured, as the expression “*non-theoretical*” suggests (Heidegger 1962, 86).

In Heidegger’s opinion, the interpretation of knowledge from the above-mentioned perspective is merely formal and external. This interpretation comes from a poor understanding of cognition as an activity of isolated subjects instead of an activity of subjects embedded in the world. That poor understanding is also based on the ignorance of knowledge as a derived mode of care that comes from the impossibility of using tools within a primary pragmatic context (Heidegger 1962, 88).⁷ Because of the forgetfulness

6. The idea that the theoretical attitude implies a de-vivification of the immediate and environmental world goes back to the *Kriegsnotsemester* lecture of 1919 (Heidegger 2000, 71–79).

7. We cannot overlook the fact that for the edition of *Being in Time* included in the *GA*, Heidegger added a note that shows a self-critical spirit regarding his early interpretation of “knowing” as a deficient mode of the being concerned with tools. He claims: “The looking-at [*Hinsehen*] does not stem from looking-away-from—it has its own origin and that looking-away-from is its necessary consequence; the-looking-at has its own authenticity. The looking at εἶδος demands something else” (Heidegger 1977, 83, note a). In my opinion, that original and positive interpretation of the theoretical attitude within the context of a hermeneutic phenomenology remains unresolved. Even Gethmann’s instructive and revealing interpretation of Heidegger’s conception of truth is still bound to the latter’s assumption of knowledge

of its caring, the theoretical perspective conceives of the world as nature, which is constantly present-at-hand. In opposition to external nature—as Heidegger points out in his summer lecture of 1925 (Heidegger 1985, 160) and later in *Being and Time*—knowledge must occur within the subject, but not as a mere physical or psychical process. Were this to be so, the subject would not transcend its own sphere. And yet the problem of theoretical reference to the world precisely consists in explaining the leap from the subject's sphere to that of the object: i.e., offering answers to the question of “how this knowing subject comes out of its inner ‘sphere’ into one which is ‘other and external,’ of how knowing can have any object at all, and of how one must think of the object itself so that eventually the subject knows it without needing to venture a leap into another sphere” (Heidegger 1962, 87).

Hence, the problem of knowledge should be an attempt to answer these states of affairs which, as Heidegger insists, arise from ignorance of the “worldhood” of cognition. In theoretical approaches, according to him, the specific characters of being of all knowledge, knowing entities and known objects are overlooked. In other words, there is a silence over the primary phenomenon of Being-in-the-world, over the previous pragmatic discovery of the surrounding world (*Umwelt*). This silence, according to Heidegger's critique, is nothing but a feigning construal of the “problem of knowledge” as a genuine problem. Against that, one of the tasks of philosophy is to eliminate inauthentic problems and open the way to things themselves, as he suggests in his Marburg lecture published as *History of the Concept of Time*. By eliminating these apparent problems, and by simultaneously assuming the interpretative framework of the existential analytic, he thinks that an authentic approach to knowledge can emerge. In this manner, he states: “Knowing understood as apprehending has sense only on the basis of *already-being-involved-with*. This already-being-involved-with, in which knowing as such can first ‘live,’ is not ‘produced’ directly by a cognitive performance; Dasein, whether it ever knows it or not, is as Dasein already involved with a world” (Heidegger 1985, 162).

From the perspective of Being-in-the-world, the attitude of knowing is already projected by its facticity onto an “outside.” Likewise, the practical object of behavior always comes forth “within” a world that was previously disclosed synchronously with the behavior that makes up our existence.

as a derived behavior within the discovery of the primary world (Gethmann 1993, 121–28). In the third section of this article, I reevaluate, from a Hartmannian perspective, the inherent ontological consequences of the existence of a gnoseological relation.

Through its everyday understanding of being (*Da-sein*), our *Existenz* previously discovers a meaningful world that, in each case, is for the sake of our singular being. On this ground, “knowing” is conceived as a modified form of involvement that may open new possibilities for our mundane existence, which can be carried out in an autonomous way, as we can see in the scientific way of living. However, Heidegger emphatically claims that “a ‘*commercium*’ of the subject with a world does not get created for the first time by knowing, nor does it arise from some way in which the world acts upon a subject. Knowing is a mode of *Dasein* founded upon Being-in-the-world” (Heidegger 1962, 90).

Thus far, the distinctive features of Heidegger’s critique of the theoretical conception of the subject-object relation as developed in the ontological project of *Being and Time* have been summarized. This critique of the subject-object relation affected how he and his followers read Hartmann’s *Metaphysics of Cognition* in the second half of the 1920s and onwards. However, in the specific case of Hartmann’s conception of the subject-object relation, this critique by Heidegger presupposes two things: first, that Hartmann assumed the primary access to the world to be through knowledge, and second, that from an ontological perspective the Baltic philosopher uncritically understood both subject and object according to the idea of being as present-at-hand (*Vorhandensein*). Yet this is surely not the case. Heidegger’s understanding of Hartmann’s approach is limited because, by focusing mainly on the substantial character of being of subject and object, he is far from considering the complex ontological constitution of the Hartmannian idea of relation of being (*Seinsverhältnis*). Consequently, Heidegger fails to distinguish between the starting point of Hartmann’s analysis—his phenomenological revision of traditional approaches to knowledge—and Hartmann’s ontological stance towards the solution of the aporias of cognition. These misunderstandings led Heidegger to qualify Hartmann’s approach as another form of “critical realism.” But Hartmann was cautious in labeling his own position as another form of realism, at least from the outset. He claims that “it is impossible to label ontology as a realism from the outset. This contradicts its innermost tendency.”⁸ Heidegger overlooked the fact that, in Hartmann’s approach, the key to the ontological explanation of the subject-object relation is on this side (*diesseits*) of the realism-idealism dispute, which has an epistemic origin and history.

8. “Es geht also nicht an, die Ontologie von vornherein als Realismus abzustempeln. Das widerspricht ihrer innerstlichen Tendenz” (Hartmann 1949a, 199).

Thus, we must first turn to Hartmann's conception of cognition as apprehension (*Erfassung*). We will see that the Baltic-German philosopher does not conceive the subject-object relation from a merely theoretical perspective, but also from an empirical one. Therefore, the issue of how the knowing attitude can access the world is not problematic in character. And yet, for him, the problem of the objectivity of knowledge remained an open-ended one. The Hartmannian approach to the problem of the objective validity of knowledge will not be considered here. Instead, our goal is to show, by highlighting Hartmann's ontological solution to the fundamental aporia of knowledge, that the gnoseological relation is attached to an extended complex of ontological relations. Through this conception, Hartmann can legitimately defend his idea of cognition (*Erkenntnis*) as apprehension and can account for the fact of γνῶσις through representation (*Bild, Abbildung*) without assuming a disconnection or a trivial duplication of the world. On such grounds, the Heideggerian critique of Hartmann's approach can be shown to be inadequate.

4. HARTMANN'S CONCEPTION OF COGNITION AS APPREHENSION

The leitmotiv of *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* is clearly expressed at the beginning of the preface to the first edition, where Hartmann writes: "Metaphysics of cognition (*Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*)—which is meant to be a new name for the theory of knowledge (*Erkenntnistheorie*)—is better than the criticism of knowledge (*Erkenntniskritik*): it is not a new metaphysics whose foundation would be knowledge, but rather only a theory of cognition whose foundation is thoroughly metaphysical."⁹ Thus, the purpose of Hartmannian gnoseology was to rediscover the metaphysical foundations of cognition.

When Hartmann published *Metaphysics of Cognition*, the main representatives of the *Erkenntniskritik* movement that he was arguing against were furnished by Neo-Kantianism and phenomenology (understood in the transcendental sense).¹⁰ In Hartmann's opinion, the metaphysical assumptions

9. "Metaphysik der Erkenntnis—das will ein neuer Name sein für Erkenntnistheorie—besser als Erkenntniskritik: nicht eine neue Metaphysik, deren Grundlage Erkenntnis wäre, sondern durchaus nur Erkenntnistheorie, deren Grundlage metaphysisch ist" (Hartmann 1949a, III).

10. By 1927, Heidegger also conceived of his ontological project of *Being and Time* as a transcendental science of being, but with the pretension of offering a more original elaboration than Kant's conception of the character of the transcendental (Heidegger 1982, 17). On how Hartmann's motivations go beyond the Neo-Kantian mainstream, and how his interpretation of Kant is radically different from Heidegger's, see Alicja Pietras (2011, 237–39, 242–50). Herbert Spiegelberg referred to Hartmann as an eccentric member of the phenomenological movement, and apparently for good philosophical reasons, but also accurately stated that the

behind those trends were idealistic: i.e., they involved assumptions based on a reflectively determined conception of being. A few years later, in *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, published in 1935, Hartmann identified another form of that reflectively articulated conception of being in Heidegger's ontological approach. According to Hartmann, Heidegger's idealism is most obvious in his conception of tool-being that is derived from his phenomenological-hermeneutical approach (Hartmann 1965, 71–76). What is remarkable for our discussion is that Heidegger underestimated Hartmann's early criticism of phenomenology in *Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, which is concerned with the ontological status of intentionality. This underestimation, reproduced by Heidegger's followers, has remained undisputed. In what follows, I appropriate the Hartmannian criticism of phenomenology with a view to questioning Heidegger's conception of the subject-object theoretical relation in *Being and Time*. The point of departure for this appropriation will be the understanding of the metaphysical turn in Hartmann's inquiry into knowledge.

In contrast to his contemporaries, Hartmann's intention was to show the unavoidability of metaphysics in the analysis and understanding of the gnoseological relation. Thus, he states:

As long as we abide by the original sense of cognition as the apprehension of a being, there can be no doubt why this layer of problems is a metaphysical one. We could call it the ontological side of the problem of knowledge, since its center of gravity lies in the character of being as such, which belongs to the object of cognition.¹¹

The object of cognition is *being as such*. Hence, Hartmann claims that cognition is neither a sort of creating (*erschaffen*) nor a kind of producing (*erzeugen, hervorbringen*) of the object (*Gegenstand*) of knowledge, but the apprehension of something (*ein Erfassen von etwas*) that previously exists

Baltic thinker was suspicious of the hidden idealism in Husserl's perspective (Spiegelberg 1994, 306–7). For a recent and relevant discussion of Hartmann's critical attitude towards phenomenology, see Möckel (2012, 105–27). Perhaps the key to understanding Husserl's and Hartmann's different conceptions of phenomenology lies in the former's idea of phenomenological research as a science, whilst for the latter, phenomenology is a methodological moment of philosophy as science.

11. "Solange man an dem ursprünglichen Sinn der Erkenntnis als dem Erfassen eines Seienden festhält, kann auch kein Zweifel daran sein, warum diese Problemschicht eine metaphysische ist. Man möchte sie als die ontologische Seite des Erkenntnisproblems bezeichnen, denn ihr Schwerpunkt liegt in dem Charakter des Seins als solchen, der dem Gegenstande der Erkenntnis zukommt" (Hartmann 1949a, 15).

(*ist vorhanden*) independently (*unabhängig*) from its being-known (Hartmann 1949a, 1). Accordingly, he conceives of cognition as a transcendent activity: an apprehension of something that is not subject-dependent: i.e., not merely immanent. In that sense, his criticism is addressed against that dominant point of view, which presumed that it is possible to explain knowledge without elucidating the problem of being.¹² His criticism draws from questioning those perspectives which bestow ontological pre-eminence upon the subject's activity and therefore uphold a reflectively constituted conception of the entity's being.

Hartmann claims that cognition is the transcending apprehension of something that exists prior to and independently of the act of knowing. The expressions "*ist vorhanden*" and "*unabhängig*" should not be understood here, as Heidegger did, as something that refers either to a prominent entity or to a temporal determination such as presence. In this context, the previous existence means that the subject does not produce the existence of its object of cognition; such independence means that the existence of the object and its determinations, despite its necessary reference to the subject, is not caused by any specific gnoseological action on the part of the subject. The previous existence and independence of cognition's object is gnoseological. Taking this into consideration, if we follow Hartmann's theses, it is more accurate to interpret the gnoseological meaning of "*ist vorhanden*" as indicative of a form of ontological selfsistance (*Selbstständigkeit*).¹³ This is the driving idea behind the notion of *Ansichsein* as a suitable concept

12. Husserl clearly expresses his abstention from any metaphysical commitment in his early work *The Idea of Phenomenology* (Husserl 1991, 19). Heinrich Rickert's philosophy can be considered to represent another form of avoidance regarding the question of real being (Rickert 1921, 205).

13. The German words *Selbstständigkeit* and *Unabhängigkeit* are both commonly translated in English by the word "independence." However, there is an evident difference in the etymological roots of the German words. Certainly, *Unabhängigkeit* is best translated as "independence," because the verb *hängen* is the precise translation of the Latin verb *pendere*, which means "to hang." So, etymologically speaking, "independence" means "not hanging from anything." But *Selbstständigkeit* is directly related to the verb *stehen*, which is also linked to the Latin verb *stare* and the Greek one ἵστημι, <Pass., ἵσταμαι>. All of them derive from the Proto-Indo-European root **sta-*, which means "to stand," "to be," "to take place." Thus, etymologically, *Selbstständigkeit* means "to stand," "to be," or "to take place by itself." Given these considerations, I suggest translating *Selbstständigkeit* by the expression "selfsistance." In this word, the elements of the German word are in concordance with the possibilities of the English language. In the context of our discussion, the object of knowledge is any form of *selfsistance*, any form of being-in-itself (*Ansichsein*), which, in the ontological sense, is not limited to real being, but also includes ideal being and the entities that depend on human activity, such as intentional objects, representations, and even assertions. Hartmann expressed this idea later in *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie* (Hartmann 1975, 142–44).

for the object of cognition. Hartmann uses the concept of “apprehension” to vindicate the ontological selfsistance of the object’s being. Ontological selfsistance is a prior condition for gnoseological *independence* (*Unabhängigkeit*). Thus, to grasp the object of knowledge is, in fact, to apprehend the determinations that constitute the being of an object.¹⁴ Hartmann affirms that “the difficulty of the concept of ‘apprehending’ lies precisely in the concept of being that must be apprehended.”¹⁵ Thus, although the concept of *Gegenstand* contains a subject-dependent moment (*gegen*), it also refers to the selfsistance of what stands in front of us (*stehen*).¹⁶ In cognition, what can be known is the graspable aspect of the object’s being, an aspect partially grasped by our cognitive activity. To sum up, for Hartmann the object’s being is not placed in front (*vor-stellt*) of the subject but rather apprehended by him in the way the object confronts him.

The activity of apprehension is a relation of being (*Wesensverhältnis*) in which the subject and the object stand *vis-à-vis* each other. Subject and object are separate and mutually transcendent because they are selfsistant, because “both have a being-in-itself.”¹⁷ On such grounds, Hartmann states that the gnoseological relation is bilateral (*zweiseitig*) but not reversible (*nicht umkehrbar*), which is to say that the functions of subject and object are not interchangeable (*nicht vertauschbar*), because they are essentially different (*wesensverschieden*). In knowledge, the object is indifferent towards the subject, but not the other way around. So, Hartmann affirms that the “function of the subject consists in an apprehending of the object, whereas

14. We must be careful not to prematurely interpret the simple act of apprehending as truthful knowledge. Since criteria of truth are not contained in the simple act of apprehending, we cannot uncritically affirm the truthfulness of this act. In what follows, it must be considered that knowledge does not necessarily mean, for Hartmann, true knowledge. Indeed, the Baltic philosopher highlights four meanings of the concept of knowledge. They are inseparable from each other and should not be understood as meanings from which one can choose: (1) knowledge as relation-of-being; (2) knowledge as gnoseological structure; (3) knowledge as truth; (4) knowledge as progress (Hartmann 1949a, 58). In this article, I will only be working with the first three meanings. Also, I treat his concept of “knowing as apprehending” as a helpful and encompassing hypothesis that should be maintained through each phase of knowledge so that the latter can show its own complex structure: i.e., its overlapping and embedded character.

15. “Die Schwierigkeit im Begriff des ‘Erfassens’ haftet Eben am Begriff des Seins, welches erfasst werden soll” (Hartmann 1949a, 16).

16. G. D’Anna has remarked that, for an accurate interpretation of Hartmann, it must be understood that in the expression *Gegenstand* there is not only a subjective moment, but also an independent moment indicated in the “*stehen*” or the “*Ständigkeit*” of what stands in front of us (D’Anna 2011, 262). The gnoseologically independent moment of the *Gegenstand* already includes the meaning of *Selbstständigkeit* as explained above in footnote 13.

17. “Haben beide ein Ansichsein” (Hartmann 1949a, 61).

the object's function consists in being apprehensible for the subject, and in becoming apprehended by him."¹⁸ Through apprehension, subject and object become entangled in a reciprocal relation: the subject apprehends and objectifies determinations of the object (*Gegenstand*), and these object determinations become objectified (*wird objiziert*) by him. From a metaphysical point of view, the gnoseological problem consists in explaining the meaning of "apprehending" and "being-apprehended." The question is how the subject and the object become entangled without eluding the essential differences that have a determining role in the gnoseological relation. Hartmann's aporetic consideration of these apparently incompatible modes of being (being-in-itself and being-apprehensible) is the key to understanding his treatment (*Behandlung*; Hartmann 1949a, 316) of the antinomy of apprehension.

In contrast with Hartmann, the perspective of *Erkenntniskritik* assumed the impossibility of apprehending the *Ansichsein*, the selfsistance of entities. On this approach, there is no metaphysical component within knowledge. Beginning with a one-sided and misleading ontological conception of the principle of consciousness (*der Satz des Bewußtseins*), *Erkenntniskritik* suspends the selfsistance of the object and remains in the field of immanence. According to that principle, "consciousness cannot apprehend other than its own contents and, therefore, it is hopelessly trapped in itself."¹⁹ But, if that were the case, it would then be impossible for the object to determine the subject, while for Hartmann, the gnoseological relation is a unilateral determination (*einseitige Bestimmung*) of the subject by the object (Hartmann 1949a, 321). To clearly understand this unilateral gnoseological determination, it must be noted that Hartmann's partial solution to the aporia of apprehension draws from two main theses: the acknowledgment of the selfsistance of both subject and object, and the acceptance of their belonging, at least partially, to a common connection of being (*Seinszusammenhang*). Thus, Hartmann's ontological solution to the gnoseological antinomy of apprehension goes as follows:

18. "Die Funktion des Subjekts besteht in einem Erfassen des Objekts, die des Objekts in einem Erfasßbarsein für das Subjekt und Erfasßtwerden von ihm" (Hartmann 1949a, 44).

19. "Das Bewußtsein nicht als seine eigenen Inhalte erfassen kann und somit unrettbar in sich gefangen ist" (Hartmann 1949a, 93).

Through their selfsistance, subject and object obtain a common essential feature which relates them, the being . . . So, subject and object stand in front of each other *as members of a connection of being*.²⁰

This connection of being is complexly constituted and, therefore, irreducible to a gnoseological correlation. Furthermore, subject and object are ontologically related from the outset and, secondly, become gnoseologically correlated. Hartmann emphasizes that the “real being-confronted-to-each-other of consciousness and of its object is precisely a presupposition of knowledge.”²¹ The Baltic-German philosopher thereby sheds light on the problem of how the subject can be in gnoseological with an existing object.

Hartmann’s metaphysical turn in the explanation of knowledge demands that we understand gnoseological activity as a secondary process embedded in other ontological relations. He affirms that

cognition is a *secondary ontological structure* [*Gebilde*]. It is one of many relations of being, but a totally secondary and dependent one in its assembling [*Gefüge*]. Because knowledge is dependent on the being of the object and the subject, whereas their being is not dependent on cognition.²²

In that sense, Hartmann’s gnoseology is the starting point for a theory of ontological relations in which the relation of knowledge is endowed with a peculiar status amidst other more fundamental relations. This status is what Hartmann tried to show through the analysis of the constitution of the gnoseological formation of representation.

5. HARTMANN’S CONCEPTION OF THE GNOSEOLOGICAL FORMATION (*ERKENNTNISGEBILDE*): REPRESENTATION (*ABBILDUNG*) AS PROJECTION (*PROJEKTION*)

To understand Hartmann’s depiction of the subject as being determined by the object in the gnoseological relation, the activity of cognition must

20. “Subjekt und Objekt gewinnen durch diese ihre Selbstständigkeit einen gemeinsamen Grundzug, der sie verbindet, das Sein . . . Subjekt und Objekt stehen einander also als *Glieder eines Seinszusammenhangs* gegenüber” (Hartmann 1949a, 320).

21. “Das reale Sichgegenüberstehen des Bewußtseins und seines Gegenstandes ist eben Voraussetzung der Erkenntnis” (Hartmann 1949a, 205).

22. “Erkenntnis ist ein ontologisch sekundäres Gebilde. Sie ist eine von vielen Seinsrelationen, aber in deren Gefügen eine durchaus sekundäre und abhängige. Denn Erkenntnis ist zwar vom Sein des Gegenstandes und des Subjekts abhängig, dieses aber nicht von ihr” (Hartmann 1949a, 205–6).

be understood as immersed in a more extended connection of being (*Seinszusammenhang*). As mentioned earlier, knowledge is embedded in experience and, accordingly, experience involves cognition. For Hartmann, the gnoseological confrontation of subject and object is already present in experience and is not a mere theoretical assumption. Contrary to a purely theoretical understanding of the subject-object relation, Hartmann points out that “even the non-scientific consciousness is a cognitive consciousness.”²³ The gnoseological relation is not a modification of everyday behavior, but an ontological constituent of our experience of the world. The ontological feature of the gnoseological relation is the production of a partial objectification of the existing objects; this objectification is the subject’s activity within the gnoseological relation, and the content of this objectification is determined by the self-sistant object. Besides this, since Hartmann understands both naive and scientific attitudes as being affected by the whole structure of cognition, their phenomena must be taken into consideration within the explanation of the overall gnoseological activity. From this perspective, for Hartmann, both Neo-Kantianism and phenomenology are one-sided in their explanations of cognition: the former because it limits itself to scientific mathematical knowledge, the latter because it limits itself to unprejudiced consciousness (Hartmann 1949a, 40–44).²⁴ Contrary to these tendencies that restrict themselves to a limited field of givenness (*das Gegeben*), Hartmann states that the analysis of knowledge must consider a wider experiential basis, so that its interpretation does not fall prey to the same bias. His intention is to examine the widest field of givenness possible (Hartmann 1949a, 43).²⁵ The matter in question, it may be said, is not the act of knowledge, but rather the *experience of cognition*.

It must be remarked that, if we stick to the affirmation of experience as a prior connection of ontological relations in which the subject and the object are confronted, there is no need to keep asking the question of how an apprehending consciousness “can be in contact” with an existing object outside of it. Certainly, Hartmann uses the metaphor of “reaching out” to an

23. “[Indessen] auch das nichtwissenschaftliche Bewußtsein ist erkennendes Bewußtsein” (Hartmann 1949a, 41).

24. On this topic, Heidegger also expressed his deep disagreement with Husserl. For him, Husserl’s aim to achieve a prejudice-free methodological procedure is a utopian goal (Heidegger 2005, 2).

25. Alicja Pietras even affirms that “Hartmann’s notion of ‘givenness’ is the widest notion of ‘givenness’ in all the history of philosophy. The new ontology should start from the analysis of all givenness, from all that we experience, and Hartmann means not only scientific and philosophical experience but also life experience” (Pietras 2011, 247).

object in his first approaches to the *phenomenon* of knowledge, but it is to establish the transcendence, the mutual *Urgeschiedenheit* of both subject and object (Hartmann 1949a, 44–45). A few years later, in *Das Problem der Realitätsgegebenheit*, Hartmann stated the following to clarify his approach:

The popular mode of representation of the subject as if it were first trapped in itself and then had to break free to gain consciousness of reality . . . is not mine. From the outset, there is no genuine consciousness that does not stand open to the course of real occurrences.²⁶

However, in *Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* Hartmann already offered an explanation in which the being-confronted of objects and subjects is not seen through the metaphor of “stepping out, being outside, and returning.” If we accept that subject and object are ontologically related in experience, and that the activity of apprehension occurs within the latter, then the metaphor of “stepping out” is something different from bridging the gap with things themselves. By reevaluating experience as a connection of being in which apprehension occurs, Hartmann cancels the assumption of an insurmountable abyss between subject and world. The original differentiation of subject and object is not an ontological gap, but an ontological form of relation. The cognitive consciousness, consequently, does not cancel the connections with the world, but is rather the capability of apprehending and reflecting the differentiation of ontological relations.

By contrast, the idealistic interpretation of cognition conceives consciousness as an *ontologically closed sphere*; idealism negates, or at least suspends, the ontological weight of any other form of being than consciousness. It is as if consciousness were a superior, a more powerful mode of being than the other ones of the existent world. For Hartmann, this conception is a one-sided interpretation of the phenomenon of cognition, which focuses mainly on the selfsistance of consciousness and devaluates the selfsistance of objects. Idealism grants a superior ontological status to the immanent and correlational structure of consciousness by considering that somehow the object’s being is produced by the subject’s activity. However, Hartmann claims that traditional idealism disregarded the fact that the “principle of consciousness is already a gnoseological principle.”²⁷ This is as much

26. “Die beliebte Vorstellungsweise, als wäre das Subjekt zuerst einmal in sich gefangen und müßte dann erst ausbrechen, um ein Realitätsbewußtsein zu gewinnen . . . ist die meinige nicht. Es gibt kein wirkliches Bewußtsein, das nicht von vornherein aufgeschlossen im Zuge der Realgeschehnisse drinstände” (Hartmann 1931, 90).

27. “Der Satz des Bewußtseins ist schon ein gnoseologischer Satz” (Hartmann 1949a, 94).

as to say that the idea of a consciousness imprisoned is late evidence based on scientific-gnoseological reflectiveness, and runs contrary to our everyday experience, in which we naturally distinguish between how things are and how we think of them. Furthermore, to acknowledge an imprisonment implies a previous differentiation: specifically, that between an inside and an outside. This differentiation is only possible if the subject's consciousness is somehow affected by a different form of being. Hartmann conceives the principle of consciousness not as something that produces isolation, but as a form of link consisting in an objectification: i.e., a reflection of a limited range of ontological connections and determinations (Hartmann 1949a, 328). The reflection during cognition is a sign of the fact that the gnoseological apprehension is mediated by a gnoseological formation which is at stake in the subject's activity of objectification.

The presence of a mediating formation between subject and object proves to be necessary when recognizing cognition as an activity of apprehension immersed in experience, and when admitting that the knowable objects neither become determined nor are created by this apprehension. Hartmann affirms that, through apprehension, some features of the object can reappear "within" the subject. But insofar as it is *sensu stricto* impossible for the object to be inside the subject, the fact that features of the object reappear "within" the subject necessitates the presence of a hybrid intermediating structure of being in the gnoseological process. For Hartmann, that structure is a subjective cognitive formation (*Erkenntnisgebilde*), which emerges because of the act of apprehension, and at the same time can have objective validity by representing some determinations and relations of the knowable object. This representative formation is, thus, an image (*Bild*) or a reproduction (*Abbildung*) of existent objects. For the Baltic-German philosopher, what is altered by the act of apprehension is not the psychic interiority of the subject, but this gnoseological structure, which is inseparable, of the subject's act of apprehension and their being aware of the existing object (Hartmann 1949a, 48). The phenomenon of apprehension, metaphysically conceived, implies these interwoven moments: the encountered object, its apprehension, and its representation.

Hartmann proves the presence of representation by pointing to the consciousness of error and illusion, which could not be explained if there were no structure mediating the gnoseological experience.²⁸ There can

28. In his theory of the mediating structure, Hartmann is in tune with Aristotle, who in his *De Anima*—more specifically in his meditation on phantasy—is concerned with the commonly overlooked problem of falsehood. Due to this common neglect, according to Aristotle, each

only be illusion and error on the basis of an ontological confrontation: the selfsistance of the object allows the subject to contrast it with its own thoughts. Through the recognition of falsehood, the subject becomes aware of the possibility of apprehending the existent object:

not as it is in itself, but rather *as it is seen, apprehended, or interpreted*. This difference comes to consciousness where the content of a new apprehension enters in opposition to a previous apprehension.²⁹

The activity of apprehension is oriented towards the existing objects, but it also encompasses previous and simultaneous subjective prejudices and assumptions. For Hartmann, the apprehension of the world is a mediated one (Hartmann 1949a, 328.) The entire activity of knowledge, which implies an auto-corrective representation of the selfsistance of the objects, would be impossible if there were no other selfsistant elements to contrast each new apprehension with and thus correct, or extend, our subjective representation of the world. To that extent, Hartmann claims in his phenomenology of cognition that

given that the process of experience, as progressive knowledge, essentially consists in the progressive correction of illusions and errors, a reflection on the image, and also a *consciousness of the image*, is also given with it.³⁰

It must be said that the existence of the gnoseological formation has historically been denied on account of its double dependence. Hartmann outlines this dependence when he points out that the image is neither merely constituted by the subject, nor just rooted in the object, but determined by both. Seen from the subject's perspective, the reproduction belongs to experience and is thus modified by its process. From the object's point of view, however, it shares with it the objectuality (*Gegenständlichkeit*):

perception and intellection is always considered as truthful (Aristotle, *De Anima*, 427b1–3). Our Hartmannian interpretation of the performance of the gnoseological structure is prompted by Aristotelian discoveries regarding phantasy. For a relevant contemporary discussion of the Aristotelian conception of the latter, see (Ferrarin 2006, 89–123).

29. "Nicht wie er an sich ist, sondern *wie er gesehen, erfasst oder gemeint* ist. Zum Bewußtsein kommt dieser Unterschied, wo erneutes Erfassen zu erstmaligem Erfassen in inhaltlichen Gegensatz tritt" (Hartmann 1949a, 46).

30. "Da . . . der Prozeß der Erfahrung, als einer fortschreitenden Erkenntnis, wesentlich in fortschreitender Berichtigung von Täuschungen und Irrtümern besteht, so ist mit ihr auch die Reflexion auf das Bild, also auch ein *Bewußtsein des Bildes*, gegeben" (Hartmann 1949a, 46).

i.e., the possible concordance with the existing object.³¹ The dual dependence of representation prevents an understanding of it as a mere “copy” of the object. This is because, if representations were copies of what exists, “then all knowledge would be true and adequate.”³² Hartmann asserts the dual dependence of representation, but with two provisos: we should not assume that, through representation, the existent object becomes somehow placed inside the psychic sphere of the subject, and we should not attribute the same type of selfsistance to the principle of consciousness as the one that befits the existent subject and object. The alleged trivial duplication of entities is thereby prevented: the representation is a hybrid form of being, different from subject and object.

According to Hartmann, the representation “appears” (*erscheint*) within the common sphere of being in which subject and object confront one another. Hartmann acknowledges the appearing of the representation in the world through an intentional act of *projection*. He states:

The accurate imagery (analogy) for the mode of being of a structure which exists only on the ground of an act—in this case, on the ground of the act of looking—and yet ‘appears’ in the world of the being-in-itself, is that of *projection*.³³

31. This does not mean that Hartmann’s proposal should be understood as if there were a trivial duplication of objects (a realm of intentional objects and another of real objects), as Maria van der Schaar interprets it (Schaar 2001, 287). For Hartmann, intentional objects are not selfsistant as existing objects, because they depend on the subjective structure of apprehension. They do not exhibit the same ontological sufficiency as beings of the world. They exist because of acts of cognition, but apprehension does not consist simply in making a copy of the existing world. Intentional objects are no duplication of the world, but rather another form of being which can be contrasted in its content with existing objects. Furthermore, intentionality, given that it exists as a specific form of being, is different from how we represent it in our reflective activity. Otherwise there would not be any question about how to research, make progress with, and correct our ideas about intentionality.

32. “So wäre alle Erkenntnis wahr und adäquat” (Hartmann 1949a, 80).

33. “Das zutreffende Bild (Gleichnis) für die Seinsweise eines Gebildes, welches nur auf Grund des Aktes—in diesem Falle des Hinblickens—besteht, und dennoch in der Welt des Ansichseienden ‘erscheint,’ ist die *Projektion*” (Hartmann 1949a, 123). Through a discussion of projection, Hartmann’s criticism of Husserl’s phenomenological notion of intentionality can also be validated, since it affects the idea of an intentional horizon. In general, Hartmann disputes the idea that the theory of intentionality—the *inexistence* of the object as dependent on subjective acts—furnishes an adequate approach when it comes to explaining the empirical character of the relation of knowledge. It is certainly the case that, drawing on the notion of intentionality, and through an emphasis on the execution of the act, phenomenology questions the validity of the principle of consciousness and everything that derives from it (Hartmann 1949a, 106). However, to that extent it is also the case that “the phenomenologist, provided that he remains only in the intention, only sees half of the phenomenon, namely, the

His main contribution in this regard is to show that the subjective reproduction is a hybrid way of being: i.e., a hybrid form of selfsistance, which does not produce images inside of the subject's consciousness, but rather consists in a projection that places an objectified sphere within the world. For Hartmann, that objective sphere is dependent on, and correlative to, the subject. In such a sphere, the existing objects are objectified (*objiziert*), and the objectification claims to be valid objectively. The projection delimits the subject's sphere and, correlatively, projects a court of objects (*Hof der Objekte*). As Hartmann states:

The existent subject delimits, as it were, through the threads of the relation of knowledge that converge in him, a portion of the sphere of being as its sphere of objects; the expression 'court of objects' does not mean anything more than this.³⁴

For Hartmann, the representation as projection belongs to the world, i.e., has a form of objectivity (*Form der Gegenständlichkeit*), and, at the same time, is conditioned by the subject. Each new apprehension is affected by a subjective afterimage (*Nachbild*) (Hartmann 1949a, 122). Due to the subjective persistence of representation, existing objects are not simply apprehended as they are but also represented according to the subject's previous experience. Each new apprehension is conditioned by what has been known and unknown. Because each act of apprehension implies projective afterimages, a new apprehension can become inadequate despite the vivid presence of the existing object. Therefore, the subjective persistency of the projection plays a central role for both error and truth.

non-metaphysical one. The ontological weight of the object, and with it that of the act, which is the only one to count as 'apprehensive,' remains hidden for him." ("Der Phänomenologe, sofern er bei der Intention stehen bleibt, sieht nur die Hälfte des Phänomens—und zwar die unmetaphysische. Das ontologische Gewicht des Gegenstandes, und damit auch das des Aktes, der allein als 'erfassender' gelten darf, bleibt ihm verborgen") (Hartmann 1949a, 107). According to Hartmann, with the phenomenologist's obliteration of the principle of consciousness, the distinction between the object as immanent and as transcendent certainly becomes irrelevant. Nevertheless, the obliteration of such a principle itself becomes problematic, because it also denies the empirical fact of error and illusion, and our consciousness of them. Hartmann rejects the phenomenological confusion between the ontological transcendence of the *Gegenstand* and intentional immanence (the object as intended). As we will show, for him, the true status of the intentional object appears within the act of projection: the intentional object and its appearing horizon is the correlative pole of the subject's activity.

34. "Das seiende Subjekt steckt gleichsam um sich her durch die in ihm zusammenlaufenden Fäden der Erkenntnisrelation einen Teil der Seinssphäre als eine Objektsphäre ab; nichts mehr bedeutet der Hof der Objekte" (Hartmann 1949a, 206).

When there is true apprehension—and somehow there is always some amount of it in an ontological sense—the projected objectuality and the existing object partially coincide in their content. This projection turns out to be a concordant, objectively valid, representation of the object's being. By contrast, when the represented object does not coincide in its content with the existing one, the projection certainly has an objectual intentional content, but this intentional content is not objectively valid. If the object is not represented in concordance with its being, but instead is something that is only immanently coherent with the subject's thinking, a misrepresentation is projected onto the existent world. Hartmann gives a nod to phenomenology when he affirms that

all merely intentional objects belong, as such, to this projected world. From there comes their 'appearance' in the external world. But projection—whatever it may be—is not cognition; the projected object is not an object of cognition.³⁵

The gnoseological representation should not be understood as something through which the subject immediately apprehends the object's being, but rather as something that, due to the persistence of previous subjective images, also distorts the world.³⁶ Personal and collective prejudices and assumptions are examples of intentional projections that misrepresent or distort the selfsistant world.

Hartmann shows in *Metaphysics of Cognition* that the existent world is not ontologically constituted by the intentional projection of the subject: the existence of error and illusion testifies to this. For him, the projectivity of the subject—its mode of representing the world—presupposes a selfsistant complex of ontological relations in which the projection occurs. It can be said, in a phenomenological way, that the subject projects its intentionally meaningful horizon of objects, but that this meaningful horizon is not the world itself. Instead, the Baltic-German philosopher claims that the represented-world, the

35. "Alle bloß intentionalen Gegenstände gehören als solche dieser projizierten Welt an. Daher ihr 'Erscheinen' in der Außenwelt. Aber Projektion—was sie auch sonst sein mag—ist nicht Erkenntnis, projizierter Gegenstand nicht Erkenntnisgegenstand" (Hartmann 1949a, 123).

36. It is not inaccurate to say that representation can be transparent (*durchsichtig*). Hartmann himself characterized it this way. In *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie* he claims the following: "Image, representation, thinking are transparent, they 'do not confront'; only the theoretic-gnoseological reflection discovers them." (Bild, Vorstellung, Gedanke sind durchsichtig, sie 'stehen nicht gegen'; erst die erkenntnistheoretische Reflektion entdeckt sie) (Hartmann 1965, 143).

strictly closed content-sphere, which arises in all facets of relations, reflections, representations, and constitutes itself a counter-world [*Gegenwelt*] of the existing world, is the 'objective' contentful sphere of the knowing consciousness. Its inner aspect is consciousness itself.³⁷

6. ON THE SUBJECT'S GNOSEOLOGICALLY ECCENTRIC STANCE (*EXZENTRISCHE STELLUNG*)

Insofar as the process of cognition is developed by each empirical subject—and for Hartmann, there are only empirical subjects (Hartmann 1949a, 206)—the constitution of the world-representation will always be correlative to each cognizing subject. From the perspective of individual experience, the subject occupies a central position in each court of objects, because this court is in each case projected and delimited in line with the afterimage of individual subjects. Thus, the subject's situation is, apparently, as if it were, correlatively, the center of a surrounding world (*Umwelt*). However, from an ontological point of view, it can neither be said that the subject is at the center of the existent world nor that the world is correlative to the subject's projection. The central position of each subject in its own court of objects must not be confused with its position in the connections of being. In the first perspective, since the projection emerges from the subject and is constituted—in Heideggerian words—"for the sake of" its empirical interests, what appears in the sphere of experience is considered as a surrounding world. But if we consider the phenomena of error and illusion from the perspective of intersubjective experience, we can claim that each subject acknowledges the presence of its world-representation alongside other subjective projections. All the subjects coexist simultaneously projecting their own representation of the world and tend to believe in the objective validity of their representations of the common world. This situation is explained by Hartmann as follows:

The range of knowledge and the objectified region of being cannot be absolutely one and the same for different subjects. But, in general, the subjects live after all in a common object-world.³⁸

37. "Streng geschlossene Inhaltssphäre, die in allseitiger Relation, Reflexion und Repräsentation entsteht und in sich eine Gegenwelt der seienden Welt bildet, ist die 'objektive' Inhaltssphäre des erkennenden Bewußtseins. Ihr Innenaspekt ist das Bewußtsein selbst" (Hartmann 1949a, 209).

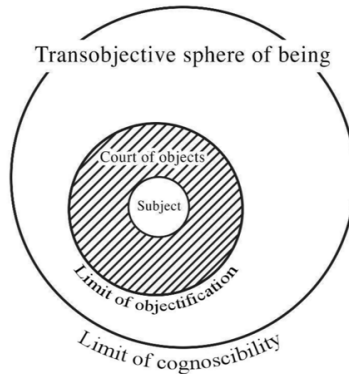
38. "Die Reichweite der Erkenntnis und der objizierte Ausschnitt aus dem Sein kann für verschiedene Subjekte nicht absolut ein und derselbe sein. Aber im allgemeinen leben die Subjekte doch in einer gemeinsamen Objektwelt" (Hartmann 1949a, 206).

On the basis of this remark, Hartmann puts forth in his *Metaphysics of Cognition* a conception of the human being's gnoseological situation according to which all empirical subjects have an *eccentric stance* (*exzentrische Stellung*) in a common sphere of being. He says:

the exact boundaries or circumference [of a certain central sphere] may well be different for each subject, and yet produce by its *eccentric stance*, so to speak, a *partial overlap* of each other.³⁹

He sketches this subjective eccentric stance in a common world in the following diagram:⁴⁰

Figure 1. The eccentric stance of the subject (Hartmann 1949a, 205)



As can be seen in Hartmann's diagram, the subject is not at the center of the transobjective sphere of being, but only at the center of its court of objects. Other subjects can easily be imagined, all with their courts

39. "Die genaueren Grenzen oder Umkreise desselben [eine gewisse zentrale Sphäre] können deswegen sehr wohl für jedes Subjekt andere sein und gleichsam bei *exzentrischer Stellung* zu einander dennoch *partiale Deckung* ergeben" (Hartmann 1949a, 206–07).

40. Regarding the concept of the subject's *eccentric stance*, we would like to express our partial disagreement with Joachim Fischer when he claims that Hartmann did not coin this concept but only contributed to its later formulation by Helmuth Plessner (Fischer 2011, 87). It is evident that Hartmann discovered the eccentric stance of subjects and the gnoseological consequences of it in his *Metaphysics of Knowledge*. Because of that early discovery, Hartmann was probably more receptive to Plessner's analysis, and the Plessnerian appropriation of that concept, in *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch* (1928). Thus, it would be more accurate to say that, in *Das Problem des geistigen Seins*, Hartmann reformulated a concept that he himself had originally coined and that Plessner had improved in his major work.

of objects partially overlapping with those of the others and all of them having an eccentric stance in the transobjective sphere of being. The diagram reveals Hartmann's conception of the gnoseologically eccentric stance produced by the coexistence of multiple subjects within a common world. By taking the Hartmannian diagram further, we could claim that in the intersubjective gnoseological experience each subject can be fully aware of the difference between the transobjective world and the different world-objectifying projections. Errors and illusions are openly contested in intersubjective experience, while disputing the objective validity of their representations of the world: i.e., their concordance (*Übereinstimmung*) with the world's selfsistance. In the process of intersubjectively contrasting world-representations, subjects can acknowledge that the existent world, because of its selfsistance, is not simply as they take it to be.

We appeal to the intersubjective gnoseological experience because, although an individual subject can try to correct the immanent coherence of its representation of the world, it can nonetheless remain trapped in the illusion of what makes sense only to itself. The subjective coherence of a world image is not a decisive criterion of its objective validity. And, since the object of knowledge, the selfsistant world, remains indifferent to its subjective representation, the subject is prone to fall into the trap of self-referentiality. These are the gnoseological conditions for the idealistic view in which the subject occupies a centric stance. But, by paying attention to intersubjective experience, it is visible that, since the relation between subjects does not imply the same indifference of the object with regards to the subject, all the subjects continuously find themselves disputing the objective validity of their representations of the world. Intersubjective disputes over the validity of world representations prevent subjective self-referentiality from distorting the world. The acknowledgement of the eccentric gnoseological stance makes it possible for us to orient ourselves towards the world and discover its selfsistant ontological connections. Objectivity is the form of transcendence that cognition makes possible. This gnoseological transcendence is only possible as an intersubjective task.

7. CONCLUSION

The ontological projects of Heidegger and Hartmann both start from the common idea that knowledge does not give us access to the world for the first time. For both thinkers, to claim that it does so is to grant undue privilege to theoretical over other forms of human activity. Against this perspective, both philosophers re-evaluate experience by conceiving knowledge as a secondary activity. In Heidegger's case, this re-evaluation is given

through the concept of facticity; in Hartmann's, it is given through the understanding of apprehension as an act submerged in the fabric of experience. But their thoughts bifurcate from that point onwards. Whereas for Heidegger the world is constituted in correlation with the interpretative practical behavior of *Dasein*—the world is the surrounding horizon of meaning that exists only in correlation with *Dasein*'s understanding of being—Hartmann's intention is to affirm the selfsistance and independence of the world from the subject. In Hartmann's thought, the relation of knowledge offers evidence as to the independence of the world, since it shows that the world is not modified by our knowledge of it—in other words, that the subject does not constitute the world, but only its image of the world. In contrast, for Heidegger there is no distinction between world and knowing (understanding), because the world is always correlated with interpretative projection; the selfsistance of the world is just another possible meaning for understanding.

In what follows, I present a criticism directed against Heidegger from Hartmann's perspective. This criticism is not intended to claim that the latter's stance is more accurate than the Heideggerian one. Moreover, the purpose is to point out some aspects that should be re-examined in the context of metaphysical considerations pertaining to cognition—that is to say, considerations in which the distinction between what one thinks about the world and the world itself makes sense—with a view to sketching some new possible approaches to ontology.

Thus, the first questionable aspect in Heidegger's approach is the fact that he erases the differences between the horizon of *Dasein*'s understanding and the selfsistant existing world in which that horizon is projected. This is, in Hartmann's words, a reduction of the world itself to the court of objects delimited by each subject, or each *Existenz*. In this sense, what we can encounter in Heidegger's approach is a case of giving ontological-idealistic status to consciousness's meaningful projectivity, but in a phenomenological-hermeneutical fashion (the horizon of being's understanding).

Secondly, Heidegger's critique of Hartmann's position in respect of the latter's traditional conception of the subject-object relation is inaccurate because, as has been shown, Hartmann never conceived of the subject as enclosed in their sphere of consciousness. On the contrary, Hartmann includes the subject in a manifold of ontological relations, through which the subject is linked to the entities of the world. In his thought, subject and object, while both selfsistant, belong to a common sphere of being. For that reason, it is possible for the object to determine the subject in the relation of cognition. With his description of knowledge as embedded in a complex

sphere of being, Hartmann overcomes the false idealist problem of how consciousness could go outside of itself, and accounts for the possibility of the object's gnoseological efficacy *vis a vis* the subject. These ideas play a decisive role when it comes to Hartmann's later ontology as developed in *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*.

A third questionable aspect of Heidegger's approach is his idea that the existential projection (*Entwurf*) inherent to *Dasein*'s understanding of being is the "essential discoverer" of entities as they are. It is questionable because this implies that an entity's appearance is the same as its being. Heidegger claims that

Being (not entities) is something which "there is" only in so far as truth is. And truth is only insofar as and as long as *Dasein* is. Being and truth "are" equiprimordially. (Heidegger 1962, 272)

However, this is to confuse the self-sistent being of the objects with the meaningful appearance of objects. From a Hartmannian perspective, the representation of the world—which, in Heideggerian terms, could be identified with the hermeneutic structure of meaning—is not only an uncovering, but also a distorting structure of the world. Thus, it must be claimed that the Heideggerian existential concept of meaning (that for which something appears as something) offers neither an adequate explanation of the gnoseological phenomena of error and illusion nor an adequate criterion for the objective validity of understanding. The fact that we understand something is insufficient to explain our entire experience of truth and concordance with what exists and occurs. Because of this, Heidegger is forced to explain error by resorting to existential phenomena such as falling (*Verfallen*): error (*Irre*) is *Existenz*'s self-interpretation stemming from an entity that it is not. But, from Hartmann's perspective, this Heideggerian existential explanation can only be a misleading account of gnoseological phenomena.

The fourth and decisive questionable aspect of Heidegger's approach is his attempt to reject the ontological structure of the subject-object relation. Heidegger fails to grasp the manifest empirical conditions made possible by the ontological relation of subject and object. His analytics of *Existenz* interprets the attitude of knowledge in advance of this as being derived from daily practical behavior, as if there were no daily gnoseological activity, no daily grasping of what occurs in the world. In this sense, Heidegger forgets that knowledge, despite its secondary character, is a determining element of experience. Because of this, he overlooks the fact that projection (either as *Projektion* or as *Entwurf*) is really an ontologically hybrid

structure through which we experience the differences between the world as we see it and the world as it is. The subject-object ontic relation is the fact of knowledge *qua* its being embedded in the whole complex of ontological relations. Understanding is not possible without a form of cognition. Insofar as the empirical subject is already a knowing subject, the subject-object relation is also originally determinative for facticity.

Heidegger's conception of both being and cognition remains idealistic and anthropocentric. His concept of "being-knowable," as one among other discoverable meanings of being, has an idealistic connotation: all the meanings of being are dependent on the existential projection of *Dasein*.⁴¹ Furthermore, when he states that existential projection is always the discoverer of meaningful entities, and that the constitution of meaning is for the sake of *Dasein*'s being, this implies an anthropocentric perspective. The Hartmannian conception of the subject-object relation reveals, in contrast, an intersubjectively eccentric perspective, which accounts for the phenomena that we observe in our everyday experience of the world in a more natural and comprehensive way.

The Hartmannian idea of an eccentric stance shows that the subject's proper ontological *locus* is not at the center of the world, and that the world exists in a selfsistant and independent way. The subject is not a Being-in-the-world, but a being *of* the world. When subjects acknowledge each other within a common transobjective world, they no longer conceive of the world in a self-referential form. The decentralization of the subject makes possible a reorientation of consciousness: instead of linking each entity to the horizon of meaning, the subject reorients itself towards the world as such. Thus, the eccentric stance implies, on the one hand, that the subject acknowledges that the world does not exist for the sake of human beings and, on the other hand, that the subject's representation can also conceal the world's own being. Accordingly, to genuinely discover the world is, through constant decentralization, to free it from the bounds of subjective projection or, more specifically, from distorting subjective prejudices. A few years later, in his treatise *Das Problem des geistigen Seins*, Hartmann

41. On this matter, Pineda's reading of the *Black Notebooks* suggests that Heidegger was fully aware of this subjective-anthropocentric resonance connected with his ideas in *Being and Time*. The reason for this lies in the transcendental perspective that Heidegger assumed in those years. However, in the late 1920s he began a reassessment of his own theses, for which the starting point was the abandonment of the transcendental view. This led Heidegger to consider the fundamentality of being's pre-understanding not as a possession of humans, but as an event (*Ereignis*) that takes places in human existence (Pineda 2024, 43, 61).

described the transcendent capacity of knowledge to unconceal the world's being in the following terms:

For concealing is not in the essence of the thing, it does not show resistance to the penetration of knowledge. Only the human conceals it—through his prejudices. If he removes them in selfless work, then the thing lies free in front of him. This is the meaning of ἀλήθεια (unconcealment), which is involved in every effort of knowledge.⁴²

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42. "Denn im Wesen der Sache liegt es nicht, sich zu verbergen, sie wehrt sich nicht gegen das Eindringen der Erkenntnis. Nur der Mensch verbirgt sie sich—durch seine Vorurteile. Räumt er diese in hingebender Arbeit hinweg, so liegt die Sache frei vor ihm. Diese ist der Sinn der ἀλήθεια (Unverborgenheit), um die es in allem Einsatz der Erkenntnis geht" (Hartmann 1949b, 389–90).

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