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SPACE AND *LEIB* IN NICOLAI HARTMANN'S
PHILOSOPHIE DER NATUR:
TWO KEY DIMENSIONS OF THE PERSONAL SELF

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1. *Introduction*

Although Nicolai Hartmann's theory of knowledge is embedded in Kant's thinking and recalls many of its themes in a constant confrontation, Hartmann's perspective differs from Kant's transcendental approach for a key reason: a basilar realism. According to Hartmann, the ontological principles of reality – both the fundamental ones, which are common to all layers of being, and the special ones, unique to one layer or a subset of layers – are effectively mirrored by our categories of thought. One could say that between the two poles there is a fundamental isomorphism. Consequently, on several occasions Hartmann diverges explicitly from the «idealism of consciousness [*Bewusstseinsidealismus*]» [Hartmann 1980, 366] of many contemporary philosophers of the phenomenological (Edmund Husserl) or transcendental approach (Jakob von Uexküll). According to them, subjective experience would be a sort of unavoidable filter against the external world and, therefore, it risks becoming the only sphere of experience that is fully real. Nevertheless, it should be said that Hartmann considers realism as neither ontologically nor logically proved, nor even as passible to be proven. Rather, he viewed it only as a more fecund and essentially less problematic position than all theories that, in a radical way, separate conscious experience and external reality, as well as representation and “things-in-themselves”.¹

¹ According to Hartmann, idealism of consciousness, transcendentalism and phe-

It is not our goal here to discuss Hartmann's basilar realism in-depth. However, it must be highlighted that his attitude is not at all an "ingenuous realism". The categories of knowledge that reflect the basic structure of reality are neither given *a priori*, nor unchangeable. They have been gained through a long process of conceptual clarification that has been carried out by philosophers; today, this work continues mainly with science. This is particularly true for those categories that are peculiar to a limited field of being (the so-called *spezielle Kategorien*) and, therefore, it is also true for the entire categorial discussion that is developed in the text we are dealing with, Hartmann's *Philosophie der Natur* – whose subtitle reads, relevantly, *Abriss der speziellen Kategorienlehre* (*Outline of a Doctrine of the Special Categories*).

To emphasise Hartmann's realism is a good starting point for understanding his view of the personal experience of space and the living body (the *Leib*). In Hartmann's *Philosophie der Natur*, there are two distinct ways for human beings to acquire knowledge of nature and of themselves as natural beings: on the one hand, through spontaneous faculties such as perception, memory, and imagination; on the other hand, through reflexive analysis (which includes philosophical, logical, and scientific perspectives on reality). Both ways of acquiring knowledge are realistic and rely on a basilar ontological agreement with the

nomenological approaches create a problem that they cannot solve: even if the whole world of experience «should be appearance, then the appearance would have to be explained» («[auch wenn die Erlebniswelt] Schein sein sollte, dann müßte das Schein erklärt werden», Hartmann 1980, 367). In other words, says Hartmann, having declared the external reality inaccessible, radical subjectivists not only cannot explain why subjective phenomena arise, and why they arise in a particular way, but they «simply shift the burden of proof on opponents», or in original: «sie schieben einfach die Beweislast dem Gegner zu» [Hartmann 1980, 367], asking *them* to prove the connection between extra-conscial reality and representation. That this connection exist, is, for Hartmann, an immediately given, pre-reflective attitude of the mind, from which we should move: phenomena should not be proved or justified, they should firstly be described (and, here, even phenomenology can give a valuable contribution) and, secondly, systematically explained through categorial analysis. The actuality of Hartmann's position is also clearly visible in a recent paper by Keith Peterson, who analyzes Hartmann's realism in connection with the so-called "new realism" of contemporary philosophers such as Quentin Meillassoux, Ray Brassier, and Maurizio Ferraris (see Peterson 2016).

extra-subjective reality. Intuitive categories allow us to acquire knowledge in a spontaneous, often inconsequent, but very rich and personal manner, while philosophical and scientific categories work in a reflective, analytic manner. As we shall see through the examples of space and *Leib*, the first approach of the intuitive experience allows Hartmann to recover, in a realistic frame of thought, themes and suggestions that the 20th Century philosophy has developed mainly as phenomenology. Incidentally, one would not expect to find these themes and suggestions inside Hartmann's philosophy of nature. This paper proposes an initial investigation of such convergences, which, if they are proved, deserve to be further explored through a more accurate comparison with the phenomenological tradition.

2. *Hartmann's double approach to natural categories*

Before going further, it is necessary to briefly sketch the basic structure of Hartmann's ontology. According to Hartmann, being is divided in ideal being and real being. The first realm includes two typologies of timeless entities, with mathematical and logical entities on one side, and ethical values on the other. The real being, which is subjected to time and processuality, is divided into four major types: inorganic being, organic being, psychic being and spiritual being (which, in turn, includes history, institutions, culture, and personal life). The sphere of nature extends itself on the first two levels, that of the inorganic and the organic being. Hartmann's natural ontology is based on two main traits: its stratified character – in line with the ontological view of the previous works, firstly *Der Aufbau der realen Welt* [Hartmann 1940] – and its overall processuality. The most general categories of nature are space, time, process, change, causality, and the character of system; many of these categories, such as time, regard the whole real being. Besides these, there are also special categories that are specific to the living being, such as the holistic character of organism, self-regulation, reproduction, and variability.

Nature is also the ontological sphere where the aforementioned duality of the human knowledge – divided into spontaneous, intuitive forms on one hand, and in reflected thought on the other – can be observed in the clearest way. Even here, Hartmann's approach is system-

atic: already the categories of the inorganic layer, which includes the basilar coordinates of all natural processes (the so-called “dimensional” categories), are considered both as pre-critical, immediate forms of human consciousness and as reflected forms which have undergone a process of critical, philosophical, and scientific elaboration. In the concrete articulation of Hartmann’s *Philosophie der Natur*, each category is discussed firstly as a critical form of thought and secondly, in a dedicated paragraph, as a category of intuition (*Anschauung*), imagination (*Vorstellung*), or pre-critical consciousness (*Bewusstsein*). To mention just a few examples, the section on time concludes with the broad paragraph “Real time and intuitive time (*Realzeit und Anschauungszeit*)”; the section on space with the paragraph “Intuitive Space (*Der Anschauungsraum*)”; the section on processuality with the paragraph “Process as category of consciousness (*Der Prozess als Bewusstseinskategorie*)”; the section on causality with the paragraph “Causality as category of consciousness (*Kausalität als Bewusstseinskategorie*)”; and so on.²

This systematic double approach to categories is interrupted when Hartmann’s analysis approaches the categories of the organic being. Already the category of the dynamic structure (*dynamisches Gefüge*), which marks the border between inorganic and living being, is characterised by a pronounced «extraneity to consciousness [*Bewusstseinsfremdheit*]» [Hartmann 1980, 476]. Then, in the midst of the organic being, the pre-critical consciousness fails completely to grasp the categories that inform the real being. According to Hartmann, this phenomenon would explain the frequency and regularity of the errors that human beings commit in analysing this ontological layer (in particular, its specific form of causality). With the organic being, the philosopher says, opens up «the great gap [*die große Lücke*]» of human knowledge [Hartmann 1980, 489]. In other words, *Anschauung* and pre-critical experience can mirror both the lower layers (those belonging to the inorganic being) and the higher ones (the psychic and spiritual being) in a richer and more effective way than they can do with the intermediate layer of the organic being. This is also reflected in the different space which, in *Philosophie der Natur*, is dedicated to the pre-critical forms

² The aforementioned paragraphs are to be found, respectively, in Hartmann 1980, 58-63, 116-126, 276-278, 382-386.

of knowledge of the different layers. If, as we are now going to see, Hartmann devotes an extensive discussion to the intuitive form of a fundamental category such as space, his attention for the intuitive form of more specific categories of the real and particularly of the organic being declines progressively.

3. *The intuitive form (Anschauungsform) of the category of space*

As emerges from what has been said so far, it will not be possible to reconstruct here in its entirety the discussion that, in *Philosophie der Natur*, Hartmann devotes to natural categories seen as pre-critical categories. Bearing in mind the arbitrariness of the choice, I will focus on one category in particular (that of space), that I consider among the more suitable ones to highlight Hartmann's double approach. What makes this category even more interesting is that its analysis merges seamlessly with the analysis of the human living corporeality.

The category of space is a guideline for human action and experience both as a critically refined theoretical tool used by science and philosophy and as a spontaneous coordinate of the intuitive, pre-reflected experience and self-perception of human subjects. Consequently, with Hartmann's realism, this category is based in both versions on a deep-reaching ontological agreement with the external reality. As we shall see in the concluding remarks, this common reference to an external pole implies, for a sort of transitive law, that a minimal isomorphism must subsist even between the critical and the pre-critical categorial forms.

As a reflected category, space is a «dimensional category [*Dimensionskategorie*]», or simply a «dimension [*Dimension*]» [Hartmann 1980, 47]; the same is true for the category of time (on which we cannot focus here). Dimensionality is a categorial trait that is strictly bound to the multiplicity and processuality of natural entities. Indeed, multiplicity and processuality require «a continuum of possible transition, within which a field of infinite discretion opens up» [Hartmann 1980, 48].³ In a different manner (in time we have a simple dimen-

³ Original text: «[Multiplizität und Prozeßhaftigkeit brauchen] ein Continuum möglichen Überganges, innerhalb dessen ein Feld unendlicher Diskretion sich auftut».

sionality, in space a three-dimensional articulation), space, as a basic category of nature, provides an empty and neutral sphere *inside which* there can be, in general, multiplicity, discretion, relations, and change. This is the way in which mathematics, physics, and philosophy mostly think of space as ontological pre-condition for a possible multiplicity of entities and processes.⁴

As a pre-critical form of perception and representation, the intuitive category of space demonstrates different features. Neutrality and emptiness are substituted by the distinctive inhomogeneity of human spatial experience: «the places in this system are not equivalent [...]. They appear graded according to preferred directions and areas» [Hartmann 1980, 129].⁵ This inhomogeneity reveals itself in many ways: the horizon is narrower for the sense of touch and wider for that of sight, and also changes according to the age of the perceiving subject [Hartmann 1980, 132]; in the visual space, the horizontal plane is privileged [Hartmann 1980, 129]; perspective causes many subject-related optical effects, such as the scaling down of objects in function of their distance [Hartmann 1980, 120], and so on.

The inhomogeneity of the intuitive space is due to a typical trait of our consciousness. As a psychic entity, consciousness is non-spatial in itself and uses non-spatial tools (for Hartmann, representations can have a spatial content, but they are non-spatial as psychic entities). Nevertheless, consciousness succeeds in posing itself as a perspective centre of a system of coordinates and in building up around itself a visual field that reproduces the spatial elements of the outer reality (and here, as we shall see, the *Leib* plays a key role). Consciousness, writes Hartmann, «makes an equivalent of the spatial appear in the non-spatial»

⁴ The discussion on dimensionality is carried on by Hartmann inside a constant confrontation with Kant. Besides a basic divergence in the way of considering the categories (transcendental idealism on Kant's side, critical realism on Hartmann's), Hartmann criticises Kant for not having clarified what space and time have in common: the categorial moment of dimensionality. By the way, to add dimensionality to the Kantian *a priori* forms of sensibility would be a very interesting theoretical experiment.

⁵ Original text: «die Örter in diesem System sind nicht gleichwertig [...]. Sie erscheinen abgestuft nach Vorzugsrichtungen und Vorzugsgegenenden».

[Hartmann 1980, 118],⁶ and this process of reproduction of spatially extended contents through non-spatial representations is neither a mechanical mirroring of the spatial aspects of the external world, nor is it the creation of an illusory sphere. It is, instead, a spontaneous process of reconstruction and «re-objectivation» (*Re-objektivierung*) that has a semiotic nature. Perspective phenomena (such as the reduction of the size of the objects in function of the distance, or the apparent convergence of parallel lines) «do not act as illusions in developed consciousness, but as *signs* of distance and location» [Hartmann 1980, 120; italics my own].⁷ Incidentally, Hartmann's refusal to attribute an illusory character to perspectival phenomena and, in general, to spatial representations is fully consistent with his realism. Even if space, as a form of intuitive perception, is the result of processes of re-objectivation and semiotic mediation, it remains, writes Hartmann, «an astounding adaptation of consciousness to the outside world» [Hartmann 1980, 118].⁸

4. *The pre-critical experience of the Leib*

Our presentation of Hartmann's view of the intuitive space would be seriously incomplete without mentioning the role played by the living body (the *Leib*)⁹ – that is, for him, the immediately re-perceived psycho-physical unit of the self. Faced with the problem of understanding how an unextended psychic being such as consciousness can be constitutively rooted in a place in the real space, which then becomes the

⁶Original text: «[die Vorstellung] läßt im Unräumlichen ein Äquivalent des Räumlichen auftreten».

⁷Original text: «[solche Phänomene] wirken im entwickelten Bewusstseins nicht als Täuschung, sondern als Anzeichen der Entfernung und der Lage».

⁸Original text: «[der Raum ist] eine erstaunliche Anpassung des Bewusstseins an die Außenwelt». In Hartmann's work, the term adaptation (*Anpassung*) has to be read in a pragmatic, rather than a Darwinian sense; see also Hartmann 1980, 3 (where the term “adaptation” clearly appears as a synonym for “orientation” [*Orientierung*]).

⁹In the inability to provide a detailed account of the establishment of the *Leib* category in philosophy, philosophical anthropology, and phenomenology, I limit myself to some essential bibliographical indications: Grätzel, 1989; Waldenfels 2000; Fischer *et al.* 2010; Schmitz 2011; Rappe 2012.

centre of the representative space, Hartmann responds that this can happen only in an indirect way, through the mediation of the living body: «Consciousness is indirectly transposed to a place in the real space by the living body [*Leib*] to which it is bound. And it can perceive precisely by this mediated localization: only from one location it can see, hear, and touch» [Hartmann 1980, 122].¹⁰ The phenomenon of the mediated localisation, made possible by the living body, is a basic condition of the perceptive activity of the self-conscious subject. The perceiving subject «can indeed change location, but only by a real spatial movement of the living body» [Hartmann 1980, 122]¹¹ and is «bound by the living body to the real place of the living body» [Hartmann 1980, 123].¹² Through the *Leib*, consciousness becomes a centre of coordinates in the real space, i.e., in the discrete domain of multiplicity, relations, and change; then, forgetting the mediation of the *Leib*, it experiences itself directly as the centre. For consciousness, corporeity is at the same time a limit and the source of the effectiveness of its action in the real world.

If the intuitive perception of space is necessarily centered on the body, other pre-critical faculties of the subject such as imagination and representation can overcome this boundary; this happens through a sort of projective dislocation of the centre in a different point of the spatial field. The centrality of the perceiving *Leib* is not eliminated, but inserted in a wider symbolic field. This gives rise to the possibility of re-

¹⁰ Original text: «Das Bewusstsein ist durch den Leib, an den es gebunden ist, indirekt an einen Ort im Realraume versetzt. Und wahrnehmen kann es gerade durch diese vermittelte Lokalisierung: es kann durchaus nur von einem Standort aus sehen, hören, tasten».

¹¹ Original text: «[das wahrnehmende Subjekt kann] die Stelle zwar wechseln, aber nur durch realräumliche Fortbewegung des Leibes».

¹² Original text: «[das wahrnehmende Subjekt ist] durch den Leib an den realräumlichen Ort des Leibes gefesselt». Boundness (*Fesselung*) is a key word in Hartmann's *Philosophie der Natur*; it refers to the ontological limitedness of human beings as natural entities and is linked to the idea of the progressive diminution of possibilities that goes hand in hand with the temporal character of the human life. To avoid possible misunderstandings, it should be noted that the *Fesselung* is not an original ontological category, but rather the secondary outcome of those fundamental ontological principles that, being dimensional, are the condition of possibility for all subsequent levels of reality. See also Hartmann 1980, 140.

garding the perceiving subject (so to speak) from outside. This process of «re-objectivating world orientation of the subject» [Hartmann 1980, 123]¹³ is described by Hartmann with explicit reference to Helmuth Plessner's concept of the ex-centric positionality (*exzentrische Positionalität*) of human beings: «man is oriented towards the world and sees himself [...] in an ex-centric position towards it» [Hartmann 1980, 123].¹⁴ Both authors see the ex-centric positionality as the dividing line between human and non-human animals. In their view, non-human animals are also rooted in the real being as perceiving and living bodies, but they are not able to detach themselves from their “centric” position; only humans can symbolically and cognitively project themselves into other points of the spatial field.

The basic role played by the living body in the constitution of the *Anschauungsraum* has a final, relevant consequence for self-perception by the subject. As mentioned above, consciousness is, for Hartmann, an unextended instance which, in order to orientate and act in the world, must produce an inner equivalent of the spatial world. In this process, consciousness itself has to be represented through an equivalent in space, which is not directly the *Leib* but «the self [*das Ich*]» [Hartmann 1980, 122] or «the own person [*die eigene Person*]» [Hartmann 1980, 125].¹⁵ In the personal space of the self, the unextended sphere of the

¹³ Original text: «[die] reobjektivierende Weltorientierung des Subjekts».

¹⁴ Original text: «der Mensch orientiert sich auf die Welt und sieht sich selbst [...] in exzentrischer Stellung zu ihr». On the concept of positionality in Plessner's philosophical anthropology, see Fischer 2000; Chrobak 2014, 73-80. On Hartmann's personal and theoretical relationship with Plessner (and, in general, with German philosophical anthropology), see Fischer 2011, 78-79.

¹⁵ In *Philosophie der Natur*, Hartmann speaks of the person with a significantly different perspective than in the preceding texts. If, above all in *Ethics*, the person was defined primarily by his task of grasping and achieving the moral values (which Hartmann classifies, ontologically, among the ideal entities), in his *Philosophie der Natur* the philosopher rather focuses on the ontological preconditions that make possible the subsistence of the person inside the real being (and hence, indirectly, the performance of the moral action). Among these preconditions, in this contribution we have focused on spatiality; in another recent paper, instead, we have analysed the fundamental question of how the person can last in the dimension of time (see Brentari 2018). On the issue of the person in Hartmann's ontology, see also Hartmann 2002, 317-341; Hartmann 2003, 341-368; Hartmann 2004, 205-240; Hartmann 1962,

subject as consciousness comes to a full identification with the spatiality of the subject as living and perceiving body.

Once again, the experienced spatiality of the personal sphere is not a primary dimension from the ontological point of view, but it is pragmatically very useful. Through the personal self, the subject «locates himself in the spatially intuited world of things, in which it, as consciousness, can assume no place at all» [Hartmann 1980, 122].¹⁶ This allows for it to interact effectively with things; however, the opening up of this possibility is accompanied, as a sort of side effect, by the reification of the self, which, in the pre-critical self-perception, appears as a «thing among things» [Hartmann 1980, 125].¹⁷ This reification also accounts for the immediate, irrefutable attribution of the body to the self; «the living body» – writes Hartmann – «[is] attributed to the self» [Hartmann 1980, 125].¹⁸ On closer inspection, there is a peculiar misunderstanding here: the self, which borrows its mediated spatial extension from the *Leib*, thinks of itself as the *owner* of the body.¹⁹ Yet again, the reason for this misunderstanding should be sought after in what is, for Hartmann, the very sense of the spatialisation of experience, that is, the need to act in a reliable equivalent of the outside world, where the body *is* first of all a spatial entity.

In other words, the reification of the self gives rise to the opportunity to draw a pragmatic and experiential border between myself (the union of personal self and the *Leib*) and the other-than-myself. The self, writes Hartmann, «is perceived by “me” as the “mine”; its contrary is constituted by the outer world, which is related to it [but] [...] is perceived and understood as the “not mine”» [Hartmann 1980,

124-172, Hartmann 1955, 311-318; Da Re 1996, 221-227; Da Re 2001.

¹⁶ Original text: «[Das Subjekt] lokalisiert also sich selbst in der räumlich angeschauten Dingwelt, in der als Bewusstsein gar keine Stelle annehmen kann».

¹⁷ Original text: «[das Selbst erscheint als] ein Ding unter Dingen».

¹⁸ Original text: «der Leib [ist] zum Ich gezählt».

¹⁹ A doubt about the solidity of this possession could arise already by observing the strong limitations affecting the representation of the bodily interiority («*das Leibinnere*», Hartmann 1980, 125); this sphere is usually «dark, blurry, and also short-ranging as far as its content is concerned», or in original: «[diese Sphäre ist] dunkel, verschwommen und reicht auch inhaltlich nicht weit» [Hartmann 1980, 125].

125].²⁰ Moreover, according to Hartmann, the outside world must have a clear «preponderance [Übergewicht]» in the pragmatically-oriented consciousness – in Hartmann's words, the «simply practical thinking» [Hartmann 1980, 125].²¹ This preponderance is indispensable to the orientation and adaptation of the human being.²²

In short, the pre-critical experience of space and the *Leib* must lead to the constitution of an external world that is immediately experienced as a sphere of alterity. The person relates to this sphere with a mixed attitude of extraneousness (that originates from the opposition between *meinig* and *nichtmeinig*) and of cognitive agreement (ultimately due to Hartmann's categorial realism). In this regard, Hartmann is concerned that the awareness of the subjective mediation of the experiential field could result in the subjectification of this field, with the resulting loss of alterity (and, ultimately, of effective reality) of the *nichtmeinig*. What the philosopher wants to avoid, in other words, is the Husserlian or Uexküllian (but, ultimately, Kantian) «misleading representation [*irrig*e *Vorstellung*]», according to which «the surrounding thing-world becomes an extended self-sphere, for example, as an environment existing merely “for me”, or as “my world”» [Hartmann 1980, 125].²³

²⁰ Original text: «[das Selbst] wird von “mir” als der “meinige” empfunden, und der Gegensatz dazu bildet die auf ihn bezogene Außenwelt, [...] die als die “nichtmeinige” wahrgenommen und aufgefasst wird».

²¹ Original text: «[im] schlichten praktischen Denken».

²² This must happen even if, as counter effect, the consciousness is over-objectified («überobjektiviert», Hartmann 1980, 125) and therefore misunderstood in its nature of unextended psychic entity. In any case, if reification and over-objectivation of the self are unavoidable on the pragmatic level of experience, they can be brought to consciousness and corrected on the level of the critical ontological reflection.

²³ Original text: «die umgebende Dingwelt [wird zu] einer erweiterten Ichsphäre, etwa als bloß “für mich” bestehende Umwelt” oder als “je meinige Welt”». For an overview of Hartmann's references to Husserl, see Landmann 1943, 400; as for Uexküll, in Hartmann 1980, 532-533, the author says he is explicitly contrary to the use of the term *Umwelt* in the Uexküllian sense, namely as a subjective species-specific construction.

5. Concluding remarks

In all its forms (as a critically reflected category, as an intuitive category, as a represented inner world and so on), the Hartmannian category of space grasps some essential traits of the external world, i.e., of space as an ontological principle. This can be generalised by saying that Hartmann's realistic stance leads him to affirm the presence of a minimal *isomorphism* between all categorial forms of the subject on one side, and the external reality of space on the other. On the categorial side, this isomorphism is based on some features that are common to all versions of a given category. For space, this common feature is dimensionality: in all its forms, space remains a three-dimensional sphere, in which a multiplicity of discrete entities can simultaneously exist. Even as a form of perceptive intuition, representation, and imagination, the category of space must respect this minimal isomorphism not only with the critical, scientific notion of space, but also with the external world. Otherwise (if space, for instance, were only an expanded self-sphere), this category would be deprived of any value for orientation.

Once the categorial forms have respected this minimal isomorphism, then they are free to diverge significantly in their development and goals. The reflected category of space becomes the object of specific research disciplines (geometry, physics, critical ontology itself), whereas the unreflected form continues to secure the everyday orientation of man in the natural and relational world. In both cases, many elements are added to the basic, isomorphic schema. We cannot go more in-depth here into the epistemological implications of Hartmann's realism with reference to the geometrical notion of space;²⁴ in order to conclude our reflection, we shall instead summarise the four main points of divergence of space as form of intuition and representation from the aforementioned minimal isomorphic traits.

²⁴ See, however, Pinna [2016], who provides both a clear introduction to this relatively little-studied issue of Hartmann's natural ontology, and a theoretic contextualisation of the Hartmannian position in contemporary epistemology. In the reconstruction provided by Pinna, Hartmann stands among the supporters of the ontologically original nature of space and time dimensions («primacy thesis»), a position opposite to relational and derivative views – which, by making space and time mere coordinates relative to other entities, and hence dependent on them, ultimately lead to their vanishing («disappearance thesis») (see Pinna 2016, 25).

Firstly, spatial sense-perception and representation are spontaneous processes of reconstruction and re-objectivation of the spatial elements of the external reality. They do not rest on a mechanical mirroring of the external world, but on semiotic procedures, thanks to which the spatial conditions are translated into non-spatial representations (for example, an increasing distance from the subject is rendered through the scaling down of the size of the perceived objects). Secondly, the abstract tri-dimensionality of space becomes a subject-related system of coordinates. The coincidence between *Leib* and consciousness makes possible the mediated localisation of the subject in the real space; consequently, space becomes an inhomogeneous, personal field that can be experienced in different ways in relation to the age of the subject or the considered sense (sight, touch, etc.), and so on. Thirdly, the spatialisation of the consciousness is the pre-condition of the distinction between inner and outer space – between an inner sphere of self-consciousness and proprioception and the external world. This wide-ranging division of space in *meinig* and *nichtmeinig* is a sort of anthropological basis condition and is very far from the neutral view of space as a critically reflected category. Fourthly, if the coincidence with the *Leib* gives consciousness a stabile localization in the real space, the representative faculty can provisionally dislocate and project the subject, on the imaginative plane, into other points of the perceived space. This is the relevant phenomenon of the ex-centric positionality of man that Hartmann, like Plessner, sees as a particularity of human beings towards non-human embodied subjects.

Perhaps to preserve his basic realistic stance from any misunderstanding, Hartmann avoids the term “phenomenology” and “phenomenological”. Nevertheless, the summarized traits of space as a natural, pre-critical category testify for the presence, in the realistic frame of Hartmann's *Philosophie der Natur*, of a deep *phenomenological insight* into some basic coordinate of human personal experience (first and foremost, on its being rooted in a living body). A similar discussion of the intuitive versions of other categories of the real being (time, change, process, etc.) would very probably support this research approach. If, for Hartmann, phenomenology is usually only the starting point of the ontological enquiry (the phase of data collection and preliminary de-

scription of the phenomena of the considered ontological layer),²⁵ here we have a deeper and more content-related closeness of Hartmann to the classical issues of the 20th Century phenomenology (with the relevant mediation, it should be recalled, of Plessner's philosophical anthropology). The respect of the minimal isomorphism of the intuitive categories (with the critically developed categories on one side, and with the basis articulation of the external reality on the other) gives a decidedly realistic character to Hartmann's phenomenology of the lived experience. This avoids the risk that the subjective experience of the world comes to coincide with an expanded sphere of the self. At the same time, it is doubtless that his ontological analysis can shed light on many relevant aspects of the *condition humana* and on the self-perception of the embodied person.

²⁵ See Landmann 1943, 395-397; Mohanty 1982. Landmann's contribution is still the most accurate and accurate analysis of the relationship between Hartmann and phenomenology. Landmann's thesis is that of a profound consonance between Hartmann and authors such as Husserl and, above all, Max Scheler. This consonance is manifested in some common points: the respect of the given inside the philosophical enquiry; the criticism of the psychologism (see Landmann 1943, 400), the skepticism towards the metaphysical systems; and the focus on the ethical and axiological application of phenomenology (see Landmann 1943, 404). At the same time, Landmann recognises that Hartmann's philosophy exceeds the phenomenological approach at the very moment in which it becomes an ontology. In any case, the peculiar character of such an ontology – its pluralistic and non-reductive character, its attention to the peculiarities of the different ontological layers – leads Landmann to the following concluding assertion: «we have gone so far as not only to consider Hartmann as a phenomenologist, but even as the achiever of phenomenology» (see Landmann 1943, 422). Even if he agrees with Landmann as far as the convergence lines between Husserl and Hartmann are concerned – to which he adds the «rehabilitation of the ontological status of the essences [*Wesenheiten*]» [Mohanty 1982, 16] – Mohanty does not share the overall evaluation of Hartmann as achiever of the phenomenology. On the debate about the relationship between the phenomenological tradition and Hartmann's ontology, see also Thyssen 1953; Bertolini 2016.

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Keywords

Nicolai Hartmann; Ontological Realism; Personal Experience; Space; Corporeity; *Leib*

Abstract

This paper offers an initial investigation of some philosophical-anthropological and phenomenological aspects of Nicolai Hartmann's *Philosophie der Natur*. In this work, besides the critical analysis of the ontological articulation of the natural being, Hartmann shows great interest in the spontaneous, unmediated usage of some categories of natural ontology (space, time, causality, process, and so on). Our particular focus is Hartmann's analysis of the pre-critical spatial self-perception of the subject, that reveals wide-ranging links with the phenomenologically relevant issues of the living corporeity (*Leiblichkeit*) and the delimitation of a personal sphere of experience.