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MODERN VIEW



Historical and Philosophical Excursion

ANTONIO MILLÁN-PUELLES
AND EASY PROBLEM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

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Summary

The article is devoted to a book of a Spanish philosopher, Antonio Millán-Puelles. The book is called “The structure of Subjectivity” and pertain to the philosophical psychology domain. General approach of Millán to the theme and his mode of presenting it correspond to the basic trend of philosophy in Spain under Franco. More precisely, that philosophy, firstly, uses conceptual and terminological resource of scholasticism and, secondly, applies the method of phenomenological description with the goal to gain access to ontological foundations of reality. According to Millán-Puelles, subjectivity is a specific kind of being, that is, a living being which is the subject of its own acts. Treating the functioning of living things in the perspective of Aristotelian and scholastic distinction “potency / act”, Millán-Puelles affirms necessary complexity of subjectivity, its structural constitution. The main themes of Millán’s book are as follows: 1) the basic structure of subjectivity is formed as a union of the body and consciousness: subjectivity is not reducible to a pure consciousness; 2) subjectivity cannot be entirely transparent for itself; 3) subjectivity is radically appealed to the intentional transcending to another being; 4) but in the transcending to another being it simultaneously realizes and connotes itself.

Keywords: structure, subjectivity, consciousness, intentional transcending, intimacy of subjectivity.

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Spanish philosophy of the 20th century is a philosophy of a difficult fate. Following the brilliant beginning associated with the names of Miguel de Unamuno and José Ortega y Gasset, over the brief decades of the Spaniards' diligent apprenticeship from philosophers from northern European countries and the reverse movement of young Spanish thought on the other side of the Pyrenees, the long era of Francoism set in, which meant a semi-hermetic isolation of philosophy in a very specific domestic environment. The wall that shut off the Spanish philosophers from the wide philosophical world was not completely impenetrable: new ideas, albeit belatedly, somehow migrated into the country, nor were all personal contacts excluded. However, in general, semi-isolation, as well as a specific policy of Francoism with regard to "autochthonous" Spanish thought, led to the fact that in mid-20th century, a special philosophical environment developed on the Iberian Peninsula, which lasted until the last years of Franco's rule and which clearly began to open only with the onset of globalization. Spanish philosophers of this period are almost unknown and uninteresting to the philosophical centres of today's Europe and America, and therefore they hardly operate in our philosophical space. This also applies to Russia, where very few researchers study modern Spanish philosophy [Zhuravlev 1992; Zykova 1978; Kimelev 2010; Yakovleva 1999]. The point, however,

is not only lack of interest and, as a consequence, of translations and research attention to Spanish thought of the 20th century. The point is also that an attempt to directly address the most sophisticated of its products immediately reveals their inaccessibility or extreme complexity, which can be explained by its radical differences from our system of concepts and language. The set of concepts and language of German or French philosophy of the same decades may be just as complex, but we have more or less “digested” and appropriated them; they acquired for us the degree of naturalness that allows us immediately, without special reflective efforts, to identify their sources and conceptual contexts. On the contrary, Spanish philosophy of the 20th century, when first encountered, is perceived as an alien product (1).

What is special about this philosophy? It has a very special way of referring to the late-scholastic Latin tradition, created primarily by the efforts of Spanish authors. Whereas in other European countries neo-scholasticism was clearly positioned and perceived as a philosophical basis for Catholicism, being in this capacity as a phenomenon if not quite marginal, then at least lying outside the mainstream of Western thought, in Spain this generally Catholic tone was prevalent and added overtones to such ideas as national identity and “our traditional philosophy”. The glorification of the personality and teachings of Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) acquired an almost official character, with a magnificent celebration of his four hundredth anniversary in 1948 and pompous speeches delivered on this occasion [Iriarte 2017, 147–149]. Scholastic studies at university departments and systematic works in a neo-scholastic spirit, including those written in Latin, were initiated and supported by the authorities for ideological reasons. In Russia, we are all too familiar with this situation, albeit our authorities favoured a different philosophical direction, and this is hardly surprising. However, it is worth noting that the Spaniards born in the first two decades of the 20th century, who entered philosophy in the forties and fifties,

were well read in scholasticism, and versed in the texts not only of St. Thomas and Suárez, but also Domingo Báñez, Gabriel Vásquez, John of St. Thomas, Francisco de Araujo – authors of the second half of the 16th and the first half of the 17th cc., who had made the glory of post-medieval Spanish scholasticism. Graduates of philosophical faculties were accustomed to the language of this mature scholastic tradition, as language appropriate for thought and judgement. When an author used this conceptual and terminological language to create his text outside the sphere of the history of philosophy and in line with systematic, theoretical philosophy, he could count on understanding of his colleagues, who were able to interpret scholastic allusions without resort to voluminous explications.

It is exactly this feature that makes the best examples of Spanish thought of the middle and the second half of the 20th century so closed to us. And it is not just a matter of style. The classical concepts of scholasticism, having passed through the melting pot of New European philosophy, since Kant, have acquired new meanings and have been built into other contexts. These include "reality", "being" (as well as "Being"), "subjectivity" and "objectivity", "freedom", "truth", etc. They lose their traditional semantic load and acquire a new meaning, entering into new ties. Without additional and numerous explanations, the text that is held together by their scholastic meanings and relations, looks bizarre and impenetrable. Following the usual concepts, we suddenly find that they are not leading where we headed for. Familiar paths break off already at the second step. Formulations that enchant scholastic thinking with their stereoscopy and density of meanings behind them, sound like beautiful, but empty phrases to a reader who is not rooted in the same scholastic tradition. Loss of scholastic conceptuality and transformation of terminology make even historical and philosophical works on certain subjects quite difficult to comprehend. However, there is always at the disposal of the researcher an unlimited (by anything but the size of publication) resource of commentary given

as footnotes or incorporated in the body of the main text. But what if the author, who is a Spaniard of the second half of the 20th century, instead of commenting on the scholasticism and explaining it to himself and to his reader, simply lives by it?

But it is not only such special relations with scholasticism as a living conceptual environment that define the uniqueness of Spanish philosophy of mid-20th century. J. Ortega y Gasset's major contribution was to introduce Spain to phenomenological thought. The Spanish soul responded with warm gratitude and passionate attention. As far as we know, the doctoral thesis of the Spanish philosopher Xavier Zubiri, *Essay on a Phenomenological Theory of Judgement*, was the first work on phenomenology that was not written in German [Conill-Sancho 2006, XVII]. Nevertheless, the Spanish reception of phenomenology also has its specifics that relate, in particular, to the tradition of scholastic philosophizing. Spanish thinkers assimilated phenomenology as a descriptive tool, as a kind of scalpel, with the help of which they prepared reality and got access "to objects as such". But they never rejected ontological substantiation of this reality, nor did they favour a pure phenomenological description at the expense of metaphysics. Scholastic metaphysics in Spain chose the phenomenological method as more effective than logical-metaphysical categorial analysis, more typical of traditional scholasticism, and this was another characteristic feature of Iberian thought. This symbiosis defines the specific philosophy of Xavier Zubiri (1898–1983), one of the most brilliant Spanish philosophers of the 20th century, whose principal books are accessible to the Russian reader [Zubiri 1980–1982; 1962; 1963]; and the same symbiosis is characteristic of Zubiri's younger contemporary, A. Millán-Puelles.

Antonio Millán-Puelles was born in the city of Alcalá de los Gazules in the south of Spain on February 11, 1921. Antonio's first hobby was mathematics, but the course of the young man's life was determined by his encounter with Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.

After studying for some time at the Philosophy Faculty of the University of Seville, Millán completed his philosophical education already in Madrid in 1943. Then he began a career of a successful university teacher: at the University of Navarra in Pamplona, as a visiting professor at Mainz and at various universities in Latin America, but first of all in Madrid. In 1947, his first book was published, *The Problem of the Ideal Being. A Study of Hartmann and Husserl* [Millán-Puelles 1947]. Since 1951, Millán-Puelles headed (according to the results of the competition) the Department of Philosophy at the Complutense University of Madrid and remained in this office for 25 years. From 1976 until his retirement in 1987, Millán led the Department of Metaphysics at the same university. Since 1960, he repeatedly won prestigious national awards in the fields of literature and philosophy and was awarded two Orders: the Grand Cross of the Civil Order of Alfonso X, the Wise, and the Grand Cross of the Order of Civil Merit. The philosopher's life ended in Madrid on March 22, 2005.

Antonio Millán-Puelles left a rich philosophical heritage: 20 books and over 200 articles. In 2012, Ediciones Rialp started publishing his 12-volume *Complete Works*. Spanish researchers consider these books by Millán as his major philosophical output: *The Theory of the Pure Object* [Millán-Puelles 1990], *The Free Affirmation of Our Being. A Rationale for Realistic Ethics* [Millán-Puelles 1994], *The Value of Freedom* [Millán-Puelles 1995], *The Interest for Truth* [Millán-Puelles 1997], *The Logic of Metaphysical Concepts* [Millán-Puelles 2002-2003], and *The Structure of Subjectivity* [Millán-Puelles 1967]. We are going to discuss the latter book (whose Russian translation is currently being prepared for publication).

The Structure of Subjectivity is one of the most difficult books in all Spanish philosophy. It fully incorporates those characteristic features of the Spanish thought of the 20th century that we mentioned above, but it is not the only reason for its extremely sophistication. Millán's book does not even contain a single reference to philosophi-

cal history: it is a purely systematic work, where only a few other philosophers are sparsely mentioned. The author does not bother to facilitate his readers, nor does he provide such support as familiar names or familiar ideas. And when he does mention names, it makes the reader's task even harder, because Millán, when expounding or summing up other people's positions, treats them quite freely (to no lesser degree than when Heidegger treated the Greeks). It is not historical and philosophical circumstances that matter to him, but the way this or that alien idea is seen in the light of his own task, how it works (or does not work) in the context of the problem's comprehension that is being built up on the pages of his book, right before our eyes. We can add to this that Millán-Puelles's text is extremely dense: there is no "fluff", no single extra hint to help the reader. There remains but one way out: to follow the author slowly and painfully, stopping at every step and checking the meaning of each phrase.

But is it worth it? Perhaps, there is nothing more before us than a summary of personal experience, a description of individual consciousness, which requires the reader to make an effort that is disproportionate to the real value of the text? It may seem so if you forget about the ontological foundation on which the phenomenological descriptions of Millán are built, about the absolutely objectivist tradition that stands behind the scrupulous preparation of acts of consciousness and of conditions for their feasibility that is conducted by Millán in this book. In it, the philosopher is not engaged with himself, he seeks to describe the universal characteristics of any human consciousness.

The text of Millán, difficult even for native Spanish readers, would be completely impenetrable to outsiders, if the philosopher himself had not given them clues. In the mid-50s, he published a textbook for the needs of his own University department, *Fundamentals of Philosophy* – his most popular work, which has already gone through many reprints. Let us try to get through to the text of Millán's book, using the textbook as a key.

So, the book is entitled *The Structure of Subjectivity*, therefore it is most convenient to approach it proceeding from the title. In its content, the book belongs to that sector of philosophy which is nowadays called philosophical psychology and in the ancient and medieval system of sciences was called the science on the soul (*scientia de anima*). In Aristotelian philosophy, the soul was understood as life-generating capacity present in bodies, i.e. as a certain class of beings. Therefore, the realm of philosophical psychology is cognition of living beings. This type of psychology is opposed to experimental psychology (specific positive science that claims to be independent of any metaphysics and focused exclusively on the phenomenal side of cognition, desire and will). Millán followed the tradition in seeing the specificity of the philosophical (“rational”, “speculative”) psychology as having the *ontological*, or *entitative* aspect for its object [Millán-Puelles 2001, 300-301]. Philosophical psychology of the Aristotelian type does not abstract itself from the ontological vitality of being, which carries out cognitive and volitive acts, from the fundamental fact that such acts belong to a specific reality or being, namely, a living being, i.e. capable of performing movement (2). The living being serves as a substratum (*subiectum*, *sujeto*) of all vital acts, including cognitive and volitive acts (at the level of higher living entities). In other words, the higher living entity, in relation to his/her own acts, represents *subjectivity*. But why should we discuss the *structure* of subjectivity? Because the ability to move assumes in subjectivity the ability to act simultaneously in two roles: as an agent and as a patient. In fact, as subjectivity moves itself, it has to be active, remain *in act*, but as it undergoes action, it has to be *in potency*. To possess both properties, subjectivity must have at least two “parts”: actual and potential. A living being cannot be simple. Consequently, self-movement of living requires that subjectivity should be a structured composition [Millán-Puelles 2001, 303]. On the basis of the above explanations, the basic structure of subjectivity is determined, firstly, as composed of corporeality and

consciousness and, secondly, as a composition of potentiality and actuality. Thus, the title *The Structure of Subjectivity*, interpreted in accordance with A. Millán-Puelles's *Fundamentals of Philosophy*, refers the book to Aristotelian science on the soul and to its scholastic modifications, which helps us to understand a number of the author's fundamental theses.

Firstly, subjectivity is not the same as consciousness. Millán's main *critical* intention is actually refutation of idealism that presupposes identity of subjectivity and actual consciousness. Millán sees the starting point of such identification in the Cartesian *res cogitans* (*thinking substance*). "Strict and monolithic idealism," observes the Spanish philosopher, "is always simultaneously actualism, where everything different from the activity of consciousness can take place only as an object, and in no other way" [Millán-Puelles 1967, 128]. But if consciousness is not substantial in itself, if it is only a coherent sequence of acts of living things, then subjectivity inevitably has the structure of "body plus consciousness" and in principle cannot be identified only with consciousness. This non-identity very often manifests itself in everyday life, for example, in the thoroughly described intermittence of consciousness, i.e. the ability of subjectivity to temporarily lose consciousness and to retrieve it again: "What ceases or is interrupted is consciousness, not subjectivity" [Millán-Puelles 1967, 93]. Another fact is recognition by subjectivity of the fact of its coming into being and the non-being that had preceded it. But the moment of transition from non-being to being can never become an actual fact for subjectivity: "*For subjectivity, thinking about its past non-being is a belated episode. Any such thought, taking place not at the very moment of the emergence of subjectivity, comes late.* But this is absolutely inexplicable if one recognizes mutual equivalence or at least mutual implication of *cogito* and *sum*" [Millán-Puelles 1967, 89].

Secondly, subjectivity as a natural corporeal being is subject to influence of other natural bodies, it functions as a patient in relation

to these impacts. In this capacity, it is similar to any other things in the world, hence comes Millán-Puelles's thesis of the "thing-like" nature of subjectivity. This "thing-likeness" manifests itself in a variety of ways. Millán discussed one example in detail: the moment of awakening from sleep caused by the sound of an activated alarm clock. At the very moment of realizing one's awakening, this awareness is inseparable from the natural cause that caused it: the sound signal; the effect of the cause and its result merge together, and only a little later, already in reflection, subjectivity realizes that the experience of awakening was caused by a sound signal. But even then, realizing that the alarm had interrupted sleep, subjectivity realizes the consequence of this sound, but does not know or understand how it happened: the mechanism of one's own experience remains uncertain to subjectivity. Thus, "subjectivity" embodies a natural dimension, in the sense that it can be affected by something that it does not realize. During reflection, when aware of the uncertainty of the unexpected experience, subjectivity associates itself with it and thereby unconditionally accepts the fact of its determination by *something that has affected it in a purely natural way.*" [Millán-Puelles 1967, 117].

Hence, thirdly, comes the thesis of Millán-Puelles about radical *inadequacy* of consciousness that is inherent in subjectivity. Inadequacy toward what? Toward its own being as a structural reality, a structural entity that, in its corporeality, cannot be either completely controlled by consciousness, or completely transparent to conscious acts. The "thing-likeness" of subjectivity is the reason why, being determined bodily by events occurring outside our consciousness, subjectivity is not aware of the specific form of this influence. Even when we recall the experience of such an event afterwards (for example, that we were awakened by an alarm clock), "this experience appears as somewhat vague, not because of insufficient memory and not because of our way of comprehending it, but because of its own internal structure: by virtue of the fact that it is connected

– in the unity of identical subjectivity – with an event outside its consciousness. When I notice that I do not know the concrete form in which the “subject-cause” acted upon me, when producing the experience over which I am now reflecting, this experience appears before me as something involved (in some way) with the vagueness of the natural fact, which is related to it in the unity of my identical subjectivity” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 118]. In other words, “not only in a ‘spontaneous’ experience, but also in our reflections about it, we sustain inadequate consciousness of what happened in subjectivity” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 119]. Hence, there is a possibility of an aberration, or error of consciousness. Millán-Puelles examines this topic, using the classical example of sensory – primarily visual – illusions, taken from Antiquity and especially from scholasticism.

Thus, the analysis of human subjectivity from the point of view of its ontological structure, carried out on the basis of phenomenological preparation of facts of everyday life, leads to the assertion of radical *factuality* and *conditionality*, inherent both in the being of subjectivity and in actual implementation of its cognitive and volitive potencies: “‘Inadequate consciousness’ and ‘subjectivity, which is something more than its consciousness,’ are strictly equivalent formulations. They describe the same phenomenon, or, more precisely, an identical and unified essential necessity. Adequate consciousness is impossible for being which is not limited to consciousness alone. Subjectivity is not completely transparent to itself, because its essence does not allow this, and not because of any additional obstacle” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 151].

Then, what should it be like the conscious life of cognition and aspiration, rooted in this actual corporeal being?

In accordance with the principles of scholastic Aristotelianism, Millán-Puelles sees an act of cognition as actualization of cognitive capacities. For subjectivity, this means an act of growth in being. Why? Precisely because, with its capacity for cognition, subjectivity does not always exercise it, since being that is sufficient to *possess*

a cognitive potency is not enough for its *actualization*. The act of cognition requires more being than that which subjectivity possesses in itself. The key to this statement is a description of the cognitive mechanism in *Fundamentals of Philosophy* [Millán-Puelles 2001, 362-371]. The act of cognition is initiated by adopting a non-material form of the object of perception (*species impressa*) through the senses and, after a number of abstractive procedures, into the intellect. This traditional Aristotelian and Thomist description suggests that the outcome of the primary intellectual act (simply grasping the thing) is not material, i.e. intentional, possession of the object of knowledge. From the ontological point of view, it is important that along with transfer of intentional content, the *species* influences the cognitive ability as a real efficient cause, and any such cause therefore leads to a real consequence in what is influenced, which adds (“pours”) being into it (3). For non-cognitive beings, this means a physical change, a replacement of the previously existing form (for example, an aggregate state) with another. But the acceptance of an intentional form into the intellect does not change the subjectivity as a physical being, it happens as intentional enrichment: without ceasing to be itself, it unites with the form of another. Therefore, subjectivity belongs to those beings, “which are not fully measurable by their immanent existence. In other words, one can exist as an uncommunicated being, but also something different from it. When this happens, then the cognizer grows and goes beyond the limits of one's own being, acquiring another's being, in a word, transcending oneself. However, this is not a transformation, since one continues to be what one was before, but additionally becomes what one intentionally unites with” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 198]. Millán-Puelles calls this increase in a subjectivity's being during cognition, *intentional transcendence*.

Thus, from the moment when consciousness is present in subjectivity, intentional transcendence also takes place. It is impossible to reduce it to a simple orientation toward an object or to objective

constitution of cognized as such: it is always a real growth. Hence, the Spanish philosopher emphasizes, “the need to assert something absolutely unacceptable, if we understand this as a pure phenomenological description of cognition: *the presence of the being of the cognized ‘in’ the being of the cognizer*” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 201]. The presence of the object “in front of me” is *its* presence, but it is also *my* real event.

The play of “mine” and “another” in the act of intentional transcendence presupposes a self-alienation of subjectivity, its orientation toward the object, and growth in being while grasping it, but this self-alienation is never complete. In any act of cognition of something other, subjectivity, without becoming (without “making” oneself) an immediate object for oneself, at the back of his thought is aware that he is cognizing another. In this indirect, non-obvious, or, in the words of Millán-Puelles, “unobjective” reflection, “unobjective presence of self,” in the certainty that no consciousness is possible without “concomitant” (*concomitante, consecretario*) self-awareness of subjectivity, we observe what the philosopher calls the *tautological nature of consciousness*. He also speaks about *heterologism of consciousness* of subjectivity, meaning the capacity of subjectivity to address something other and really grow in an intentional connection with this other.

However, intentional transcendence does not only occur in acts of cognition, but also in acts of desire or will. Moreover, it is in these acts that it is in the “purest” form, for it is carried out not as a real growth in being, but exclusively as a “direction-to” what subjectivity does not possess, but seeks to possess. In order to understand the interpretation of desire and will by Millán, one must bear in mind the inextricable connection between acts of intellect and will that the Aristotelian and scholastic tradition asserts, and that the act of willing is conditioned by initial acceptance of its object as something positive. Only what intellect presents (truly or falsely) to will as a good thing can become an object of aspiration [Millán-Puelles

2001, 371]. And, of course, in acts of will the tautological nature of consciousness manifests itself, too: for example, when one is thirsty, the desire to drink comes simultaneously with awareness of thirst, although the desire and the awareness are not the same. Upon these two assumptions (conditioning of an act of desire to cognize something good and tautological nature of subjectivity, which is conscious of its own desire), Millán gives a thorough phenomenological description of these acts, taken in various modifications.

However, for Millán, descriptions as such are never a goal for itself. From his description of intentional acts, he proceeds to the main issue: what is the condition that makes intentional transcendence possible in general? This condition is the finite nature of subjectivity. The mention of finiteness here is not a rehearsed trick to round off the scheme prepared, it is a necessary conclusion after considering the *factual* implementation of the intentional life of subjectivity, after considering the reality of transcendence. In fact, “transcendence presupposes a certain portion of non-being: in each case, it is that very non-being toward which transcendence is accomplished. Physically, this non-being, therefore, is a limitation, finiteness. Since subjectivity is inherent in transcendence in the intentional sense, it is limited by nature” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 223]. The very essence of the act of transcendence requires that its subject should not possess naturally what he will transcend to. This physical finiteness takes place before any actual implementation of intentional acts and independently of them. On the other hand, in the act of transcendence, which *is already taking place*, subjectivity is always aware of itself (in unobjective tautology) as something different from what it transcends to. This difference is posited as an object in secondary acts of strict (not merely concomitant) reflection. In such acts, the difference from that other which acted as the object of a direct act, subjectivity’s own extrinsicality to another is constituted as objectified finiteness by the very being who possessed its physical finiteness even before that. Thus, in the consciousness of its finite-

ness, subjectivity transcends itself twice: as a physically limited being, and as a being directly conscious of its limitations.

For all that, in spite of my finiteness, I am able to perform the act of constituting an infinite being as my object. I oppose it, but at the same time I am connected to it, and with it, I associate my own finiteness. In this opposition and connection, my existence undergoes constraint and pressure: “*Here, in this opposition, which is simultaneously a synthesis, between the narrowness of my being and the absolute infinity of being, lies the key to the possibility of anxiety as an essentially metaphysical fact*” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 232]. “Anxiety,” *angustia*, is a Spanish word that goes back to Latin *angustia*, meaning “narrowness, tightness, being squeezed.” From the Latin meaning, A. Millán-Puelles extracts the metaphysical connotations of this term in his Spanish text. So, metaphysical anxiety is nothing more than an experience of the “constraint” of one’s being: subjectivity is not able to get rid of it physically, but is capable of opening itself to an infinite being intentionally. It is precisely the realization of one’s “captivity”, “hobbleness” of one’s own inevitably limited existence, which is “the deepest kind of anxiety, most clearly showing the dialectic of the ‘natural finiteness’ of subjectivity and its ‘intentional infinity’” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 232].

Will captivity be the last verdict that cannot be appealed? Millán-Puelles considers that it is not so. Even though subjectivity can open towards infinite existence only intentionality, even if we can never completely overcome the bitterness of constraint, subjectivity is meant to open so. For it, this calling is an *essential vocation for self-fulfilment*. It is free to accept this vocation or to flee from it and “be comforted by trading empirical goals, overvaluing the latter” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 247]. But freedom cannot abolish the factuality of this vocation: synthesis of physical limitations and intentional infinity precedes any other choice.

The whole theme of intentional transcendence, in which the reader will certainly see many parallels with modern philosophy,

nevertheless, with good reason, can be opened with the key of “potency / act” opposition, which was declared in *Fundamentals of Philosophy* and confirmed in the text of *The Structure of Subjectivity*. The ability to transcend to another being, ultimately – to infinite being, is a potency essentially inherent in subjectivity, regardless of whether it is realized, and if it is, in what ways and forms it happens. Real transcendence is actualization of this potency. Such a distinction of potential / actual transcendence is counterpointed by the distinction of potential / actual *intimacy* going together with it.

What does A. Millán-Puelles mean by intimacy? For him, it is that particular selfness that constitutes the essence of subjectivity and, in principle, cannot be fully objectivized. In conscious subjectivity (performing operations of intentional transcendence), this selfness manifests itself in this way: alienating itself in transcendence, subjectivity is “not alienated completely, for it does not lose itself as subjectivity, but, on the contrary, it is alienated in order to gain ‘a non-objective presence’ of itself” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 256]. In any act performed, subjectivity co-means (connotes, *connota*) itself as being non-objectively present to itself, self-present. As for the other meaning of ‘intimacy’, which is peculiar to subjectivity that is only potentially conscious, it “is an entity, which subjectivity always is ‘before’ starting to act consciously (therefore, it is not only its substance, but also all its stable definitions)” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 252]. In short, the specific selfness of subjectivity is always self-conscious in all transcendental acts and its essence and properties are always permanent, even if the subjectivity does not perform any acts, but is related to them in a purely possible state. In the last part of the book A. Millán-Puelles conducts a masterly analysis of aporias associated with both modifications of intimacy and with their deformations that have taken place in the history of philosophy. We will discuss only one of them – the denial of human nature as incompatible with human freedom.

Millán-Puelles contrasts this thesis, widely spread in modern philosophy, with the Aristotelian-scholastic understanding of nature as the original “principle of motion”, “which, in each type of changeable beings, determines the possibilities of the dynamism corresponding to it” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 310]. Nature is a substance regarded in its dynamics. In this sense, it does not prevent changes, but constitutes their more internalized, or intimate, principle and condition. In fact, any changes are possible only as changes in *something*, and this *something* remains permanent in the change. Therefore, a changeable being cannot be static, but it is *sustainable*. Substantial essence as a dynamic principle of sustainability *in* change and *through* change: that is what nature shows. Does this contradict freedom? The actual position of man is such that he also remains stable through changes. Any free self-determination of a person is self-determination of one and the same, permanent human being, following the same operational principle. Moreover, this operational principle will be essentially the same for all beings of the same species, despite individual differences. Any person builds his own life and defines himself in it freely, proceeding from his initial situation and the conditions specified by the factuality of his being’s structure; but what he cannot do is to define himself proceeding from *another* initial situation and from the structure of another being. Life is given to us as a gift, and it is not built yet, it is given us as a task, but upon certain conditions: “The ethical aspect of the issue is called responsibility; but it is preceded by a ‘physical’ or, more precisely, a metaphysical aspect, which, speaking negatively, consists in the already mentioned impossibility to make decisions about one’s own free actions, proceeding from another initial situation and through another operational principle: both determine us essentially” [Millán-Puelles 1967, 312].

Already in this brief analysis, aimed at revealing the “structure of subjectivity” in both meanings – as the theme and as the book, – the appeal to scholasticism as a living resource of ideas (discussed at

the beginning of the article) is clearly shown, which is so characteristic of Spanish philosophy. The approach of Millian Puelles to the theme of consciousness is far from dogmatic, when he discusses its rootedness in the corporeality of a human being, its inherence in a being which is finite physically but is destined to the infinite fullness of intentional being. The philosopher does not collect “correct” judgements of traditional scholasticism in order to adjust the phenomenological descriptions under speculative theses, for the purpose of solving the tricky puzzle. The situation is exactly the opposite: the actual situation of the subjectivity, brought to light in the course of phenomenological preparation of data, leads him to trust the correctness of the fundamental principles of scholastic philosophy regarding natural beings and subjectivity as one of them. The author’s goal is to understand the ways consciousness is constrained by inevitable boundaries of corporeality, yet free in its vocation to the intentional infinity of being, involved in the aporias of possibility and actuality, conditionality and freedom: this is the goal of the hard and beautiful path along which Spanish philosophy moves forward, namely in Antonio Millán-Puelles’ works.

However, did not David Chalmers explain to us that the only *hard* problem of consciousness is the problem of qualia?

NOTES

(1) Of course, this does not apply to all texts written in the middle and the second half of the 20th century, but only to books that expressed the characteristic features of Spanish “semi-hermiticism” of the Francoist era.

(2) Self-movement is understood not only as an ability to move locally, but also any change, any actualization of internal capacities, whose source lies in an actualized being itself. Hence, the thesis of Aristotle about the fundamental immanence of any vital acts.

(3) See Suárez’s detailed teachings on the “infusion” (*influxus*) of being from the real cause: Suárez F. *Disputationes metaphysicae*. Disp. XII, sect. 2.

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