

## Recensione

Sacha Golob, *Heidegger on concepts, freedom and normativity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 270

The first book by Sacha Golob proposes a new perspective on Heidegger's early thought (1920-35), which deserves particular attention especially for its arguments and clarity. The continental scholars of Heidegger are given the opportunity to familiarize with the most known Anglo-Saxon readings of the German philosopher and with current debates on some topics of his philosophy, such as realism and theories of perception and normativity. Indeed, Golob reviews the existing analytic literature on Heidegger providing a coherent framework, called "the dominant approach", which he then attempts to undermine with both exegetical and philosophical competence.

The aim of the whole book is to endorse an original thesis about Heidegger's intentionality, i.e. "the property, typically attributed to mental states, whereby those states are directed toward or about something". According to Golob's Heidegger, there are two modes of intentionality, which differ according to the way they deliver their contents: the first one is non-propositional, which is to say that its vehicle for the contents is not an assertion (since Heidegger equates the propositional and the predicative, Golob 2014: 9), but rather a structure called "*a as b*"; the other is instead propositional. The non-propositional intentionality is also the basic level of experience, and thus it is the condition for the possibility of the latter (one might call it "pre-propositional"); this is due to the fact that the primary intentionality contains, among moods and objects, those concepts that compose the "grammar" that can be expressed through assertions (Golob 2014: 71). Therefore, Heidegger's primary intentionality is non-propositional and conceptual. These issues are discussed in the first three chapters of the book, especially in the third, which is the core of Golob's account. Once gained this new account of intentionality, in the last three chapters Golob adopts it to face different questions, such as Heidegger's "metaphysics" (realism, being, truth), freedom and authenticity.

The first chapter outlines the assumptions and the problems of the dominant view on Heidegger's intentionality. This widespread approach, which claims that the primary level of intentionality is non-propositional and non-conceptual, is the one put forward by authors like Blattner, Carman, Dreyfus, Okrent, Schear and Wrathall. Accord-

ing to this view, propositional intentionality seemingly fails to grasp the “fine-grained” richness of experience. The key assumptions of this account of intentionality are inspired by two claims by Heidegger (Golob 2014: 13-4), and they are: assertions are somehow connected with present-at-hand entity; since present-at-hand is not the primary modality of dealing with entities, propositional intentionality must be explanatorily derivative on some non-propositional intentionality. Clearly, the main point is the notion of present-at-hand. However, Golob points out at least three different meanings of it (Golob 2014: 16-7), none of which supporting the connection with the assertion. In fact, as Golob puts it, why should talking about something entail that to the topic of assertion is ascribed any kind of properties in any strong philosophical sense? Furthermore, why shouldn't the assertion, if it is an intentional state, be primary revelatory and thus distort the experience? In addition to these unanswered questions, Golob patiently rejects ten proposals that may underpin the dominant approach (Golob 2014: 26-46), and then concludes that it is flawed to explain the derivative state of the assertion, outlined in *Being and time* §§33-4, in terms of the incapability of the propositional intentionality to catch a supposed fine quality of basic experience. On the contrary, the propositional intentionality hinges on some concepts embedded in the non-propositional intentionality; without those concepts, our experience could not be linguistically expressed (Golob 2014: 10), and also we could not know how to deal with things ready-to-hand unless their affordance was not provided by a conceptual explanation (Golob 2014: 44).

In the second and third chapters Golob illustrates his own theory of intentionality. First of all, he begins with the puzzling conjunction between present-at-hand and the assertion, stating that not every assertion leads us to understand entities as present-at-hand, as Carman and Wrathall argue, but only those which are analysed through what Heidegger calls “Logic”, namely a method of propositional analysis that regards entities as substances to which some properties are assigned (Golob 2014: 52-4). Thus, Heidegger's purpose is to “free grammar from logic” (Golob 2014: 68), and Golob identifies this grammar with a conceptual pattern, called “*a as b*”, which allows the primary intentionality to intend things as ready-to-hand and to switch to the propositional modality. The “as” enables the *Dasein* to access entities, labelled by the “a” variable, locating them within a meaningful context – the “b” variable; in other words, the “*a as b*” structure is

the grammar of *Dasein's* projection, through which entities obtain sense by their insertion into the web of relations called "world" (Golob 2014: 83). Here, Golob introduces two very important principles, i.e. "*A Priori*" and "*Ontological Difference*", according to which the access to the meaningful context, the *b* variable, must rely on a prior familiarity with the meanings of entities (Golob 2014: 84); moreover, this familiarity can't be an entity itself, because that would entail an infinite regress (Golob 2014: 88). What explains *Dasein's* closeness to meanings is called by Golob "Prototype" (Golob 2014: 109), which, referring to a passage from *On the essence of ground*, exemplifies the relations that an entity can support inside a context. Then Golob claims that for Heidegger the prototype is time, since time is not an entity and in *Being and time* it is asserted that the condition for the possibility of the disclosure of the world is the horizon of time (Golob 2014: 112).

Before further explaining how time works as a prototype, Golob analyses Heidegger's sources for his idea of prototype, i.e. Kant and Plato. Heidegger's Kant indeed aims at outlining the transcendental conditions to intend present-at-hand entities, and he identifies them with time, which is the form – Kantian word for "prototype" – offered by pure imagination that orders the relations of entities. However, Heidegger criticises Kant for having often confused the form with the "logical form", which is a form abstracted from its intentional content (Golob 2014: 116). This step diverts Kant from the path of Plato, who first thought the form as an image, an anticipated look to what a thing is (Golob 2014: 117). This kind of form differs from the logic one, because it keeps the connection with an entity, as it portrays it, whilst the logical form is "the pure image of objectivity" and makes it possible to experience objects only as substances (Golob 2014: 119-20). On the contrary, although Plato did not seek the connection between ideas and time, and Heidegger criticises his use of the prototypes as too ontic (Golob 2014: 128-31), the Greek philosopher has the merit of having deployed several visual metaphors to describe how prototypes form the experience, e.g. the light and the "clearing", which Heidegger then adopts in order to overstep Kant's reliance on the faculty of imagination and logic (Golob 2014: 128).

After this brief contextualisation of Heidegger's thought within the history of philosophy, the most delicate question of the whole book comes, i.e. Golob's assessment of Heidegger's prototypical approach. What remains to be explained is in fact the reason why time, and

nothing else, is exactly the prototype addressed by Heidegger to enable the familiarity with “*b*”, and thus the “ontological knowledge”. This issue is not solved in *Being and time*, which contains only implicitly the theory of the prototype developed in the years following its publication: as Heidegger puts it, *Zeitlichkeit* itself cannot prove how time acts as a prototype, because it only shows the unity of *Dasein*’s features; this task would have been performed only by *Temporalität*, but *Being and time* halts exactly where that concept should have been fleshed out (Golob 2014: 138-41). It is only at the very end of *Basic problems of phenomenology* that Heidegger claims that time can act as a prototype insofar the temporal ecstasy called “*praesens*” makes things available for their contextualisation (Golob 2014: 143). However, Heidegger’s answer to the question about the possibility of a non-propositional and yet conceptual intentionality is very inchoate. Furthermore, one cannot distinguish the specificity of *praesens*, which is supposed to be the temporal schema of ready-to-hand, from Kant’s temporal schema of present-at-hand (Golob 2014: 144). On this and other grounds (Golob 2014: 145-53), in the 1930s Heidegger changes his account of the prototype and replaces time structures with artworks. Indeed, the act performed by artworks of illuminating an entity successfully epitomizes a way to access entities that is still conceptual and expressible by a certain language – e.g. poetry (Golob 2014: 153-4).

In the fourth chapter Golob compares his novel account of Heidegger with some issues of the contemporary analytic philosophy, e.g. the critique advanced by Searle on the distinction between ready-to-hand and present-to-hand (Golob 2014: 156-64), Heidegger’s realism (Golob 2014: 167-80) and his concept of truth (Golob 2014: 180-91). Among the pages of this chapter, an interesting and both controversial claim by Golob stands out, i.e. his understanding of Being as “some *x*, which exemplifies the properties possessed by an entity *without* being an entity itself” (Golob 2014: 171). This definition of Being is totally aligned with the theory of a prototype that states how to locate an entity into a meaningful context, however it might bluntly appear too much ontic, i.e. overly similar to what is typically identified as “essence”, as Golob after all recognizes (Golob 2014: 184).

In the last two chapters of the book the theory of the prototype is connected to the issue of freedom. Indeed, in line with the problem outlined above of supplying a valid alternative to temporal prototype,

Heidegger recognizes that freedom stands for *Dasein's* transcendence – and so for its intentionality – insofar it discovers entities as free to be located into the world (Golob 2014: 194). Moreover, freedom itself acts as a prototype because, according to Crowell's studies on Heideggerian normativity, it is “the capacity to recognize and commit oneself to norms, and to act on the basis of them” (Golob 2014: 195). These norms are of course the set of possible relations that define how to use a thing (Golob 2014: 196), thus *Dasein's* attitude towards entities consists in adjusting its approach to them in the light of these norms (Golob 2014: 223). What about *Dasein's* attitude towards itself instead? The endurance of *Dasein's* self does not hinge on any persisting entity, but rather it depends on *Dasein's* “ability to take and sustain a particular stance on its own behaviour” (Golob 2014: 213), thus there are no norms binding on *Dasein* except death, namely its finitude (Golob 2014: 239). It is exactly on this issue that authenticity diverges from inauthenticity: while the inauthentic *Dasein* denies its finitude, the authentic one affirms it, and thus it can achieve its true structure (Golob 2014: 221). Therefore, as Golob concludes, authenticity becomes an important requisite for doing philosophy, because it provides the right perspective on existential phenomena (Golob 2014: 240).

What kind of account of Heidegger is provided by Golob with his dense and tantalizing book? I think that there are two main issues, woven together, that Golob seems to overlook, whose absence still influences his whole reading of Heidegger: thrownness and the history of being. The first one, i.e. *Dasein's* feature that exhibits its being already in the world, and thus contextualizes its projects into a historical horizon (*Being and time*, § 41), is clouded by the priority accorded by Golob to the projection and the “*a as b*” structure (Golob 2014: 83). This upshot is also due to Golob's significant use of the transcendental approach, which claims that some empirical phenomena are made possible thanks to a priori grounds (Golob 2014: 85); therefore, *Dasein's* dealing with entities must be understood on the basis of the “*a as b*” structure, which must be explained by the concept of prototype, that Heidegger leaves unexplained and ultimately rejects. Heidegger is surely influenced by this approach, as he explicitly recognizes in *Being and time*. However, I think that this theme is balanced by another influencing element of Heidegger's thought, namely the phenomenological principle of simply describing what is given, rather than explaining it (Golob 2014: 65). Thus, the familiarity with

meanings could be easily articulated in terms of *Dasein's* thrownness and the hermeneutic circle, instead of advocating the prototypical theory. Moreover, thrownness introduces the historical relation between *Dasein* and being which also defines for Heidegger Western philosophy, i.e. the history of being. Although Golob states that he wants to focus only on the early Heidegger, referring to the history of being, e.g. the one sketched in the third chapter of the *Contributions to philosophy*, may help to clarify some of the main questions of Golob's book, like the reason why Heidegger criticizes logic or the link between present-at-hand, assertion and representation. Furthermore, it is the history of being that can explain the limits of the *Zeitlichkeit*: if time does not manifest itself as the horizon of being, and so requires the *Temporalität* (Golob 2014: 141), it is due to what has happened in the history of being and metaphysics, and not to some inherent problem of time structures.

In sum, Golob's book offers an absorbing reading of Heidegger's philosophy; it has the merit of providing a "repetition" of Heidegger's thought in the genuine sense outlined in *Sein und Zeit* (Golob 2014: 135), and, thanks to the variety of questions handled by Golob, it also opens the way for many future researches.

Marco Cavazza

## Rassegna

### Due libri sul paesaggio

(Flavio Cuniberto, *Paesaggi del Regno. Dai luoghi francescani al luogo assoluto*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 2017, pp. 330; Andrei Pleșu *Pittoresco e malinconia. Un'analisi del sentimento della natura nella cultura europea*, a cura di A. Paolicchi, prefazione di Victor I. Stoichita, Pisa, ETS, 2018, pp. 228)

Questi due studi sul paesaggio sono distanti nel tempo ma presentano qualche singolare punto di contatto. La data della traduzione italiana non inganni: il libro di Andrei Pleșu è stato pubblicato in lingua originale nel 1980. E siccome è stato pubblicato in Romania, alla distanza cronologica se ne aggiunge una culturale, perché il lavoro è stato concepito nella seconda metà degli anni Settanta in un Paese dell'Europa dell'Est allora ancora isolata dalla "cortina di ferro". Con tutto ciò, il libro era (ed è ancora, seppure l'autore abbia rinunciato