

INTENTIONALITY AND RATIONALITY IN THE KAIRIC PROCESS

1. The Rise of the Problem. Before being able to give an answer to the question as to which is the part played by intentionality and rationality in the whole kairic process, it would be rather advisable at first to give a definition of the term, kairicity. The kairic process means a succession of attitudes, by which the consciousness actually responds to a sequence of objective events, either natural or previously objectivated by itself, underlying such a continuity before dividing it into two separate parts, which have nothing to do with the notions of *before and after*, but with those of *not yet* and the *never again*. In this case, the role of consciousness in this discrimination is not at all that of a simple observer, since it participates as a true actor in the act of creation and in the fruition thereof, being installed in its core in order to manage it in the most adequate way. To introduce kairic discontinuity into a real quasi-discontinuity in process of self dislocation is the actual and essential meaning of the kairic process. There is something more, however: by observing the eventual and contingent discontinuity appearing within the objective continuity, as well as by predicting and even promoting it, the whole structure of the given succession of real events is actually restructured. Indeed, the whole kairic process is put in action whenever the consciousness hastens to claim, within reality, an adequacy of the structure of its own intentionality. Conjectured, suggested, ascertained, provoked and reaped, the kairos assures such an adequacy. The kairos appears to be like an eventuality, whose merits are proved by the intentionality of consciousness, such an intentionality being not actually understood not in the quasi static Husserlian meaning of the totality of its contents but in the more dynamic Bergsonian meaning of intention and of project¹.

Under these circumstances, the kairic process, being used by consciousness, is suitable to every kind of attitude thereof, when facing, of course, situations of a primarily theoretical kind; nevertheless, it also applies in the first place to attitudes concerning situations of practical kind. It could be even maintained that, as far as practical activity of consciousness is considered, every situation of a theoretical kind

1. Cf. Jean-Marc GABAUDE, *Éclairage sur le kairos à partir de la philosophie de Bergson*, *Philosophia*, 21-22, 1991-1992, pp. 349-357.



is likely to be subject to an alteration of its own intrinsic quality, in order to respond to the practical vocation of kairicity, in the meaning given to and in the use made of it by consciousness. In fact, every generalised conception of kairicity is equivalent to a certain pragmatism².

In addition to this conception, the notions of *kairos* and kairicity run the risk of suffering a degeneration of their own philosophic functionality, be it real or even philosophical. Consequently, it is within the strict framework of these considerations that one has to stay, in order to specify the part effectively played both by intentionality and rationality of consciousness during their participation in the kairic process. Is it, therefore, right to assert that there is no activity of consciousness at all, except the kairic one? In this case, it may be ascertained that taking advantage of a given kairic process is a general attitude, much more widespread than one would have suspected from a first approach, and that it is necessary to recognize that intentionality and rationality are the predominant features of every resort to the kairic process.

2. Intentionality. Considering the two meanings already granted to it, intentionality refers to every kind of activity of consciousness when the latter is directed towards its object; more precisely, towards its objective, which it considers it a favorite, as a longed for, as a desired, and as a required one and, therefore, being charged with an axiological connotation, supposing that it is not a value by itself. A mainly affective configuration, which often raises to the rank of an axiological configuration, is being immediately recognized to it. One may refer here to the dynamic nature of values acting upon consciousness like a missile which, while approaching the human ear creates what is usually called in physics the Doppler-Fizeau effect. According to this effect, the pitch of the sound produced by a moving source of sound varies between the high and the low, depending on its coming near or going far from the observer's ear, according to a rigorously constant rule, either it is the source of the sound or the observer himself that is moving³.

The aforesaid double meaning constitutes the true substance of the equivalence between the physical effect already described and the axiological activity of consciousness. It also constitutes the foundation of the kairic aspect of this activity. Both approaching and the getting away are actually the two supplementary sides of a *kairos*, which, from another viewpoint, corresponds to a *minimum* of distance starting from the threshold of consciousness, together with an *optimum* of quality and of availability thereof, which is ready to take advantage of this *kairos*, in view of its fruition. Consequently, the kairic process becomes a process of approximation of this very *minimum*, which has been since converted into an *optimum*; it also becomes a

2. Cf. E. MOUTSOPOULOS, *La bergsonisation du pragmatisme*, *Athéna*, 72, 1968, pp. 109-112.

3. Cf. IDEM, *Phénoménologie des valeurs*, Athènes, Éditions de l'Université, 1981, p. 53 and n. 3.

process of surpassing and reducing of a whole distance to be covered, since, due to this process, the consciousness is intentionality located *beyond* the intermediary contingencies, right in the heart of the critical and crucial moment before which nothing is accomplished yet and after which everything is lost. Examined from this angle, the kairic process to which the consciousness unceasingly takes recourse, due to its intentional constitution, obtains, apart from its status of process, the status of a principle, by virtue of which not only a discontinuity (or a series of discontinuities) is introduced into continuity, but also a latent, potential or probable discontinuity (or a series of discontinuities) is introduced therein, and is actualized and turned to account for the best profit of consciousness which, incidentally, refers to it and even installs itself therein⁴.

This explains why the conception of temporal entropy, as it results from the second principle of thermodynamics, formulated more than one hundred years ago by Clausius, is actually abolished by the kairic look, which is given by consciousness to the order of successions. One may henceforth easily deduce the reason why to the provisional present, which is defined in a prospective way, corresponds the retentional present, which Husserl analyzes in details and which is defined in a retrospective way. Poets and novelists, starting with Lamartine and Proust, have tried to point out the axiological importance of such capital references. Due to the intentionality of consciousness, which is involved in the kairic process used by it in order to take advantage of reality, by assimilating it previously to itself, temporality, which appears to be a secular metric invention, just able to explain the repeated succession of days and years, disappears to the profit of a kairicity which expresses the true vocation of existence, a vocation which actually consists in conceiving what is endlessly extended through the endlessly restrained. The kairicity of the intimate life of consciousness is opposed to the insipidity of scientific observation. One has to do with a total commitment which allows consciousness to face its conceptual universe «in colors», as a universe of values⁵.

Does this mean that the preceeding considerations actually imply the abrogation of any purely scientific concept? This would be rather impossible to be ascertained. On the other hand, science, within the framework of its progress, gradually abandons the idea of a temporality which is necessary (with the exception of certain particular cases), to any classical explanation of the universe and tends to conceive time as an invented instrument, just able to remind us of our appointments⁶. Nevertheless, even in this case, time could not but mathematize our impati-

4. Cf. IDEM, *Kairos. La mise et l'enjeu*, Paris, Vrin, 1991, pp. 105 et suiv.; 132 et suiv.; 170 et suiv.

5. Cf. IDEM, *Kairos ou l'humanisation du temps*, *Diotima*, 16, 1988, pp. 129-131.

6. Cf. IDEM, *Kairos et histoire*, *Proceedings of the Academy of Athens*, 59, 1984, pp. 532-553. Cf.

ence or our apprehension, our aversion or our nostalgia. Due to the rigor of its own vocation and of the principles on which it has been established, science is hardly able to attenuate the affective tonality, which actually qualifies the practical universe of consciousness, whenever it, too, does not risk to engulf itself in it. Furthermore, as far as science does not depend on man's practical activity, this is exclusively due to his own will, since he makes use of kairicity, namely of the kairic process, only to the extent to which it determines the successive stages of processes which, in order to be valid, must be necessarily subject to the fundamental principles of reason: in particular, to the principles of identity and causality, which are completed by the principles of contradiction and of distinction between first and second causes. The principle of finality would serve to assure a major continuity in the scientific operations.

3. Rationality. To the extent that it intervenes in the kairic process, rationality should be considered not only at the particular level of the process in question used during the scientific activity of consciousness, but also at the generalized level of its being used under any circumstances. Although the kairic process is at the basis of every practical activity of consciousness, it essentially responds to the analytical tendency of the same, which is enriched by its synthetical tendency. As a matter of fact, consciousness aims at analyzing its own operational field according to a model of division which is the most appropriate to the purpose suggested by its intentionality. The main characteristic of this division, which relies on the fundamental divisibility of each particular operational field, consists in its being subject to an implicit as well as explicit rationality: in fact, it provides the principles and the elements according to which every model of kairic division is constructible and functional. It should be reminded at this point that the kairic process consists, on the one hand, in introducing a discontinuity into continuity or, at most, into a quasi-continuity; and, on the other hand, in enhancing such a discontinuity after having it up through a new element, thus giving it the aspect of a paradox⁷.

The armature of reason which intervenes to the kairic restructuring of reality actually brings together the rational principles and the ways in which they are applied, namely the categories of understanding, as they have been, for instance, formulated by Kant. *At a first stage*, consciousness takes recourse to the arsenal composed as above, in order (a) to determine the most appropriate operational field for its activity during a given operation aiming to kairify at least a precise part of reality for the benefit of the existence on behalf of which the consciousness acts; (b)

R. OMNES, Le temps en physique, *Revue (Travaux de l'Académie) des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, 148, 1993/1, pp. 11-25, namely p. 20: «cela n'a aucun sens de parler de temps inférieurs à 10⁻⁴⁴ seconde».

7. Cf. E. MOUTSOPOULOS, Le vieillissement et le problème des catégories temporelles, *Questionnements philosophiques*, t. 1, *Conscience et création*, Athènes, Hermès, 1971, pp. 124-155, namely p. 144.

to distinguish within the aforesaid field one or more homologous series of succession, which can be restructured through its intervention to its own benefit; (c) to reveal the most significant fault in the aforesaid series of successions, as well as in each homologous series, to the extent, of course, to which the latter presents in effect certain parallel faults; and (d) to establish the relations, which comply the best with reality, to its own intention and to the most operational function between the faults which have been pointed out, without ignoring however the fault observed in the principal succession sought for. *At a second stage*, consciousness takes recourse to the arsenal of reason, in order (a) to establish in an authentic way, from every particular series, a complex, but also unified, series of successions, within which it will be always called from now on to act, namely by discerning zone, both minimal and optimal, on which it will essentially exert its activity; (b) to consider the aforesaid zone as a kairic one, namely corresponding both to the threshold and to the end of a critical change of the objective reality, as well as to the uniqueness of the occasion which is foreseen as seizable; (c) to reduce the ternary system of temporal categories: *before - during - after*, to a binary system of kairic categories: *not yet - never again*, so that it may become applicable to its own operation, while endowing it with the character of pursuing a uniqueness; and (d) to determine by distinguishing them, kairic zones within the kairic zone initially detected, in order to establish in this way the kairos of a kairos and so on, so as to finally define a kairic *minimum quod sit*, which, still acting in its capacity of zone, will assure the regular, although critical, transition from one side of the unified series of successions to the other, while remaining integrated to both of them, thanks to a gradation imposed by the repeated insertion of kairic zones into other kairic zones⁸.

It only remains to the consciousness to proceed to the exploitation of the results of its own operation, according to an implicit or explicit rationality which is eventually expressed during the preceding stages. The aforesaid eventuality manifestly dominates the kairic process followed by the consciousness during the realization of its intentional purposes. Just like a musical fugue, within the limits of which every rule and every process of counterpoint is actualized and specified under the predominant role of a unique form, which is strictly organized, a kairic operation of the consciousness makes reference to every principle and to every element of rationality, which are recapitulated and applied in a regulative and original way. Such a display of processes cannot of course be realized in an exhaustive and detailed way. Just as it happens in all of its activities, consciousness resumes and condenses all these practices and finally operates with its usual elegance and efficiency. By distin-

8. Cf. IDEM, Vers un élargissement du concept de vérité: le presque-vrai, *Annales de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines d'Aix*, 40, 1966, pp. 189-196.



guishing two moments of its energy, the consciousness proves that by acting in a kairic way and by taking recourse to the resources of reason in order to support its action, it actually introduces discontinuity into continuity before assuring a new continuity within the discontinuity it had previously established. The kairic process participates in this dialectical game, within a movement, which, in the long term, is proved to be purely ontological⁹.

4. Towards certain conclusions. According to the preceding analysis, intentionality and rationality would be the two marking aspects of consciousness, when the latter is involved in the kairic process during its approximation of reality which it tries to seize and to restructure according to its own structure, in order to take advantage of it. The pragmatic character of such an approximation and of such an assimilation has been sufficiently underlined. Nevertheless, rules and principles, which constitute the wide arsenal of reason, are being mobilized to this effect, either as a whole or in a selective way, during commitment of the consciousness regarding the exploitation of the given situation. As far as the intentionality of consciousness is concerned, this seems to function only at the level of use of the kairic process less like a reference than like a project; less like a possibility than like a movement, less under a static than under a dynamic (or even cinetic) aspect, which is relevant to the axiological pursue¹⁰. Such a valorification of kairic intentionality proves to be a true field of activity, where the definition of a value or the definition of a kairos are not at all distinct activities¹¹.

The most prominent character of the kairic process followed by the consciousness which does not lose at all any of its other characteristics, consists in acting in a way which is both analytical and synthetical, i.e. in a fundamentally dialectic way. In this epistemological context, the axiological character of the activity of consciousness has been given an increasing blaze, to the extent that it is reinforced in its definition towards the objectives of consciousness, which are considered to be values themselves. In certain cases, it is necessary that in front of such a value, consciousness be in perpetual action, mainly if it fears that the value thus having been defined and provisionally assimilated, finally escapes. In its capacity as the consciousness of existence, consciousness confirms the continuity of existence itself by taking recourse to discontinuities which it voluntarily creates and suppresses within its own operational field.

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9. Cf. IDEM, Catégories temporelles et kairiques, *Questionnements philosophiques*, t. 1, pp. 97-123.

10. Cf. IDEM, *L'itinéraire de l'esprit*, t. 3, *Les valeurs*, Athènes, Hermès, 1977, pp. 34-40.

11. Cf. *ibid.*

**ΠΡΟΘΕΤΙΚΟΤΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΟΡΘΟΛΟΓΙΣΜΟΣ
ΚΑΤΑ ΤΗΝ ΚΑΙΡΙΚΗ ΔΙΑΔΙΚΑΣΙΑ**

Π ε ρ ί λ η ψ η

Ὁ πλέον ἐξέχων χαρακτήρ τῆς καιρικῆς διεργασίας, συνοδευομένης ἀπὸ τὴν συνείδησιν ἢ ὁποία δὲν χάνει καθόλου κάποιο ἀπὸ τὰ χαρακτηριστικά της, συνίσταται στὸ ὅτι αὐτὴ δρᾷ κατὰ τρόπον ὁ ὁποῖος εἶναι συγχρόνως ἀναλυτικὸς καὶ συνθετικὸς, δηλαδὴ θεμελιωδῶς διαλεκτικὸς. Μέσα στὸ γνωσιοθεωρητικὸ αὐτὸ πλαίσιο, ὁ ἀξιολογικὸς χαρακτήρ τῆς συνειδησιακῆς δραστηριότητος προσλαμβάνει μιὰν αὐξουσαν λάμψιν σὲ βαθμὸν ὥστε νὰ ἐνισχύεται κατὰ τὸν καθορισμὸ τῶν ἀντικειμένων τῆς συνειδήσεως, ὅσων θεωροῦνται ἀξίες καθ' ἑαυτά. Σ' ὠρισμένες περιπτώσεις εἶν' ἀναγκαῖον ἢ συνείδησις νὰ εὕρισκεται σὲ διαρκῆ δραστηριότητα ἐνώπιον παρόμοιας ἀξίας, κυρίως ἂν φοβᾶται πῶς ἡ ἀξία ἢ ὁποία ἔχει καθορισθῇ καὶ ἀφομοιωθῇ προσωρινῶς μ' αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπο, τελικῶς δραπετεύει. Ὡς συνείδησις τῆς ὑπάρξεως, ἡ συνείδησις ἐπιβεβαιώνει τὴν συνέχεια τῆς ἴδιας τῆς ὑπάρξεως αὐτῆς καταφεύγοντας σ' ἀσυνέχειες τῆς ὁποῖας ἡ ἴδια δημιουργεῖ ἐκουσίως καὶ συμπιέζοντάς τις ἐντὸς τοῦ ἰδίου τοῦ ἐνεργειακοῦ τοῦ πεδίου.

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