



Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz - Witkacy

## LETTER FROM STANISŁAW IGNACY WITKIEWICZ – “WITKACY” (23 October 1936)

(Response to Professor  
Roman Ingarden)

1. The acceptance of the multiplicity of monads at the moment when it is assumed to be essentially non-corporeal is worthless to me, because it implies the entire theory of intentional correlates assigned intersubjectively, creating a world ordered in a certain way and not otherwise, which in its essence and not otherness, we cannot receive only from “laws of consciousness”

(the world must exist, because consciousness would be empty, it would be simply bored, poor thing) without the intervention of some pre-established harmony behind which God must lurk. The monad not being one with its body, only riding on it as a “pure” I on a grey bitch from time to time (as in Bergson, where the “spirit” is “wider” than the body) is powerless when it comes to the constitution of the world from them (their multiplicity). From the corporal monads, I can make any world statistically, assuming, of course, the monads endeavor in light of their impermeability and weight, as well as their own movements and those caused by the weight of their large clusters. However, without accepting that our system, for example, is part of a monad, we could not explain the first movement in it, the existence in general: it would be the same problem as in materialism, where the cause of all movements in the entire universe (supposedly we assume it is closed and repeating indefinitely, as any insulated system without entropy in addition) remains a mystery; it is relatively shifted into infinity. But you have to leave materialism, where there is no consequence and there are still some colossal gaps which are supposed to be filled by something at some point. Of course, I cannot speak of the origins in monadism, but the fact that something is happening in general is a problem always settleable in a given order of magnitude, in a given sector of the world: something is happening because we are inside a certain finite monad. To some extent, these things are developed in the “Populäre Monadenlehre” which you have at home. I proceed to the question of the body.

2. Well, I argue that the idealists, hypostatizing illegitimately the moment of dependent existence (I speak of unity of personality), create a pure self, which they make independent of the body: it sits pure on its own, and from it intentional acts explode, it sees itself directly no longer as something transcendent (as a thing) and could actually get by without the world. In my opinion, the world cannot fully constitute itself in the entirety of its sine qua non in such a spiritual monad, and above all its body cannot be constituted, which, apart from the fact that it is a complex of experiences, is also an organism, i.e. not an aggregate of things, but it constitutes a certain unity, corresponding to the unity of consciousness. Once you separate things this way, the pure consciousness and the body, then of course, we must ask ourselves, why this body has to exist in reality, and not phenomenally, like things (with the latter I completely agree with Husserl and Cornelius, but to me their concepts of “intentional correlation” do not exhaust the entirety of existence, neither the body nor the thing, despite the chasm that divides these two things, which I will try to prove. The body is an organism and as such it has an objective existence, and the object exists in the same tactile qualities as the body from the outside, because it is a pile of bodies - material monads: otherwise it would not exist in reality. Regarding this you can claim that that the body is an organism, we know it from experiences which can be broken up into qualities. But we know everything from experiences and therefore this argument, however fair, cannot be made and this is the same point that solipsism and idealism cannot be logically rejected. This is the same as with *petitioprincipi* in the theory of knowledge – some qualities prove others and we will never leave this magical circle of each self enclosed within itself and such is the structure of existence and it makes these conceptions possible: solipsistic and idealistic.

3. We must establish something as the inviolable state of things absolutely certain in its essence and then try to describe it, accepting only those concepts which it inevitably implies. I exist – it is certain – but how? The idealists would like to limit this fact to the existence of a pure self – I am asking myself, what belongs to it? Is it conceivable in complete purity without any content? Then all selves would be identical, indistinguishable. Actually, we do not know if they would be different, as non-spatial, and therefore not related to any location. Everything would merge into one heap at one point of mathematics = Absolute Nothingness. Each self is unique – it is qualitatively different from the others. Can we say that pure selves are empty vessels that have only the ability to release aimless, intentional acts and egocentrism – then what is that thing, which it is staring at and how do these acts exude from the self? How does it happen, where? In time only, and non-spatially? This is a completely inconceivable thing, and above all, it is not even remotely similar to what we have in the state of things. There is no pure self, which is an illegitimate hypostasis. Please try to close your eyes and put yourself in an amoeba situation and then undertake introspection. All illusions disappear at once. From idealistic assumptions it would appear that only the pure self is real, because it exists identically, and the rest is only some “theatre” (!?), which some “initial harmony” imposes on it and on other selves, creating an intersubjective world. Meanwhile, not only is the pure self identical, but my body is too. My calf is the same calf today and yesterday and 20 years ago and it is from inside out only mine, and not just like objects outside me, which for me can also be identical, but they are not mine. And that’s what I call, in contrast to non-mineness [non-Meinigkeit] and the disappearance of objects, a reality, on par with the unity of the self. These are the moments, the self and its content (body

and memories), which should not be separated, because no one has seen or will see them separately, this can only happen in the idealist *Erschaung* in which they – deluded by the “optic lighthouse” and the apparent lack of quality of “pure thinking” falsify hopelessly a simple state of affairs, creating an abyss between the contents of consciousness and species (IEs) [Individual Existences]; through creating the I, I do not justify the existence of monad bodies, but 1) I find in the world corporal monads being as such and alone and 2) I cannot imagine and think of the non-corporeal existence of the self: this image is associated only with false introspection. The unity of personality does not simply exist in one point, but it includes all content, and above all the body. There are qualities which are more spatial and time bound, but they are also not easily found. When I do not fall under the impression that anything non-material (strictly non-tactile) is non-spatial, the whole narrative regarding the otherness of thinking disappears; I have the after effects of the living spatial qualities, memories, imaginations, assigned to others, associated with the signs: here lies the heart of the matter. Who once understands the homogeneity of the psyche and the formation of the so-called “spirit” from the same composites of qualities, as the whole other part of inner life, for them the nightmare of their “incorporeality” immediately disappears.

4. The continuation of such a sensible thesis, that I would recognize the bodies as real and then objects as real, i.e. objects such as they appear to me, I resist like a fire, considering such naive realism even as logically, and not only ontologically contradictory. This implies a contradictory idea of, for example, red, which nobody can see, a tone not heard, and other similar conceptual monsters. I am also very much against a formulation that everything is material and spiritual, because it implies a fundamental difference of corporality and spirituality already within the being for itself, within which everything is only (including the external world) a consequence of quality (but in several necessary types: (XN) in[ternal] and ex[ternal] touch = (XN) of the body, (XN) of the world) with the help of sight and touch, I consider the body as one of the objects of the world and from there it arises the fact that it remains there and the “spirit”, composed of memories, feelings (purely bodily, only indeterminately placed) visions and thinking (in the nominalistic sense, not in the Husserlian), it stays on the other side of existence, as something with accidentally linked with the body. For me there is only one individual existence (IE) examined from the inside (and then the world also is an experience) and examined as an organism or as one of the bodies in Real Space and then within the limits has to be in (P) [physicalist] view reduced to dead particles.

Here with this material and spiritual I see a falsely formulated matter: it is correct, without the implications of Cartesian duality, it comes from psychologism; then we avoid this “intersection” and we are in agreement with the natural approach (about which you write) in which we always present ourselves as bodies in unity with the “spirit” i.e. with the rest of existence (XN)) besides the bodily and “the worldly”. That is the main line of my argument.

5. As for Husserl: I experience “horrible” moments reading the transc[endent]al Logic. I will have to write a big thing about H[usserl], after I, within my boundaries, will deal with the Viennese. I do not know at all that he would deal seriously with sensory perception. This I would like to know. I am also very much against these creative operations “in creating things” from the hyletic material. We constantly ignore the body

and look into the world through the eyes suspended in the air. And the body is the first, supposedly transcendental subject, but given directly. And through the body (muscular sensations) we create a complete “*transcendent*” on the basis of the “*immanent*” – i.e., an optic vision (and not a pure and already two-sided transcendental vision). The rest are memories, so-called past experience – but the body is at the base, and Husserl doesn’t have a body – it is a “ghost” of an infernal old man with some abandoned (and certainly stenching a bit) correlate. I would not use the term “the sense of things” at all. It seems that the immanent is only a symbol of something we do not have, and just like the conceptual symbol makes sense, the immanent, which is a transcendent thing, makes sense. I bring this all to bodily disposition in light of previous experiences. These are all monstrous terminologies which



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then imply all of this. This is an idealistic consequence and because a thing is only a correlate, as far as my „sense“ of things coming from experiences, I hypostatize the thing as such and I see it constituted in me and devalued. But it is horrible, if such a powerful intellect as Husserl has this false perspective (the epoche was a criminal maneuver!) – I have not yet reached eliminating being in itself – it is the peak of monstrosity – and horrible terminology drives into nonsense. There is a spatial individual (= (IE) [Individual Existence], which in its personality is not at all concentrated in some mathematical point as spaceless, but is in its unity, divided into spatially existing contents in its spatial content as such: it is here, and not elsewhere and this body is, next to the memories required by the continuity and identity of personality in time, an integral part, rather a non-self-dependent moment of what we understand under the name “(IE) from the inside” = being in itself and for itself. I, as a realist, have the right to ask directly by what law has the state of given things been falsified like a mistake and a non-idealist has the right to demand proof that the body is something special in its “my-ness” (Meinigkeit) – it never disappears, it only moves into the background of Cornelius (unbemerktter Hintergrund), and things disappear completely. In the evolution from an amoeba to a person, the development of imaginative and conceptual contents takes place (the symbolism of signs exhausts this matter completely), which constitutes from the memories, against the background of the evolution of central apparatus, and these exact contents remove the initially sole content of unity of personality, i.e. the body merged

into the background appearing as such at the point casting awareness. This analogy with the vision that H[usserl] misuses with the help of quotes is the result of the spatiality of all the conscious contents and the one-dimensionality of time. Without the spatiality of all qualities, in pure time of a distinct self, there is the unimaginable existence of a "background" and groups of qualities, simultaneously multilayered experiences. Such is the state of things, and not the hypostatic pure self, which (without the body it cannot be otherwise done) we must establish as inconceivably existing and inconceivably producing inconceivable pure objectless acts. The act reduced to the groups of complexes of material qualities becomes a "rational" psychological short cut, not the hypostatic existence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> order (the first is the pure self). As for the phenomenality of objects, we will not be in disagreement. But the question of why the body cannot be treated as a phenomenon is also a perfidious question of an already corrupt idealist, which is based on free assumptions mentioned previously, which deny the most obvious state of things. If we expand the concept of phenomenality in this way, then everything is a phenomenon, and phenomenality loses its meaning that distinguishes certain things in contrast to others. My body is hard and impenetrable and the objects are too – and so if they are phenomenal, then the body is too. But objects are hard for the body and for the self through this body. First there is a body presented in its internal unique qualities as my body, then only through that body things are presented as similarly hard, but without an internal substrate, without which existence and these things would not exist for us. That is why we call things (and the body of others (IEs)) real, that they are presented in the same way as our body: they are real in the sense that they must either have self-awareness or be composed of something of a nature, that beyond their phenomenality [sic], something in them sits as a being in itself: in the bodies of others (IEs) the unities of personalities with complexes of internal sensations constituting whole holistic states of things in which those as moments stand out and in objects of multiplicity of those entities in themselves: this is realism. Because in relation to what a phenomenal body is supposed to be, if I directly feel it from the inside as real, as myself, then the calf is mine, and Giewont is not mine - or in relation to the organism when I look at it from the side? These are real illusions, based on the sight situated in the brain, with the help of which I can observe my body as if from a pure self (as a matter of fact through an internal light) as one of the objects beyond me. I do not believe in reconciling realism with certain assumptions of H[usserl] (acts, intentions, pure self, etc.) and with his terminology. Somewhere this must crack. In H[usserl] there are only quasi-descriptions that could ultimately be translated into human language (the state of things is terminologically distorted and leads to new conceptual backbones.) Wronskiites found in H[usserl] the basis (spontaneity of creating concepts through the pure Self) for their "spontaneous creation of a pure masterintellect". Stępniewski gets inside Husserl and what will come out of it!! I understand ontology in your broadest sense of meaning and I am waiting for it from you with great anticipation.

I have not yet reached eliminating being in itself – it is the peak of monstrosity.