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The atmospheric sensing of European situations: the “Montaigne program” for European students

Abstract

This article is meant as a draft to apply Hermann Schmitz's theory of atmospheres to the field of European communication. Schmitz himself has strongly emphasized the debt philosophy has to pay off after having created barriers of understanding which have caused great damage for European culture. Together with his – still unexplored – theory of speech and language, this application advocates an extension of the corridor for acquiring an unknown European language to reach a corporeal and atmospheric familiarity near to that of the mother-tongue. With it, a considerable widening of understanding among young Europeans and a contribution to regenerate the European type of civilization seem to be possible.

Keywords

Feelings as atmospheres, Incorporation, Implanting European situations

Nowadays, to speak about Europe and to speak about the European Union seem to be the same. Against this assumption, the present text argues that Europe is no objective entity like the EU, but a chaotic manifoldness enclosing not only a great diversity of states of affairs, programs and problems, but embedding pre-reflexive references, above all atmospheres with a considerable affective impact. In an analogue way, an alternative program for European student exchange is needed that will take in account the neglected pre-reflexive range of experiences and memories, wishes and fears for fostering a better understanding among European nations. This is in clear opposition to the ERASMUS-program that, like EU, is meant to be a catalyst of professional competences and economic success. The new European program will be named MONTAIGNE-program².

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² For more details, see my book *Europa regenerieren. Über das Entstehen kollektiver Atmosphären* (2019, forthcoming).

1. *The range of pre-reflexive experience*³

With the creation of the Eurozone and the Lisbon Agenda of 2000, the political and economic elites confirmed their conviction that the European Union had to play its role as a global player. But in opposition to Russia, China and the USA, EU being an unidentified political object (a multi-level construct or an institutionalized transnational politic entity, Germ. *institutionalisierter transnationaler Herrschaftsverband*) lacked the indispensable missionary idea of global players (Sloterdijk 2005: 365-74). So, the idea was born to fuse EU with Europe. The huge cultural reservoir of European traditions and ideas would be the projectile driving the economic and political warhead. The amalgamation of EU and Europe, called the “European project”, is the common base of EU elites. But till now all intents to ascribe a European identity to EU citizens have failed (Bouchard 2016). The EU is a functional construct and no historical entity with an affective impact comparable to a nation state. The EU has to borrow cultural “values” from different cultural ages and contexts; it doesn’t have a culture of its own and is unable to give to men and women a common orientation to life (Joas, Wiegand 2006). To the populations, the affective impact of recently created institutions and statements (Court of Justice of the European Union, European Court of Human Rights, European Charter of Human Rights) stay weak. On the other hand, the massive internationalization of politics shows that the EU is above all an economically driven entity. Consequently, the students’ exchanges facilitated by the ERASMUS-program can’t have the aim to deepen a problematic European identity but are meant to strengthen the competitiveness of EU on the international markets.

³ The origin of this approach is the discovery of subjective state of affairs (*subjektive Tatsachen*) which only the concerned person is able to testify in her own name (Schmitz 2012a, *Kurze Einführung in die Neue Phänomenologie*). The following translations are available: Italian: T. Griffero (ed.), *Nuova fenomenologia. Una introduzione*, Milano 2011; Polish: A. Przylebski (ed.), *Nowa Fenomenologia. Krótkie wprowadzenie*, Warschau 2015; French: J.-L. Grosos, Ph. Georget (eds.), *Brève introduction à la nouvelle phénoménologie*, Paris 2016; Danish: *Kort indføring i den nye fænomenologi. Oversat af Sune Frølund*, Aalborg 2017; Romanian: P.G. Sandu (ed.), *Scurta Introducere in Noua Fenomenologie*, Oradea 2018; Serbian: D. Smiljanic (ed.), *Kratki uvod u Novu Fenomenologiju*, Novi Sad 2018. The English and Spanish translations are forthcoming.

“To face the international challenge” is one of the ubiquitous invitations to students to train their attitude towards and their cooperation with different peoples and cultures. The offer of universities to outgoing students consists of a toolbox to overcome administrative obstacles and so-called critical incidents due to cultural and institutional differences⁴. This global transcultural⁵ (or cross-cultural) approach, i.e. transcending, not meeting the singular culture, is meant to make students and future employees work efficiently worldwide despite affective “hot spots”, strange behavior and troubling customs of other cultures. Current literature concerning diverging cultural experiences starts from a distanced view on the objective world and its cultural variations as a given thing⁶. This perspective betrays the global “view from nowhere” (Nagel 1986) of *homo oeconomicus*, interested in managing, i.e. dominating processes and being distant, if not indifferent to the affective significance of impressions and atmospheres (Bolten 2012). The multiplication of literature about civilizational knowledge, European studies, social sciences, cultural studies and interdisciplinary cooperation (Lüsebrink 2012: 115-28)⁷ is passing over the fact that to the individual, yet domestic perception of the self and the surrounding world is primarily constituted by an unobtrusive, affective, pre-reflexive corporeal sensing, corporeal communication, subjective impressions, meaningful but diffuse situations, corporeal space, moods, emotional atmospheres and atmospheric space. This orientation in the world should not be confused with discursive communication by speech signs. To emphasize this difference, Schmitz has chosen the paradox of the “message without signs” (Schmitz 2010a: 18-29; Schmitz 2011a: 29-53). This is a fortiori the case of experiences in other countries and with people from there. But the phenomena

⁴ See the toolbox developed by French-German University: https://www.dfh-ufa.org/fileadmin/Dateien/stabsstelle/2016/DFH_Leitfaden_deutsch_web.pdf; https://www.dfh-ufa.org/fileadmin/Dateien/stabsstelle/2016/DFH_Leitfaden_franz_web.pdf; Müller-Pelzer 2017: 87-102.

⁵ I don't use the term transcultural in the way Wolfgang Welsch did. I start from the meaning of “beyond” as it is used in the words “transalpine” or “transsiberian”. So, transcultural means: beyond an individual culture, aiming at something else.

⁶ See the overview in Lüsebrink (2012).

⁷ The phonetic resemblance of the omnipresent word international seems to have invited to use intercultural in the same way. But international concerns relations institutions and organizations have, meanwhile intercultural does not.

stemming from these sources are currently considered to be too chaotic to have any practical use. To serve an analytic purpose, they must be formatted and reduced to data available for statistic treatment. In the domain of intercultural studies dedicated to companies, this aim is trivial: the purpose is to rely on refined construed objects to dominate as far as possible the unforeseeable. Concerning the hermeneutic disciplines, intercultural research is more interested in the individual case and less attracted by generalization. Nevertheless, they share the epistemological ideal that the activity of Reason is necessary to build the notions to seize real phenomena (Schmitz 1995: 19-25).

Analyzing step by step the occidental tradition of philosophical thinking, Schmitz has shown that after the Democritean-Platonic revolution this reductionist approach has become the “normal” European theory and practice. Therefore, also in intercultural context, the pre-reflexive area remains a *terra incognita* and of minor ontological and epistemological value. The scientific dogma, however, fails by asserting that the reduction of phenomena to objectively measurable and statistically usable data would cover the whole domain of empiricism. In fact, the corporeal sensing of everyday experience, corporeal communication and interaction, atmospheres etc. is lacking. So, the reductionist approach gives only a half empiricism (Rappe 2018: 143-9).

To an average exchange student, pre-reflexive experiences, e.g. atmospheres, are well known, but there is a consensus that the specific atmosphere of a meeting, a university, a city or a country can't be explained in reliable terms and, thus, doesn't matter in first place. From their stay abroad, students keep in mind some emotionally tinted experiences that leave a shameful, angry, joyful, overwhelming or respectful touch, but these experiences stay enclosed as isolated events in a section of curious, pleasant or unpleasant, footnotes to his or her stay. With the background of the scientist world explanation (Schmitz 2010b) and the intense penetration of life by the paradigm of *homo oeconomicus* (Illouz 2018), those experiences, in the professional focus, are just nice to have. Looking back to the original idea of ERASMUS-program formulated by Jacques Delors, the aim of combining a deepened understanding among the citizens of Europe, better opportunities on the labor market and the responsibility of universities to contribute to public welfare has come off worst (Chambon, Bat-Hatem 2014: 74).

So, coming back to the original impetus, European student encounters have to massively rely on this resonant layer of corporeal experiences: only then the full empiricism will be at hand. This implies to unlearn what has become not a second nature, but the first nature to nearly all academics when dealing with different cultural situations, i.e. scanning from a distant perspective the unknown impressions and extracting the useful data to concentrate them in constellations following the individual practical relevance. This unlearning implies, on the other hand, to learn to become sensitive and resonant to ambiguous, but somehow suggestive impressions⁸. A resonant composure (*Fassung*) as a corporeal competence doesn't figure in any of the current lists of competences, and this although it is the core of real social and intercultural competence!

To develop the sensitivity for meaningful impressions and to become a disposition means to consider it as a source of knowledge. This is unusual, more: it is a "provocation of traditional epistemology" (Großheim 2008: 26)⁹. "The world shows up not as a neutral realm of already separate entities but as the atmospheric fields of significant situations, opportunities or quasi-corporeal forces or 'opponents' that in the first instance become manifest to the conscious person in form of the 'internally diffuse meaningfulness' of holistic corporeal impressions" (Müllan, Slaby 2011: 245).

Therefore, the phenomenological method to include the corporeal sensing of suggestive impressions and feelings as a hypothetical source for investigation is necessary to open broad fields of neglected empiricism. This is particularly true for intercultural contacts because here the implicit, pre-reflexive and unthematic "layer" of communication is even more important than in the domestic culture with its pre-linguistic ("unwritten") rules, rites and routines to manage the diffuse "significativity" (*Bedeutsamkeit*) of common situations.

To undertake this philosophical turn under the conditions of European student exchange would seem all the more reckless, if there were not the opportunity to learn an unknown language from scratch, simulating the entrance of a child into its surrounding world, language and

⁸ This has not to be mixed up with the so-called tolerance ambiguity which is an intellectual control of irritations, but not the corporeal sensing and resonance of puzzling impressions.

⁹ "Die so harmlos wirkende Kennzeichnung der Sensibilität als Disposition, etwa zu bemerken, führt zu einer Provokation der traditionellen Erkenntnistheorie, weil diese Bestimmung so etwas wie unmittelbare Sachverhaltswahrnehmung vorsieht".

culture. Here, we touch the growing of the sensitivity for overwhelming or meaningful impressions, becoming a disposition to understand what is going on and a competence to assemble meaningful impressions so that they become pressing constellations urging a word, an exclamation or a sentence.

This model relies on the fundamental difference Hermann Schmitz has established between the living, feeling and felt body (German *Leib*, French *Chair*, Spanish *Carne*) and the physiological body (German *Körper*). The *Leib* is the great absent in traditional occidental philosophy due to the dogmatic dualism between body (belonging to the outer world) and soul (constituting an inner world) created by Democritus and Plato. This artificial “splitting of man” (Schmitz 2016: 16)¹⁰ by classical Greek philosophy has made that the feeling and felt body had disappeared as if it had fallen in a crevasse (Schmitz 2014a: 8). This is the reason why Gernot Böhme calls the reconquest of the spontaneous life experience (*unwillkürliche Lebenserfahrung*) an existential task (Böhme 2003). The MONTAIGNE-program¹¹ will take advantage from the corporeal praxis of the encorporation into an unknown European language, i.e. to sense the feeling and felt body (*Leib*), to rediscover the corporeal communication (*leibliche Kommunikation*), and espe-

¹⁰ “Menschpaltung”.

¹¹ The denomination ERASMUS-program stems from the acronym European community action scheme for the mobility of university students. Since the 1980s mobility had become a central educational objective for exporting countries. The decision to allude to the Dutch humanist has been taken for marketing reasons: at that time, the play with the name of the emblematic humanist had been considered useful. Today, not just for marketing, but for historical reasons, there are two motives to prefer the name of Montaigne. The first is the fact that the intellectual departure of modern Europe in 16th century finds the most appropriate expression with a jurist-writer-philosopher as Michel de Montaigne (1533-92). He had overcome the reassuring limits of the Christian humanism of Erasmus of Rotterdam and had experienced the turbulences of a world, having lost the traditional orientation in metaphysical, political, scientific and anthropologic respect. The second reason is that in his *Essais*, Montaigne writes in French, a vernacular language, and not in Latin he perfectly dominates. Thus, Montaigne witnesses that being European is inevitably linked to the acquisition and practice of a living language (or more). So, he represents two principles which make the European of today, i.e. the self-containing critical spirit of the European type of civilization, and the implantation in pre-reflexive situations (*Lebenswelt*) nurtured by a national language and ancient European traditions. In this respect, the MONTAIGNE-program fits better for a student exchange program.

cially the antagonist incorporation as well as the incorporation in solidarity (*antagonistische und solidarische Einleibung*). The pre-reflexive corporeal space is the interface to the space of feelings, understood as room filling atmospheres (obtrusive or creeping). Atmospheres are anchored in common situations, i.e. a common perspective on life with a diffuse but characteristic tint.

The personal situation, currently called personality, relies on a corporeal base, structured by the tendency of tension towards the pole of narrowness (e.g. present in the various experiences of startling and dismay) and of expansion towards the pole of width (e.g. present in the various experiences of fluent or abrupt distraction). Like an expander, the individual dynamic force, the vital drive, opposes and relates the two poles giving to the corporeal movements a dialogic structure, modulating a more or less acute (epicritic) or smooth (protopathic) quality. The human possibility, in contrast to plants and most animals, is the personal emancipation from corporeal movements. But even the habitual composure of an adult, i.e. a person on a certain level of emancipation, depends on personal regression because of the inevitable affective implication by unexpected impressions and the vulnerability by shocks. Schmitz emphasizes that personal regression is indispensable for the affective renewal of the person's level of emancipation; otherwise, this level risks in turning into a façade. The personal situation is completed by a personal world of one's own (*persönliche Eigenwelt*) and a personal neutral world (*persönliche Fremdwelt*), establishing different degrees of affective implication and distance in the relationship with others (Schmitz 2010: 333-48)¹².

The key point is that the individual is moving in a pre-reflexive area, or better: belongs to a pre-dimensional space (Schmitz 2005: 283) that is also constitutive for the common situations, i.e. the surrounding world the individual is living in with others (Müllan, Slaby, 2011: 245). The corporeal communication which is the main axe of corporeally being in the world is widened to the dialogue with the corporeally based personal situation of others. Mostly being of the type of antagonistic incorporation (*Einleibung*), the constitution of common situations passes not through the exchange of encoded and decoded signals. The corporeally felt affective implication is completed by the integration into collective feelings understood as pre-dimensional collective at-

¹² "Entremdung und Urfremdheit".

mospheric spaces. Their ontological status of being half-entities (Griffo 2017, *Halbdinge*) does in no way weaken their power: objectivation, interpretation and argumentation show to be insufficient when facing the diffuse pre-reflexive area. This has to be taken into consideration when addressing the access to another culture.

2. Situations and speech

The language acquisition proposed by the MONTAIGNE-program differs strongly from school and university foreign language learning because this is part of the European education system driven by economic and political interests (*Bildungsökonomie*). Meritorious projects as the program of Intercultural Citizenship, disseminated by Michael Byram and the AIE of Council of Europe, try in vain to counter the reductive market logic of competitiveness and unlimited economic growth, namely nationalist state ideologies (Byram 2008)¹³. The MONTAIGNE-program differs, too, from Jürgen Trabant's plea for European multilingualism. Trabant has advocated that becoming European doesn't pass through the multilingualism, as useful as it may be, but through the choice of a "brother language" (before called "adoptive language", Trabant 2014: 34-6). Just as in the case of a younger brother or sister (or an adoptive child), where one follows the development and the new view on the world with affection and patience, a brother or sister language engages a deep affective implication, demands patience and allows seeing the world with other eyes. Fearing the disappearance of European high-level languages including scientific, philosophic and cultural use, Trabant strongly argues for the languages as the "European memorial sites" (Trabant 2012: 257-71) because a brother language will be the necessary support of "europäische Bildung" and mutual understanding among European peoples (Trabant 2014: 35).

I share this concern, but I believe, in fact, that the approach by language learning as individual *Bildung* is too narrow; this may explain Trabant's pessimism concerning the survival of European culture languages; the acquisition of an unknown and neglected European lan-

¹³ See the CoE *Autobiography of intercultural encounters*:
https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/autobiography/autobiographytool_EN.asp.

guage pursued by the MONTAIGNE-program will trigger more than anything else a common European situation of understanding because it is meant not to reproduce existing power relations; a philosophical criticism of occidental failures will be indispensable to avoid theoretical and practical traps.

The comprehensive MONTAIGNE-approach is a more feasible, equitable and sustainable way:

- *feasible* to average students from all disciplines who perhaps will be discouraged by Trabant's demanding cultural ideal;
- *equitable* to the lesser spoken and particularly endangered European languages and civilizations, and
- *sustainable* in the sense of a collective European effort.

Trabant's nearly exclusive focus on the undeniable negative effects of global English on other European languages and cultures may hide the different but also egoistic politics trying to push French, German, Spanish or Italian on the front stage. Therefore, the MONTAIGNE-program will exclude these five most spoken languages to resolutely focus on the other approximatively 25 European languages and their cultures¹⁴. This doesn't mean, of course, to exclude the five most spoken languages from Europeanization.

My thesis is that a different foreign language acquisition can become a game changer able to open the access to European neighbor cultures on a new base of reciprocity. This should contribute to a regeneration of the European feeling of belonging together. The most powerful situation to give depth, order and orientation to human life is speaking in sentences¹⁵. With the moment of its birth (or even sooner), the baby begins to live in situations (*Sichseinleben*, Schmitz 2012b: 230-5). With the settlement of a corporeal implantation into a common situation (the family), the baby integrates into the first cultural rituals. From the end of the first year, it appropriates the linguistic registers (words, sayings, sentences) into the antagonistic corporeal communication with its surrounding. With the use of "I", not only a linguistic, but an anthropological threshold is passed: it is the beginning of the personal situation establishing the difference between the affectively own and the affectively foreign. Current research (Schmitz 2005: 264) says – and Schmitz is following this state of the art – that till the age of about 11 to 15 years this phase would be the "window"

¹⁴ For more details, see Müller-Pelzer (forthcoming).

¹⁵ The theory of speech and language may be found in Schmitz (2012b: 207-55).

to learn another language in an analogue way as the mother-tongue by imitation, intuition and playful experimentation – a window that would be closed afterwards and leave the youngsters with the rule learning type.

Here, I would like to modify the current working hypothesis. The modification concerns the unquestioned supposition that foreign language acquisition has to take place under conditions coined by a school or university *curriculum* in the framework of public educational system. In this context language acquisition becomes the overall social function to survive in global markets: yet children are contaminated with the ideology to be amongst the winners, i.e. to choose the most “paying” languages. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), too, has to be seen in this programmatic perspective.

On the contrary, the language acquisition I would like to argue for, will begin on the base of corporeal communication of the encorporation type (German *Einleibung*) and opening the opportunity to enter implanting common situations (*implantierende gemeinsame Situationen*) of the host culture. Meanwhile the rule-based learning will at best offer including common situations (*includierende gemeinsame Situationen*) with a moderate affective implication, if all, the implanting common situations of infantile learning are characterized by a strong commitment which may only be released accompanied by heavy traumata. Important to bear in mind are the changes back and forth from one type to another. Schmitz has taken the model of different family members: the parents may attach great importance to family as an implanting common situation; the children, growing up in this affective climate and becoming more and more adults, may, however, take progressively their distance, adopting the affectively moderate inclusive common situation or, in the case of a rupture with the family members, slip into a neutral or indifferent relationship¹⁶. But the inverse development is also possible, e.g. in case of life crisis, death of a family member or an apparently unspectacular change in the personal situation, when the affective commitment will possibly become strong again or even stronger than ever. This example announces the useful completion between the intuitive infantile learning method and the following

¹⁶ The German ecologic “rebels of Schönaun” against nuclear energy may illustrate a comparable development from an implanting common situation in the beginning to an inclusive common situation today: <https://www.ews-schoenau.de/>
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elektrizit%C3%A4tswerke_Sch%C3%B6nau.

method following may will have: once young Europeans will have experienced the growing up in implanting common situations, there will be always a way back, if the interest has been lost; vice versa, the way from including common situations to the pre-personal affective immersion in implanting common situations is locked.

Starting from these experiences of personal regression and emancipation, the learners of MONTAIGNE-program will, step by step, begin to speak, i.e. to express the affective significativity of things, persons, and feelings. Thus, the words, sayings and sentences uttered in the new language will help to strip away for a while the dependence of the often oppressing, puzzling or diffuse situations. So, in a certain way, Schmitz explains, the subject finds itself beside the situations and, nevertheless, must live in the situations (Schmitz 2014b: 12)¹⁷. The success of the encorporation method of language acquisition depends, then, on dedicating the full attention to generate affectively impacting common situations. For this reason, the projected European semester in the frame of MONTAIGNE-program will be free of modules other than those of atmospheric sensing and language acquisition.

Briefly summarized these are the main differences: economic and political utilitarianism will be avoided by excluding the European languages most spoken from the exchange program, i.e. German, English, French, Spanish and Italian; the relaunch of understanding among European peoples will be guided by the regeneration of the European type of civilization, not by economic interests and competitiveness.

The central focus is not on acquiring the highest degree of language skills and measurable linguistic competences but on competence for European situations, i.e. sensing the affective significativity of telling specific collective atmospheres resumed as an existential feeling (*Lebensgefühl*).

The European type of civilization considered as the common origin of being European puts the brotherhood or sisterhood of languages in the forefront and leaves aside the inappropriate association of foreignness. To regenerate Europe, the common European situations impact much more than the position of the respective language in the system of Indo-European languages.

Following Schmitz, speech is considered as the connection between the pre-reflexive, corporeal feeling and the reflexive emancipation

¹⁷ "Er [der Mensch] findet sich selbst gleichsam neben den Situationen und muss doch in ihnen leben".

from the “jail” of corporeally dictated situations: the anthropological base of corporeality, corporeal communication and interaction in a corporeal space, constituting the responsivity to a wide range of feelings, being a *humanum commune*, the competence to speak another European language will open an unknown way of feeling and thinking, referring to the common European type of civilization.

This specific approach requires a specific language didactic and methodology. The task of the students will be threefold¹⁸: first, the modeling on the perspective of the child learning to speak and, second, the students coming back to their adult perspective, and, third, the students trying to integrate the new experiences in their habitual composure.

If it is right that children are learning in a corporeal way (Wolf 2016), the language introduction will take its inspiration from the infantile didactics and methodology. But even in this phase the training can't negate that to accept this perspective at the age of young adults needs more than a simulation attitude accompanied by the implicit knowing that this interaction is just a play without seriousness. Instead, an attitude of serious playfulness is needed. Schmitz, in his anthropology, has called this perspective the “playful identification” (*spielerische Identifizierung*) taking spontaneously something as such, e.g. the photo of a landscape as the landscape itself (Schmitz 1995: 178-82). In some occasions even the adult will be able to slip into this perspective, for example when weeping with the unhappy movie hero. But the team players of the language training are real persons and adults to whom an infantile perspective is offered. So, they find themselves simultaneously on different levels of personal emancipation and concerned by corresponding types of affectivity. Schmitz completes his analysis by two additional perspectives: the project (*Entwurf*) of a person, choosing a role and modeling one-self on it, e.g. wishing to become a versatile intercultural mediator; and the playful identification taking a distance to one-self (*Abstand nehmende spielerische Identifizierung seiner selbst*), e.g. seeing one-self from a critical distance. These are the attitudes an adult language learner can deal with. Given that all participants are sharing the same experience, the needed role switching will become a source of ambition and acknowledgment.

Finally, the students are trying to integrate the new experiences in their composure. Comparable to young immigrants having to switch

¹⁸ For more details, see Müller-Pelzer (forthcoming).

between the affective youth memories of their culture of origin and the challenge to behave “reasonable”, i.e. corresponding to the norms of the host country, MONTAIGNE-students will have to integrate the child perspective, the adult perspective of academic learners and the challenging perspective of students having to modify their initial expectations, hopes and fears etc., i.e. to adapt their composure (*Fassung*) to the demanding experiences in the host country.

To come closer to the competence for European situations, we must switch from the subjective perspective to the opening up of collective atmospheres. Here, Schmitz’s distinction between actual and durable situations becomes relevant (Schmitz 2005).

3. Towards a sensitivity for collective atmospheres

The announced renewal of language training will rely on actual common situations: the students will listen, pronounce, enact, and use sounds, words, sayings and sentences in groups and share, thus, new actual common situations with specific atmospheres: tense or loose, funny or problematic, delicate or overwhelming. Students will become resonant to the melody and rhythm of the unknown language; they will notice in which situation the respective uttering is adequate. On the other hand, the parallel teaching courses will establish a cognitive and affective relation to durable common situations of the surrounding civilization: a city, a landscape, auratic monuments or locations, national and European memorial sites. Students from different European countries will discover a specific collective atmosphere, put this experience in relation with comparable atmospheres in their domestic civilization and begin to make explicit what they are feeling. Actual common situations and durable common situations complete each other: the appropriation of the sensitive and the cultural world has a common focus in discovering that the other is not a stranger, but that the reciprocal incarnation between Europeans works spontaneously (Schmitz 2010: 333-48).

But this experience is far away from current exchange. To illustrate the profound change in the required students’ attitude, I will give a sketch of four ideal-typical attitudes: the defensive and the pragmatic attitude are referring to the average social background, meanwhile the critical experience attitude and the corporeal resonance attitude include the characteristic contents of a developing personal situation.

The first three ones are to be found in ERASMUS exchange; the last one will give an idea of the intended MONTAIGNE attitude.

The defensive attitude (“contract type”) without affective implication may result from a rigid strategy concerning the individual career as well as from an unwilling obedience to an administrative decision, e.g. to study on another place than the respective student had been wished. Due to the unfavorable domestic filters, the new cultural environment stays mute, seems strange and sometimes even hostile. The personal composure is heavily armored to discard any risk of being touched and destabilized; the different circumstances have just to be suffered for a while. The foreign languages reduced to an instrument to be used efficiently. The only loan is the mention of an international experience in CV.

The second attitude is the pragmatic attitude (“copain-copine/Tinder type”). The great majority of exchange students are assembled around this behavior type, but it would be an oversimplification to treat them as a homogenous student group. They have acquired or are quickly acquiring a flexible disposition to manage new impressions insofar as these contribute to build new social links and to have fun. This mixture of utilitarian and hedonistic attitude reflects the general consumer trend of present societies. These students are eager to live in an international community with the consequence that the corporeally smooth experiences predominate; the rough, perplexing experiences are filtered thanks to the initial, efficiency driven protensions (hopes, fears, expectations, programs, etc.). The individual corporeal disposition is linked with common activities like playing football or dancing, cooperating in a student association or becoming friends with students from different countries. This disposition is linked with latent encorporation. The wish to belong to a community drives them to look for events that offer the chance to be included in common atmospheres (party, rock concerts, making music together, singing, making fun, etc.) by spreading corporeal movements (encorporation in solidarity) through the gateway qualities (*Brückenqualitäten*) springing from one to another (rhythm, choir singing, dancing, Schmitz 1995: 127-30; Landweer 2016: 137-74). Following the respective corporeal disposition and the precedent cultural stamp (taste, social class, income of the parents, social norms, etc.) different styles emerge creating the emotional solidarity of comradeships, separated from other groups.

The wish to belong to a community is frequently combined with the intention to find a sexual partner for about six months, e.g. with the

help of specialized internet portals like Tinder (Illouz 2018: 208 ff.). Following Illouz, the intention “to have a good time” and “not to stay alone” triggers the commodified sex, i.e. the acceptance of market behavior. In New Phenomenology terminology, we have a latent incorporation giving at best limited inclusive common situations which fade away without too much regret.

Both subtypes of tempered corporeal atmospheres are dissolved when students go back to their domestic country; the seldom intent to give to the common atmosphere a continuation by visiting each-other mostly fails, or, very rarely, the contact glides on to another type (see below). These including common situations create moderate affective ties which provoke a nostalgic regret when they finish but normally they don't provoke a trembling or a shock of composure: the affective equilibrium is not touched (Schmitz 2011a: 45, 72), and this fits well with the aims of ERASMUS-program supporting a transcultural, affectively filtered ease to assure international working efficiency, excluding a strong affective implication into a chosen national culture¹⁹. The foreign language is practiced in a functional way and frequently substituted by the global English.

The critical experience attitude (“hermeneutic type”) resumes those students who, more focused on the self, are looking for an individual contact and are not interested in standard comradeship or superficial sexual contacts. They try, e.g. to get into non-university associations, to live together with students from other faculties or universities, to get friends with ordinary people from the country, to improve their language skills, etc. In fact, from the beginning and besides their studies, they have taken the decision to experience “something different” or “something authentic” that would happen, but even to them difficult to explain. For the before mentioned types the common situations of a host country stay generally something seen from outside (strange, funny, enticing, etc.) or unobtrusive thanks to an intercultural toolbox, explanatory student guides of the universities, buddy organizations, help desks, dancing parties, common excursions, etc. These

¹⁹ Contrary to official statements, ERASMUS-program does not help to develop the European feeling of belonging together, a broader use of European languages and the political commitment of students. The multilingual mixture of the student population can't hide the fact that the omnipresent global English (in many countries the teaching language and interpersonal *lingua franca*) represents a barrier to the country's domestic language despite language courses and the popularity of a particular students' slang.

measures allow to pass a semester abroad without lasting personal unease. But those who are looking for unforeseeable and even puzzling experiences will not avoid the challenge of individual atmospheric feeling and/or the invasions of collective atmospheres, strange behavior or cryptic explanations; they may even attract their attention. Without a preparation by an organization, these students may get in touch with including common situations of a different type compared with their peer groups. They grope their way and, with a lot of luck, are going to transform including common situations into implanting common situations with a strong affective bound. But the pre-reflexive predominance of the reductionist world view will, in most cases and in the long run, encapsule these experiences and transform them to a sort of unconnected floating island on the biographical stream. In some few cases these students are so strongly attracted by the sensing of the specific *nomos* of a common situation that they may decide to continue studying and working in the host country.

The corporeal resonance attitude (“encorporation type”): the following profile will circumscribe the corporeal base the participant of MONTAIGNE-program will share (Schmitz 1997: 119-30). A reminder: it is not about the physiological body which is the object of a distant perspective but about the living, feeling and felt body, which is only accessible from the subjective perspective of somebody affectively concerned. To be corporeal – this is the basic evidence of New Phenomenology – means to be able to have a fright (Schmitz 2011b: 251). Students who are sensitive to telling impressions and the meaning between the lines don’t look for making a scoop. In the first place, neither declarative knowledge, nor professionally useful experiences matter for them but the treatment of impressions through antagonistic encorporation as well as in solidarity (Schmitz 2011b: 29). They are aware of the insight that telling impressions (impressive situations) are the natural units of perception. To them, situations encompass, first, states of affairs (*Sachverhalte*), e.g. protentions concerning the unknown country, university, people, language, etc., second, programs, e.g. moods of repulsion and resonance (utility, prestige, persuasion, due respect, glaring injustice, abomination), and, third, problems (e.g. something threatening, enigmatic, scary, puzzling), – all these embedded in internal diffuseness, i.e. not individuated (suggestive, *vorschwebend*). In these cases, the sensed expression gets its pregnancy when accompanied by atmospheres of feelings. The reciprocal antagonistic encorporation (*wechselseitige antagonistische Einleibung*) is a model for what

is happening with feelings coming from outside but felt corporeally: one senses the phenomena not as psychic, but as something which happens to one's own *Leib* (Schmitz 1997: 130).

Thus, the student of the future MONTAIGNE-program will have to pass the important threshold to *unlearn* the traditional way how to acquire the competence to speak a new language, i.e. not to see in a language just an instrument to cognitively get a grip on reality, to scan the unknown impressions and to reduce them to impoverished constellations following a practical relevance. Language will be experienced as a two-headed situation emerging from corporeal communication, especially antagonistic incorporation, and, on the other hand, allowing to condense, to seize, to express and to determine with sentences affecting states of affairs, programs, problems, and involvement in atmospheres. Changing moods and attacks by overwhelming feelings shock the accustomed social routine, provoke uncertainty, and with its sudden or insidious emotional turbulences. Feelings understood as atmospheres are quasi-things (Griffero 2017: 19-54), but when they appear, they manifest themselves with authority to the addressee as the volume of corporeal resonance. Without this resonance, feelings may be observed from a distant or perceived from a sympathetic perspective. But in our European context it is more important to differentiate between individual and collective atmospheres.

Schmitz distinguishes two types of feelings: pure moods and passionate feelings.

Pure moods are – as Schmitz has put it – diffuse or centered all over specific objects as the church, the garden, the city, a particular monument, the home or the family (Schmitz 1995: 292-309). A student coming from Central Europe, e.g., without any contact to Orthodox religiosity will sense a characteristic impression when entering for the first time in a modern Orthodox church with its overabundant colorful paintings of saints, Maria, Jesus Christ and the “Pantokrator”. The resonance given to this sensing covers a wide range of possibilities because it depends on a great number of factors: the educational level (familiarity with the Christian history of salvation), the corporeal disposition (solid, flexible, nervous, etc.), the present protentions (expectations), the attitude toward religion(s), etc. But the aura will at least lead to virtual sentences as “I have the impression that this is a location fairly different from others”, or “I have the impression that something appeals/does not appeal to me”. There is the possibility to stay an observer or to accept of being (selectively) affected. In addition to places

with a religious aura, there is a wide range of auratic locations, e.g., the serene beauty of places in Italian cities or the melancholy of certain cemeteries and killing fields of the 20th century.

The second type of atmospheres is that of passionate feelings, overwhelming and dominating the persons for a certain time, hindering an immediate recovery of the composure like deep sadness, rage or shame. To be touched by a specific atmosphere may transform the initial observer view into the view of participants which for a moment are sharing affectively the feeling. The corporeal intelligence, the “thinking without words” (Schmitz 2012b: 213)²⁰, then, does not proceed in the analytic way, disassembling the atmospheric experience in separate elements. On the contrary, the common situation the students may have joined communicates in a corporeally sensed way the program of how to react and what to do. On the other hand, the observer may at best enter an inclusive common situation, characterized by a moderate attachment, e.g. sympathy, but being without consequences for the personal situation.

Once the sensitivity for atmospheric phenomena is awake, atmospheric reality latently accompanies the daily experience of common situations. Mostly, it doesn’t play the first role but is tinting the corporeal space of common situations, e.g. the special “way” of conversations. In one country, the speakers trigger the progress with dialectical change of perspective to show their interest. In another country, the speakers are reserved to show respect to the interlocutor, never contradict and mostly signalize comprehension to any proposition. But a comparable attitude may also betray a defensive attitude: confidence may grow here only after a longer period. Again, in another country, clear speaking is estimated because the speakers are supposed to serve the progress of the common matter, and the respective factual contribution contributes to the mutual regard. In opposition, in some other country the conversation, first, serves the aim to tax the hierarchical position, the eloquence and the personal profile with the intention to choose an adequate behavior.

But it would be counterproductive to behave following these cultural stereotypes (Thomas 2014): they are reduced constellations abstracted from chaotic manifold situations. Instead, the attentive interlocutor will have to look for the situation and the idiosyncratic, i.e. cor-

²⁰ “Das sprachlose Denken”.

poreal and atmospheric touch of the counterpart, and on this pre-reflexive level understanding will work. Each conversation the student has with unknown or known persons is corporeal communication in the sense that besides the information exchange the main task is to meet a corporeal complicity and not to decipher and dominate. Conversation is mainly about to find out something one has in common or one doesn't agree with, to match oneself with somebody or to catch fire. Here, the function of conversation is primarily to create a social, an atmospheric tie and not so much to communicate something (Schmitz 1995: 74). The aim to know how to handle the interlocutor can inspire sentences as "I feel that this person is attached to me" or "I have the impression that he doesn't take me seriously" (Großheim 2008: 26)²¹. In these occasions corporeal communication is linked with affective implication. Feelings may emerge in case of deception, sensing injustice, humiliation, joy, respect, fear, disgust, etc. (Großheim, Kluck, Nörenberg 2014; Dammerling, Landweer 2007).

4. Conclusion

Conversation, contact with auratic locations and with implanting common situations are three different ways where antagonistic encorporation as a form of corporeal communication opens doors to intercultural understanding. The peoples of Europe, sometimes also regional communities with a long history, are living in their specific implanting common situations. But these are not closed: once the pre-reflexive level of experience is reached and exploited, a reciprocal integration in collective atmospheres of European neighbors with different cultural forms becomes possible. In this perspective, Europeans learning an unknown European language the MONTAIGNE way come closer to the goal to be "united in diversity" because these learners – independent of the chosen language – join each other in the same way to treat implanting European situations. The nomos (implicit programs) of these

²¹ The author underlines that the respective competence is primarily not activist, but "pathic", i.e. the willingness when facing another culture to expose on-self corporeally to its chaotic diversity. Corporeal intelligence means the capacity to accept corporeal resonance (partial corporeal regression) without losing completely one's composure.

common situations invites to the similar praxis through different applications. So, one recognizes one-self in the devotion of the others for their adoptive language, creating the affective bonds of a common corporeal and atmospheric space. In the perspective of European citizens, the felt implicit norms claim a common responsibility for the European languages in an equal way as for education, environment, global climate, doing business responsibly, or for animals.

The European semester of MONTAIGNE-program will have the following profile:

- open to students from all disciplines and convinced of the need for a fundamental change to regenerate Europe;
- readiness to accept any European language drawn out and to pass a study semester in the respective country; individual learning careers will be considered;
- consent with the general program of regenerating Europe; individual biographical arguments of non-Europeans will be considered;
- Consent with the administrative and practical rules including especially: preparation of the stay (courses, preliminary exams/6 ECTS) and compulsory program, formats of language acquisition and exams/30 ECTS.

The current education economy (*Bildungsökonomie*) in EU invites European students to a “view from nowhere”, i.e. to adopt a global perspective on Europe without affective implication. In opposition to the ERASMUS-program to prepare students to the global competition, the MONTAIGNE-program integrates the *acquis* of New Phenomenology beginning with the corporeal base of human life leading to collective atmospheres anchored in common situations. To expect a better understanding between Europeans from organizations with clear economic and political interests is vain. Instead, Europeans, and in the first line European students integrating studies abroad in their curricula, are invited to enter the pre-reflexive collective atmospheres of communities with a large collective memory. The dialogue between the corporeal intelligence and the hermeneutic intelligence will be fostered by learning a European language drawn out of a list of about 25 languages; the most spoken ones – English, German, French, Spanish and Italian – will be excluded. Thanks to new language learning methods and an exclusively European semester, even students in the 20s will be able to build, step by step, a competence for European situations thanks to encorporation in another European language. With it, they will succeed to integrate their personal situation into implanting

common situation of their elective European neighbors. Sensitive to the corporeal resonance with collective atmospheres, the conditions are at hand to avoid the alternative of nationalism or cosmopolitan rationalism.

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