

Love and Community:  
A round-table discussion with  
Jean-Luc Nancy, Avital Ronell and Wolfgang Schirmacher  
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Schirmacher: It's a rare opportunity to have one of the most important and most intriguing European philosophers among us. He has agreed instead of giving a lecture to participate in an open round table, which is intended for questions and answers and for open discussion. We are asking him questions and he will tell us how wrong our questions are. To the students in his class he said so much about the body that we are kind of fed up with it. So the body will not be the main topic, in the beginning at least. He wants to be asked questions about politics, art and community. I don't know whether you want to start, Avital, or if we should see whether somebody already has a question for asking.

Ronell: I would be happy to start unless someone wishes to have the floor as we say in English. Only to break the ice, in case there is some ice. This a very simple question, it's not what you are used to as an intervention, which would have involved a very elaborate recapitulation of some of your work. I don't know if you recall one of the texts that you wrote that is the most startling, and in a good sense, destructive for people — in other words it has a transformative quality, and some people are blown away by it — it's precisely the text called "Shattered Love". It has changed lives, it has devastated, it has created ecstatic recognitions and dis-identifications, break-ups, new fusions and so on, multiplied the whole notion of a possible couple and given different modalities of loving and love. Now I wanted to ask you about your love, but I also read somewhere where you had something to say to displace the Lacanian insistence on lack, and now you are teaching Christianity to us. I wonder whether this created an interference with the kind of ecstatic love that seemed possible in "Shattered Love". This text is particularly powerful not only because it is an amazing text, but also because I remember working on its translation. It somehow inscribed itself inside me somewhere.

Nancy: I can demonstrate that your question is false because it is not a question, but a demand. Of course as every demand is a demand of love, everybody sees that everyday. This text has something to do with what I am working now — as you mentioned, I am also working on what I have called a deconstruction of Christianity, which asks what can we grasp from Christianity, or what is it that remains after its self-deconstruction. I believe without a doubt that Christianity has already deconstructed itself, that it has opened up a space to let us see something which was always present in it but unseen and unseeable until now. Among those things that perhaps remain from Christianity, belonging to it as a precondition that Christianity itself doesn't know but at the same time is recovered by the repressive power of religion, is, of course, love. This is the famous Christian love, which is nothing but impossible love. Because, first and foremost Christian love is a command, a command to love everybody, which is obviously impossible. I simply ask myself about that — would not precisely the impossibility of this love be the very thing that produces the very concept, content and reality of this love? As every construction deconstructs itself in a certain way, so the command of love as impossible is one of those things

on which Western thinking as Christian is structured, organized, and derived from. This is for me a reflection which started a long time ago, when reading "Civilization and its Discontents". There Freud writes about how civilization is sick, and how to cure it, because of course psychoanalysis can't be used to cure the collective. In one place he writes that of course the answer of Christian love seems to be the best answer, but I'm afraid, he writes with irony, that it is not practiceable. I thought that precisely this is the point: The fact that it is impossible is why it is the answer. Now if you think about it, this is precisely the definition of love that Lacan gives. Lacan's definition is that love consists in giving what one does not have. Of course this is a definition by impossibility, because how can you give what you don't have? We don't need to be Christian or to have a Christian face to agree that Lacan's definition is a Christian one. To give what I don't have is precisely not to give something I would have, so it must mean not to give anything of the order of anything that could be given. No, to give something that doesn't belong to the realm of give-able things, neither that nor to give myself, because one could be seduced by the idea "yes this means to give myself." If myself is once again something I could give, then this myself is only the myself which I have. Then this definition means that love consists in giving something which is nothing. Nothing has to do with what is not a thing, not at all a thing — then what is not a thing, what is not an object? If you want, this is a subject. But this doesn't really mean to give the subject, as the subject would be once again some thing that I would be. Love consists in my giving from me what is not mine in any sense of a possible possession of mine, not even my person. So to love means to give what is behind or beyond any subject, any self. It is precisely a giving of nothing, a giving of the fact that I cannot possess myself. This is to abandon, because in that case I would say that to give is the same as to abandon. In French I would say donner is the same as abandonner. Because to give in French is donner...

Schirmacher: To give up.

Nancy: Ah, that is wonderful. To give is to give up. So, yes, perhaps that could be meaning of "shattered", and thus of the title to this ancient text you refer to — that is that to love means in one way to give the self as possession, the self as present to itself, and in another way to give and to abandon to the other something that the other himself has, to say that it is in the same way for himself because he is as well a self. In other words, love is to share the impossibility of being a self. I think that in that way this is perhaps a means to understand Christian love with all its impossibility, with all its absurdities, contradictions and denials, within the context of the church but outside of the church as well. So with all that has been done against this idea of love, this idea still did organize something in Western thinking and it is the point where we are today. I think that we all share something of this idea, even if we share nothing else with Christianity, and then I could say that for me it gives two further possibilities. One is to think of the community not as a totality in which the people would have to share a common being, that is, a common possession, a common body if you want, "body" taken in the sense of an organized whole, organized entity. We think the body of political thought not as an organicity, but of community as the living to share precisely an impossibility of being-in-common. I would say the community of love is a community living to share the absence of common being. Not the absence of being-in-common, but the absence of common being. There is no common property, and that is what we have to share. That's the first extension of this idea of love. The second is that there is then a way from this idea to understand what Christianity meant by "loving one's neighbor".

Ronell: "Love our neighbor" — it's a big problem.

Nancy: You know the place in the gospel where the meaning of the neighbor is explained — some Pharisean asks Jesus: "Who is my nearest, or my neighbor?", and Jesus answers with the parable of the good Samaritan. A man was wounded and lying on the side of the road and a priest, a Jewish priest of course, passes and does nothing, and there is no one, finally comes a Samaritan who stops and heals the poor man's wounds and pays for a place for him to stay. Then Jesus asks, "who was the neighbour of this poor man?" That is the core of the Christian story, that the neighbour is everybody, without any distinction. That is something that is also at the core of the whole structure of Western thinking, a thinking of equality and perhaps, to a certain extent, of the fraternity of all men. Then what does that mean? Precisely, if you think about how difficult it is to love your neighbor. I don't know in Manhattan perhaps, but I think that the "nearest" is absolutely not the nearest in any sense of neighborhood, nor the nearest by place, nor the nearest by taste, nor the nearest according to my desire, etc. The nearest is everybody, to the extent that everybody shares with me the same impossibility of being or becoming the fixed enunciation of a certain position. Of course everyone is different, the woman, the man, the blond, this one is brown, is tall, is small, is... I don't know, is French, is American, is intelligent, is stupid, is strong, is weak, etc. However, all those properties are precisely only properties, and if love consists in giving what is not a property, then it consists precisely in this common unproperty. Which means then that this love doesn't say anything against love in the ordinary sense, but perhaps we should refer to ordinary love as predilection. One could say that the ordinary love of lovers is a predilection, a preference, which is based on distinction. This is this one I love and not the other one — but then we could analyse how even in this predilection the love as impossible is present. Or how predilection very quickly becomes a kind of possession. For now I would say that it makes understandable how impossible love consists in loving without any predilection, and that explains how it can become the idea "to love one's enemy", which is the top of absurdity. To love my enemy does not mean that I should have a predilection for my enemy — as he is my enemy I hate him and I fight him. Instead, I should think of the enemy as my enemy but also as a subject who has no more or less properties than me, because he or she has no properties. I would just perhaps add a footnote regarding Lacan. Everywhere in Lacan's system you have this haunting nothingness, which here gives perhaps a certain pessimistic or ironic sound to his definition of love, "to give what you don't have", but perhaps this is not the only side of Lacan's thinking here. Although there is so much in Lacan about an originary lack and so on, I just want to insist that I would underline that the impossibility of love should not be interpreted as a lack, as an originary lack, because every lack is to be filled if possible. Love means precisely to fill the emptiness with emptiness, and thus to share it.

Schirmacher: Thank you for your open lecture. I knew I only had to make Avital ask a question to give us the lecture. Let me just to make a small remark — as you know this guy was not invited to tell you some truth. He is here to introduce you to a certain way of approaching things. As you see he gives with one hand and takes away with the other. If you know Derrida, you know then that one of his teachers made him do it. But what he does better than Derrida is that something very fluid, very imperceptible appears in this discussion of the possibility of impossible love. The possibility starts as an opening in which something appears, which cannot be grasped, but can only be lived in a certain way. So he gives to us by taking away. Forget Derrida, he just gives more, more than I can take... OK so in this respect I invited him, my idea was to get any political thinker nowadays who I could respect, because normally I have total distaste for politics. In this respect anything political as such relies on an outdated, misused concept going back to Aristotle — you should throw it away and never talk about it, because they are using it to make you to do things, to bring you together to fight or to kill, whatever. So, is there anybody whose approach gives us a new idea of politics? I am pretty sure that it is

somebody who is not talking about politics as such, but who is talking about Christian love and the body instead of war. Hannah Arendt talks about natality and not about politics and institutions and democratic processes and all this stuff. We learned to hate it because it doesn't work, it's only for crooks. So this is a very strange way of approaching it and here we have a politics which does not have this name but might be a kind of practise of it. You share the impossibility of community and in this sharing there is your chance of community. It is the community which cannot send you to death. You might have a voluntary death, that is a possibility, but there is no expectation except this sharing which is not a word or an abstract concept. You can only share because as a community it is impossible to do so. This sounds very vague, it sounds like nothing compared to all these big promises we have about what will happen if we have community, but this vagueness is, I think, worthwhile to explore.

Audience: But isn't Derrida's idea of the gift what you are implying with the idea of giving what you don't have?

Nancy: Yes, yes, this is somewhere almost the same, but I don't think that he says this in relation to love. What Derrida adds is around the same point, his main thought is "to give" cannot succeed if the giver knows about his gift, so "to give" needs to be imperceptible. Now concerning the "imperceptible", we can comment about how I can give myself my gift, if I return my gift to myself, to say that psychologically when I think I make a gift. I think that is very Christian, you know. This is also in the gospel, that you are quite unsure, not knowing what your left hand is doing. In addition, the task of love is demanded so strongly that I will answer its call even if I shall not receive any gratification in return from the love. This we could say makes this love absolutely unrepresentable, and even in the feeling in which this love is not a feeling and nevertheless should be a way of feeling, this is where we might feel the nothingness of predilections. I return intentionally to the "nothingness" to say to Wolfgang that with the nothing, one has always to think that "nothing" is not nothing. Nothing is something, it is a something of no thing. In English you can do that, this is "no-thing". In French I can do that with the word rien. You know in French rien means nothing, but what is very interesting is that rien comes from the accusative form rem, from the word res, which means thing. Res comes reality, reality is from res. Now I don't know the entire etymological derivation, but rien became nothing by the way of meaning a thing, a small thing, a very small thing, the smallest possible thing and then not even rien...

Audience: Could you say that, if you say that nothing is like not really nothing, could you say that nothing is not neo-nihilism?

Nancy: Exactly, thank you very much for introducing this very important word. Precisely, nothing is nothing nihilist. All these questions are somehow about what we should do with nihilism. That is sure, that we are in the middle of nihilism. That means we have no longer have a heaven of value, or a tradition, or a nature. This is precisely the reason for what we have, in so different a manner, to do with the nothingness, which precisely is not nihilistic. If we go a step further with nothing, we say that nothing is no-thing. What is no-thing? This is I would say is everything which is not a thing. You and me, for example. Who here would accept to be a thing? So, perhaps this is a very, very important point. It is told that Archimedes said "give me the right point and I will move the world" - that the mechanics of it, if you have the right point, you can move a very heavy mass with a short stick. Now, this is perhaps the academic point for us, exactly the point where we can sublimate the nihilism and turn nihilism into something. This is very important because to the nihilism, as Nietzsche said, there are only two issues. One is to

try to replace the nihil as the emptiness of heaven, the absence of Gods, of sense of value etc. by taking all Gods, all values, all sense and again and again trying to fill the holes, which is already done all day. Perhaps I would say the whole story of the twentieth century will one day appear as a story of a civilization desperately seeking to fill the hole; value, value and something more - this is what we were talking about in class, speaking of what Bergson calls the supplementary soul. Bergson says that this world needs a supplementary soul. A soul, however, cannot be supplementary. Then either there is a way which is desperate, or of course there is the nihilistic way in which we destroy. The people who call themselves destroyers were literally the nihilism. Lastly, the third and quite different way is perhaps precisely to understand how nothing is not a thing.

Ronell: This will allow us to talk about the difference, in a certain way, between community and politics, if we briefly consider the so-called "hippie movement" in America, which was at one point a movement under the signifier of love which we are talking about.

Nancy: Yes, precisely this is a way of speaking about community and politics. Today I think there cannot be a politics of love, because if love is what I tried to say, it excludes a certain fulfillment that politics implies. The space of politics shall be a fulfillment totally organized, although this doesn't mean totalitarianism. It has to be the law, and here we could say that the law is that what I call here fulfillment, or a closed space. Precisely with what I said about love can be said in another way by saying the "law of love." This is a very Christian expression, the law of love, which is only a law to the extent that there is precisely no law, or that there is no closure of the law, or, that in love we find the achievement of law. Love is the achievement of law, which means that love is beyond law, or that the law of love is a law commanding and indicating something beyond law. That is for me the reason to think that community is one thing and politics another. Of course politics belongs to community, but politics is not everything. If politics is taken as equally co-extensive and homogeneous to community, we are very quickly in totalitarianism. This is because we say everything is political, and if everything is directly, ontologically political, that means very simply that everything belongs to law. So I can make law about anything, about food, about art, about love as predilection. There is a very ancient and not by chance quasi-originary model for that in Plato. You know it is often said that the politics of Plato is quite totalitarian, because Plato says that the law can and must say which man has to be married to which woman, which child has to be saved, how you have to educate, etc. Why? Because the politics of Plato is a politics which conceives of thought as founded on something, namely on ontology, theology, etc. The politics of Aristotle is quite contrary. For some reason it is only the way of Plato which determines a certain thinking of politics. This is the way of thinking that Karl Schmidt named political theology. I think when we are in a world where there is no meaning to provide this kind of foundation as a transcendent foundation, when we are in the world without God, precisely the world of nihilism, it is absolutely normal and natural to succumb to the temptation to ontologize the community as such, to proclaim that the totality of the community and of mankind should be the foundation of politics. This is Rousseau. To a certain extent this is an extraordinary ambiguity in Rousseau, in the "Social Contract" — this book is at the same time a book not about foundation, but about creation, the self-creation of mankind as such. Man comes from the contract and not the reverse, because if it was the reverse it would be quite different thing from the contract which was already by Hobbes or Spinoza for example. After that when Rousseau tries to found a politics on this ontological self-production of mankind, he describes his politics and then he writes "But such a constitution would be good only for a people of Gods." So, this is a reason for why there is such an ambiguity in Rousseau, and for why some people still now explain how Rousseau is the roots of totalitarianism. I think that for

us now it is very important to learn about the distinction of a community as such, for example to think of it as, among other ways, a way of love, and to think of politics as a special order where of course the community has to establish a law to guarantee management as a management of justice, equality, the rule, etc. I was smiling when I say management, because while I should be ashamed to speak of politics in terms of management, I think this is precisely today a serious question to know in what extent there is not something. I don't speak of the politics of the managers, but in Europe today there is always, always the leftist critique which goes "Those socialists are only managers. They do nothing but manage the capital." This is precisely a very important point, of course there are different ways of managing, but if such a sentence can be a total, radical critique, that presupposes first that we know what other than the capital we could right now propose. Secondly, that implies that we have an idea of politics which immediately goes far beyond any management, which is not only the law but the total being of community. That is exactly what we have learned in about the middle of the twentieth century.

Schirmacher: OK, now I have to bring some order here, because I see that...

Nancy: You are the law, the state, everything you hate. So now we can make a revolution.

Schirmacher: Now I want to collect your questions and let Jean-Luc answer them altogether.

Audience: Your concept of community and of Being-With reminded me very much about the way Wittgenstein talks about concepts. He says that a type of bird isn't defined by a specific characteristic, but by a group of characteristics that the birds, say nightingales, have. They don't each have the same characteristic but instead each one has a characteristic in common with another one. I also wondered, although you can use your concept to define community, how can you use it to define different communities?

Audience: George Bataille say that we communicate across our common psychological lacerations, cuts. You describe it as touching, can you elaborate on what the difference might be, for example in either a restricted or a general economy?

Audience: You've stated that if communication communicates anything, it's intensities, forces, and effects, and hardly concepts. Why exclude concepts, aren't they a valid way of sensing the world? Can a concept or a general abstraction be something that is sensual?

Audience: When you speak of love and sharing of nothingness, how does that apply to the body? Not explicitly in an erotic sense, but in the body as a presence, and how that also extends into community.

Audience: I would like you to elaborate more on to what extent we can speak about politics as an aesthetic project. We could speak about it in relation to the individual, because in the social field it could be dangerous.

Audience: In your concept of community, does that necessitate enemies as well as friends?

Audience: I would want to know about your conception of Christian love in relation to anarchism.

Ulmer: The room here is full of critics, learners, beginning scholars, people who have to face Wolfgang with their dissertation ideas, I wonder if you could in your response provide some

meta-commentary on your thinking process, how you can start talking about the love the way you do, it can seem perhaps magical or mysterious for those who aren't intimately aware of the philosophical tradition.

Nancy: Until Greg's question almost all the questions made it possible to give one answer to all of them. There were many questions about a community as specific structure of being-with. And to say first, regarding the Wittgensteinian nightingale, I would say what interests me is that is the different are together. The question is, what is "to be with", which as you know is a question that Wittgenstein did address. Wittgenstein is aware of and very attentive to the singularity as such and to what makes it possible to share something singular. First it is a question which comes to me through Heidegger, because he is the first to introduce a very simple, almost self-evident concept of Being-With. There is, however, a very strange thing in "Sein und Zeit", that besides so many precise, long and complicated analyses, he makes no analysis of the "With" as such and that seems to be very important, perhaps because the "With" is a quasi-empty category for all philosophy. The whole scheme of our culture knows very well what is to be in or out, to be and to identify with something or to be totally exterior to it, to be homogeneous or heterogeneous. But to Be-With, this is the same thing to say that the glass is with the pen on the table and "be on" is a way to "be with", or I am with Wolfgang and Avital on this side of the table, you are each with the other. What is that? In a certain way this is nothing, because "I and Wolfgang" to a certain extent are like "the glass and the pen", we have nothing to do with the other. Then you've got a lot more to do. First, because he is the director, I am the teacher, etc, and perhaps if we go a little further we find that we are two human beings, so we share something biologically, etc... So the "with" has very interesting property in that it shows a proximity, it implies a proximity, and so once again we have the "nearest". But it is proximity without recovering one through the other. If the pen is hidden behind the glass, you can't say that they are "with". Or if I hide myself behind Wolfgang there is no longer Jean-Luc with Wolfgang. So, "With" implies proximity and distance, precisely the distance of the impossibility to come together in a common being. That is for me the core of the question of community; community doesn't have a common being, a common substance, but consists in being-in-common, from the starting point it's a sharing, but sharing what? Sharing nothing, sharing the space between. "With" is in a certain way always between, or implies an in-between, and so from there we can go to the question which Victor asks. Yes, I would say that what I take here from Bataille is of course this central meaning that communication implies a gap between the one and the other, and that communication is not a continuous transmission, because the continuous transmission is a transmission of a information. Information is a concept. What I don't share absolutely with Bataille is the way he goes from that gap to the cut and then slowly to the sacrifice, which implies that there is still another realm, a sacred realm to which I could transfer something. In the end however Bataille did himself write "what I call the sacred is nothing else than the communication of passions", and from there we could return to love, etc, regarding passion, and once again for you the man with the concept, in the communication, it shall still be a communication of passion, even if it is through or by the means of concept. This is in a certain way like Kant who wrote "I cannot read Rousseau without being too much troubled and so I have to read Rousseau twice, because the first time I could not sustain my emotion." It is perhaps a very good example of communication between men of concepts. I think that touching seems to me to indicate the same thing. That is the distance in the approach, but it avoids all questions of cutting, sacrifice etc. I disagree as well with Bataille who is always presenting the sex of the woman as a wound, because it implies that there is some penetration into the flesh. Sex doesn't cut the body any more than the mouth or the anus, or any bodily orifice cuts the body. It is an opening, which is something different. This is why, regarding

eroticism, I like to say there is no penetration, that penetration in a certain way has no proper meaning. To penetrate is to enter into the internal structure of the matter, but in physical love as well as in spiritual, it is the same — there is no penetration into, there is everywhere only a touching.

Schirmacher: But excuse me, are you saying that there is no penetration, because I can still remember this act, you know it was long time ago...

Nancy: But penetration where?

Schirmacher: The penis in the vagina. Your parents haven't told you about that?

Ronell: I remember that once you said that there is a prejudice, an assumption that the vaginal structure is an interiority.

Nancy: This is exactly what I mean. It's a topological issue — for me the body is first a hole, a tube if you want, and around the tube is a skin. The first character of this topology is that it is a resounding thing. The air can go through the tube and you have the skin over it and you produce music. The body is first a certain sound, and that sound is the voice. And yes, with a little more time I would claim that to make love is to produce a sound — sometimes a real sound, even with words, but even in the silence there is a certain sound that is a certain resonance, resounding or vibration. The only place where the two lovers can really penetrate themselves into each other and become one thing is in the grave, like it is in the story of Tristan and Isolde. There is one flower, the rose grows from the grave of Tristan and goes into that of Isolde. I would argue that the community is always a community of Being-With, that the With is characterised by the touch, and that the touch is characterised both by proximity and by distance, but by proximity as distance. In the touch you still need to have both. This is the impossibility of penetration. The conclusion then is that a community is a community of bodies and nothing else. This doesn't mean that it is a community like the glass and the pen — It means that to be "in common" we need the exteriority of the bodies, contrary to the very old model where the community should become a pure community of spirits becoming One Spirit. Now to return just for one moment to Christianity: in this very point there is an enormous ambiguity within Christianity, which gives the model of one body for all. This model is called the mystical body of Christ. Normally the mystical body of Christ was understood as a unique body of all men, but a couple of theologians even understood it as a totality of the universe. At the same time, however, in a way which for Christianity is quite contradictory, the singularity of each man, not only of each man but of each creature of God, each being, is impossible to suppress. And that is the meaning of the resurrection. The resurrection is a resurrection of the body. The resurrected body is not precisely a spirit, but a body to be touched or not touched. You know the story about Jesus and Magdalene: "Don't touch me!" All this means that a community as a community of bodies means a community of mutual presentation of the common absence of common substance. Which is another way to say what Lacan says, with the father as being "because of" the mother as a common substance. However, to become an individual means precisely to go out of the common substance, and then even the brother and the sister are separated from the substance. The father, then, is a common law suppressed as death, the father is a dead father as it is said by Lacan. The only thing that I disagree with there is precisely that Lacan needs once again a figure of lack, of castration, and so the figure of the center of signification is an empty center, a zero point. I prefer to take that in the way of the no-thing, as I did before. So then, you are asking about the community's relation to its enemies.

What I said about love did already answer to the question of the enemy – I answer that the meaning of "to love even the enemy" is the meaning of love understood as having nothing to do with predilection such as friendship, or what is the contrary, hostility.

Schirmacher: The question was about the community and not about love. There is still a difference between love and community.

Nancy: Yes, but first I wanted to say that love gives the rule of community in general, but now we should add that the predilection is not simply something other, and that the difficulty of absolute love, of impossible love, is that it has to deal with possible love as predilection. This is because possible love is not only the possible, it is necessary. It is necessary that there are certain links, certain proximities between groups of people, etc, and the fact that there are friendships and hostilities has to be taken as such. The question is only to know if a positive community or a community of predilection has to totally exclude the other communities or not. Now, without the general rule of the impossible love, why would community not exclude the other, that is, to kill it? Once again this is a question of substance, identity and subjectivity, and if the community of predilection thinks of itself as being natural, as being a substance, as a race given by nature such as Aryan, or Serbian, or Croatian, or Macedonian, or the Hutu or the Tutsi, this community has an absolute right in a certain way to kill all the others, because it is the only community and has no ground for the existence of other communities. Then the question is simply not only the structure of the community of predilection, but to understand how the communities have to be related to each other. Then we can begin to examine the relations between community, art and politics. So I agree with you, but my answer would be that politics can be an aesthetic project only in relationship to the individual, not as a social project. This is what I formulate by saying politics is not everything, and then I think it is better to think that politics doesn't have to become an aesthetic project, if politics is a general and closed law. The law has nothing to say about beauty. And as it is known the Nazism can be interpreted, as Lacoue-Labarthe did, as a national aestheticism.

Schirmacher: Ah, bravo!

Nancy: No, I could not disagree but anyway there's no need to. No, no I did not answer to Greg – his question is so different, so original that I am a little paralysed by it, but I understand very well why you pose it. Do I have a method? I don't know. But simply, I think I was educated and more than educated, I was brainwashed, and touched by a certain number of persons because it was the first time that I heard somebody teaching about Hegel in a certain way. That touched me, even if I did not understand very much at the time. I was also affected by all those people, people like Ricoeur, Derrida, Canguilhem, and other people who are not known and I would say came from outside. This is perhaps now why I am always thinking by the outside. Of course I speak of living people, because when I am speaking of touching, first I think through those who are living. What I mean is that they all gave me a quantity of imposed ideas and then I tried to work with that. This is why I don't think I have so much in proper philosophy with me, and that is why I have difficulty answering when I am asked about my concept of something. But I think that I have no one concept. What is present in contemporary thinking is all of our common problem. You are exposed to that, you take one part, another and so this is a little bricolage there. But in accordance with Levi-Strauss, bricolage is as rational as the scientific method.

Schirmacher: Thank you very much. It is very hard for the artist to think about his own method, because we do it for him and he doesn't do it any more.