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Decision as heresy

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

I.   Jaanus Sooväli, "Entscheidung als Häresie", in: *Studia Philosophica Estonica* 2013 (forthcoming).

II. Jaanus Sooväli, "The Absence and The Other: Nietzsche and Derrida against Husserl", in: *As The Spider Spins: Essays on Nietzsche's Critique and Use of Language*, edited by J. Constâncio / M. J. Mayer Branco, Berlin / Boston: De Gruyter, 2012, pp. 161–177.

III. Jaanus Sooväli, "Die Abwesenheit des Ich und das Fremde des Bewusstseins", in: *Lettura della Gaia scienza. Lectures du Gai savoir*, Nietzscheana 14, edited by C. Piazzesi / G. Campioni / P. Woltling, Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2010, pp. 173–186.

IV. Jaanus Sooväli, "Was ist das souveräne Individuum?", in: *Nietzsche-Studien*, edited by W. Stegmaier / G. Abel, Volume 38, 2009, pp. 477–485.

V.   Jaanus Sooväli, "Saateks: Tahte genealoogia ja fenomenoloogia", in: *Akadeemia* 2011, no. 5, pp. 902–911.

VI. Jaanus Sooväli, „"Moraali" genealoogiline enesetühistus", in: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Moraali genealoogiast*, translated by A. Luure, Tallinn: Varrak, 2013 (forthcoming).

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

For more than a hundred years, the self-present, self-sufficient, autonomous, self-conscious, rational "subject" has been repeatedly called into question by many different authors and even traditions. This "subject", which had often lured us onto wrong paths and into apparent or specious philosophical problems (not to mention its contribution to the forgetfulness of being, see Heidegger 1986 and 1996), and which in the 20th century – the period of the most critical self-criticism of philosophy – it was felt ought to have been eliminated or deconstructed, has been said to be a historical contingency, fabricated in the history of philosophy at some point in the past. Its fabrication seems to go back in the history of philosophy as far as the Greeks (*hypokeimenon*, *ousia*, see Derrida 1973: 147) but in a somewhat more explicit and rigorous form (the theory of knowledge) to Descartes and his distinction of two substances, *res extensa* and *res cogitans* (Descartes 2008: 19–20)[1]. It is at any rate noteworthy that the topics of "subject" and "subjectivity" were so important in 20th century "continental philosophy" (but the relevance of these topics does not seem to have disappeared in the 21st century, for example in the so-called "new pheno-menology"[2]) that it is hard to find an author who did not, from one perspective or another, express his views on the matter – to the point where some thinkers, particularly Jacques Derrida and Simon Critchley, began to raise doubts about whether such a unified "subject" with unchangeable and fixed characteristics has ever purely existed in philosophy or was rather retrospectively read into its history. In other words, do we find exactly the same treatment of the "subject" in the works of e.g. Leibniz, Descartes, Kant and Hegel? Perhaps there is no homogeneous history of the unified "subject" but rather an amalgam of complex, complicated and ambiguous histories of quite different treatments of it? As Derrida puts it in one interview: "There has never been The subject for anyone, that's what I wanted to begin by saying. The subject is a fable […]." (Derrida 1991: 102)[3] With this, however, Derrida is not saying that the problem of the "subject" does not have common roots or that there are no evident similarities, analogies or shared characteristics between different conceptuali-zations of it. It is precisely these roots and analogies, but no less discrepancies and differences, that need to be studied genealogically in order to arrive at an understanding and description of somewhat more veridical histories of the "subject".

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[1] Cf. Luik 2002.
[2] Cf. Zahavi 2005.
[3] Cf. Simon Critchley (1996:22): "Has there ever exited a unified conscious subject, a watertight Cartesian ego? Or is the subject some phantasy or abstraction that is retrospec-tively attributed to the past that one wants either to exceed, betray or ignore? That is to say, is not the subject a fiction that Kant finds in Descartes, without it being in Descartes, what Heidegger finds in Kant without it being in Kant, or that Derrida finds in Husserl without it being in Husserl?"

This is not, however, the topic of this dissertation. Issues related to the "subject" are quite important to this study and do make up a substantial part of it, but they are only important insofar as the traditional way of understanding decision-making – the concept of *decision*, both traditional and heretic, being the theme of this study – requires and has always required a certain, more or less limited, more or less coherent idea of the "subject". At the same time, considering the reservations of Derrida and Critchley, it is not presumed that this idea is completely homogeneous and watertight; nevertheless, it does seem to be based on certain analogies and similar characteristics. Now, taking into account that some of the constant properties of the subject have been questioned from all possible perspectives with increasing intensity, what will happen to decision that is based on that understanding? If, for example, the idea of a self-present, rational and autonomous decision-maker is no longer entirely trustworthy, if we have convincing reasons to doubt its trustworthiness, then it is no longer possible to understand decision as an active, free and autonomous phenomenon based on rational deliberations, as is still done quite frequently in different philosophical traditions. Decision and the closely related concept of responsibility should therefore be re-thematized, without presuming a predominantly autonomous and rational agent, or if we wish to talk about a "rational" decision-maker or agent in the future, then the concepts of "rationality" and reason should probably be expanded considerably.

Although the "subject" has come under heavy criticism for a long time now, there remain relatively few re-conceptualizations of the aforementioned concepts. Perhaps one of the biggest challenges in the philosophy of the 21st century, taking into consideration that a strictly autonomous and rational "subject" or decision-maker has lost its certainty and credibility, is precisely to provide a new description and interpretation of phenomena like decision and responsibility (and therefore understand in a new and adequate way that which in philosophical literature has been referred to as the *agency*). Jacques Derrida has, in his own interesting and provocative way, answered this challenge or difficulty exactly by situating decision in comparison to most of the earlier treatments of this matter on quite a different footing and foundation (if it were still be pertinent here to speak of a "foundation", which it actually is not). The analyses and "evaluation" of Derrida's re-interpretation of decision provided in this thesis can be understood as a general contribution to a more adequate grasp of phenomena like "decision", "responsibility" and "agency" when certain characteristics of the "subject" have been called into question.

2. TOPIC AND STRUCTURE OF THESIS

The study, which consists of six articles and this summary, is thus centred on the concept of decision or, to be more precise, on two conceptions of decision that are in many ways interrelated and at the same time radically different. One of these conceptions, which could also be referred to as the traditional or dominant description of decision, originates, according to the thesis, from Aristotle; the other, which in this study is called the heretical concept of decision, can be found in the works of Jacques Derrida. It has to be emphasized that Derrida himself has neither described his understanding of decision as *heretical* nor opposed it in an explicit and systematic way to that which in this thesis is called Aristotle's traditional and dominating concept. The central aim and main contribution of this study is precisely to demonstrate that Derrida's thematisation of decision can in a very interesting way be conceived as *heretical* with respect to Aristotle's traditional concept.

   Taking the aforesaid into account, the thesis can be divided into three parts: the first provides an interpretation of Aristotle's understanding of decision, discusses its weaknesses and highlights the presuppositions and concepts (such as virtue, deliberation, activity and the voluntary) that form its basis. The second part contrasts Aristotle's concept with Derrida's heretical "concept" of decision, which, as has been thoroughly demonstrated, not only problematizes or radicalizes many of the aspects of Aristotelian treatment but also breaks away from it in some important respects. Some philosophical support has also been given to Derrida's approach. These two parts are included in Article I, the lengthiest in the thesis. The third part, which according to logical structure and sequence should fall between the two previously mentioned parts, is concerned with Derrida's and Nietzsche's criticism of the "subject". This criticism is viewed as one of the main reasons why Derrida modifies and undermines the Aristotelian concept of decision. In other words, criticizing the "subject" that is identical to itself, self-aware and autonomous not only allows but also obligates Derrida to re-interpret such moral and philosophical phenomena as decision and responsibility. This deconstruction, therefore, creates a certain opening needed for Derrida's argument to get underway. Although this dissertation is mostly concerned with Aristotle and Derrida, who are herein treated as signifiers of two very different "traditions" of the concept of decision, it is impossible to ignore Friedrich Nietzsche when it comes to the topic of the "subject", as he significantly influenced Derrida in the way the latter problematizes and deconstructs the "subject". The topic of the subject is analysed in Articles II, III and (partially) IV, which examine the common ground between Nietzsche's and Derrida's deconstruction of the subject; and then also in Articles V and VI, which concentrate almost exclusively on Nietzsche's criticism of the subject. However, Nietzsche is not the only one who had an impact on Derrida in that respect – in fact, Derrida said that he was greatly influenced by Martin Heidegger and Sigmund Freud, for example. In this case, what would justify Nietzsche's special role in this thesis? First of all, Nietzsche seems to have been

a little more influential on Derrida's thinking than Heidegger or Freud (see Derrida 1972: 29; 2002: 215–256)[4]. Secondly, Nietzsche was one of the first, one of the fiercest and, I dare say, one of the clearest critics of consciousness, "subject" and "subjectivity". Through him and based on him, it is easier to understand what came after him. Thirdly, it is impossible to consider and explore everything concerning this topic in one dissertation; some gaps inevitably remain and will need to be filled later or by someone else. And fourthly, to the extent that the previous reasoning does not suffice, this also represents a decision or a choice in a certain Derrida-like sense.

All of the articles mentioned above have been written over the course of about four years and in a sequence that is somewhat different to their final order in the dissertation. Article IV was the earliest to be written, in 2009; Article III came second, in 2010; a year later, Article II, which is a thematic elaboration, development and expansion in English of Article III (written in German), was completed; Article I, which is placed as the first in this dissertation, was written in 2012. In the interests of accuracy and correctness, one might add that Article I that was finished last but became the first article in this study was actually in some sense started before all of the others. The articles in Estonian (V and VI) were written in 2011 and in the beginning of 2012 respectively.

This introductory article, which provides a certain prologue to the articles of the thesis, is meant to create a sort of wholeness by bringing the articles together, relating them to one another and filling in some of the thematic gaps left by them. It has three main tasks or goals: firstly, to explain what is meant by "subject" and its deconstruction in this study and how Aristotle's traditional concept of decision presumes that classical "subject" (this explanation being necessary because apparently it is not self-evident that Aristotle's thinking could include something that might be considered a "subject"); secondly, to analyse the sense in which and the reasons why Aristotle's idea of decision is treated as a traditional and dominant one in this thesis; and finally, to consider and briefly analyse the advantages and disadvantages of Derrida's heretical concept over the traditional notion of decision.

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[4]   Cf. Anderson 2003.

3. CHARACTERISTICS AND "DECONSTRUCTION" OF "SUBJECT"

Let us, then, take a closer look at what is meant by "subject" and its deconstruction in this study, as it may not be self-evident at first glance that the deconstruction of the "subject" conducted by Derrida and Nietzsche (which, it must be emphasized, is not disposing of the "subject" or the death of the "subject", as many have understood, but re-interpreting and re-situating the "subject"[5]) could somehow undermine Aristotle's concept of decision. After all, the question "was there really anything like the "subject" in ancient philosophy?" seems perfectly justified. And if there was, then what kind of "subject"? As previously mentioned, this thesis does not attempt to present the histories of the "subject"; it is only essential to demonstrate that, at least in part and to a certain extent, Nietzsche's and Derrida's criticism of the "subject" does include presuppositions of Aristotle's notion of decision, be they implicit or explicit.[6] This also applies when considering that the main weight of Nietzsche's and Derrida's criticism is not directed solely towards Aristotle, not even above all, but to a somewhat more contemporary concept of "subject". Not only does this paper criticise the concept of decision of Aristotle himself but also the so-called Aristotelian concept as the traditional one; later, in Chapter 4 of this summary, this idea (Aristotle's concept being the traditional one) is explained in more detail. However, first we must delimit and explain the "subject" as it is understood in this study.

a. Self-presence and Rationality

The first important clue or intimation to what is meant by "subject" in this dissertation comes from an aphorism of Friedrich Nietzsche "titled" *Die Unbekannte Welt des "Subjects"* from *Morgenröthe. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurtheile* (1881):

> Die unbekannte Welt des »Subjects«. – Das, was den Menschen so schwer zu begreifen fällt, ist ihre Unwissenheit über sich selber, von den ältesten Zeiten bis jetzt! Nicht nur in bezug auf gut und böse, sondern in Bezug auf viel Wesentlicheres! Noch immer lebt der uralte Wahn, dass man wisse, ganz genau

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[5]   Regarding this problem, Derrida (1984: 125) had the following to say: "I have never said that the subject should be dispensed with. Only that it should be deconstructed. To deconstruct the subject does not mean to deny its existence. There are subjects, "operations" or "effects" (*effets*) of subjectivity. This is an incontrovertible fact. To acknowledge this does not mean, however, that the subject is what it says it is. The subject is not some meta-linguistic substance or identity, some pure *cogito* of self-presence; it is always inscribed in language. My work does not, therefore, destroy the subject; it simply tries to resituate it."

[6]   Hence, the aim here is not to treat all the possible similarities, subtleties and twists of Nietzsche's and Derrida's "deconstruction" of the "subject".

wisse, wie das menschliche Handeln zu Stande komme, in jedem
Falle. Nicht nur »Gott, der in's Herz sieht«, nicht nur der Thäter, der seine That
überlegt, – nein, auch jeder Andere zweifelt nicht, das Wesentliche im Vorgange
der Handlung jedes Andern zu verstehen. »Ich weiß, was ich will, was ich gethan
habe, ich bin frei und verantwortlich dafür, ich mache den Andern verant-
wortlich, ich kann alle sittlichen Möglichkeiten und alle inneren Bewegungen,
die es vor einer Handlung giebt, beim Namen nennen; ihr mögt handeln, wie ihr
wollt, – ich verstehe darin mich und euch Alle!” – so dachte ehemals Jeder, so
denkt fast noch Jeder. Sokrates und Plato, in diesem Stücke große Zweifler und
bewunderungswürdige Neuerer, waren doch harmlos gläubig in Betreff jenes
verhängnisvollsten Vorurtheils, jenes tiefsten Irrthums, dass »der richtigen
Erkenntniss die richtige Handlung folgen müsse«, – sie waren in diesem
Grundsatze immer noch die Erben des allgemeinen Wahnsinns und Dünkels:
dass es ein Wissen um das Wesen einer Handlung gebe. »Es wäre ja
schrecklich, wenn der Einsicht in das Wesen der rechten That nicht die rechte
That folgte«, – diess ist die einzige Art, wie jene Grossen diesen Gedanken zu
beweisen für nötig hielten, das Gegentheil schien ihnen undenkbar und toll – und
doch ist diess Gegenteil gerade die nackte, seit Ewigkeiten täglich und stündlich
bewiesene Wirklichkeit! Ist es nicht gerade die "schreckliche" Wahrheit: dass,
was man von einer That überhaupt wissen kann, niemals ausreicht, sie zu thun,
dass die Brücke von der Erkenntniss zur That in keinem einzigen Falle bisher
geschlagen worden ist? (Nietzsche 1988, vol. 3: 108–109)

The first thing to notice is that in the so-called "title" of the aphorism, the word
"subject" appears in quotation marks. It is difficult to say what exactly Nietz-
sche meant by this, but it is obvious that words in quotation marks must be read
more attentively than words lacking them. On the one hand, by means of these
quotation marks, Nietzsche seems to refer to a common and wide-spread notion
of the "subject" from which he wants to take his distance. On the other hand,
maybe Nietzsche is using quotation marks to point to the fact that "subject" may
mean many different things depending on the context. The concept of "subject"
that is used in epistemology and metaphysics is obviously not completely
identical to the notion used in ethics (see Roden 2004: 93). There are, however,
similarities and analogies between them – for example, both the epistemological
and ethical "subject" seem to retain a certain sameness within the plurality of
experiences, (self)-cognition, acts and deeds. All the same, by placing "subject"
in quotation marks, Nietzsche is perhaps attempting to convey that this is not
simply and strictly a Cartesian "subject", in the sense of a thinking thing
contrasted with an extended thing, but more like an *active* and acting "subject"
that belongs to the realm of ethics and actions. However, to the extent that an
acting "subject" presumes some form of self-awareness and sameness within a
plurality of actions, it is not fully distinguishable from a purely perceiving and
knowing "subject" (as in the theory of knowledge) either.

The above quote begins in a somewhat Socratic manner – according to
Nietzsche, people are mostly ignorant about themselves; they do not know
much about themselves, but this is the very truth that is the most difficult for
them to grasp, and the one in front of which they close their eyes. They do not

know that they do not know anything about themselves yet – not even Socrates, as it emerges when one continues to read the quotation: Socrates may have claimed to know that he did not know anything; however, about the decisions and actions of human beings, above all his own decisions and actions, he seemed to think that he knew the most essential part, namely that a good or correct course of action follows the right perception or rational deliberation and that wrongful deeds only result from ignorance (Plato 1976: 46, *Protagoras* 352C)[7]. As the above quote clearly expresses, according to Nietzsche it is one of the most fatal prejudices, the deepest of fallacies, to think this way. Precisely this ignorance of oneself (and even more, of course, of everyone else), of which one is sadly not yet aware, calls the Socratic view into question, according to Nietzsche. In other words, if someone knew significantly more about himself than he does now, he would be forced to abandon the Socratic view regarding human decisions and actions – this view would turn out to be a mere fable.

Apparently, Nietzsche means that it is not simply "consciousness" and rational deliberation occurring "in it" that guide our decisions and actions to a considerable degree, but something entirely different and unknown, be that the differences between various forces and affects, the legacy of the past, processes that the consciousness cannot control, etc. Decisions and actions are said to never be what they appear at first glance or what we think of them – according to Nietzsche, we must accept an "horrific" and inevitable truth: "dass die Brücke von der Erkenntniss zur That in keinem einzigen Falle bisher geschlagen worden ist" (see also Articles II, III and V). It is the frightfulness of this insight that Nietzsche regards as the reason why great thinkers thought the opposite was true. Nevertheless, this frightful thought is considered to be the naked reality that exposes itself hour after hour. There are numerous other passages and aphorisms in the works of Nietzsche in which he points to people's ignorance of themselves (and of others) and the constraints of their self-awareness and self-transparency (see also Article II)[8].

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[7]   Cf. Epictetus (1956: 121–123) who seems to have put forth his own version of this Socratic view: "If what the philosophers say is true, that in all men thought and action start from a single source, namely feeling – as in the case of assent the feeling that a thing is so, and in the case of dissent the feeling that it is not so, yes, and, by Zeus, in the case of suspended judgement the feeling that it is uncertain, so also in the case of impulse towards a thing, the feeling that it is expedient for me and that it is impossible to judge one thing expedient and yet desire another, and again, to judge one thing fitting, and yet be impelled to another – if all this be true, why are we any longer angry with the multitude? – "They are thieves," says someone, "and robbers." – What do you mean by "thieves and robbers?" They have simply gone astray in questions of good and evil. Ought we, therefore, to be angry with them, or rather pity them? Only show them their error and you will see how quickly they will desist from their mistakes. But if their eyes are not opened, they have nothing superior to their mere opinion."

[8]   Closely related to this aphorism is the immediately preceding one which precisely emphasizes the limits of language in self-knowledge and self-awareness, cf.: "Das sogenannte "Ich." – Die Sprache und die Vorurtheile, auf denen die Sprache aufgebaut ist, sind uns vielfach in der Ergründung innerer Vorgänge und Triebe hinderlich: zum

Therefore, according to Nietzsche, to a significant extent, people's decisions are not led by rational deliberations; on the contrary, without an explicit or even definable relationship between these two, people's decisions and even the *direction* of the rational deliberation in one's consciousness is determined by something that is "imperceptible" or missing, by something that does not present itself (see article V).[9] It is important to note at this point that Derrida, unlike Nietzsche or Freud and many others, is careful and even sceptical when using the word "unconscious": both consciousness and its antonym "unconsciousness" or "subconsciousness" belong among concepts of metaphysics (cf. Derrida 1972: 21–22) that inevitably carry metaphysical connotations which Derrida, to the extent that it is possible, seeks to avoid in his work (although he admits that this is never fully possible: there can be no genuine exiting from metaphysics; even a deconstructive discourse moves on the borderline of metaphysics and the domains outside of it).

Taking into consideration what Nietzsche argues against in the aphorism above and using it as a reference point, it is possible to deduce some of the characteristics of the "subject" as it is understood in this thesis: "subject" is something that knows itself, is capable of rational-intellectual deliberation, and according to that deliberation and guided by it, is capable of making free, active and autonomous decisions and of taking action. Such a "subject" presumes a self-awareness or *self-presence* in the consciousness (at that, it is important to remember that according to Derrida consciousness in its different modifications has always implied and signified a self-awareness or a self-presence in the consciousness[10]). This self-presence and self-transparency means a certain

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Beispiel dadurch, dass eigentlich Worte allein für s u p e r l a t i v i s c h e Grade dieser Vorgänge und Triebe da sind–; nun aber sind wir gewohnt, dort, wo uns Worte fehlen, nicht mehr genau zu beobachten, weil es peinlich ist, dort noch genau zu denken; ja, ehedem schloss man unwillkürlich, wo das Reich der Worte aufhöre, höre auch das Reich des Daseins auf. Zorn, Hass, Liebe, Mitleid, Begehren, Erkennen, Freude, Schmerz,– das sind Alles Namen für e x t r e m e Zustände: die milderen mittleren und gar die immerwährend spielenden niederen Grade entgehen uns, und doch weben sie gerade das Gespinnst unseres Charakters und Schicksals. Jene extremen Ausbrüche – und selbst das mässigste u n s b e w u s s t e Wohlgefallen oder Missfallen beim Essen einer Speise, beim Hören eines Tones ist vielleicht immer noch, richtig abgeschätzt, ein extremer Ausbruch – zerreissen sehr oft das Gespinnst und sind dann gewaltthätige Ausnahmen, zumeist wohl in Folge von Aufstauungen: – und wie vermögen sie als solche den Beobachter irre zu führen! Nicht weniger, als sie den handelnden Menschen in die Irre führen. W i r s i n d A l l e n i c h t D a s, als was wir nach den Zuständen erscheinen, für die wir allein Bewusstsein und Worte – und folglich Lob und Tadel – haben; wir v e r k e n n e n uns nach diesen gröberen Ausbrüchen, die uns allein bekannt werden, wir machen einen Schluss aus einem Material, in welchem die Ausnahmen die Regel überwiegen, wir verlesen uns in dieser scheinbar deutlichsten Buchstabenschrift unseres Selbst. U n s e r e M e i n u n g ü b e r u n s aber, die wir auf diesem falschen Wege gefunden haben, das sogenannte "Ich", arbeitet fürderhin mit an unserem Charakter und Schicksal.–" (Nietzsche 1988, vol. 3: 107–108)

[9]   Cf. Nietzsche 2011.

[10]   Cf. Derrida 1972: 17: "Que veut dire « conscience »? Le plus souvent dans la forme même du « vouloir-dire », elle ne se donne à penser, sous toutes ses modifications, que

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identification of the "subject" with itself – the presence of the desires, thoughts, wants, intentions and rational deliberation of the decision-maker to himself. If the correct (self-)knowledge has been reached with the help of rational deliberation – for example, what one wants, whether the desired objective is a good thing, how it can be achieved, what the positive and negative consequences of it are and what the risks potentially involved are – then, in standard everyday situations, a decision is made based on, and resulting from, this knowledge. However, if we undermine the authority of consciousness, of the self-presence of consciousness as a "subject", as Nietzsche and Derrida have done from different facets, then the existence of such an autonomous, self-aware and rational "subject" immediately becomes questionable. For example, in his article *Différance*, where Derrida refers to none other than Nietzsche as his predecessor, he writes the following about consciousness:

> On en vient donc à poser la présence — et singulièrement la conscience, l'être auprès de soi de la conscience — non plus comme la forme matricielle absolue de l'être mais comme une « détermination » et comme un « effet ». Détermination ou effet à l'intérieur d'un système qui n'est plus celui de la présence mais celui de la différance […]. […] je rappellerai seulement que pour Nietzsche «la grande activité principale est inconsciente » et que la conscience est l'effet de forces dont l'essence et les voies et les modes ne lui sont pas propres. Or la force elle-même n'est jamais présente: elle n'est qu'un jeu de différences et de quantités. (Derrida 1972: 17)

Therefore, consciousness is not an absolute form of existence in either Nietzsche's or Derrida's thinking; in other words, it is not the absolute origin of thoughts, decisions and actions, but more of an effect or consequence of a certain "system". Derrida gives several "names" to what comprises this system; the best known among them – and the one that was mentioned in the previous quote – is *différance,* which Derrida described elsewhere as the "disappearance of any originary presence" (Derrida 1981: 168). Something – a sign, a thought or an intention – is present only insofar as it is different from something else, which means that it is never *simply* present: it carries traces of differences in itself which have never been nor ever will be present. On the one hand, *différance* creates an *appearance* of the "subject" as self-presence (see Article II); on the other, it is precisely that which undermines this subject and makes it impossible as such. Hence, *différance* and other similar nominal effects are one of the main reasons why the "subject" (as an identity and a consciousness) must be reinterpreted and resituated (cf. Lumsden 2007: 38)[11].

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comme présence à soi, perception de soi de la présence. Et ce qui vaut de la conscience vaut ici de l'existence dite subjective en général. De même que la catégorie du sujet ne peut et n'a jamais pu se penser sans la référence à la présence comme *upokeimenon* ou comme *ousia,* etc., de même le sujet comme conscience n'a jamais pu s'annoncer autrement que comme présence à soi."

[11] For example in *Positions*, Derrida (2004: 25) writes the following: "[...] the subject, and first of all the conscious and speaking subject, depends upon the system of differences and

Naturally, this does not mean that consciousness loses all meaning or that a person is incapable of rational and conscious deliberation; the problem is rather that this deliberation lacks the meaning and autonomy that has been attributed to it until now. Consciousness is not only an effect of something that is not present; a deliberation born of it is not simply contaminated by something "non-present", but according to Nietzsche and Derrida, since that deliberation is also always linguistic in the broadest sense of the word (as is the entire "consciousness"), it is consequently and in "essence" also something general (linguistic signs form a system of differences and can be repeated endlessly by all); as such, it is completely non-individualistic. Therefore, it should be asked how autonomous and binding (and *present* to some singularity) a deliberation born and conducted in consciousness could be and what kind of role and importance it would play in decision-making. As previously mentioned, precisely this authority of self-presence and the subversion of "subjectness" based on it forms the main topic of Articles II, III and V.

b. Sameness and Autonomy

However, identity should not only and strictly be considered a self-presence in self-awareness. Equally important to this study is identity as a more or less constant set or disposition of characteristics. "Subject", in the senses of both self-presence and firm disposition, is something that remains the same underneath the plurality of experiences and actions. But self-presence as such is not necessarily required for identity. These two ways of understanding identity are still interconnected, since people themselves (or cultures, nationalities, communities etc.), for example, can fight for their certain identity, talk about their character or disposition only if they are aware of it to some extent; nevertheless, the emphasis here is not on being aware of it. For example, in this context Aristotle speaks about *hexis* or firm and fixed disposition. It should be briefly mentioned that this constant disposition forms the basis for the most basic concept of Aristotle's ethics – "virtue" or "excellence". Nietzsche and Derrida obviously do not wish to deny that a person can have a more or less constant character or attitude; however, they do relativize this constancy to a significant degree – it is always possible (and not simply as a chance or an aberration) that the person will act contrary to their supposedly constant attitude. As was previously seen, the identity of a "subject" is not closed in itself: it is open, it is pierced, it has gaps and holes, there is always some "other" abiding in it. For example, Derrida remarks in one of his interviews that "people who fight for their identity must pay attention to the fact that identity is not the self-identity of a thing – for instance, this glass, this microphone – but implies a difference within identity" (Derrida 1997: 13), continuing his train of thought thusly: "In the case of culture, person, nation, language, identity is a self-differentiating

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the movement of *différance*, [...] the subject is constituted only in being *divided* from itself, in becoming space, in temporizing, in deferral."

identity, an identity different from itself, having an opening or gap within itself." (Derrida 1997: 13) This inevitability of the other or others in "sameness", this duplication of a person is, among other things, related to the teeming and exuberant diversity of an historical or genealogical legacy and heritage. Michel Foucault describes this state of affairs from the point of view of a person researching genealogy or historical origins:

> Where the soul pretends unification or the Me fabricates a coherent identity, the genealogist sets out to study the beginning – numberless beginnings, whose faint traces and hints of colour are readily seen by an historical eye. The analysis of descent permits the dissociation of the Me, its recognition and displacement as an empty synthesis, in liberating a profusion of lost events [*l'analyse de la provenance permet de dissocier le Moi et de faire pulluler, aux lieux et places de sa synthèse vide, mille événements maintenant perdus*]. (Foucault 1998: 374)

Because the I as a synthesis and a unity has been formed from the diversity of incomprehensible historical heritage, which among other things apparently includes confrontations, incompatibilities, conflicts, etc., then the synthesised unity of the I (therefore a certain constant character or nature) could crumble and collapse at any moment. The important aspect here is the certain inevitable possibility of crumbling. But this does not mean that Derrida would like to destroy all sorts of unity; on the contrary, he says that we do need a certain unity, but he is interested in the inevitable and necessary border or limit of any attempt at unification and homogenization (Derrida 1997: 13).

Therefore, such a traditional "subject" also denies *historicity*. Let us consider this more closely. An exhaustive and detailed consideration of historicity casts doubt not only, of course, on the identity of the "subject", but also (and now from a slightly different angle) on the autonomy of decisions and actions (identity and autonomy are interrelated). Consisting of certain sequential now-moments that are separated from each other, such a "subject" should be able to freely deliberate on any given now-moment and make a decision according to this deliberation (and / or following its own nature). However, taking into account that a person – including the directions of their deliberations and possible decisions – is mainly defined by his or her historical *legacy*, this autonomy becomes questionable (cf. Diprose 2006: 438). According to both Nietzsche and Derrida, such a "subject" *itself* (or the appearance of such a "subject") is born of contingent historical development.

In his *On the Genealogy of Morals,* Nietzsche demonstrates that the idea of the "free will" of a "subject" and of its capacity to make decisions and take responsibility is partly produced and perpetuated by a set of historical processes which he calls a "slave revolt in morality" (for a thorough discussion of this, see Article VI). To put it concisely, this event is a victory over aristocratic values achieved by values belonging to lower classes and to the priesthood.[12] It is in the course of this event that the idea of there being an independent agent behind

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[12]   Cf. Nietzsche 2007: 60–61.

decisions and actions, a "subject" who can choose whether and how to act (Nietzsche 1988, vol. 5: 279) is perpetuated – the roots of which are hidden in the subject-predicate structure of language itself. In the same work, Nietzsche implies that primitive and cruel social punishment systems as a sort of memory technique (such as breaking on a wheel or stoning to death) have ingrained certain social and moral norms into people's memories by defining the permissible and impermissible that guide the actions of an agent without the latter being really aware of it (cf. Diprose 2006: 438). However, if the decision-maker or agent is indeed largely defined by complex and diverse historical legacies or inheritance, then how is it possible to talk about autonomy in a rigorous sense, take decisions and responsibility? The convergence of different historical legacies in the decision-maker, its placement in and its "being thrown" into a certain historical context or reality that defines him and that he is not able to control significantly undermines any kind of autonomy (whether it is based on rationality or will).[13]

But in his *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche also speaks of a sovereign and autonomous individual who is capable of making promises and decisions and taking responsibility for them (see Article IV). This individual is supposed to have been indeed genealogically produced and shaped by morality of custom (*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*) or by moral discipline but, as the last stage of development, has now shaken off this morality (Nietzsche uses the word *übersittlich*) and become independent of it. As such, autonomy or sovereignty[14] does not seem to be completely compatible with the rest of Nietzsche's thinking, and various interpreters have attributed different meanings to it: for example, it is either something that Nietzsche truly considers possible or indeed real in its purest form (cf. Diprose 2006), or an unattainable ideal, hyperbole, allegory or simply something that does not make much sense (Angier 2006, see also article IV). This enquiry supports the view that in describing sovereignty Nietzsche makes use of hyperbole as a literary device or strategy: ultimately such an historically developed sovereignty must still be understood as something highly unstable, historically placed and heteronomous. This perspective is the most compatible with other aspects of Nietzsche's thinking. However, if a sovereign individual is indeed interpreted as something that Nietzsche considers possible or something that actually exists – in other words, if its description in *On the Genealogy of Morals* is understood verbatim, as Rosalyn Diprose (2006: 439) seems to have done – then Derrida naturally would not be able to agree with Nietzsche on this issue: for him, such sovereignty and autonomy would be yet another fictional idea. A human being, as Diprose (2006: 439) correctly notes, is never completely sovereign and self-present according to Derrida: he is completely (using Heidegger's terminology) finite and "heteronomous" due to

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[13]   Cf. Lumsden 2007: 39: "The disparate sources that make up one's subjectivity are never merely mine, they are delivered to me; they are not caused by me and they cannot reflect some inner essence."

[14]   By sovereignty is meant freedom from external control; in this sense, the meaning in which it is used here is very close to that of autonomy.

his or her "being-thrown" (see Heidegger 1986). On historical legacy or rather inheritance and the finiteness and being-finite of human beings, Derrida notes the following:

> Only a finite being inherits and his finitude *obliges* him. It obliges him to receive what is larger and older and more powerful and more durable than he. But the same finitude obliges one to choose, to prefer, to sacrifice, to exclude, to let go and leave behind. (Derrida and Roudinesco 2004: 5)

This quote is important because the necessity of selection, preference, sacrifice and exclusion that is conditioned by the finiteness of humans should not be understood as a sovereign act by an autonomous "subject" as has been done traditionally, but instead as based on a certain "passivity" and "heteronomy"[15] (see also Article I). Due to the finiteness of humans, every human being expresses his or her legacy in idiosyncratic or individual ways, but the manner of self-expression, or rather how it is expressed in an individual, is not governed by his or her autonomous decision. And this brings us to a very important distinction between Nietzsche and Derrida: even if a "sovereign individual" is also something rather conditional and relative, Nietzsche still understands responsibility (and implicitly also decision) from the point of view of sovereignty and autonomy in his *On the Genealogy of Morals*. As Nietzsche explicitly states therein: only a sovereign individual has this "stolze Wissen um das ausserordentliche Privilegium der Verantwortlichkeit, das Bewusstsein dieser seltenen Freiheit, dieser Macht über sich" (Nietzsche 1988, vol. 5: 294). This means that to the extent that Nietzsche undermines autonomy and sovereignty, he also seems to undermine the concepts of decision and responsibility; if autonomy proves to be conditional when analysed more thoroughly, then a decision could only be conditional and limited as well – in other words, he does not attempt or consider it necessary to develop an alternative which would separate responsibility and decision from autonomy. For Nietzsche, decision (at least implicitly) and responsibility, to the extent that and within the limits in which they are possible, must be based on a certain more or less conditional and relative sovereignty. Derrida, on the contrary, as thoroughly demonstrated in Article I, understands decision from completely different, almost opposite preconditions. Namely, Derrida does not only deconstruct, undermine and relativize the presumed unity, autonomy and identity of the "subject", but also points to a peculiar matter of fact which is quite essential as well (see also Article I) – that even if such a calculating and calculable "subject" with an autonomous and constant identity truly existed, i.e. if a "subject" was indeed what it claimed to be or what it was thought to be, then in principle it would

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[15]   It should nevertheless be borne in mind that, according to Derrida, decision is not purely and simply heteronomous or passive as opposed to autonomy and activity. Rather, it hovers somewhere between passivity and activity, heteronomy and autonomy. For this reason, I have placed these words in quotation marks.

nevertheless be unable to make a decision. Hence, Derrida writes in *Politiques de l'amitié*:

> Sans doute la subjectivité d'un sujet, déjà, ne décide-t-elle jamais de rien ; son identité à soi et sa permanence calculable font de toute décision un accident qui laisse le sujet indifférent. *Une théorie du sujet est incapable de rendre compte de la moindre décision.* Mais cela doit se dire *a fortiori* de l'événement, et de l'événement au regard de la décision. Car si rien n'arrive jamais à un sujet, rien qui mérite le nom d'événement, le schème de la décision tend régulièrement, du moins dans son acception commune et hégémonique (celle qui semble dominer encore le décisionnisme schmittien, sa théorie de l'exception et de la souveraineté), à impliquer l'instance du sujet, d'un sujet classique, libre et volontaire, donc d'un sujet auquel rien n'arrive, pas même l'événement singulier dont il croit, par exemple en situation d'exception, prendre et garder l'initiative. (Derrida 1994: 87) [16]

From this it is possible to deduce that the deconstruction of the unity and identity of the "subject" performed by Derrida is not merely a neutral description of the state of affairs, but possesses a certain ethical or normative dimension as well. In the words of Derrida himself: "That is why I insisted on what prevents unity from closing upon itself, from being closed up. This is not only a matter of description, of saying that this is the way it is. It is a matter of accounting for the possibility of responsibility, of a decision, of ethical commitments." (Derrida 1997: 13) The problem regarding why such a previously described "subject" could not make decisions (or would necessarily remain irresponsible) according to Derrida is explained and treated in more detail and with accompanying examples in Article I.

c. Aristotle's Concept of Decision and the "Subject"

The "subject", as it is understood in this paper, is therefore characterized by a certain self-awareness and self-presence (in consciousness), by a rationality that guides action and thought, by identity ("subject" is largely the same underneath the plurality of actions and experiences), freedom, activeness and autonomy. Aristotle's concept of decision presumes, more or less explicitly, all these characteristics of the "subject". Even though Aristotle does not have a single term for either "subject" or "consciousness" and even if he does not share many problems that are associated with the concepts of "consciousness" and "subject" in modern times (such as Cartesian indubitability), that does not mean that

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[16] Cf. also Derrida 1999: 23–24: "Does one have the right to give this name 'decision' to a purely autonomous movement […] which would proceed only from me, myself, and would merely deploy the possibilities of a subjectivity that was mine? Would we not be justified in seeing here the unfolding of an egological immanence, the autonominal and automatic deployment of the predicates or possibilities proper to a subject, without that tearing that ought to advene in any so-called free decision?"

Aristotle was unaware of the phenomenon that we call "consciousness" or "subjectivity" (see also Caston 2002) or that he did not presuppose properties that characterize the "subject". (In relation to consciousness, the most important fact in this context is that a rational deliberation is something conscious, something that one is aware of[17], and that the deliberator and decision-maker is aware of himself as a decision-maker (knows who he is, knows himself) and of the details and circumstances of the decision – and Aristotle seems to agree with this explicitly.) Article I thoroughly analyses Aristotle's concept of decision and the problems related to it. To summarize it here, it is possible to say that Aristotle understands decision as a phenomenon through which an individual becomes the initiator or the author of his or her own action. But how does he understand decision (*prohairesis*) itself? According to Aristotle, a decision is something voluntary (*hekôn*); the voluntary is defined in Book 3 of *Nicomachean Ethics* as follows: "What is voluntary seems to be what has its origin in the agent himself when he knows the particulars that the action consists in" (Aristotle 1985: 58, NE 1111a22–24; cf. Aristotle 1984: 1941, EE 1225b1–b10). Those particulars or details that form the prerequisites of voluntariness and, therefore, of the decision itself are: (1) who decides; (2) what his or her action will be or what he is doing; (3) what the object of that action is; (4) means of action; (5) purpose of action; and (6) manner of action (whether it is done calmly or quickly). Now, if one of these particulars or details (and, as Aristotle adds, especially the most important one of those – namely the second one, what one is doing) remains unknown, then the action is no longer something voluntary and therefore cannot be considered a decision. It is noteworthy that Aristotle considers it necessary to point out and highlight that "certainly someone could not be ignorant of all of these *unless he were mad* [my emphasis, J.S.]. Nor, clearly, could he be ignorant of who is doing it, since he could hardly be ignorant of himself." (Aristotle 1985: 57; NE 1111a6–8)

However, according to Aristotle, a decision is not simply something voluntary; it is said to be a voluntary act that is strictly related to rational deliberation – that is guided by thorough rational deliberation. Nevertheless, a certain motivating force joins rational deliberation because Aristotle defines decision-making in his *Nicomachean Ethics* as a "deliberative desire to do an action that is up to us" (Aristotle 1985: 64; NE 1113a10–12). According to this quotation, a decision has a double origin: on the one hand, it derives from irrational pursuits or from a striving and motivating force (*orexis*), in Kuhn's (1960) words, from the darkness of the irrational; on the other hand, from the clarity of rationality, from rational deliberation. However, Aristotle completely subjects this

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[17]   For example in *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle states quite explicitly: "Now someone who sees perceives that he sees; one who hears perceives that he hears; and one who walks perceives that he walks. Similarly in the other cases also there is some [element] that perceives that we are active. Hence, if we are perceiving, we perceive that we are perceiving; and if we are understanding, we perceive that we are understanding." (Aristotle 1985: 260; NE a29–b1). – Regarding Aristotle's treatment of problems related to consciousness, see Caston 2002.

endeavouring irrational force to rational deliberation; this force strives and motivates according to this deliberation and under its guidance. Due to this, Aristotle subjects decisions to rational deliberation, whereas a decision-maker is aware of and perceives himself as a decision-maker and also what he does, why he does it, etc.[18] Such an approach to decision undoubtedly belongs to or under the thing against which Nietzsche argues in his aphorism *Die unbekannte Welt des "Subjects"*, which was our starting point for the topic of the characteristics and deconstruction of "subject". He does not name Aristotle in it (although Plato and Socrates are mentioned) but does say "so dachte ehemals Jeder, so denkt fast noch Jeder".

Finally, regarding decision, one more thing is important to Aristotle: namely the constant disposition or certain identity. Decision-making is not simply guided by rational deliberation, but is also based on a steadfast disposition (*hexis*), character or stable identity (as a constant sameness) which is acquired as a result of upbringing and long training and repetition. According to Aristotle, in some instances a decision automatically stems from disposition. Although Aristotle unites these two approaches in his thinking, a certain tension and irreconcilability can be observed between them (see Article I).

Nietzsche and Derrida deconstruct and undermine all of the abovementioned characteristics of the "subject", which, as previously said, does not mean that they negate a certain self-awareness or the possibility of rational deliberation taking place in consciousness or the existence of a relative identity. Their criticism only limits (even if to a significant extent) the authority of consciousness, autonomy and rationality: consciousness and rationality are no longer considered to be an absolute form of existence but more an effect, just as the identity of a decision-maker reveals itself to be more relative than before. It

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[18] It may nevertheless seem that Aristotle, when he goes on to analyse acrasy and acratic, still allows for the possibility that decision and deed do not always follow rational deliberation. Insofar as Aristotle seems to recognize *deviant* cases where right rational deliberation is not followed by right deed – although here it should be emphasized that according to Nietzsche and Derrida it would not be a *deviance* but normality – he is apparently, and at least to some extent, critical of the Socratic view. According to Aristotle, acrasy appears when a person in a certain situation does know what is right, but acts nevertheless wrongly; for example, leading a bad life. Aristotle himself notes in *Nicomachean Ethics* that although Socrates thought that acrasy never occured, this seems to be contradictory to the experience which appears to confirm its reality (Aristoteles 1985: 174–175; NE 1145b25–29). In *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle offers four solutions to the problem of acrasy and acratic, but as Richard Robinson has shown very convincingly, all four seem to boil down to the claim that knowledge found through deliberation is not completely and *actually* present in the mind or reason of the acratic – the acratic may *potentially* know what should be done or what is the right thing to do, but this knowledge is not active at the moment of the deed. Robinson writes thus: "For in my view every one of the four solutions amounts to saying that the acratic, at the time of his act, does not have fully in mind all the parts of the practical syllogism that ought to govern it." (Robinson 1995: 195) Thus Aristotle does seem to agree with Plato and Socrates that what leads human decisions and actions is knowledge, rational clarity achieved by rational deliberation. There is indeed some sort of acrasy, but in such cases this knowledge is simply not active.

should be emphasised at this point that Derrida does not understand his "deconstruction" as irrationality, but rather as a modern form of rationality – one that includes everything that previous forms of rationality sought to exclude from the realm of rationality. If contemporary rationalism wants to provide an adequate description of the modern world, then it must in one way or another take into consideration the so-called "discoveries" which have been made in psychoanalysis, for example – while not abandoning a critical and careful stance toward its ultimate self-comprehension.

It is not only Aristotle's approach to decision that in some way presumes the "subject" delineated above, or at least a part of the characteristics of this "subject". Next, we will consider the sense in which this study understands Aristotle's approach to be the so-called traditional and widespread one, and the one that is still in many ways dominant.

4. TRADITIONAL CONCEPT OF DECISION

Let us thus consider why Aristotle's approach to decision-making is called the traditional one in this thesis and to what the phrase "Aristotelian conceptualization of decision" used in the thesis refers. This study claims that Aristotle presents a certain general framework that captures a large part or even the majority of later approaches to decision. Even if these later approaches differ from Aristotle's approach considerably or even sharply in some respects, they still hold important and "inherent" components of his conception and thematization. By the general framework are mostly meant the two pillars of Aristotle's approach that were pointed out earlier: *firstly*, he understands decision as something based on rational deliberation and guided by it; *secondly*, he understands decision as based on a constant disposition that has been acquired through training and upbringing (like, for example, on virtue which, to simplify, is a good and valuable disposition). Aristotle seems to have wanted to combine these two pillars into one complete theory in his ethics, even though, as previously mentioned, a certain tension can be seen here. Later, these two pillars seem to diverge even further in different treatments, so that at least to a certain degree (and in certain treatments) they will become mutually exclusive.[19] Now, the majority of later approaches to decision, which are quite often presented implicitly within a more general theory of morals and actions, are based on one or the other of these two pillars.

a. Decision and Rationality

The Aristotelian approach that a decision is made after lengthy rational deliberation and based on knowledge and information acquired through it – that in some sense a decision results from rational deliberation and is subordinate to it – is so widespread that it seems self-evident. It is thought that people deliberate on what they should do, analyse their goals and means to achieve them and make decisions based on the knowledge acquired through and according to this deliberation. The same is thought to happen with political decisions that concern entire countries and nations and that could dictate war or peace. Nowadays, such a view seems obvious in both the everyday and the philosophical sense, and seems to have been self-evident for the larger part of the history of philosophy. Now, differences between various rationalistic approaches become evident when attempts are made to determine, in a more exact and subtle manner, what is meant by reason (when, for example, practical and

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[19] Of course, one could also name as one of those pillars activity, voluntariness or freedom, which Aristotle's conception likewise presupposes (as, of course, do most later conceptions). However, I will confine myself to the two pillars mentioned above. Besides, in most rationalistic treatments of decision, a certain voluntariness is already an inseparable and necessary component, although there are conceptions which emphasize radical freedom without being rationalistic (see below, footnote no. 20).

theoretical reason are differentiated, as by Immanuel Kant), what is meant by grounds, what can be deliberated, whether reason uses another motivating force to make a decision or take action such as it is *explicitly* meant by Aristotle, or whether reason itself possesses such a force, etc. However, all of these differences accept a certain conceptual minimum, according to which rational deliberation performed by the rational "subject" is the very basis of decision.

In what follows, I will provide some examples of rationalistic theories of decision in order to show that despite all of the differences, a certain conceptual minimum is shared by them. One of the most faithful and influential proponents and supporters of Aristotelian views in the Middle Ages was Thomas Aquinas. He also makes some subtle distinctions regarding deed and motivation. According to Aquinas, a deed emerges in a rather complicated interaction between reason or intellect and will (*voluntas*). One of the components or factors of this interaction is precisely decision or choice (*electio*). Herewith arises the question for Aquinas as to whether choice belongs to the realm of intellect and rational deliberation or that of the will, because he says that "the term 'election' implies a quality of reason or intellect and a quality of will; Aristotle refers to it being both understanding as desirous and desire as understanding" (Aquinas 2006: 125). But the will itself had already been defined by Aquinas as something rational, namely rational desire (*appetitus intellectualis* or *rationalis*) in opposition to natural and animal desire (Aquinas 2006a: 159–161). And as a rational desire, the will obeys (at least in most cases and as normality) the commands of reason, follows its superior guidance. In this sense one could claim that it does not really matter whether Aquinas imputes choice to will or reason, as it has already been submitted to a certain rationality. And eventually Aquinas indeed seeks to understand choice as rather belonging to the will, as an act of will. This *rather* is important here; Aquinas tries to explain his idea with the help of Aristotle's distinction between "material" and "formal" cause by writing in *Summa Theologiae*:

> It is clear that reason comes before will and directs its activity, in that the will tends towards its object in the setting of reason, which presents to it the object of desire. Accordingly then, that will-act which turns towards an object proposed to it as being good, that is, as being reasonably subordinate to the end, is 'materially' one of will, but formally one of reason. [...] In this sense choice is substantially an act of will, not of reason [...]. (Aquinas 2006: 125)

One can thus read from the quotation that choice does substantially (*substantialiter*) belong to the will, which is described as the "material" cause of choice, but on the other hand it is itself guided by reason or intellect as the "formal" cause of choice. One might indeed form the impression that it has to do here with a certain double rationality: the will as rational desire is guided by reason. But this, as alluded above, could perhaps be understood in such a way that since the will is rational desire, it is also guided and steered by reason (about the

intellectualism of Aquinas, cf. also Williams 2012: 203–204; Hause 1997: 168[20]).[21]

In modern times, moral rationalism, for example, has figured prominently and still has many influential proponents today. Also, this movement seems to implicitly (and in some cases explicitly) include a rationalistic conception of decision. Moral rationalism, understood here as a view according to which morals are based on reason or rationality, leading to the most general claim that moral truths, permissible and forbidden, can be known mostly or only through reason, often attributes to reason in its many forms (or knowledge found through reason about what should be done) not only a leading but also a motivating and impellent force (see Nichols 2002). For example, Leibniz, whose thinking is in many ways similar to that of Aristotle (cf. Roinila 2007: 161–165), writes in one of his later comments on his *A New Method for Learning and Teaching Jurisprudence* (1667): "To will is nothing but the striving arising from thought, or to strive for something which our thinking recognizes as good" (Leibniz 1989: 91).[22] According to this quote, a striving and motivating force seems to arise from thinking itself. On the one hand, it is not identical to Aristotle's thinking; as became apparent, according to him, a decision also requires a certain irrational motivating force, but since he completely subordinates this force to reason, both his and Leibniz's approach form part of the same rationalistic framework. Leibniz seems to have accepted Aristotelian presumptions and then taken one step further. However, on the other hand, Leibniz's extreme rationalism is already *implicitly* present in Aristotle's thinking (see also Article I, especially concerning the connection between practical syllogism and action).

As already mentioned, different forms of moral rationalism still have many followers, for example, Christine Korsgaard (1986) and Michael Smith (1994,

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[20]   One possible counter-reading of Aquinas which puts more emphasis on the independence and freedom of the will is offered by Kristinson 2006.

[21]   Yet it seems that in the Middle Ages Aristotle was not read only in light of Thomas Aquinas; for example Duns Scotus (1266–1308) and other "voluntarists" read him under the influence of St. Augustine, since they emphasized first and foremost the radical freedom and independency of the will (Alanen 2003: 208–235; Alanen 2009: 91–92). (As is demonstrated in the study (cf. Article I), the Aristotelian account of decision also presupposes a certain voluntariness.) According to them, the will is not determined by reason. This kind of view, which does not lean on either of the Aristotelian pillars mentioned above, implies a conception of decision which is no longer based on rationality. However, on the basis of this "freedom", even this conceptualization could in some sense be called Aristotelian, albeit not rationalistic.

[22]   This is somewhat similar to what Descartes (2008:41) has to say regarding the will and motivation in his *Meditations*: "[…] it [the will] consists purely in this: that we are moved in relation to that which the intellect presents to us as to be affirmed or denied, pursued or avoided, in such a way that we feel we are not being determined in that direction by any external force. For, in order to be free, I do not have to be able to be moved in either direction. On the contrary, the more I incline to one alternative, whether because I clearly understand that the good and the true are on that side, or because God so disposes my innermost thoughts."

1997); although some of its critics have asked whether psychopaths are not an expressive counterargument to such moral rationalism: their intellect seems to be sharp, they seem to clearly know what to do and what to avoid, their rational deliberation seems to be correct and resemble that of people who are sane, and yet it does not motivate them; for some reason, they do not follow this awareness in their decisions and actions; or, in other words, it is not actualized or expressed in their behaviour and actions. And even when their moral deliberation is faulty (for which there is some support), then this deficiency seems to have little to do with their rational capabilities and more with their affective system (see Nichols 2002).

One of the most explicit and detailed rationalistic conceptions of decision today has been offered by Julian Nida-Rümelin. According to him, decision is based on rational deliberation and calculation of grounds: "Die rationale Person lässt ihr Urteilen und Handeln von praktischen wie theoretischen Gründen leiten. […] Sie entscheidet sich gegen eine Handlungsoption, wenn die Abwägung praktischer Gründe negativ ausfällt […]." (Nida-Rümelin 2005: 48) Here is given a certain general rationalistic description of decision to which probably every rationalistic conception of decision would subscribe. But at least on the basis of one passage it seems that he also (and somewhat similarly to Leibniz) seeks to go even further than that: he seems to refer to the fact that decision itself really is the immediate result of rational deliberation. When, namely, the taking of decision is imminent, the expectations that the decision-maker may have regarding his own decision make, in Rümelin's words, no sense. Precisely in this context he writes:

> Dann sind die Bedingungen der Entscheidungsfindung klar: entweder sind sie dergestalt, dass das Ergebnis der Abwägung von Gründen schon festliegt – dann ist die Entscheidung schon getroffen –, oder das Ergebnis der Abwägung ist trotz Kenntnis der Entscheidungsbedingungen noch offen. Dann machen auch Erwartungen hinsichtlich des Ergebnisses keinen Sinn. (Nida-Rümelin 2005: 50–51)

Decision, as in moral rationalism described before, is almost entirely reduced to rational deliberation, or more precisely still to its result. Decision as a phenomenon seems to lose all independence and specificity. As mentioned before, something similar can even be seen in Aristotle's conception, namely regarding his practical syllogism. It is therefore not only a pure accident or coincidence that Nida-Rümelin, aiming to explain his treatment, refers explicitly to Aristotle (Rümelin 2005: 55).

Now, there is no doubt that there are considerable and evident differences between different rationalistic concepts of decision, regardless of whether those concepts are explicit or can be found implicitly in some theory of morals and action. But that a decision is preceded by rational deliberation, that it is itself based on it, guided by it and in some way results from such deliberation, seems to be a conceptual minimum to which all rationalistic conceptions would subscribe. Such a conceptualization of decision seems to be so self-evident and

dominating in philosophy (but certainly not only and not even first and foremost in philosophy) that even in e.g. the general dictionary of philosophical terminology *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe* decision is thematized in a similar fashion, thereby referring to Aristotle. Here is the quote:

> Entscheidung (lat. *decisio*, engl. *decision*), einer Handlung unmittelbar vorhergehender Entschluss zwischen Handlungsalternativen, wobei die kleinste Alternativenmenge die ist, entweder eine bestimmte Tätigkeit auszuführen oder untätig zu bleiben. In diesem Sinne der "Wahl", jedoch mit deutlicher Betonung von Vernunft, Denken, Überlegung, bestimmt schon Aristoteles die Entscheidung […]. (Regenbogen & Meyer 1998: 186)

As can be seen from the quotation, decision is defined through the German word "Entschluss" (which could also be translated into other languages as "decision"), about which one reads the following in the same dictionary: "Entschluss oder Entschliessung, der Abschluss des Erwägens zwischen mehreren Möglichkeiten des Handelns" (Regenbogen & Meyer 1998a: 188). Decision is thus described here not as a result of deliberation but somewhat more cautiously as its end (although in certain contexts the word *Abschluss* could also mean "conclusion" or even "result" (*Ergebniss*)). In any case, this definition of decision no doubt belongs to the same rational framework as Rümelin's and other conceptions analyzed above, and therefore also accepts the same conceptual minimum.

b. Decision, Fixed Disposition and Virtue

From the moral rationalism and rationalistic conceptions of decision described above, which emphasize the importance and role of rationality and rational deliberation in taking (moral) decisions, various forms of so-called virtue ethics can be differentiated which have become very influential, especially in the 20th century. For such theories, what is most important in estimating an act or deed is acquired character[23] and not some kind of rational rule or deliberation which preceded it. Also, this view can be seen as belonging to the Aristotelian framework, which, as demonstrated above, is based on two pillars or cornerstones: rational deliberation and firm or constant character. According to virtue ethics, the goodness or rightness of a deed is mostly guaranteed by good firm disposition or character (virtue) which, due to its relative permanence, could also be called a certain identity. Good character that can be formed and developed through upbringing, education and training is understood as the basis of good deeds. Such a view includes the general idea that if a person has acquired a good character or virtue then he will also make good decisions, which in some

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[23] Also the rationalistic theories of ethics can, of course, speak about virtues (and normally they do), but virtues play there a secondary role, they are clearly submitted to rational deliberation and principles.

sense follow from his disposition more or less automatically or naturally, and in some sense even unconsciously, thus not needing complicated rational deliberation or rules[24]. Various forms of virtue ethics do not, of course, deny rational deliberation (which can help, for example, in finding the right means to achieve a certain goal), but it is not central, since the motivation to decide on something is seen to come from (firm and constant) character. A courageous or brave person takes courageous decisions not because of rational deliberation or rule (to maximize one's utility, for example), but because he has required through rigorous education, upbringing and training such a character which naturally realizes and expresses itself in the deed.

If one were to interpret David Hume in terms of virtue ethics, which has often been done (cf. Hursthouse 1999 and Taylor 2006), then even he, who is known as one of the sharpest critics of rationalistic theories of ethics[25], would belong to the Aristotelian framework (despite, of course, important differences regarding many aspects of Aristotle's ethics). Hume wanted to prove "that reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will; and secondly, that it can never oppose passion in the direction of the will" (Hume 1968: 413). According to Hume, the widespread and canonical Aristotelian view that decision and deed are based and must be based on long and thorough rational deliberation is delusive[26]. When the aim is given – that is, when there is an inclination to a certain aim – then reason can help to find good and right means to achieve that goal, but reason is not capable of much more. And unlike in Aristotle, this inclination is no longer submitted to rational deliberation in any

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[24] In the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* the following is stated about virtue ethics: "They [proponents of virtue ethics] also claim that virtue ethics is truer to human psychology in concentrating on the less conscious aspects of motivation – on relatively stable dispositions, habits, and long-term goals, for example – where modern ethics focuses on decision making directed by principles and rules." (Garcia 1996: 841)

[25] Cf. Hume 1968: 413: "Nothing is more usual in philosophy, and even in common life, than to talk of the combat of passion and reason, to give the preference to reason, and assert that men are only so far virtuous as they conform themselves to its dictates. Every rational creature, `tis said, is oblig'd to regulate his actions by reason; and if any other motive or principle challenge the direction of his conduct, he ought to oppose it, till it be entirely subdu'd, or at least brought to a conformity with that superior principle. On this method of thinking the greatest part of moral philosophy, ancient and modern, seems to be founded; nor is there an ampler field, as well for metaphysical arguments, as popular declamations, than this suppos'd pre-eminence of reason above passion. The eternity, invariableness, and divine origin of the former have been display'd to the best advantage: The blindness, unconstancy, and deceitfulness of the latter have been as strongly insisted on."

[26] Compare with the words of known Hume interpreter Stroud (1981: 155): "Thousands of hours of information gathering, hypothetical reasoning, and deliberation went into the invasion of France on D-Day, for example, and finally the event occurred. Isn't something like that also often the case for individual human beings who deliberate and then decide what to do? They seem to be trying to determine or discover what they should do, or what is the best thing for them to do, and it seems as if they often succeed, and then, as a result of that discovery, act. […] Hume thinks this conception of reason and its relation to action is completely mistaken."

way. But insofar as Hume regards every virtuous deed or behaviour "only as a sign of some quality or character" (Hume 1968: 575; cf. Johnson 1990: 159–160) and insofar as he understands them as resulting from a firm and fixed character or principle ("proceeding from any constant principle"), as Aristotle did, to that extent even he can be broadly seen as belonging (as a representative of virtue ethics) to the framework of Aristotelian understanding or conceptualization of decision; as leaning on one of its pillars.

Virtue ethics, of course, has taken many different forms, which has led Marta Nussbaum (1999) to doubt whether we can even speak of a single movement called "virtue ethics". Important and pertinent in the given context among the forms she highlights is the neo-Humean virtue ethics group, which is said to include Philippa Foot, Simon Blackburn, MacIntyre et al. (Nussbaum 1999). About this group Nussbaum writes: "For all of our neo-Humeans, then, the turn to virtue ethics is a way of reducing reason's exorbitant demands and pretensions to authority; it is a way of grounding morality in other features of human nature." (Nussbaum 1999: 195) A little further on, she claims specifically about MacIntyre: "[He] appeals frequently to Aristotle; he appears drawn to the Aristotelian tradition. But even in interpreting Aristotle's own thought he ignores Aristotle's tremendous stress on deliberation and reflection […]" (Nussbaum 1999: 197). Thus, it seems that what Aristotle tried to unite in his ethics (virtues of character and rationality) has some problems coexisting in some of the later treatments.

Till now we have mostly spoken about a constant and lasting character or disposition on which decisions and deeds are based. But Aristotle, as well as Hume and many others (in the above quotation Nussbaum also mentions "human nature"), also makes essentialistic generalizations about human nature as a whole. For this reason, one can generally claim that insofar as a certain human nature or essential traits inherent to all human beings are postulated (like compassion or benevolence) and can be taken as forming the basis for human decisions and deeds, then one can quite broadly still speak of the Aristotelian framework and of one of its pillars. That is why this framework is understood here precisely in opposition to Derrida's conception of decision, which excludes the fact that decision is based on a constant principle, be it individual character, some hypothetical human nature and essence or even causality.

What is said in this short subchapter is, of course, not meant to prove that all conceptions of decision in the history of philosophy are in some sense Aristotelian (that is, accept one of the cornerstones of Aristotle's treatment) or that the Aristotelian conception is implicitly present in all theories of action and morality.[27] The aim of this subchapter was only to demonstrate that the Aristotelian treatment of decision, insofar as it can be found either implicitly or explicitly in influential philosophical movements, has certainly dominated, to the

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[27] For example in my Master's thesis (Sooväli 2008), I showed that in some sense (but not precisely in Derrida's sense) one could also describe Kierkegaard's treatment of decision as heretical.

point where even in the general dictionary of philosophical terminology "decision" is defined in Aristotelian terms. And as can be seen in Article I, even Derrida's own "concept" of decision, which accepts neither of the pillars of Aristotle's conception (or in other words, which clearly rejects both of them), has not remained untouched and uninfluenced by it. Derrida's conception of decision has been called heretical (cf. Article I), but heresy as such always retains an "essential" connection and some kind of dependency on the orthodoxy.

5. DECISION AS HERESY

Insofar as the examined criticism of the "subject" performed by Nietzsche and Derrida also undermines and calls into question the traditional understanding of decision or, at least, some of its most important aspects, it entails a need to conceptualize decision somewhat differently and anew. Hence, Derrida's attempt to understand and thematize decision in a novel way, his so-called heretical treatment of decision – which, having been analyzed in Article I, does not need to be repeated here – ensues in some sense "logically" from his criticism of the "subject". At this point, the question about the possible advantages and disadvantages of his reinterpretation of the phenomenon of decision is not only justified but in some sense even necessary; for example, what possible implications and consequences would it have for the very specific decisions made in concrete situations?

The problem is that if one is to believe that Derrida's understanding of decision somehow prepares us for concrete decisions or if one hopes to find in his approach clear guidelines or methodological support (similarly, for example, to decision theories) that would help people to take better and more adequate decisions, then one has missed the point of his analyses from the outset. Decision as decision, despite the fact that it must be preceded by thorough rational deliberation and analysis of the situation, cannot in Derrida's view result from that deliberation (for example, from some kind of calculation of expected utility). The very decisiveness of the decision presupposes a more or less radical breakaway from the preceding deliberations, calculations, rules or some ethical programme (for example, Kant's famous categorical imperative). The same applies to the thematization of decision itself – Derrida thematizes it in such a way that it cannot form some theoretical basis or support for concrete decisions – otherwise his treatment of decision would annul itself. According to Derrida, without this mentioned breakaway and cut, there would only be a dull, mechanical application and putting into operation of the cognitive apparatus. And by emphasizing this decisive interruption and absolute beginning and initiation, Derrida is referring to something immemorial that the concept of decision has always, in one form or another, presupposed, among others also in Aristotle himself. In this sense (and in spite of its being heretical or heretical-ness), also Derrida's treatment is in some sense still quite "traditional", although he does significantly change the meaning of this interruption and absolute beginning by understanding it on completely different grounds.

But precisely this fact – that Derrida's account of decision cannot offer any concrete guidelines or programme for making "better" decisions – has been regarded by some (including Dominic Moran 2002) as one of its greatest deficiencies.[28] Utilitarians and pragmatists, even if they accepted the pertinence

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[28] Cf. Critchley 1999: 275: "Derrida insists that judgements have to be made and decisions to be taken, provided it is understood that they must pass through an experience of the undecidable. But then, what decisions are taken, which judgements are made?"

of Derrida's theoretical analyses regarding the concept of decision, might ask: what "use" does it all have? Also, Richard Rorty (1996), who greatly respects Derrida's earlier deconstruction and criticism of metaphysics, regards his "moral philosophy" as utopian and apparently useless or without consequence.

One other widespread argument (which is related to the first) against Derrida's understanding of decision (see Article I) asks the following question: since Derrida accentuates and underlines a radical break from and interruption with every kind of rational deliberation, rules, laws etc., does he not turn decision into something completely arbitrary and random, something based on the randomness of "pure will" (cf. Lilla 2001: 190) or the "emotional storm" of the decision-maker (cf. Sokoloff 2002: 190)?

However, one could also see it as an advantage that Derrida does not offer concrete guidelines for taking particular decisions. The first thing that should be emphasized is that this interruption and undecidable as a moment of absolute darkness in the instant of the decision is, according to Derrida, the condition of possibility of ethics. If decision were based on rational deliberation, rules or calculation of probability, then it would be something more or less mechanical and programmed and, as such, it would help to avoid responsibility and exclude ethical problems and dilemmas. Secondly, all of the possible rules, laws (with regard to legal decisions), calculations, programmes and theories on which the concept of decision has been based by different conceptualizations and approaches do not take into account the singularity or the otherness of the other and can be unjust. Decision which follows a programme is in some sense a priori destruction of the other (Sokoloff 2002: 347). For example, a decision of a judge has to follow the law, but this very law itself might be unjust (see Article I). Furthermore, the generality of the law overlooks the particularity of the individual case. Derrida, insofar as he takes the interruption and the undecidable strictly into account, retains in every decision a certain openness to a greater justice towards the singularity of the other, as well as an openness to modification of the law and rules. But this openness is at the same time, of course, also openness to "evil" and perjury. Derrida himself also admits this last possibility by writing: "Sans la possibilité du mal radical, du parjure et du crime absolu, aucune responsabilité, aucune liberté, aucune décision." (Derrida 1994, 247)

The condition of good and just (but actually every) decision is, as it appears, the possibility of absolute errancy. But Derrida seems to accentuate above all this absolute respect and responsibility for the singularity of the other: as Sokoloff (2002:346) writes, "a non-appropriative respect for others" is to be taken as a kind of ethical border of decision. If one adds here that in spite of the undecidable as the condition of possibility of decision Derrida paradoxically also emphasizes the necessity of deliberation and consideration of laws (see Article I), then the claim that in Derrida's thought decision is based on the

arbitrariness of "pure will"[29] turns out to be untenable. On the other hand, Derrida does seem to diminish the importance and import of this possibility of absolute errancy. The undecidable as an absolute break with preceding deliberation etc. can in principle lead to even greater exploitation of the other as the following of some programme or calculation. Derrida indeed admits (but does not speak at length about) the possibility that the other in me can also be something "evil".[30] But regardless of this, Derrida mostly speaks of the absolute respect for the singularity of the other, the possibility of which appears after one has deconstructed every sort of egological immanence and subject-centeredness, and understood that decision is in some sense always taken by the other in the decision-maker

Thus, in some sense at least, it is rather an advantage – the possibility of decision and "freedom" – that Derrida's treatment of decision does not offer us concrete guidelines for taking decisions. But in its own way, Derrida's approach can nevertheless influence our decisions. Insofar as it demonstrates, with the help of the aporias found in the concept of decision, how difficult, if not impossible, it is to take a decision; insofar as it refers to the fact that we can never be completely certain that we have made a decision, not to mention whether the decision was good or just; insofar as it brings an aspect of doubt and self-criticism into every "good conscience" by means of that uncertainty, to that extent Derrida's understanding of decision can have more or less direct ethical-political consequences. According to him, this disquietude and uncertainty regarding one's decisions and actions is a positive ethical force. His treatment of decision seems to exclude the possibility that one could ever be completely satisfied with one's decisions, that one could believe one's decisions were good and just or that one has done enough.

The following line of argumentation can be added here: Nietzsche had already earlier stated that old morality and moral philosophy had not only become incredible – since its basis and guarantor, God, had become incredible and impudent hypothesis – but also dull and boring (cf. Nietzsche 1988, vol. 5: 163); more refined and demanding persons, according to Nietzsche, kept away from it. Does not Derrida's ethical-political discourse, with its absolute demands, aporias and twists – having accepted and adopted Nietzsche's insight that morality cannot ultimately be grounded (according to Nietzsche, moral philosophy had always tried to ground morality) – turn, in its own performative way, morality and moral philosophy back into something "interesting"? One might argue that also in this sense could Derrida's analyses of decision, responsibility etc. have a direct impact on people's "morality".

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[29] Not to mention, of course, that the possibility of some "pure will" is excluded in the thought of Derrida and belongs to the egological immanence Derrida has taken on to deconstruct.

[30] In this sense, one can partly agree with what Moran writes (2002: 116): "Deconstruction's relation with notions such as "the good" is far more equivocal than many of Derrida's recent pronouncments would indicate."

CONCLUSION

In my dissertation I argue that it is possible and sound to speak about two in some ways certainly interrelated but still fundamentally and radically different conceptions of decision. One of these conceptions, which, in this study, has been called the traditional and dominating understanding of decision, is seen to originate from Aristotle; the other, which is designated as an *heretical* "conception", derives from the works of Jacques Derrida.

Heresy is a certain system of beliefs or theory that is at variance with the accepted theory or system of beliefs. It must be emphasized that the condition of possibility of heresy can only be orthodoxy itself – there can only be heresy in this breaking with and away from the orthodoxy, and such a breaking always involves a certain dependence on, and belonging to, the orthodoxy. Derrida's conception of decision seems to have precisely this kind of relationship to Aristotelian conception of decision – breaking away from it and belonging to it at the same time. However, not only is Derrida's understanding of decision heretical with respect to Aristotle's conception: decision itself, as it appears from Derrida's thematisation, turns out to be also a sort of heresy – heresy in the face of rational deliberations, calculations of utility, common norms, values and demands. The word "heresy" itself comes from the Greek *hairesis* which means precisely choice or decision but more generally also the act of violent taking, as for example when soldiers storm the city. It must be mentioned that Derrida himself has not understood his conception of decision as heretical with respect to Aristotelian conception, thus the main contribution of the thesis consists precisely in detailed contrasting of Derrida's conception with the Aristotelian one and thereby bringing out the very hereticalness of Derrida's conception. This sheds also an important light on the conditions and historical development of the concept of decision.

My study is motivated by the problems surrounding the concept of the "subject". The way the "subject" or decision-maker is explicitly or implicitly understood, determines the way decision itself is understood. The traditional conception of decision, as shown in the thesis, is based on a certain more or less coherent concept of the "subject" or decision-maker. This concept of the subject is, for example, characterized by self-knowledge, autonomy, activity, identity, self-consciousness, and guiding rationality. But precisely these characteristics of the subject have been repeatedly and for more than hundred years now, called into question by very many different authors and even traditions. Decision and the closely related concept of responsibility should therefore be re-thematized, without presuming a predominantly autonomous, self-identical and rational agent.

Taking the aforesaid into account, my thesis can be structured in the following way: Firstly, I have outlined Aristotle's concept of decision and analysed problems and difficulties related to it. It has been demonstrated that Aristotle understands decision (a) as an expression of a firm and constant disposition, be it virtuous or not, acquired through long practice and education; and

(b) as resulting from rational deliberation and calculation. I have argued that a certain tension can be seen between these two determinations. In some places, Aristotle (c) also ascribes a syllogistic structure to this aforementioned rational deliberation and seems thereby to annul decision as such. Besides this, (d) the decision-maker, according to Aristotle, knows *himself* and knows himself *as* a decision-maker; he also knows the conditions and circumstances surrounding his decision and decision-making (what he does, for what purpose, by what means etc.). And finally, (e) the rightness or correctness of decision is guaranteed by ethical as well as dianoetic virtues.

Secondly, I have argued in brief that Aristotle presents a general framework that captures a large part or even the majority of later approaches to decision. Even if these later approaches differ from Aristotle's conceptions considerably or sharply in some respects, they still hold some important and "inherent" components – mainly, one (or both) of the first two mentioned characteristics – of his conception and thematisation.

Thirdly, it has been argued that Nietzsche's and Derrida's criticism of the so-called "subject" encompasses some of the implicit and explicit presuppositions on which Aristotelian concepts of decision are based. To these presuppositions that the deconstruction of the "subject" calls into question belong, among other things, the activity and voluntariness of the decision-maker, the firm and constant disposition as the basis of decision, self-awareness and a certain extreme rationality of the decision-maker. This deconstruction, which no longer allows decision to be thematized in the way Aristotle did, is therefore also argued to be one of the main reasons and motivations as to why Derrida deems it necessary to depart from the Aristotelian conception and create a new one which would be independent of these assumptions and presuppositions.
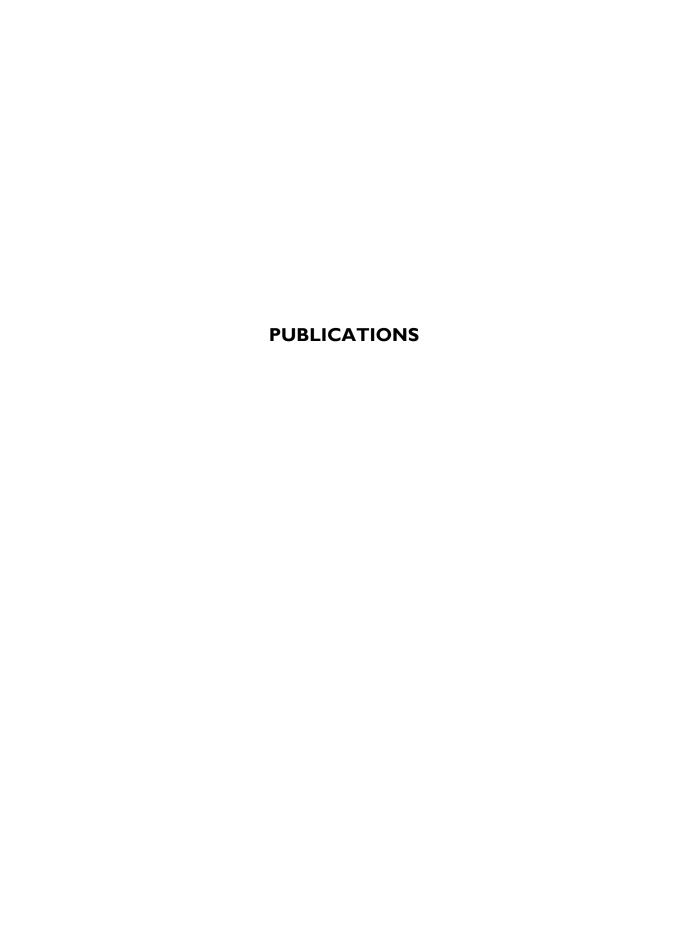
Fourthly, I have outlined Derrida's heretical "concept" of decision and contrasted it with Aristotle's concept. It has been argued that Derrida not only problematizes or radicalizes many of the aspects of Aristotelian (and Aristotle's) treatment of decision, but also breaks away from it in some important respects. It has been demonstrated, namely, that for Derrida decision is no longer based on the activity and autonomy of the decision-maker or "subject", but should rather be understood as something "passive", "heteronomous" and partially even "unconscious". Decision, according to Derrida, is the decision of the "wholly other in me" and does not simply follow on from some egological immanence. Finally, I have also analyzed the ethical and political implications of Derrida's understanding of decision and addressed some of the criticism aimed at it. I have argued that far from leading to and founding or justifying nihilism or ethical indifference, Derrida's conception of decision is rather directed towards absolute respect for the singularity of the other and can therefore be understood as raising the very stakes of ethics – even if, according to Derrida, this raising the stakes of responsibility and ethics in general can only occur at the price of the possibility of absolute failure and errancy.

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PUBLICATIONS

SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

Käesolev väitekiri "Otsus kui hereesia" keskendub otsuse (ingl. *decision*, pr. *décision*, sks. *Entscheidung*) mõistele. Uurimuses näidatakse, et on võimalik ja mõttekas kõnelda kahest teineteisega küll mitmes mõttes seotud, kuid seejuures omavahel siiski põhimõtteliselt ja radikaalselt erinevast otsusekäsitusest. Ühte neist käsitusist, mida uurimuses on nimetatud traditsiooniliseks ja domineerivaks, nähakse pärinevat Aristoteleselt, teist, mida uurimuses nimetatakse selle traditsioonilise käsituse suhtes *hereetiliseks*, Jacques Derrida töödest.

Hereesia on teatav uskumuste süsteem või teooria, mis lahkneb üleüldiselt omaksvõetud uskumuste süsteemist või teooriast. Seejuures tuleb rõhutada, et hereesia võimalikkuse tingimus saab olla ainult ortodoksia ise – hereesia saab eksisteerida ainult selles ära- ja lahti murdmises ortodoksiast, ja selline lahtimurdmine sisaldab endas alati ka teatavat sõltuvust ortodoksiast. Derrida otsusekäsitusel paistab olevat just selline suhe Aristotelese otsusekontseptsiooniga – ühelt poolt ta lahkneb sellest mõningates väga kesksetes aspektides, kuid teiselt poolt ta mingis mõttes siiski ka kuulub sellesse. Kuid hereetiline ei ole mitte ainult Derrida otsusekäsitus, vaid ka otsus ise, nii nagu see selles käsituses ilmneb, kujutab endast teatavat hereesiat – hereesiat mõistusliku kaalutluse, omaksvõetud normide ja väärtuste suhtes. Sõna "hereesia" ise pärineb kreeka sõnast *hairesis*, mis tähendab just valikut või otsust, üldisemalt aga ka tormakat haaramisakti. Kuna Derrida ise ei ole mõistnud oma otsusekäsitust Aristotelese kontseptsiooni suhtes hereetilisena, seisnebki töö uudsus Derrida käsituse üksikasjalikus vastandamises traditsioonilisele aristoteleslikule käsitusele ning seeläbi Derrida käsituse hereetilisuse esiletoomises. See heidab ka olulist valgust otsuse mõiste ajaloolisele arengule ja tingimustele.

Uurimistöö taustaks ja motivatsiooniks on probleemid, mis ümbritsevad "subjekti" mõistet. Rohkem kui viimase saja aasta vältel on korduvalt ja üsna erinevate autorite poolt seatud küsimuse alla autonoomne, aktiivne, ratsionaalne ja rohkem või vähem püsiva identiteediga "subjekt". Kui see ettekujutus püsiva identiteediga ratsionaalsest ja autonoomsest otsustajast ei ole enam aga täielikult usaldusväärne, kui meil on tõsiseid põhjuseid, mida siinses uurimuses on ka vaadeldud, selle usaldusväärsuses kahelda, siis ei ole enam võimalik mõista otsust millegi pelgalt autonoomse, püsival loomuseadumusel ja/või ratsionaalsel kaalutlusel põhineva nähtusena, nagu seda on omal moel teinud Aristoteles ja suur hulk teisi mõtlejaid, ja mille kohta leidub hulgaliselt näiteid veel tänapäevalgi. Kõnealust "subjekti" kriitikat rangelt arvesse võttes ja sellesse ka ise aktiivselt panustades, mõistab Derrida seetõttu otsust hoopis teistelt alustelt.

Eelöeldut silmas pidades visandatakse uurimistöös e s i t e k s "Nikomachose eetikale" tuginedes, kuid samas ka "Eudemose eetikat" osaliselt arvesse võttes Aristotelese otsusekäsitus (otsusena on talt tõlgitud sõna *prohairesis*). Edasi eritletakse ja tõlgendatakse sellega seotud raskuspunkte ning tuuakse välja eeldused ja mõisted – nagu vabatahtlik(kus) (*hekôn*), püsiv loomuseadumus (*hexis*), voorus (*aretê*), mõistuslik kaalutlus (*bouleusis*) jne. –, millele see otsusekäsitus põhineb. T e i s e k s näidatakse, mis tähenduses on see Aristote-

lese käsitus aluseks suurele osale hilisemaist otsusekäsitusist, olgu nad siis kas *eksplitsiitsed* või *implitsiitselt* kätketud erinevates moraali- ja teoteooriates. Väide seisneb selles, et Aristoteles on esitanud teatava üldise raamistiku või sõrestiku, millesse on ette haaratud suur osa hilisemaid filosoofilisi otsusekäsitusi. Ning isegi siis, kui need hilisemad käsitused erinevad oma teatud aspektide poolest oluliselt või koguni väga reljeefselt ja teravalt Aristotelese enda omast, kätkeb suur osa neist ometi mingit olulist ja "olemuslikku" komponenti Aristotelese käsitusest ja mõistestikust.

Kolmandaks võetakse vaatluse alla Friedrich Nietzsche kui ses küsimuses Derrida ühe peamise mõjutaja ning Derrida enda niinimetatud "subjekti" "dekonstruktsioon" või kriitika. Selle dekonstruktsiooni eesmärgiks, nagu uurimistöös väidetud, ei ole mitte "subjekti" hävitamine ja "surm", nagu dekonstruktsiooni sageli on tõlgendatud, vaid hoopis selle uuesti tõlgendamine sellisel viisil, mis võtab ühtlasi arvesse sissevaateid, mis on näiteks saavutatud "teadvustamatuse" valdkonnas. Kuna nüüd see dekonstruktsioon, nagu uurimuses on eritletud, puudutab ja hõlmab nii Aristotelese otsuse-mõistmise enda kui ka hilisemate aristoteleslike käsituste nii ilmseid kui ka varjatud eeldusi, see tähendab õõnestab vähemalt osa neist eeldustest, seades need küsitavaks, loob see ühtlasi ka vajaduse uue, nendel eeldustel mittepõhineva, neist sõltumatu otsuse-mõistmise järele. Seetõttu on seda "subjekti" dekonstrueerimist käesolevas uurimuses mõistetud ühe peamise põhjuse ja motivatsioonina, millepärast Derrida lööb olulistes punktides lahku Aristotelese otsusekäsitusest ning hakkab otsust käsitama hoopis teistelt, osaliselt koguni vastandlikelt, mitte-aristoteleslikelt alustelt. Nende eelduste hulka, mille see subjekti dekonstrueerimine küsitavaks seab, kuuluvad muu hulgas "subjekti" aktiivsus ja vabatahtlikkus otsustamisel, püsiv loomuseadumus (ja voorus kui loomutäius) kui teatav identiteet, millest otsused võivad tuleneda mingis mõttes automaatselt, ning viimaks ja võib-olla olulisimalt äärmuslik ratsionaalsus, mis allutab otsuse puhtale ratsionaalsele kalkulatsioonile.

Neljandaks võetaksegi vaatluse alla ja eritletakse Derrida enda otsusekäsitust. Derrida ei ole seda oma käsitust esitanud mingis ühes kindlas teoses ega rangelt süstemaatilises vormis, pigem leidub see mõneti laiali hajutatult ta rohketes – eelkõige hilisemates – erinevatele filosoofilistele probleemidele pühendatud teostes. Kuid sellest mõningasest hajutatusest hoolimata moodustab Derrida otsusekäsitus sellegipoolest üsna selgelt piiritletud terviku. Uurimistöös eritletakse Derrida otsusekäsituse raskuspunkte ja probleeme ning ka selle eetilisi aspekte, selgitatakse apooriaid, mis seda iseloomustavad. Samuti vastandatakse see käsitus Aristotelese otsuse-mõistele, näidates detailselt, et Derrida käsitus mitte ainult – sest ta teeb muuhulgas ka seda! – ei problematiseeri ega radikaliseeri Aristotelese mõiste mitmeid aluseid ja tunnuseid, vaid lahkneb neist mõnes olulises punktis väga reljeefselt ja otsustavalt. Uurimuses on väidetud, et Derrida ei mõista otsust mitte enam "subjekti" ratsionaalsusel, aktiivsusel, autonoomsusel ja/või püsival loomuseadumusel, vaid pigem just teataval "heteronoomsusel" ning "passiivsusel" põhinevana. Samuti on toodud esile kaalutluse paradoksaalne roll Derrida otsusekäsituses. Uurimuses on käsitletud

ka kriitikat, mida eri autorid on Derrida käsituse kohta teinud, ning vaadeldud selle paikapidavust. Vähemalt osaliselt on püütud Derrida *filosoofilist* positsiooni ka *filosoofiliselt* õigustada. Sellega seoses on uurimuses jõutud seisukohale, et Derrida käsitus ei ole mitte "nihilistlik" ega põhjenda ning samuti põhjusta eetilist ükskõiksust, vaid – vastupidi – täiendab ja avardab eetilist nõudlikkust. Kuid see eetika täiendamine, täiustamine ja võimendamine saab Derrida järgi sündida ainult siis, kui otsuse langetamisel ei ole välistatud absoluutse eksimise ja kurjuse *võimalikkus*.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education
2008–2013   PhD Studies in Philosophy, University of Tartu
2006–2008   MA in Philosophy (*cum laude*), University of Tartu
2001–2006   BA in Theology, University of Tartu
1998–2001   Rakvere Reaalgümnaasium

Other Educational Information
– October 2008 – March 2009 Research at the University of Greifswald, supervisor prof. Werner Stegmaier
– January 2010 – July 2010 Research at the University of Greifswald, supervisor prof. Werner Stegmaier
– October 2010 – March 2011 Research at the University of Greifswald, supervisor prof. Werner Stegmaier
– January 2012 – March 2012 Research at Weimar's Anna Amalia Library
– May 2012 – July 2012 Research at the university *Universidade Nova de Lisboa*, Institute of the Philosophy of Language

Research Interests
– History of Philosophy (Antiquity, Philosophy in 19.–20th Century), Phenomenology, Deconstruction, Social Sciences and Culture, Ethics, Aesthetics

Academic Appointments
– 2009–2011 (at intervals) Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Greifswald, Germany

Courses taught
– *Theorien der Entscheidung* (University of Greifswald, Germany)
– *Jacques Derrida, "Den Tod geben"* (University of Greifswald, Germany)
– *Jacques Derrida, "Die Stimme und das Phänomen"* (University of Greifswald, Germany)

Administrative Activities and Membership in Scientific Organisations

2008   Moderator at the Conference of Estonian Philosophy "Eesti filo-
            soofia juured, võrsed ja õied".
2009–...   Groupe International de Recherches sur Nietzsche (GIRN),
            Member
2008–2011   Nietzsche Research Group of Greifswald, Member
2011–…   Nietzsche International Lab (NIL), Member

Honors, Awards and Scholarships

2013   DoRa T8 Scholarship
2012   Prize for Translation, Journal "Akadeemia"
2012   DoRa T6 Scholarship
2011   Research Scholarship of Trebuth-Stiftung im Stifterverband für die
            Deutsche Wissenschaft
2010   Scholarship of Gustav Teichmüller
2010   DoRa T8 Scholarship
2009–2010   Research Scholarship of Trebuth-Stiftung im Stifterverband für die
            Deutsche Wissenschaft

Presentations at Conferences

„Nietzsches Begriff der Entscheidung" – Tagung "Nietzsches neue Philologie",
    Greifswald, Mai 2008
„Die Abwesenheit des Ich und das Fremde des Bewusstseins" – Congrès
    international: «Lectures du Gai Savoir», GIRN, Reims, March 2009
„Nietzsche in Derridas Politiques de l'amitié" – Congrès international:
    «Nietzsche penseur de la politique? Nietzsche penseur du social?», Forum
    International de Philosophie Sociale et Politique, Toulouse, July 2009
„"Dies – habe ich gethan'" – III Covegno Internationale «Letture del Crepuscolo
    degli Idoli», GIRN, Pisa, April 2010
„The Coming of Perhaps" – Conference "Derrida Today", London, July 2010
„Die Verzauberung der Tugend" – Treffen mit der Niederländischen Nietzsche-
    Forschungsgruppe, Wassenaar, March 2011
„The Absence and the Other" – Nietzsche Seminar, Lisbon, September 2011
„Translation and/or Transformation" – Congrès International "Aurore comme
    tournant de l'œuvre de Nietzsche ? Renversement des valeurs et avenir de
    l'humanité", GIRN, Lisbon, June 2012
"Kõik selle maailma Aabrahamid" – Konverents "Kierkegaardi pärand
    tänapäevase mõttearenduse kontekstis", Tartu, May 2013
"Ab-Gründe der Nietzscheschen Loslösung von Wagner" – International
    Conference "Nietzsche with Wagner / Nietzsche contra Wagner", GIRN,
    Pisa, June 2013

Selection of Publications

„Moraali genealoogiline enese-tühistus". *Friedrich Nietzsche, „Moraali genea-loogiast"*, Tallinn: Varrak, 2013 (*forthcoming*)

"Entscheidung als Häresie". *Studia Philosophica Estonica*, 2013 (*forthcoming*)

"The Absence and The Other: Nietzsche and Derrida against Husserl". *As The Spider Spins: Essays on Nietzsche's Critique and Use of Language*, edited by J. Constâncio and M. J. Mayer Branco, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2012, pp. 161–177

„Tõlkimine kui transformatsioon". *Akadeemia*, no. 6, 2012, pp. 1082–1088

"Tahtest: Katkendeid teostest". *Akadeemia*, no. 5, 2011, pp. 902–911

"Saateks: Tahte genealoogia ja fenomenoloogia". *Akadeemia*, no. 5, 2011, pp. 902–911

„Die Abwesenheit des Ich und das Fremde des Bewusstseins". *Lettura della Gaia scienza. Lectures du Gai savoir*, Nietzscheana 14, edited by C. Piazzesi, G. Campioni, P. Woltling, Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2010, pp. 173–186

„Was ist das souveräne Individuum?", *Nietzsche-Studien*, edited by W. Stegmaier / G. Abel, vol. 38, 2009, pp. 477–485

„Antikristus kui antinoomia". Friedrich Nietzsche, *Antikristus*, Tartu: Zeus, 2007, lk. 145–160

„Kommentaarid Friedrich Nietzsche "Antikristusele"". Friedrich Nietzsche, *Antikristus*, Tartu: Zeus, 2007, pp. 101–145

„Tragöödia sünd: Saatürlik *Schauspiel"*. *Teater. Muusika. Kino*, no. 8–9, 2007, pp. 27–32

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Haridustee
2008 –   Doktorantuur Tartu Ülikooli filosoofia osakonnas
2006–2008   Magistriõpingud Tartu Ülikoolis filosoofia erialal (*cum laude*)
2001–2006   Bakalaureuseõpe Tartu Ülikooli usuteaduskonnas
1998–2001   Rakvere Reaalgümnaasium

Akadeemiline enesetäiendus
– Oktoober 2008 – märts 2009 uurimistöö Greifswaldi ülikoolis, juhendaja prof. Werner Stegmaier
– Jaanuar 2010 – juuli 2010 uurimistöö Greifswaldi ülikoolis, juhendaja prof. Werner Stegmaier
– Oktoober 2010 – märts 2011 uurimistöö Greifswaldi ülikoolis, juhendaja prof. Werner Stegmaier
– Jaanuar 2012 – aprill 2012 uurimistöö Weimaris Anna Amalia raamatukogus
– Mai 2012 – juuli 2012 uurimistöö Lissaboni ülikooli *Universidade Nova de Lisboa* keelefilosoofia instituudis

Teadustöö põhisuunad
– Filosoofia ajalugu (antiikfilosoofia, 19.–20. sajandi filosoofia), fenomenoloogia, dekonstruktsioon, ühiskonnateadused ja kultuur, eetika, esteetika

Akadeemilised ametikohad
– 2009–2011 (vaheaegadega) õppeülesande täitja Greifswaldi Ülikoolis Saksamaal

Õpetatud kursused
– *Theorien der Entscheidung* (Greifswaldi Ülikool, Saksamaa)
– *Jacques Derrida, "Den Tod geben"* (Greifswaldi Ülikool, Saksamaa)
– *Jacques Derrida, "Die Stimme und das Phänomen"* (Greifswaldi Ülikool, Saksamaa)

Teadusorganisatsiooniline tegevus ja liikmelisus
2008   Moderaator Eesti filosoofia aastakonverentsil "Eesti filosoofia juured, võrsed ja õied"
2009–   Groupe International de Recherches sur Nietzsche (GIRN), liige
2008–2011   Nietzsche Research Group of Greifswald, liige
2011–   Nietzsche International Lab (NIL), liige

Tunnustused ja stipendiumid

2013   DoRa T8 stipendium
2012   Ajakirja "Akadeemia" tõlkepreemia
2012   DoRa T6 stipendium
2011   *Trebuth-Stiftung*'i uurimisstipendium
2010   Gustav Teichmülleri stipendium
2010   DoRa T8 stipendium
2009–2010   *Trebuth-Stiftung*'i uurimisstipendium

Ettekanded konverentsidel

„Nietzsches Begriff der Entscheidung" – Nietzsches neue Philologie, Greifs-wald, mai 2008

„Die Abwesenheit des Ich und das Fremde des Bewusstseins" – Congrès inter-national: "Lectures du Gai Savoir", GIRN, Reims, märts 2009

„Nietzsche in Derridas Politiques de l'amitié" – Congrès international "Nietzsche penseur de la politique? Nietzsche penseur du social?", Forum International de Philosophie Sociale et Politique, Toulouse, juuli 2009

„ʿDies – habe ich gethanʾ" – III Covegno Internationale "Letture del Crepuscolo degli Idoli", GIRN, Pisa, aprill 2010

„The Coming of Perhaps" – Derrida Today, London, juuli 2010

„Die Verzauberung der Tugend" – Treffen mit der Niederländischen Nietzsche-Forschungsgruppe, Wassenaar, märts 2011

„The Absence and the Other" – Nietzsche seminar, Lissabon, september 2011

„Translation as Transformation" – Congrès international "Aurore comme tour-nant de l'œuvre de Nietzsche? Renversement des valeurs et avenir de l'humanité", GIRN, Lissabon, juuni 2012

"Kõik selle maailma Aabrahamid" – Konverents "Kierkegaardi pärand täna-päevase mõttearenduse kontekstis", Tartu, mai 2013

„Ab-Gründe der Nietzscheschen Loslösung von Wagner" – Convegno inter-natzionale "Nietzsche con Wagner / Nietzsche contra Wagner", GIRN, Pisa, juuni 2013

Valik publikatsioone

„Moraali genealoogiline enese-tühistus". Friedrich Nietzsche*, Moraali genea-loogiast*, Varrak, 2013 (*ilmumas*)

"Entscheidung als Häresie". *Studia Philosophica Estonica*, 2013 (*ilmumas*)

"The Absence and The Other : Nietzsche and Derrida against Husserl". *As The Spider Spins: Essays on Nietzsche's Critique and Use of Language*, edited by J. Constâncio and M. J. Mayer Branco, Berlin/Boston, De Gruyter, 2012, lk. 161–177

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Kommentaarid Friedrich Nietzsche "Antikristusele". Friedrich Nietzsche, *Antikristus*, Zeus, 2007, lk. 101–145

„Tragöödia sünd: Saatürlik *Schauspiel"*. *Teater. Muusika. Kino*, nr. 8–9, 2007, lk. 27–32

DISSERTATIONES PHILOSOPHICAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

1. **Jüri Eintalu.** The problem of induction: the presuppositions revisited. Tartu, 2001.
2. **Roomet Jakapi.** Berkeley, mysteries, and meaning: a critique of the non-cognitivist interpretation. Tartu, 2002.
3. **Endla Lõhkivi.** The sociology of scientific knowledge: a philosophical perspective. Tartu, 2002.
4. **Kadri Simm.** Benefit-sharing: an inquiry into justification. Tartu, 2005.
5. **Marek Volt.** The epistemic and logical role of definition in the evaluation of art. Tartu, 2006.
6. **Aive Pevkur.** Professional ethics: philosophy and practice. Tartu, 2011.
7. **Toomas Lott.** Plato on Belief (*doxa*) *Theaetetus* 184B–187A. Tartu, 2012, 208 p.