

Introduction

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Carneade! Chi era costui? –ruminava tra sé don Abbondio seduto sul suo seggiolone, in una stanza del piano superiore, con un libricciolo aperto sul davanti, quando Perpetua entrò a portargli l'ambasciata. "Carneade! questo nome mi par bene d'averlo letto o sentito; doveva essere un uomo di studio, un letteratone del tempo antico: è un nome di quelli; ma chi diavolo era costui?"
A. MANZONI, *I promessi sposi* (cap. vii)

Carneades! Who was he? –thought Don Abbondio to himself, as he sat in his arm-chair, in a room upstairs, with a small volume lying open before him, just as Perpetua entered to bring him the message. "Carneades! I seem to have heard or read this name; it must be some man of learning –some great scholar of antiquity; it is just like one of their names; but who the hell was he?"
A. MANZONI, *The Betrothed* (chap. vii)

No better analogy can be found to indirectly "illustrate" and thus describe the vicissitudes of the thought of Rudolf Hermann Lotze than what Don Abbondio exclaims about Carnades in Alessandro Manzoni's 1827 masterpiece *I promessi sposi*. Carneades was in fact one of the most important and famous thinkers of the Hellenic period; as one of the great heads of the Platonic Academy after Arcesilaus, he was sent to Rome in 155 BC to lecture on justice (together with Diogenes of Babylon and Critolaus). Apparently, more than 400 books were written about him. And yet, the question that Don Abbondio asks himself ("Carnades! Who was he?") reveals how little his name is known outside the quite restricted circles of professional scholarship¹.

The same holds true of R. H. Lotze—*this Carneades of our times!* It is undeniable that Lotze, one of the "last German idealists" (F. Beiser) and a great representative of what has been called "another 19th century German history of philosophy (*un altro Ottocento tedesco*)"², was one of the "sources" of all the most important and crucial philosophical traditions and lines of thought of the last century. Lotze seems to cast his long shadow on neo-Kantianism (both early and late generations: Rickert and Windelband, Natorp, Cassirer, Bauch and Lask) as well as phenomenology (both in the husserlian and the heideggerian varieties)—but he has also influenced, directly or indirectly, positively or only *per viam negationis*, an array of different philosophical movements and figures: pragmatism and the so-called philosophy of values, G. Frege and B. Russell, (thereby penetrating the so-called analytic philosophy), H. Gomperz (with his *Weltanschauungslehre*), the *Lebensphilosophie*, as well as the British idealistic tradition. While Sandor Ferenczi maintains that, during his psychology lectures, Lotze anticipated some of Freud's key insights³, and Benedetto Croce, in his *Logica come scienza del concetto puro*, still feels the urge to directly deal with, and hence dismiss, Lotze's theory of abstraction⁴, Walter Benjamin starts off his second thesis *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* with a direct quotation

from Lotze himself⁵. Yet, in spite of Lotze's seemingly crucial importance—were his name to be uttered at most conferences and workshops on 19th and early 20th century philosophy (especially in the English speaking academic world, where the knowledge of the history of German philosophy after Hegel seems to still blindly follow K. Löwith's account⁶), then the reaction would be exactly like Don Abbondio's: "Lotze! Who was he? I seem to have heard or read this name; it must be some man of learning—some great scholar of modernity; it is just like one of their names; but who the hell was he?"

It is of course undeniable that a great interest in Lotze's philosophy has characterized —by and large— early 20th century scholarship: the problem is that, even if such interest was not a "marginal" one, it was nevertheless confined to a series of circumscribed topics which almost exclusively revolved around "logical" questions and, in particular, the famous notion of "validity" (*Geltung*). The interest in the phenomenological movement played, of course, a fundamental role in fostering this line of study and research, just like the debate between Michael Dummett and Hans Sluga about Lotze and his more or less alleged influence on Gottlob Frege (which, perhaps for the first time and in quite a systematic way, contributed to raising the question as to the historical roots of analytic philosophy within the framework of late 19th century German philosophy).

This being recognized, if it is too early to speak of a *Lotze renaissance* (we will soon try to explain what this would be like), its "signs" are nonetheless clear and absolutely indisputable. These "signs" are, in the first place, of an editorial nature—the first one (just to recall an important case) being the critical edition of Lotze's correspondence (*Briefe und Dokumente*, edited and published in 2003 by R. Pester), to which one could add, to make a few scattered examples, the following publications: *Il valore della validità* by S. Besoli (1992); *L'armonia impossibile. Alle origini del concetto di valore in R. H. Lotze* by B. Centi (1994); *Hermann Lotze. Wege seines Denkens und Forschens* by Pester himself (1997); and the more recent works: *Late German Idealism. Trendelenburg and Lotze* (2014) and *After Hegel* by F. Beiser (2014); *Hermann Lotze: An Intellectual Biography* by W. Woodward (2015); *Lotze et son héritage*, edited by F. Boccacini (2015); *Ein vergessener Forschungsstand. Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg, Hermann Rudolf Lotze, Carl Stumpf und Kurt Lewin* by T. Peters (2016); *L'Allemagne et la querelle du matérialisme (1846-1866)*, edited by C. Morel (2017). It is also worth mentioning the recent Italian

translation of the 1874 *Logik* (edited by F. De Vincenzis in 2010) and the new German edition of the *Mikrokosmos* edited by N. Milkov (2017).

It is clear, however, that if a blunt list of names and titles like the one just provided testifies to a renewed interest in the philosophy of Lotze in its entirety (i.e., no longer confined to a limited set of problems and themes, which are almost exclusively studied only in order to better understand *other* thinkers and *other* philosophies), it cannot rise above the “level” of what could be labeled, in the words of Kant, as *quaestio facti*. *De facto*, an increasing number of scholars has been bringing the attention back to this “giant” of German or, better, European history of philosophy; the public event that has confirmed and borne witness to the existence of such a growing community is the *Hermann Lotze Tagung* organized and held in Bautzen (Lotze’s hometown) on May 20–21, 2017: *Denken im Zwiespalt. Zum 200. Geburtstag des Philosophen Rudolf Hermann Lotze*. But the answer to the *quaestio facti* does not suffice, for it does not immediately assess the *quaestio juris*—which can be framed as such: beyond the mere matter of fact of a certain number of scholars working on Lotze and his contributions to the history of philosophy, science, metaphysics, psychology, epistemology as well as aesthetics, against the backdrop of 19th and 20th century history of philosophy, science, metaphysics, psychology, epistemology and aesthetics—in what does Lotze’s own “philosophical” relevance consist for us, today, at the very beginning of the 21st century? As we firmly believe, it is only upon condition that this question is “successfully” addressed and answered that one can really speak of a “Lotze renaissance”.

Although the present issue does not claim to directly answer the *quaestio juris*, it nevertheless wants to contribute to the renewed interest in the philosophy of Lotze—and it does so by offering a series of essays exploring and touching upon the many aspects and sides of Lotze’s incredibly rich speculation, which in fact goes from “logic” to “metaphysics”, from “ethics” and “ethical” issues to his confrontation with the “empirical sciences” and the “history of philosophy”. In her essay *Lotze’s Conception of Metaphysics and Science: A Middle Position in the Materialism Controversy*, Morel provides an incredibly insightful analysis of Lotze’s own position in the “materialism controversy”, which inflamed the intellect of a great deal of scientists, philosophers and intellectuals of Germany, such as R. Wagner, C. Vogt, L. Büchner, J. Frauenstädt on behalf of Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche (to recall just a few major and more popular names): this essay’s main merit and value consist in a clear exposition of the relation between philosophy, notably “metaphysics”, and science in Lotze regarding the quite thorny question on the relations between “matter” and “spirit”. Manca’s essay (*L’espressione del pensiero. Lotze e il tentativo di superamento di Hegel*) is dedicated to what could be called a comparative examination of some basic tenets of Lotze’s conception of logic and theory of knowledge from the 1874 *Logik* with Hegel’s views: based on the strong conviction that Lotze’s philosophy, notably his understanding of the relationship between *Denken* and *Sein*—which Manca holds to represent the exact opposite of the Hegelian version—is to be considered as a sort of filter that partially determined and in-

fluenced 20th century’s reception of the thinker from Stuttgart. N. Milkov’s essay, the title of which is *Hermann Lotze and Franz Brentano*, has the merit of raising the crucial question as to the relation between the philosopher of Bautzen and the master of Husserl, Freud and Stumpf (to recall just a few names)—his goal being to bring to the light and emphasize not only the actual relations between the two, but a series of problems and concepts through which Lotze influenced Brentano himself: the judgment and its content, the content of perception, and the very issue of intentionality. As Milkov asserts at the outset: “Franz Brentano was not a solitary figure who propounded his philosophy in lonely isolation from other contemporary philosophers in Germany, as some neo-Brentanists have claimed over the last thirty to forty years. The aim in what follows is to correct such misconceptions by establishing that Brentano developed his philosophical psychology while actively engaged in the rich intellectual-historical and academic context of his time—in particular, under the influence of Hermann Lotze”. In “A Halting-Stage in the Evolution of Logical Theory”: *John Dewey’s Critical Engagement with Lotze’s Logic*, Christensen runs along a similar line, trying to follow and briefly reconstruct Lotze’s negative influence on Dewey’s *Studies in Logical Theory*, where the new “instrumental” logic is presented and worked out in a straightforward opposition to the great 1874 *Logic* of the thinker from Bautzen. If Milkov’s effort represents a first, important step toward undermining the myth of the so-called “Austrian philosophy” (understood as something isolated and unique with respect to the contemporary German speaking philosophy), Christensen’s essay is of crucial importance for whoever is interested in following the “migration”, so to speak, of 19th century German philosophy to the new world. Vagnetti’s and Pellizzer’s contributions revolve around the same topic, yet looked at it from two very different angles: the quite famous and also very thorny problem of “validity”. Now, whereas M. Vagnetti (*The “Logik” by Rudolf Hermann Lotze: The Concept of Geltung*) provides us with a quite detailed account of both the meaning and role that such a concept plays in Lotze’s logic and “theory of knowledge”, F. Pellizzer (*Il fascino dell’ideale: Heidegger e il lotzismo di Husserl*) focuses on M. Heidegger’s critical reading of Lotze and—via the latter—of Husserl’s early Platonic “idealism”. These essays almost represent the two sides of the same coin: the meticulously logical and gnoseological analysis offered by Vagnetti is in fact followed by the specifically ontological approach of Heidegger. Iocco’s paper, whose title is *Lotze e Scheler: emotivismo e autocoscienza*, takes us into a completely different topic: it develops an analysis of Lotze’s theory of emotions, and elaborates upon his influence on the phenomenology of “emotional life” of Max Scheler. Iocco’s aim consists in showing how their emotional account of self-consciousness represents a form of moderate emotivism—the latter being the thesis according to which moral judgments can have a “gnoseological” function only to the extent that we also take into consideration the affective and emotional state that actually motivates them⁷. Riccardo Martinelli closes the volume with his essay on *Platonismo o psicologismo? La filosofia della logica di Lotze*, where he compares Lotze’s two logic volumes (the 1843 edition and the 1874 *große*

Logik) on two specific and interrelated topics: Lotze's rebuttal of any "psychologistic" and "ontological" approach to logic, which he identifies with Herbart and Hegel respectively; the process of concept-formation (especially for what regards the great logic). After reconstructing the process that leads from a series of mere associations to the actual framing of a concept through the singling out of its "foundation" (which only can guarantee the mutual inherence or "co-belongingness" of its parts), Martinelli moves on to raise and tackle the thorny question as to whether Lotze can be considered as a "psychologist" or a "Platonist" in logic. His answer is straightforward: Lotze is neither. If the "teleological" function that Lotze ascribes to concepts in the process of knowledge forbids or should forbid the interpretation of the latter based on any rigid psychological mechanism, what Martinelli calls the a posteriori coincidence of thinking and being (i.e., the claim that *das Denken* has to somehow overcome itself so as to reach *das Sein* through the multiplicity of its operations, classifications, constructions) discloses the fact that for Lotze concepts in general are super-subjective, yet not at all in an ontological way.

We would like to conclude this short introduction by expressing our gratitude to the director of this journal, Prof. Marco Sgarbi, for hosting this issue on Lotze; and to William Woodward—who, due to copyright problems, could not contribute with his paper on Lotze and the *Gestalt* psychology as originally planned, but who enthusiastically supported the initiative from the very beginning.

Notes

¹ M. Bonazzi, *Il platonismo* (Milan: Einaudi, 2015).

² R. Pettoello, "Un altro Ottocento tedesco", *Rivista di Storia della Filosofia*, 1990, 81-111. See also J. Benoist (Ed.), *Un autre XIXe siècle allemand*, special issue of *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 2000 (3).

³ S. Ferenczi, "Aus der 'Psychologie' von Hermann Lotze", *Imago. Zeitschrift für Anwendung der Psychoanalyse auf die Geisteswissenschaften*, 1913, 238-241, in particular page 238.

⁴ B. Croce, *Logica come scienza del concetto puro* (Bari: Laterza, 1947), 354-355.

⁵ "Zu den bemerkenswerthesten Eigenthümlichkeiten des menschlichen Gemüths", sagt Lotze, "gehört ... neben so vieler Selbstsucht im Einzelnen die allgemeine Neidlosigkeit jeder Gegenwart gegen ihre Zukunft".

⁶ According to the *index nominorum*, there is no mention of Lotze in K. Löwith's *Von Hegel zu Nietzsche. Der revolutionäre Bruch im Denken des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts* (Zürich: Europa Verlag, 1941).

⁷ I want to personally thank all the contributors for their patience, and Charlotte Morel and Nikolay Milkov in particular for their very useful remarks and comments on this short introduction.