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Thinking Plurality

Vilém Flusser and Michel Serres:

A philosophical convergence

> "La seule philosophie possible, c'est à dire vitale, consiste à répudier l'universel. Le pluralisme et le polymorphisme."
>
> Michel Serres, La Distribution

Striking similarities

Repeatedly he came too early.[1] His prescience und untimeliness, the cross-interdisciplinary richness of his work, along with a writing strategy that weaves together the most disparate discourses, along with a preference for stylistic peregrinations over careful systematicity have often hindered his reception. His work resists any reductive synthesis and offers multiple ways of roaming over the landscape of his thought. There is no single privileged entrance to his thinking. The only possible entry into his work is plurality.

This description must sound very familiar to anybody who has ever engaged with Vilém Flusser, it is, however, not about his work, but about the French philosopher Michel Serres and is inspired by Christopher Watkin's monograph *Michel Serres. Figures of Thought* published in 2020.

As I will show in this essay, Vilém Flusser's and Michel Serres's writing and thinking are strikingly similar even if they radically diverge on some points. Their hybrid texts are situated on the very border of philosophy and literature. Flusser and Serres share the same anti-academic stance, do without bibliographies and footnotes, and have an interest in similar subjects, among them language, communication, translation, metaphor and the relationship of nature and culture, to mention only the most important ones. Add to this their similar situation as intellectuals in the academic world. Flusser never really found a home within the world of academia. Perhaps for some time in Brazil, but definitely not in France and Germany. Serres had to leave the department of philosophy where he got his PhD and migrated to the University

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[1] This is an expanded version of an online speech I held in fall 2021 at VII coMcult Flusser 101. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYUM4rBj2mE)

of Stanford where he found a haven thanks to another exile, the French philosopher and historian René Girard. However, despite their marginal position they both became prominent in the course of their career, enjoying a fame that clearly transcends the closed circuits of the academic world.

Surprisingly enough, Vilém Flusser and Michel Serres have never met personally, despite the fact that they were both living in France in the 1970s and 1980s. They have not influenced each other in any explicit way, perhaps with the exception of some of Flusser's texts written in the late 1980s, in which the metaphor of the cloud from the mid-1970s on that is also of central importance to Serres makes a sudden appearance.

I have come across one single brief explicit mention of Serres's work in the *Bochumer Vorlesungen* published posthumously. Flusser discusses Serres's interpretation of Lucretius' notion of c*linamen* which he developed in *La naissance de la physique dans le texte de Lucrèce. Fleuves et turbulences* (Serres 1977). Possibly Flusser had a general knowledge of the work or read about it somewhere else. Whatever the case may be, the following quotation reinterprets Serres' epistemological program in strictly Flusserian terms, highlighting the calculatory dimension of the modern worldview and the absurdity of human existence. "Michel Serres, ein französischer Denker, hat vor allem Lukrez einer genauen Untersuchung unterzogen. Es interessierte ihn erst einmal dieses minimale Abweichen: Was meint das, daß ein Tropfen minimal – *minime*, sagt Lukrez – von seiner Bahn abweicht? Für Serres ist das der Anfang einer kalkulatorischen Denkart. […] Serres meint, daß sei nicht nur der Beginn der Wahrscheinlichkeitsrechnung […]. Es ist eine Weltanschauung, die davon ausgeht, dass die Welt absurd ist […], daß eben nichts dahinter steht."(Flusser 2009: 214-5) For Serres, the world we live in is not absurd but full of interacting and communicating flows of meaning encompassing both the cultural and the material world, as well as our mind and our body.

Flusser must have come into contact with Serres's thinking at a certain point. At this point of my research, however, I cannot tell exactly when and how this intellectual meeting took place. It is possible that Flusser never read any books by Serres, but got to know him solely through the work of someone else. There are no books by Serres in Flusser's *Reisebibliothek* in the Flusser-Archive in Berlin. The archive lists one book on chaos and fractal structures: Friedrich Cramer's *Chaos und Ordnung. Die komplexe Struktur des Lebendigen* (Cramer 1989). However, Cramer does not mention Serres but discusses the mathematical models developed by the American meteorologist E. N. Lorenz. There are only two short passages on weather in the

book (Cramer 1989: 159 and 250), but no mention of the fractality of clouds, which in turn plays a major role in Serres' understanding of chaos theory.

In the *Bochumer Vorlesungen* that were held in 1991, two years after the publication of Cramer's book, Flusser briefly discussed fractal arithmetic, the fractal structure of coast-formations and the self-similarity of cloud formations. He even refers to Leibniz and Pascal two major influences in Serres' work (Flusser 2009: 220-221). In this sense, there are numerous possible links or points of contact to be made out, but nothing substantial.

This is surely one of the reasons why research on Flusser does not engage with Serres's philosophy and Serres scholars completely ignore Flusser's work. However, as I want to show in this essay, there are many striking similarities in their thinking that call for a dialogue between the two philosophers, a dialogue that could enrich both the academic research on Flusser and Serres, opening up new unexpected perspectives. Besides the notion of plurality and the thinking process associated with it, which I am exploring in this, essay, there are many other convergences. Both thinkers are interested in translation and transformation, in the use of metaphors as creative devices and in communication processes. The metaphors of the bridge and the labyrinth play a central role in their thinking, and they both make use of the metaphors of the wind and the cloud.[2]

I want to initiate this long overdue dialogue, in the hope that others will feel inspired enough to pursue this path of enquiry. In view of the shortness of my intervention, I can only discuss two central aspects of this surprising but highly inspiring intellectual conjunction: the notion of plurality that arises from the movement of their thought and the synthesis they strive to achieve.

By comparing the thought of the two philosophers and by creating possible bridges, I am applying a strategy that is essential for both philosophers. Flusser and Serres think in terms of relationship. For Serres relation precedes being. "I only describe relationships", he explains in an interview with Bruno Latour (Serres & Latour 1995:127). Similarly, in "On Edmund Husserl", Flusser emphasizes the primacy of relations. Taken individually, both subject and object are only abstract extrapolations of a concrete act of cognition. The primary moment is always a concrete relationship between the knower and the known. It is therefore the task of epistemology to explain how this dynamic relationship of knowledge comes about.

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[2] I am presently working on a philosophy of the wind where I discuss this specific relationship more in detail. See also Guldin 2006, 2009 and 2020.

A fundamental difference has to be pointed out here. Serres's main interest is above all in the possible relationships between discourses and disciplines. Flusser, on the other hand, defines relationship mainly in terms of an epistemological stance, the relationship between subject and object. The other aspect plays a secondary role. In "Nomaden" he writes: "Die Zeit nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg hat uns gelehrt, den harten Dingen und den noch härteren Menschen kein Vertrauen zu schenken, sondern durch sie hindurchzuschauen. Und dabei haben wir hinter der scheinbaren objektiven Härte das eigentlich Konkrete erblickt, nämlich die Beziehung." (Flusser 2020: 151)

The importance of thinking in relationships explains Flusser's and Serres's common interest in metaphors and translation processes, two different, but related ways of bridge-building, a metaphor both thinkers particularly favour.[3] To use one of Serres's key terms, bridge building is about "federating" different facets of reality (Fig. 8). He generally uses the verb *ponter*, to bridge, *überbrücken*, which highlights the dynamic dimension. For Flusser, bridge building is essentially *Sinngebung*, projecting of sense onto the world.

Imagining Plurality

Let me begin with the different ways, in which the two philosophers describe the process of thinking and the notion of plurality that ensues from it. Flusser and Serres conceive of their thinking in terms of a movement across a heterogeneous space. For both of them, thinking is not a linear progression that moves straight ahead along a simple line, but a journey full of meandering and surprising twists and turns, which can lead back on its tracks. To describe this complex movement, Flusser uses the spatial metaphors of the circle and the spiral and Serres the metaphors of a random stroll across a landscape, a *randonnée* (Fig. 7), and the wild flight of a wasp. As you would expect from thinkers emphasizing a general principle of plurality, they have also used other metaphors.

Flusser was a passionate chess-player. To describe his thinking he also availed himself of the metaphor of the knight's move, which highlights the rational strategy of the thinker-writer as a player. The knight's move denies simple linear movement. Compared to other chess pieces, its motion is unique: the knight can move two squares vertically and one square horizontally, or two squares horizontally and one square vertically. In this way, it has as many as

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[3] I will come back to his aspect in a forthcoming essay.

eight different moves that cover a circular space of 360°. It can move left or right, as well as sideways, forwards and backwards (Fig. 1). The knight' motion is not along a continuous line as that of the rook or the bishop, and often implies jumping over another piece. It is a quick surprising move, based on a flash of insight that adequately pictures Flusser's own intellectual *ars combinatoria* akin to the Baroque notions of *concordia discors* and *discordia concors*, the thought provoking combination of that which seems far apart and the conflictual juxtaposition of that which seems similar. As we shall see, the knight's move shares an essential trait with the other metaphors I am discussing here: as a non-linear movement, it implies discontinuity and rupture.
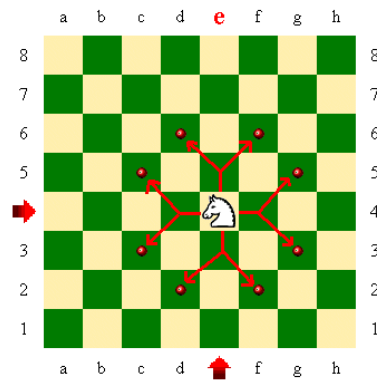

Fig. 1: The Knight's move

Another of Serres's spatial metaphors for the thinking process is that of the baker equation, which in many ways echoes Flusser's own combination of the disparate. Through constant folding, unfolding and refolding of a plane of dough, that which was far apart suddenly lies next to each other and that which seemed familiarly close ends up being at opposite ends (Fig. 2). Serres explicitly links the metaphor of the baker equation to that of the wild flight of a fly. A fly does not follow a straight line but performs a dipsy-doodle, a zigzagging movement, going left and right, up and down, forward and backward again (Fig. 9).

"Follow the flight pattern of a fly. Doesn't time sometimes flow according to breaks and bends that this flight seems to follow or invent? Likewise, my book *Rome* describes in its own way the baker's transformation … a certain folding of a half a plane of dough … produces a design precisely comparable to the flight of the fly or the wasp, the one Verlaine in his famous sonnet describes as drunk from his crazy flight. … This is an extremely complex design, in-comprehensible and appearing chaotic and random, but made admirably understandable by the

movements of the baker kneading his dough. He makes folds; he implicates something that his movement then explicate. The most simple and mundane gestures can produce very complicated curves" (ibid.: 64-5).

Fig. 2: Folding, unfolding and refolding

Contrary to Flusser who operates within the more rational, self-controlled universe of a game, Serres's baker equation and the crazy drunken flight of the fly (Fig. 9) emphasize the importance of randomness and the possibility of losing oneself, the unforeseeable side of thinking processes. Serres's thinker-writer is not playing a game that he tries to control; he is more like a sailor on a ship that has to take the anarchic forces of the wind and the waves into account. Furthermore, and this is another fundamental difference with regard to Flusser, the movement of folding and the flight of the wasp are continuous and do not imply any jumps, even if they both project a fractured and bent line.

In 2012, I spent a month at UFMG in Belo Horizonte[4] teaching a seminar on the notion of aesthetics in Vilém Flusser's work. One of the Brazilian students asked a very pertinent question. Why does Flusser so often use the negative form in his texts? Why does he so often say no? This question touches upon an essential aspect of Flusser's thinking that, at the same time, sets him clearly apart from Serres. Denying, distancing and detaching oneself are fundamental aspects of Flusser's work that are related to the notion of discontinuity.

The very dignity of a human being is the capacity to deny one's existential situation in an attempt to overcome the historical and cultural context in which one has been born. It is the ability to distance oneself from things and to have a look at them from new points of view.

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[4] See https://www.ufmg.br/ieat/2012/10/rainer-guldin-%E2%80%9Canything-in-a-way-is-a-cloud-%E2%80%9D-reflections-on-a-phenomenon-at-the-intersection-of-philosophy-art-and-science/?lang=en

Denial and distancing are directly linked to rupture and a discontinuous universe of separate worlds that can only be reunited and mended by jumping from one discreet point of view to another.

Fig. 3: The lateral expansion of the spiral

One might interpret the idiosyncratic understanding of reality that underlies Flusser's thinking and writing as an elaboration of his early exile, of the painful loss of family, fatherland and friends, and the resulting rift that disrupted his life forever. Flusser inhabits an irrevocably and profoundly fractured world, whose pieces can never be joined together again, but whose unity can be temporarily achieved. It is a game that never ends and that has to be played over and over again.

Flusser's choice of the spatial metaphors of the circle and the spiral (Fig. 3) is based on his practice of self-translation and his view of the gesture of the photographer which are both defined by the discontinuity of jumping from one point of view to another, that is, by an idea of radical rupture that is absent in Serres's thinking.
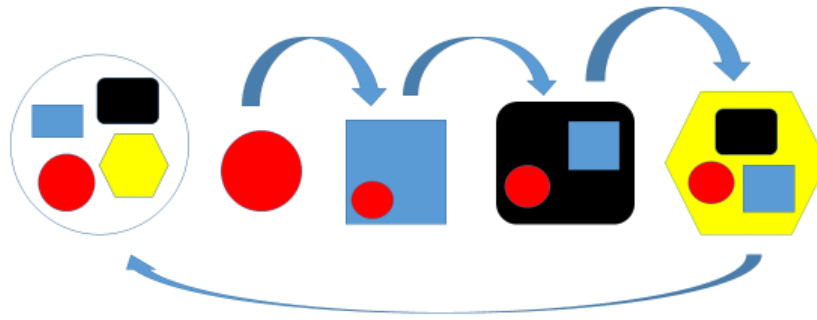
Fig. 4: The endless dance of translation and retranslation

In Flusser's view, the different languages, the different point of views, the different stages of history, as well as the different codes and the different universes they inform, are positions separated by an abyss that has to be bridged each time one wants to connect them. It is profoundly wrong to want to choose or even defend a single point of view. All points of view are equally valid. Thinking means to experience as many points of view as possible, that is to jump from one to the other. Thinking is to consider the multitude and equality of the different perspectives on a specific object. One has to realize that it is not a question of taking up the best point of view, but to "collect" as many points of view as possible. The choice is therefore not qualitative but quantitative. However, pluralizing one's perspectives on the world by moving from one to the other, discovering their novelty and their multiple contradictory relationships to each other, also implies a new quality of thinking.

Ideology, on the other hand, means to choose one point of view over all others and to stick to it. Ideological thinking "contemplates the world from a single point of view and can therefore 'explain' it and try to 'change' it. The photographer, on the other hand, has numerous equal viewpoints at his disposal. His aim is therefore not to 'explain' the world, but to 'absorb' it, always from new points of view" (Flusser 1998:29, translation mine). In the German original, Flusser uses the verb *aufnehmen*, which means at the same time to incorporate and to take a picture revealing a link to the Brazilian principle of anthropophagy, which is central to Flusser's philosophy. As we shall see, Flusser's understanding of ideology echoes Serres's criticism of 'umbilical' thinking, to which I will come shortly.

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Fig. 5: Interacting concentric circles around a central core

The circularity of the movement of thinking in Flusser's work is based on a few further assumptions. At the centre of the circle, there is not a specific unique worldview, but the object of the photographer or the subject matter of the writer. The same way that the photographer dances around the object, the self-translating writer moves in a circle, jumping from one language to another (Fig. 4), "cumulating" diverging points of view. To express this circular movement Flusser uses the German word *umschreiben*, to rewrite, which can also be read as *umschreiben*, to write around. This spiralling movement can be reversed at will. It expands laterally, incorporating more and more points of view.

The Jewish notion of Pilpul (Fig. 6) adds a further dimension to the circular movement, which emphasizes the equal validity of all points of view, but does not tell us anything about their relationship. Pilpul shows how non-discursive, non-linear and non-hierarchical thinking operates. It represents a possible model of multi-perspectival, multi-lingual thinking. The notion of Pilpul combines a central core with a series of surrounding centres that gravitate around it in concentric circles (Fig. 5). It is as a method of approaching a subject from as many points of view as possible making them interact, and above all, clash with each other. The different commentaries beleaguer the core of the page and are at the same time directed against each other. The page is a field of circling points of view that attract and repulse each other. The centre is surrounded by an inexhaustible swarm of points of view and can be perceived completely only if all these points of view have been exhausted. This, however, is not a possibility that is contemplated by Pilpul, since at the centre of this theological speculation resides the

inexhaustible Name of God. Truth is a limit that cannot be ultimately attained but only made more concrete by accumulating specific points of view. Pilpul seeks to identify contradictions as unanswerable. It runs up against the borders of the thinkable, not in order to demolish them, but to discover them.
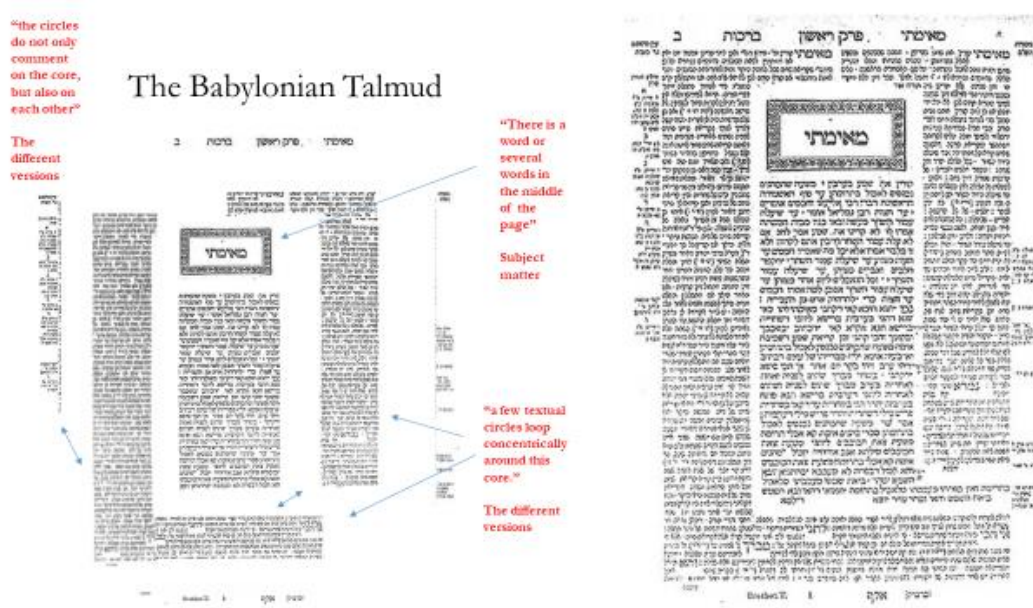

Fig. 6: The Babylonian Talmund and Pilpul

Besides the wild flight of the wasp, which is difficult to follow, and nearly impossible to anticipate, Serres uses the metaphor of the ramble, a steady continuous movement full of sudden stops and bifurcations that sometimes leads back to the beginning. The emphasis, here, is less on circularity than on a constant hither and tither movement that tries to federate all the different positions with each other. These are not arranged in a circle around a significant centre but loosely scattered all over the landscape.

The French *randonnée* and the English *random* have the same origin. The *randonneur*, the wanderer, is a metaphor of the thinker-writer. He does not jump over crevices or abysses, but moves swiftly along. This random movement does not proceed in a special direction; it is careless, haphazard and quick. As Flusser, Serres describes the movement of thinking not only as surprising but also as fast. In the interview with Latour, Serres insists on this specific aspect, which is common to all federating thought processes.
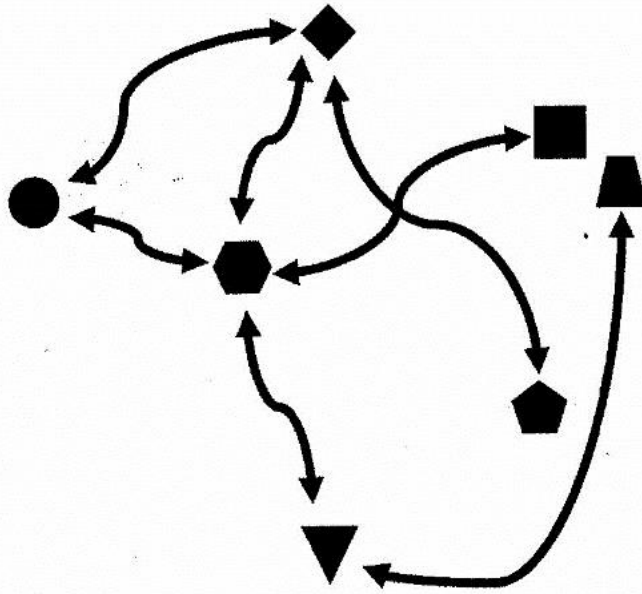
Fig. 7: Randonnée: An expanding web of relations (Watkin 2020:131)

Contrary to Flusser, Serres's plurivocal, but not plurilingual, multiverse is characterized by a profound sense of continuity. Differences are only gradual. Discourses, disciplines and languages are not separated by an abyss but tend to overlap. Serres's philosophy is about constant inclusion. Instead of saying no, of stepping back, like Flusser who tries to disentangle himself from his attachments, to cut existing ties in order to create new ones, Serres welcomes and embraces the different discourses. He does not refuse any specific point of view, even if he profoundly disagrees with it, as is the case with the philosophies of Plato and Descartes. Serres does not deny but opposes by pluralizing, by showing that a specific point of view is only one possible way of looking at the world, and that there exist many other possible ways of interpreting reality. He aims at federation and inclusion rather than exclusion in view of a higher synthesis. His thinking looks for isomorphism, for overlapping strands casting shadows on each other, for plural truths. Philosophy has the job of federating, of bringing things together, it has a fundamentally synthesising function.

Serres opposes any unique privileged discipline that wants to explain all others by introducing it into a pluralistic view of the world. "Umbilical thinking", as he calls it, is the attempt to create a hierarchical system by reducing all possible points of view to a single privileged one. Serres and Flusser steer clear of linear and hierarchical thinking.

There is, however, also a fundamental difference in the metaphors they use. Serres's spatial metaphor of umbilical thinking equates hierarchy with centeredness. The word *umbilical*, from the Latin *umbilicus*, means navel, but also centre. Because of this, Serres does not pick the circle or the spiral as spatial metaphors for the thinking process, but an open landscape populated by different discourses that he tries to reconcile looking for the invariant in variation.
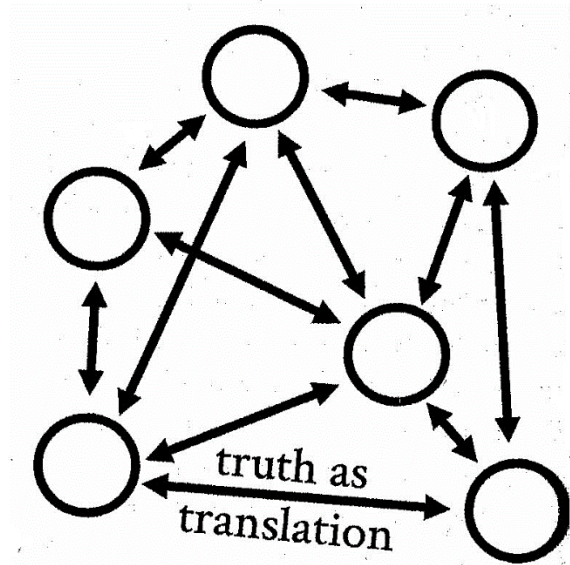

Fig. 8: Federating different points of view through lateral translation (Watkin 2020:58)

As shown before, Pilpul defines the relationship of the different perspectives to the core and to each other not only as a *miteinander*, as togetherness and attraction, as Serres would do, but also as a *gegeneinander*, as conflict and repulsion.

Umbilical thinking is not something that, once recognized, can be easily eradicated once and for all. It is a theoretical approach with a long tradition that still exercises a strong fascination of its own, which is sometimes difficult to fend off. In Flusser's case, one might detect two instances of umbilical thinking and this despite his assertions of discursive plurality. In the early phase of his work, language and linguistics temporarily assumed an umbilical role that strongly influenced his thinking. Communication and information theory took over in the course of the 1960s and 1970s. Flusser's reflections on art and photography of the 1980s have also been conceived and written within this specific theoretical universe.

Synthesis

Both Flusser's and Serres's notions of pluralism do not lead to fragmentation or a complete denial of any possible overarching unity, but project a possible synthesis. The fundamental difference between the two philosophers lies in the fact that for Flusser this synthesis is the result of an intellectual effort (see also Guldin 2020). It is a transitory, shaky construction endangered by entropy that can be superseded any time through the addition of new points of view. Contrary to Serres, however, it has a greater level of integration through the central subject around which the different positions and point of views gravitate and from which they are ultimately dependent.

To be better illustrate Flusser's notion of synthesis, I would like to introduce an example from the essay "Vom Zelten" (About Tent Camping), in which Flusser compares sedentary and nomadic lifestyles from the point of view of cooking. Sedentary cultures grow grass and feed on seeds (for instance in the form of a pizza), nomadic cultures breed goats and use their milk (for instance in the form of cheese). "Pizza can be easily eaten together with parmigiano cheese, but there cannot be a synthesis between people living in houses and people living in tents. These two ways of life are not congruent with each other (Es sind nicht zur Deckung zu bringende Daseinsformen)" (Flusser unpublished typescript:2, my translation). Synthesis, thus, implies congruence and overlapping. This is not the case with Serres who stresses randomness and absence of total control. It is a decentralising structure that emerges as the cumulative effect of isomorphic correspondences between different models. This structure is not another interpretative model, but the invariant arising out of multiple variations.

Flusser's view of synthesis is best exemplified by the page of the Babylon Talmud with its central core and the many expanding multilingual comments that surround it. This spatial setup is also a metaphor for the final version of any sequence of self-translation acts. The final version is a textual palimpsest that cumulates all earlier conflicting versions, but it can always be translated into another language adding further layers of meaning.

Flusser's synthesis is an expression of human frailty and the inability to reach any final point. His notion of rupture denies any continuity between nature and culture, between the individual and the world in which he or she lives and views all human efforts as creative attempts that are, however, ultimately doomed to failure in a world governed by entropy and death.

In this respect, Serres's vision of synthesis has a more promising, reconciling side to it that is based on a notion of continuity and gradual change embracing human culture as a whole, the history of the world, mineral, vegetal, animal and human life, as well as the circulation of water, wind, blood and information. Nature and culture are not separated, but include each other.

The best synthesis "takes place on a field of maximal differences striped like a zebra or a tiger, knotted, mixed together – a harlequin's cape. If not, the synthesis is merely the repetition of a slogan." (Serres & Latour 1995:91) Instead of an origin or a unique principle of interpretation, Serres posits a cluster of differentiated but organized relations. In the interview, Latour opposes synthesis to system. "Yes. Synthesis, in this case, is differentiated from system or even from a methodological unity. A cluster of … relations becomes a body" (ibid.:101). These relations are "ways of *moving* from place to place, or of *wandering*" (ibid.:103, emphasis mine).

These different movements of thought and the diverging notions of synthesis that go with them are mirrored in the way Flusser and Serres write their books.

Fig 9: The Crazy Flight of a Wasp (Jonas Etter, Expected Landing Point 2014)

Serres does not want to write books, but keeps writing until a book structure emerges from the process. This is best exemplified in "Randonnées", the second part of his *Éloge de la philosophie en langue française* (Serres 2014). The text freely moves back and forth in time from the 17th century to the present, and covers the most disparate geographical sites, wavers between phi-

losophy, the natural sciences, literature, mathematics and geometry. It is a free-floating pere-
grination from Descartes to Leibniz, Charles Peguy and Henri Poincaré, and from Monet to
Bergson that combines different subjects in a way that Flusser's texts, despite their combination
of the most disparate elements, never do. At a certain point, the narrator asks the reader if he
or she has discovered the secret plan according to which the book is structured. The flight of
the wasp, which is mentioned several times in the book, can provide an answer.

As a continuous but fractured, zigzagging, horizontal and vertical movement, it implies
both order and disorder, control and lack of control. A fly, as Serres explains, keeps coming
back to the same spot. It hits the same windowpane each time in a different place, at a different
angle and varying speed, always coming from a different direction. Similarly, Serres's book
combines a forward and backward motion that introduces difference through repetition. Wat-
kin describes Serres's overall oeuvre in terms remindful of Flusser. "We would do well to un-
derstand Serres's works as a swirling vortex, with material circulating, appearing and reappear-
ing in different combinations, at different depths and speeds" (Watkin 2020:207).

Flusser's writing follows a completely different logic. It is not based on an underlying
continuity of writing and thematic isomorphism, but the creation of single separate essays that
can become book chapters in the end. Each chapter discusses a specific aspect of the same
central subject. The different, disconnected points of view are linked by the common subject
they circle around. *Die Schrift*, for instance, is an accumulation of perspectives on the future of
writing. In *Post-History*, Flusser started out with a series of essays, each about four pages long.
This allowed for a loose thematic structuring, circumventing a simple linear outline from the
outset. As Flusser puts it: The ribbon, on which the single pearls are threaded, remains unde-
fined and is only tied together in the very end. Moving along the ribbon, the reader has to jump
each time he reaches a new chapter. In the last chapter of *Natural:Mind*, Flusser comments
upon the relationship between the single essays and the whole book. "The essays in this book
… can stand alone, under their own weight. And when they do not, they fail as essays" (Flusser
2013:119). The essays do not form a discursive sequence. "It is as if the beginnings of the essays
had been hung in a disciplined fashion onto a discursive clothesline and as if the ends of the
essays were waving disorderly in the wind that blows from stubborn and indomitable concrete
experience (ibid.:135).

Conclusion

To conclude let me briefly sum up the main points. By using Serres's philosophy as a backdrop, one can bring some of the main features of Flusser's thinking into prominence. The comparison has shown both convergences and divergences. Flusser's and Serres's thinking is non-linear, non-hierarchic and always open-ended, a proliferation of fixed points to infinity. For both thinkers, these different points of view are equally valid. However, despite their pluralist epistemology, they do not reject the notion of an overarching synthesis. Serres wants to include and federate discourses. He does not deny, but opposes by pluralization. A synthesis emerges as an invariant structure from the variation of different models. This structure is not umbilical, but an empty account of isomorphically related moves, not a straight path as in Descartes, but a random excursion that results in a network of multilinear reasoning. Flusser, on the other hand, circles around his subject jumping from perspective to perspective. The ensuing synthesis cumulates points of view that often radically differ from each other. It is a frail and transient construction of conflicting standpoints. Flusser's synthesis combines the centripetal force of the central core with the centrifugal conflictual tendencies of the single perspectives. The most fundamental difference between the two philosophers that informs all other notions is that between continuity and discontinuity.

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