

*Risto Eräsaari*

# WHY RECOGNITION OF CONTINGENCY IS NOT SURRENDERING TO CONTINGENCY?

## Introduction

The concept of contingency – for the most part understood as chance, opportunity, or problem of “*Spielraum*”, and not as some sort of “endism”, corrosive message, or bottom of hope – is a regulative idea, one that conceptually refers to something that is neither necessary (inevitable) nor impossible (unthinkable). Because it is a regulative idea (or a conducting concept), it has to be understood as playing a role that is at once unattainable, structuring and motivating. Looking at contingent chances or possibilities in the world is to get bogged down in the world’s diversity, pursuing determinations of what are possible orientations and thinkable trends, and grasping grounds for particularized understanding. Contingency as a regulative idea is seen in this paper as something that might be relevant for diagnostic strategy: namely, how to find orientation in the contemporary world (see Lepenies 1998), even how to exist, how to find intelligibility, perspectives and visions beyond the boundaries of

normal scientific communication or discussion.<sup>1</sup> More precisely, I will discuss three aspects of the concept of contingency as a regulative idea in the diagnosis of our time: first, the motivational background of the *discovery* of contingency; second, the *perspective* of contingency as the eigenvalue of *Zeitdiagnose*, and third, the role of the non-differentiated (reduction to unity, continuity of being, the essential shared nature of phenomena, etc.; see Gauchet 1997) in the effort to *eliminate* contingency, or as self-defence against surrendering to or being captured by it.

## The Discovery of Contingency

The Japanese philosopher Shuzo Kuki (see Light 1987, 21-23), who belongs to the early history of existential phenomenology, introduced exciting new concepts in existential philosophy in the late twenties and early thirties. Not only did he write about art, aesthetics and ethics, but his work culminated in efforts to produce a systematic treatment of contingency. His work also had some influence on Sartre, who felt in his student years felt that the notion of contingency had been neglected: “All Marxist thought culminated in a world of necessity; there was no contingency, only determinism, dialectics; there were no contingent facts .... I thought that if I had discovered contingency in films and exits into the street, it was because I was meant to discover it” (Light 1987, 20-21). Contingency was the topic of Kuki’s doctoral dissertation, of which his 1935 work *Guzensei no Mondai* (The Problem of Contingency) was the considerable elaboration.

Kuki thought that we need not linger over re-entry of necessity by way of destiny. Contingency and finality can be reconciled. This means that such conditions as nihilism or nihility should not be taken as a simple negation of or the antithesis of being. One has to trace the “true emptiness” that is not posited as something outside of and other than “being”, but which is to be realized as something united to being (anticipation of and liberation from time; the order of our experience). In his systematic treatment Kuki made substantial efforts to define contingency in three different modalities: categorical, hy-

pothetical, and disjunctive. Contingency is basically revealed as the metaphysical absolute, and goal of the work is the derivation of an ethic – the *interiorization of contingency*. He interprets Heideggerian temporality (possibility/chance as a coming towards) through the logical nature of possibility that lies in the future. All this speaks in favour of the interiorization of contingency: “That nothing takes place in vain signifies my future possibility of interiorizing the very thou conditioning me” (see Light 1987, 24). Even the almost impossible possibility becomes reality in contingency, and this contingency, ever giving rise to new contingencies, leads on toward necessity.

Contingency thus becomes a means of problematizing chances and opportunities. Contingency means freeing possibilities from simple necessity and simple reality. This formulation distances itself from the conventional approaches of confronting reality: it becomes separated both from the *assertoric* (the power of the real and the destiny of the nonreal), and from the *apodictical* (the determinism of necessity and the inevitability of impossibilities). Kuki understands the question as not about playing with the concept of contingent possibilities but *with* contingent possibilities. Thus Kuki comes to emphasize the radical meaning of contingency mainly in the area of Lebensphilosophie: a sense of eternal destiny or necessity can be given to contingency, containing nothingness or emptiness in itself, whose destiny is ever to lose itself only by vitalizing the present by means of the future.

Kuki seems to think that contingency is an inevitable condition of concrete reality in the domain of theory. As far as action or activity is concerned, Kuki's only receipt perhaps lies in the attitude or horizon of vitalism, i.e. in constructing an order of life in which one's encounters are not allowed to take place in vain. Thus perhaps the validity of Kuki's contingency lies mainly in traditional aesthetic problems, especially poetic forms where he finds more or less pure systems of the destiny of language and interiorates, and conditions them with contingency. For example, Zygmunt Bauman's (1996, 51) discussion of ethics and morality in the age of contingency, and other writers efforts to recognize contingent chances as something that leave room for manoeuvre and allowing (see Oakeshott), or even as emancipation of necessities or the circularity of necessities (see Luhmann 1997, 143, 140) may in terms of their motivation grow

out of similar to interests Kuki's, but direct their concepts to completely new understanding of the modern socio-cultural world.

The discovery of contingency has to do with the unhappiness of defining being as a triad of necessity (what must be the case), possibility (what may/can be the case) and of reality (what is the case). They always appear in combination with one another, and their elaborations seem to take us to rationalist ontologies and decisionist strategies, in other words specifications that can only be done in their contingency, or that are open to the Kantian subjective necessity of the faculty of judgement. There is a discreet silence in the face of the demand for understanding the trend or the basis of a situation or the nature of time.

## Contingency as a Perspective

It is important to notice the tension between an effort to achieve self-creation by *recognition* of contingency and an effort to achieve universality by the *transcendence* of contingency (see Rorty 1989, 25). This kind of tension has pervaded diagnostic thinking and analyses since the great nineteenth century thinkers, and perhaps particularly since the turn of the century. There are those who break with the older thinkers and see freedom as the recognition of contingency. This can be seen as an effort to detach insistence on historical reduction to unity and continuity of being, as well as essentially shared nature of context of action and community. Recognition of contingency is thus identified with a strong perspectivist or critical rather than scientific analysis, which traditionally is seen as a finder of possibilities, alternatives or choices, or what is regarded as the only means delivering valid knowledge for orientation in the world.

To boldly defend the position of acknowledging contingency means to find oneself in an odd, but exciting situation where the attempt to see life steadily is based on reflection and contemplation instead of the permanent grounding of life. While defending this position, the contingency figure may be even experienced with certain dangerous moments of exaggerating the role of the temporal and the transient. This is the case because it seems to bring self-creation so far forward

that it blinkers the condition of the possibility of experience. No wonder that in diagnostical discussion like in tendency literature and thesis novel (see Habermas 1979, 17-21), in analyses of new layers of theoretical assumptions (see Kusch 1991, xi-xii), in epochal analyses that try to trace the specific nature of time, or in sociological diagnostic thinking that tries to locate trends or orientation discourses, a comprehensive critique of our time is often accompanied by the tones and postulations of actual being, the potential lucidity of knowledge, the potentialities of the self, etc. The individual is often represented as something accustoming himself to being double-faced and double-tongued in order to exhibit the universality and necessity of the individual and contingent.

Diagnostic thinking is caught in quarrel between the analytical and the perspectivistic, between great continuities and great ruptures, and often finding itself in trying to work out compromising terms on which analysis of presence might surrender to recognition of challenges. The concept of contingency can be made to appear as an effort to specify both the contingency of modernity and the contingency of expectations and hopes in relation to it (see Luhmann 1992, 93-128). But universality of contingency is brought up to legitimize transcendence of contingency, because one might get more satisfaction out of finding traces of orientation which applied to all human beings. As Rorty (1989, 20) writes: "Think of finding such an impress as being the discovery of the universal conditions of human existence, the great continuities – the permanent, ahistorical, context of human life. This is what the priests once claimed to have done."

If someone will explain to us the ultimate locus of power, the real nature of reality, the actuality of the possibility of experience, he would also inform us what we really are, and how are we shaped or produced. He would exhibit the character or nature which had been made to appear in all of us. This would not be random or blind, because it would not be a matter of chance, or a mere contingency. It would be necessary, essential, and constitutive of what is to have the potential to be a human. It would give us a structure and a framework, in other words, the acknowledgement of that very necessity, the self-consciousness of our essence. Within it we are asked to go beyond accidental appearance, open contextualism or relativist

spatiotemporalism which reduce us to mere contingent circumstance, to learn to apprehend the context in which we necessarily live. This would give us a mind like a mirror image of the universe itself (see Mauss 1989, 19), “a lading-list which so to speak was a copy of the universe’s own list” (Rorty 1989, 26). What in other words counted as existing, as possible, or as important for us, would be what really is possible or important.

The diagnosis of our time could, with the recognition of contingent chances, acquire another view without the slightest need to be ready to abandon the idea of discovering the causes of who we are, where we come from, what we are waiting for or what awaits us. We do not even have to leave the job of tracing factors of orientation that have affected our life. What becomes a challenge to such diagnosis is becoming aware of whether it is a process of *discovery*, or a process of *recognition*. In other words, are we coming to know a true reality which was out there all the time awaiting us, or are we stressing self-knowledge as self-creation? The process of coming to know oneself is a process of confronting one’s contingency, the not inevitable and the not impossible, the chance that is determined by neither of them (see Gauchet 1997).

We would then deny the existence of the universe’s lading list (Rorty 1989), the already-existing orientation discourse (Gauchet 1997), the tacitly renewed order of things (Taylor 1997), and the great continuities sustaining our way of thinking. We would instead stress the ways in which we become inscribed to that reality, the creation of one’s mind through creating one’s own language, or inventing a new language – that (as Rorty points out) actually is to think up some new metaphors. Jorge Louis Borges (1964, 51) makes an interesting remark here on the perplexity confronted in this kind of situation by citing to imagining “hereditary work, transmitted from father to son, in which each new individual adds a chapter or corrects with pious care the pages of his elders”. This is not a satisfactory solution to the problem of recognizing possible futures, because in all fictional works, whenever a man is confronted with several alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates the others. But in the fiction of Ts’ui Pen, he simultaneously chooses all of them. In this way, he creates diverse futures, diverse times which themselves also proliferate and fork.

This sort of attempt is not undergirded by evolutionary or dialectical theory about inevitable or impossible progress, nor by unspecified claims for social or economic (pre)determinism. To stress the role of human freedom and fortuitous contingency is to stress that they happen within a certain fixed set of a priori possibilities showing that nothing has to happen, but that only certain kinds of thing can happen. These possibilities derive from the circumstances of the insertion or orientation of subjectivity into the world. The moment of contingency becomes an actual perspective, because there is the element of not inscribing in somebody else's description of oneself, not to executing a previously prepared program and not to orientating oneself according to a copy or a replica. This means that they also are detached from the burden of premetaphysical "first thinking" with its universal experience of the presence without names, without time behind the time, the pious persistence of being (see Theunissen 1998). Nowhere else has this burden perhaps has a better characterization than in Samuel Beckett's *L'Innommable* (The Unnameable): there is complete disintegration; no "I", no "have", no "being", no nominative, no accusative, no verb (see Bair 1990, 422-423).

The human subject orientates towards the other, reflexively thinking as if from another person's perspective. Orientation here means not simply symbolic purposes of every particular person, or redescribing particular persons, objects, or situations. Recognition of contingency rather than of necessity as the decisive element in orientation has a double meaning here, namely the contingency of orientation itself, and the contingency of expectations concerning orientation.

Human subjects are collectively situated in time and may orientate themselves either to the unalterable givenness of the past, or to the immediacy of the present, or else to the open horizon of the future. To bring orientation to action and thinking is a very special case. Even if we can convincingly demonstrate that we are in a crisis of orientation that seems to affect all the guiding principles of our cultural and social activity, it is difficult to express, and still not clear what the crisis is about, as Lepenies (1998, 18) points out. A self is a tissue of contingencies rather than a potentially well-ordered system of faculties. We can then take the next step to see how human sub-

jects are driven to speculate about the invisible and yet unavoidably implied undifferentiated whole of reality.

## Overstepping Contingency: The Return of the Undifferentiated?

When looking at the contingency of selfhood there are three specific moments that may be seen as mechanisms of self-defence against overwhelming contingency or against being taken over by contingency: one inhabiting our thought process (a); one dominating the processes of the imagination (b); and one controlling the forms of the problem of the self (c).

*Contingency of thought process?* A special thought content, perhaps a reminder of what used to be the explicit experience of the Other, continues to provide us with intellectual objects, perhaps in the guise of discoveries that reveal the motifs that necessitated the actual conflict between freedom and necessity (see Levinas 1993, 9). It is nonthematized, and hence extremely difficult to pinpoint. It is used in a supportive manner as a secret, decisive source of orientation discourse. These are the reasons why Gauchet (1997, 201) thinks we ought to call it the *nondifferentiated*. In his cartographic schema Gauchet explains that we are just taken into an understanding of the orders of reality in how it merely splits up into appearance and truth, sensible and intelligible, immanence and transcendence, etc. He explains that part of the world is given to immediate perception, and something else is presented when we take into account its nondifferentiated global nature, about which the only legitimate statement we can make is *that it is*. This other part is something beyond the visible and beyond sensible qualities, infinite networks of distinct objects, actual differences, etc.

Gauchet (*ibid.*, 201) speaks about a thought content that in a constitutive mode works by apprehending the real, that continues to provide us with religious type of backrest, but “which does not intrinsically produce faith, does not involve any particular conviction, and does not wish to be extended in sacral terms”. Forms of eastern spiritualism he mentions as a special case, because they contain no

theistic implications and no reference to separate subjectivity. Thus the void or the nothing they conjure up is in a good position to express the pure experience of thought. Nothing and indeterminacy are completely continuous qualities (cf. the burgeoning literature on “endism” and “beyondism”) in helping us to escape from belief in plural phenomena, as well as the illusion of our own separate existence. Perhaps this could be considered the mystical pole of the nondifferentiated.

The operative, positive pole of the nondifferentiated can be seen at work in modern science. It clearly postulates the objectivity of phenomena, but simultaneously disqualifies any direct sensory observation of them in favour of investigating the object’s real properties, which it locates in the invisible. An example of transition from direct knowledge to indirect knowledge, or from direct to unintended consequences, appears to be the increasing enthusiasm for the language of “beyond” by social science writers, where “beyond” does not necessarily need to be interpreted as some higher, deeper, or less superficial factor affecting our life and institutions, but can also be seen as the hereafter, something at the back of, or at a distance from appearances, thus slightly mystical and thus perhaps also rhetorically effective.<sup>2</sup>

If this sort of anticipation of certainty became installed at the very heart of the world, something more certain than the contingent world would surely appear. In other words, here the categories of the nondifferentiated play the role of trying to reach the unattainable, structuring and motivating. In the most extreme case only one basic mystery to be understood is left, namely, why there is something rather than nothing. The basic notions sustained by this source can in some cases be “flesh”, “fire”, “body”, “risk”, “emotion”, etc., especially if the core argument remains unspecified. They then merely represent another name for this sustaining nondifferentiation guaranteeing behind the apparent differences and distinctions between things. As Gauchet (1997, 202) clearly sees, this does not disqualify them: they correspond to an authentic requirement of thought. However we would be in a better position if we recognized the diagnostic characteristic of this requirement rather than kept on conforming to conventional concerns about great continuities.

*Contingency of imaginative processes?* The aesthetic experience is

amenable to similar interpretation, insofar as it can be related to a primordial (orthogenetic) source, which in turn renews the anticipation of the continuing harmonious existence of a relation to the world. The question is here about the immanent possibility of aesthetic experience – “an experience of difference making this involvement meaningful for us by showing it to us in an unfamiliar light, by presenting it as other, an opening onto unknown mystery” (Gauchet 1997, 203). This is an experience of a special kind of difference which in the premodern world does not appear as such, but was absorbed in and regulated by religious experience. Through an aesthetic experience something completely other makes its way in the familiarity of things.

Thus it is clear that the aesthetic experience can also be radically other (cf. the classic examples of Peter Weiss), and can in fact become a subject strategy for recognising and appropriating the opposite, namely the differentiated, the contingency of the world. This is, generally speaking, the case in for example Wolfgang Iser's (1991, 43-52) account of the reactualization of aesthetic thinking: aesthetic thinking becomes realistic thinking, our “first philosophy” becomes aesthetically embellished, the subject strategy itself becomes as aesthetic, etc. For Gauchet, on the other hand, the question is about manifestation of what is normally hidden from the senses and protected from human grasp, and it is in this sense that art “is the continuation of the sacred by other means” (Gauchet 1997, 203).

This means that the world itself begins to seen other, to disclose the special kind of depth that becomes the object of a special quest (referring only to itself, operating for itself, becoming independent of previous content, etc.). The quest for meaning, understanding and interpretation acquires a special dominance, and all registers and diverse possibilities have to be explored within the spheres of our fragmented everyday life. This of course means certain detachment from routines: intensified experience, passion and dreamlike absorption into the imaginary, etc. where the ambivalent and the uncertain may appear as contingent possibilities which become emancipated from the circularity and the determination of necessities.

But within this the perspectivism or its anticipations also become interconnected with the other deep inside: the discovery of hidden worlds or hidden truths, constructing new mirrors of otherness, con-

cerning new futures, bringing completely forgotten things of the past to life again for us. It is easy to see that alongside this sort of thinking there always is the possibility of grasping the truth of the aesthetic experience as a nondifferentiated unity, as achieved sensory universality through the aesthetic transcendence of contingency. Probably there is constant struggle in these matters, a struggle that is the eigenvalue of the times. The interface between the process of reducing the world to sameness in the intelligible activity and the process where it becomes revealed as other in sensory activity is itself radically changing.

Recognising and tracing of mechanisms and places through which we are in transit has become an object of diagnostic subject strategy, where special events (cf. the constructive differentiating and dedifferentiating of the influences of the media), normative horizons (cf. the work of life styles and life politics) have become special sources of orientation as well as channels through which orientation itself may take place. Within all this it is not so easy to tell the difference between actual recognition of orientation discourse and a renegotiation of the necessary elements of a orientation discourse. The former is of course more open to acknowledgement seeking use of oscillatory mechanisms and places and tolerating groundlessness, fragmentation, deceptiveness, etc. Contingency consciousness has so to speak become a built-in mechanism of the mentality which expects that one's encounters, constructions, etc. should not take place in vain. The latter, on the other hand, operates in a more pragmatic way, and there is not much room for the issue of, and still less problematization with contingent possibilities. This is because the reconstruction of what is to be done, or reconstruction of a new balance between risk and security, freedom and necessity, changes and the guaranteeing framework, etc. inevitably means adopting a certain universalistic approach, based on the transcendence of contingency.

*Contingency of problems of the self?* This is the experience of the problems that we are for ourselves, of the variants of the question of being a subject. Individual beings uncomfortably experience as problematic what the traditional world has presented to us as resolved (see Mauss 1989). This is why the questions of orientation, the worlds of faith, the recognisability of possibilities, groundlessness, ambiguity and ambivalence are solved no longer, but are simply reconstructed

in different ways. These wisdoms hold a mirror before us, in which we see our concerns and uncertainties, but presented in a form that does not give us much support for personal navigation. They have diagnostic value for consideration of orientation, but it is impossible to follow them. Perhaps this is why individuals are led by their peculiar concern with the transcendental: “The greater the degree of individualization, the greater problem of the self, and hence the greater potential interest in an age when one knew how to deal with this dreadful uncertainty that fills us”, as Gauchet (1997, 205) concludes.

At the same time individuals become unable to subscribe to any of the earlier belief systems that seemed to offer the chance of transcending contingency, and seem to find themselves in an unstable compromise between acknowledging the problematic and choosing the solution, between detachment and presence, between seeing their life at a distance and seeing their life within its immediacy, between provisionality and the profoundness of their belief systems.

Instead of the often insecure and disappointing chances of positive freedom, the methods of neutralizing the self come to the fore. All can calmly present becoming assured of their necessity due to their role, position, place, etc. all of which at least somehow place them in a preordained socio-cultural framework. In this sense nothing could lead them to ask what is he or she doing here. Personal contingency is thus neutralized. In this sense you cannot be marginalized or excluded. Mere ascription takes care of you. There is no divergence from your own position. The concerns and problems should then also be neutralized, cemented, harmonized, etc. instead of activating one to choose the solution, or choosing to tolerate ambivalence and indifference. You just stay in your position: no reforms, no new thinking, etc. is needed, or as Gauchet (1997, 206) puts it, “The order of things does not come from you; all you have to do is to piously renew the order without raising the issue of your difference from it.”

Birth and death, beginning and end have been easier through this order, which seems to signalize universal advice. You need not to jump to oscillatory movement, ambivalence, rootlessness and fragmentation of the world where uncertain change reminds you of the double contingency of your selfhood (see Rorty 1989). Within a world that constantly remains the same, thinking of birth is immaterial.

Likewise thinking about death: things will continue to be done as fully as you were able to do it during your presence among the living. All in all, neutralizing personal contingency becomes a means that supplies magical understanding of events, and of threats and dangers. As Gauchet (1997, 206) notices, we are then “confronted with a perfect system for both ‘necessitating’ and ‘desubjectivating’ the self”. Whether recognition of contingency could be discussed together with “struggle for recognition” (see Honneth 1996), in other words, with distinct forms of moral harm and respect, which must play its own role in the evaluation and assessment of social change, may be seen as a new field where the discussion could be continued. We would then find ourselves discussing presuppositions of the self-relation, and the ways in which they are established or maintained in patterns of recognition within the family, legal institutions, and solidarity.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Diagnosis of the time or our time (*Zeitdiagnose*) may be seen as a *seismographical value* for diagnostic consideration (Habermas 1979, 17-21), as an effort to bring home the *authority of the present* (see Gauchet 1997, 200), as an *analysis of causes and reasons* for the present situation (see Niethammer 1994), as an *epochal analysis* or an ontology of the present (see Kusch 1991), as an interpretation of the *intellectual atmosphere* (like *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* by Karl Jaspers), or as a critical interpretation of *trends and normative coordinates* in contemporary society (Beck & Giddens & Lash 1995). The effort to activate a contingency perspective is not the diagnosis itself, but a prior understanding of the regulative principles.
- <sup>2</sup> Cf. expressions like “beyond the lamentation about the erosion of values” (Ulrich Beck), “beyond left and right” (Anthony Giddens), “beyond despair and conflict” (Gianni Vattimo), “beyond this Millennium” (Manuel Castells), “beyond normal divides” (Jürgen Link), “beyond being and authority” (Jeffrey Librett), and “beyond socialism and liberalism” (Göran Therborn).

## References

- Bauman, Zygmunt (1996): *Morality in the Age of Contingency*. In Paul Heelas, Scott Lash and Paul Morris (ed.): *Detraditionalization. Critical Reflection on Authority and Identity*. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Bair, Deirdre (1990): *Samuel Beckett: A Biography*. London, Vintage.
- Beck, Ulrich & Giddens, Anthony & Lash, Scott (1995): *Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*. Oxford, Polity Press.
- Borges, Jorge Luis (1964): *Labyrinths. Selected stories and other writings*. Harmondsworth, Penguin books.
- Gauchet, Marcel (1997): *The Disenchantment of the World. A political history of religion*. Princeton N.J., Princeton University Press.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1979): Einleitung, in Jürgen Habermas (ed.): *Stichworte zur 'Geistigen Situation der Zeit'*, Bd.I. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
- Honneth, Axel (1996): *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (trans. Joel Anderson). Cambridge, MIT Press.
- Kusch, Martin (1991): *Foucault's Strata and Fields. An Investigation into Archeological and Genealogical Science Studies*. Dordrecht, Kluwer.
- Lepenies, Wolf (1998): *Social Science and Social Change. A Personal Memoir*. *Common Knowledge* 7:2.
- Levinas, Emmanuel (1993): *Collected Philosophical Papers* (Translated by Alphonso Lingis). Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Light, Stephen (1987): *Shuzo Kuki and Jean Paul Sartre. Influence and counter-influence in the early history of existential phenomenology*. Carbondale and Edwardsville, Southern Illinois University Press.
- Luhmann, Niklas (1997): *Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft, I-II*. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp.
- Luhmann, Niklas (1992): *Beobachtungen der Moderne*. Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Mauss, Marcel (1989): A category of the human mind: the notion of person; the notion of self. In Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins and Steven Lukes (ed.): *The category of the person*. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Oakeshott, Michael (1975): *On Human Conduct*. Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- Rorty, Richard (1989): *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, Charles (1997): Introduction. In Marcel Gauchet: *The Disenchantment of the World. A political history of religion*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press.

- Theunissen, Michael (1998): Vormetaphysisches Denken. In Uwe Justus Wenzel (ed.): *Vom Ersten und Letzten. Positionen der Metaphysik in der Gegenwartsphilosophie*. Frankfurt am Main, Fischer.
- Welsch, Wolfgang (1991): Zur Aktualität des ästhetischen Denkens. In Tapio Aittola & Jürgen Matthies (ed.): *Philosophie, Soziologie und Erziehungswissenschaft in der Postmoderne*. Publikationsreihe des Forschungsinstituts für Gegenwartskultur 26, Jyväskylän Universität.