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In a neo-phenomenological mood: *Stimmungen* or atmospheres?

Abstract

What is a mood (Stimmung) and why has this concept been experiencing a true renaissance in the human sciences? As a consequence of the so-called “affective turn” replacing the linguistic turn, notions like atmosphere (since the 1960s) and Stimmung/mood (in the last decade) actually seem to better explain the qualitative-emotional “more” of our sensible experience. The paper explores the essential terms of today’s debate, starting from its fluctuation between subjectifying approaches and objectifying ones. After debunking two relevant false myths about Stimmung (the untranslatability of the word and the supposed harmonious nature of what it expresses) and suggesting a de-axiologization both of Stimmung/mood and atmosphere, it examines and problematizes the traditional taxonomy of mood characteristics (duration, intensity, ubiquity, unintentionality, pragmatic uncertainty and dispositionality, non-producibility), reviews the similarities and differences between moods and atmospheres (also in the light of Hermann Schmitz’s neo-phenomenology) and suggests in conclusion to conceive any distinction among moods, emotions and atmospheres as the result of a focusing-blurring alternation within the fluid continuum.

Keywords

Stimmung, Atmospheres, Mood

1. In the mood for mood

Even a silly Broadway song² seems to hit the nail on the head when it “explains” that “sometimes I’m happy, sometimes I’m blue” because “my disposition depends on you”. My trick is understanding, on the one hand, “disposition” not as an inner-psycho state, according to the prevailing introjectionist tradition, but as a felt-bodily condition which the outside world’s also felt-bodily dimension resonates into, and, on

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² *Sometimes I’m happy (sometimes I’m blue)*, 1927, Youmans/Caesar.

the other hand, “you” not only, as required by the song, as the lover, but more generally as a spatial and affect-inducing event. This over-interpretation of the song summarises three aspects usually ascribed to a *Stimmung*, i.e. reference to ego, integration potential and communicative effectiveness³. It especially corroborates the claim that a *Stimmung* or mood⁴ is both a person’s building block, however not simply projected outward from them, and an event that exercises power over them and to which they react (even if not automatically).

It is well known that the notion of *Stimmung* is always disputed⁵ between philosophies (or art styles) emphasizing the ego’s independent creativity or pathologizing it by reducing mood to just a transitory temper, and philosophies (or art styles) seeing it as an evidence of the ego’s dissolving⁶. My playful interpretation of the song, instead, aims at freeing mood from an epistemological as well as a commonsensical introjectionist approach. This usually presents itself in a gross hydraulic version, according to which the subject would project onto the outside world affective qualities that the world completely lacks of, or in a more sophisticated-idealistic one, according to which the subject would unconsciously project onto the outside world affective qualities that they experience later as if they came from the world itself. I avoid here the trend of any *Einfühlungsästhetik* to psichicize the world as if it were nothing but an unaware echo of a contemplating subject’s soul. I consider therefore moods and atmospheres not as blind states telling us something only about who feels them, but as felt-bodily resonances inherent to the perceiver even if containing “information” about what transcends them (Thomas 2011: 228; see Griffero 2016b).

As is well known, the success of the word *Stimmung* always stresses the resurgence of the Platonic and Pythagorean idea of a universal har-

³ For a good introduction to the modern aesthetic history of *Stimmung*, see Wellbery (2010: 705).

⁴ From now on I will use *Stimmung* and moods indifferently, differentiating only in the case of German or English authors.

⁵ For a brief summary of these diverging trends, see Thomas (2010: 141-3).

⁶ Let me recall Hermann Bahr’s famous “das Ich ist unrettbar”, but, more generally, the Post-Impressionistic anti-solipsistic trend to attribute a mood directly to a landscape. For Ferdinand Brunetiere (1888: 217), to give just an example, the fact that a landscape expresses a sad or gay mood does not mean that it changes according to the individual perceiver’s mood, but that it is such, independently of us, thanks to mysterious correspondences between nature and us (quoted in Thomas 2010: 142-3).

mony and an indissoluble unity of man and nature. This makes it possible to talk about one's own mood as well as the environment's mood (see Spitzer 1963), causing a great theoretical embarrassment. Nietzsche might be a good example of this oscillation. The twenty-years-old Nietzsche seems to think that mood, still as a necessary condition for writing (and even more of writing about *Stimmungen*), is a transitory state out of our control, something that comes from inner battles but also from an external pressure on the innerworld itself⁷. Well, should one agree with this promising transposition of "the scene of understanding Mood to an outside" (Corngold 1990: 72), that paves the way for an interesting emotional externalism? Or with the so-called Enlightenment Nietzsche's later condemn of those who, despite being no longer able to rely on a transcendent legitimation of the "good mood" needed for action, artificially use *Stimmung* (and not rationality) as an argument against objections (Nietzsche 2011: 25-6)? And again, should we agree with Nietzsche's promising externalism⁸, or rather to his nihilistic genealogy, according to which feelings are only "conclusions from judgments we consider false and from teachings in which we no longer believe" (Nietzsche 2011: 30)?⁹

This huge oscillation is not only due to Nietzsche's well-known mercurial nature¹⁰ but to a semantic oscillation of *Stimmung* between a personal state of mind and an ontological quality of the world. Despite their controversial location (in the subject? In the object? Neither here nor there?) and meaning (are they helpful in understanding the world, or do they make its perception moody, or even "muddy"?)¹¹, moods are surely a pervasive phenomenon of everyday life. Examples range from the simple cases of being supercilious, anxious, melancholic, bored, sad, irritable, gay, or experiencing the party – vernissage –, funeral-mood, etc., to the most unforeseeable ones like, for example,

⁷ Given that the soul is made of the same (or at least similar) stuff that events are made of. See Nietzsche (1923).

⁸ "Our customary mood depends upon the mood in which we manage to maintain our surroundings" (Nietzsche 2011: 183).

⁹ "To trust your feeling – that means obeying your grandfather and your grandmother and their grandparents more than the gods in us: our reason and our experience" (Nietzsche 2011: 30).

¹⁰ Let us recall that the last Nietzsche talks of affect (in a more materialistic way) rather than of *Stimmung*.

¹¹ That is why even in non-objective arts like music researchers do not want to make an interpretive-epistemic category of it.

participation meant as hoping of being taken seriously (Saam 2018). Similarly, when one says that our society is inclined to an accelerating-technological model (the Silicon Valley paradigm) or to a mystical-fatalistic egotism (country's *buen retiro* and yoga paradigm), one is probably trying to determine the major mood of a certain current social sphere, obviously risking generalisation to some extent¹². This is not only a sociological risk. When, for example, according to the second Heidegger (from *Beiträge zur Philosophie* on, see Coriando 2013) *Stimmung* ceases to be a being-there's phenomenon¹³ and becomes a "throw" or "call" of Being able to reveal a historical truth and thus to suggest a new beginning¹⁴, the risk of cancelling every difference is not less serious.

Anyway, recently, as a consequence of the seemingly irresistible "affective turn" replacing the linguistic turn in the Humanities (Wellbery 2010: 733), concepts like atmosphere (since the 1960s) and *Stimmung*/mood (in the last decade) have been experiencing a true renaissance¹⁵. They bypass the long-term censorship carried out by structuralism, critical theory, poststructuralism and gender studies: these are, in fact, theories that are all suspicious towards any presentness and proving yet slave to Hegel's dogma according to which *Stimmung* is only a relic of romantic inwardness that is not up to modern secularisation and "demusicalisation" (to use Spitzer's term) and actually discredited as a kitsch word at least since the 1920s in favour of a growing "coldness".

Given that we certainly are today in the mood for "mood" again, one has however a hard time talking about a concept as metaphorically powerful as poorly defined like *Stimmung*/mood (see Bude 2018). It should be noted that this "return" of *Stimmung*/mood cannot be

¹² The illegal immigrant's mood is certainly very different from the resident citizen's one, so the man's from the woman's, the "apocalyptic"'s from the "integrated"'s, etc.

¹³ Even if it remains something that human beings cannot intentionally produce and control.

¹⁴ Thanks to three basic forms: startled dismay, reservedness and deep awe (Heidegger 1999: 11). From another point of view, the historical-cultural switch of mood could be explained as a non linear trend in which a tilting process reaches a breaking point exceeding the re-elaboration capability.

¹⁵ For Wellbery (2010: 732-3) the concept of *Stimmung* exhausted its (aesthetical) potential because of other theoretical models, trivialising use and obsolescence of the musical metaphorisation of inner states. This prognosis, lately restated (Wellbery 2011: 165), has proved completely wrong.

“only” the result of a pendulum swing through which culture from time to time updates certain topics almost only because they were marginalised before. This renaissance is rather something that a philosophy now increasingly based on affectivity, and a fortiori my pathic aesthetics (see Griffero 2016a; 2017c), cannot underestimate and has to associate with the fact that emotion clearly exceeds Wittgenstein’s verdict about the language borders of “our” world. I am far from reducing *Stimmungen*/moods to evaluative judgements or to cerebral-visceral processes or “having own cake and eat it” through a multi-componential perspective that mixes different conceptions together. I do not side neither with the 19th century psychophysical conception of *Stimmung* as the opaque outcome of representations and associations nor with its full aestheticization carried out by a *fin-de-siècle* poetics (the so-called *Stimmungskunst*), according to which *Stimmung* was the primary content¹⁶ of every art¹⁷ or even a method, no matter what its reference objects are¹⁸. Even the Brechtian “enstrangement effect”, moreover, even if vehemently defended against the attunement that a *Stimmung* implies, maybe simply employed a different material (gestures, for example) to arouse a *Stimmung*, although a critical-dialectical one (Simon 2013).

My view, inspired by the anti-introjectionist neo-phenomenological turn, in some way anticipated by Heidegger’s seminal anti-subjectivistic interpretation of *Stimmungen*¹⁹, aims at getting rid of the already mentioned Hegelian prejudice²⁰ and showing that the 200-years-long history of this concept could not be summarized, as usual,

¹⁶ “Content”, however, does not necessarily mean “subject”. Painting, for example, could also express *Stimmungen* through a peculiar way of painting, colors and what is wrongly disqualified as “only” ornamental. See the analysis of Cezanne’s melancholy in Kitschen (2010).

¹⁷ For a cursory glance at these historical developments see Welsh (2011).

¹⁸ See for example Reents (2013) and, on the metropolis-poetry’s *Stimmung*, Meyer-Sickendieck (2013).

¹⁹ An approach opposed to Dilthey’s focus on *Erlebnis*. For Dilthey’s idea of *Stimmung* see Henckmann (2007: 57-62).

²⁰ This prejudice explains the massive oblivion of the concept of *Stimmung* in postromantic aesthetics (with the exception of Friedrich Theodor Vischer and Richard Wagner. See Gisbertz (2013).

in terms of an increasing subjectification²¹, but as the opposition and at the same time the overlapping of two different traditions. There is indeed, on the one hand, the psychological tradition, that turns the *Stimmung* of the soul from the requisite of aesthetic experience into the very outcome (symbolically-associationistically conceived) of that experience (see Welsh 2011: 151 and Gisbertz 2011: 178). There is, on the other hand, the philosophical-idealistic tradition, certainly oriented towards giving more autonomy to the subject. However, even though many are responsible for this revival (literary and musical aesthetics, interdisciplinary research on emotions, among the others), according to me *Stimmung*/mood could play again a central role within the cultural debate only if it is no longer understood as an expression of subjective inwardness but as a particular feeling poured out into our pericorporeal space and (quasi-thingly and felt-bodily) experienced by us. Put differently, *Stimmung*/mood can become central again only when it is the focus of a neo-phenomenological-atmospherological approach able to enhance presentness and felt-bodily dimension in a positive and aesthesiological (not only artistic) way (see Griffero 2014a; 2014b; 2017a; 2018a; 2018b; 2019).

2. *Something special or only a kitsch effect?*

Just take a look around: while casting some light, for example, on *Pathosformeln* even politics is now increasingly based on collective emotions. But this emotional contagion is a phenomenon that seems new only due to the technological means it employs; what Spengler deplored in newspapers a century ago also applies perfectly today to Internet, social media, etc. (Spengler 1922: 460-3). As such the *Stimmung*/mood-renaissance turns the semantic vagueness of the term into something positive, thus skillfully capitalising the surprising fact that we can talk of the mood both of a musical instrument and a certain weather, both of a landscape and a particular time of the day, both of a work of art and a collective life form, etc. Come to think of it, even

²¹ Even the *Stimmungskunst*, actually, aimed at expressing something universal, even if based not on an experience but a semiotics (representations, symbols, associations) that is historically variable although socially codified (see Thomas 2011: 218ff.).

the Kantian demand for the unconditioned might be no more than a *Stimmung*²².

Now, I can only envy who can simply state, for example, that moods are “affective states which do not stimulate the relatively specific response tendencies we associate with ‘emotions’”. Instead, moods are pervasive and global, having the capability of influencing a broad range of thought processes and behavior” (Morris 1989: VII). This is indeed true, but my aim consists here in muddying the waters a little and giving full play to that “ruminative thinking” (a negative mood in turn?) I consider to be an integral part of every philosophical approach. The least that can be said is, then, that an overall and stable theoretical framework to guide this research is still lacking. Two issues need to be briefly mentioned here.

a) In an evermore conflictual society *Stimmung* risks to appear just as a compensatory-conciliatory expedient²³ resulting in kitsch. All this implies acts, products and even persons, given that someone could be said to be a kitsch-person²⁴ when they intentionally create a *Stimmung* they desire or willingly let others create one in them (see Giesz 1971: 152)²⁵. One could even define moods and emotions as kitsch affects insofar as they are not directed towards the world, not discharged into actions and work (Bollnow 1956: 95), but they are inverted (so to speak), that is, sought and enjoyed for their own sake (Krebs 2018: 239). Gumbrecht is probably right on that: there is no definitive answer to the question of how

to avoid dissolving into what Hegel accused of being “the mush of the heart” [...]. Nor is there a sure way to guarantee immunity. Concentrating on formal phenomena permits one to avoid the worst, but it is equally important not to attribute absolute qualities – or make existential claims about putative superiority – when encountering atmospheres and moods from the past and other cultures. In addition to the experience of empathy, a measure of sobriety and verbal moderation should accompany the act of reading for *Stimmung*. In

²² “Attunement is not a kind of ‘sentimentality’ or ‘edification’ – it is an attunement of thought, perhaps the attunement of thought (*Denkstimmung schlechthin*)” (Fink 2016: 48).

²³ Hofmannstahl, for example, talked explicitly (see Arburg 2010: 25) of *Harmoniearchie* as the artistic mission of reducing complexity (even if only in a momentary way).

²⁴ For Bollnow (1956: 152) persons could be kitsch to their roots.

²⁵ On this topic see also Anz (2013).

many cases, it is better to gesture toward potential moods instead of describing them in detail (much less celebrating them). (Gumbrecht 2012: 16)

b) Are moods the figured bass of our daily existence or are they rather rare and exceptional experiences like that which Alois Riegl (1929) chooses as the paradigmatic example of modern *Stimmungskunst*? Riegl's quietistic scenario is based on aesthetic distance and ascribed to modern painting (especially to landscape painting) as a result of the shift from the aptic-proximal paradigm to the optical-distal one²⁶. It should prove that perceptual distance and naturalistic nomothetic causalism act as a modern form of salvation by making a contemplation of the universal harmony possible. In virtue of its more monodic than polyphonic nature, the static simultaneity perceived²⁷ would enable the lucky perceiver to see as well ordered, harmonious and quiet at a distance what is instead chaotic, discordant and agitated if seen more closely. By virtue of prerequisites (*Ruhe* and *Fernsicht*) opposing to physicalistic atomism (see Arburg 2010: 13-20), one would feel the real *Weltseele aller Dinge*. Unfortunately, however, all this is something that one is probably aware of only when it no longer exists and that Benjamin, although through a very similar description and under the influence of Klages' theory of ecstasy, within a few years will already consider impossible (loss of aura, see Recky 2010: 8-11).

Things are, however, a bit more complicated, because distance paradoxically sometimes intensifies the *Stimmung*, as in the case of Riegl's perceptual distance, but sometimes it completely switches it off, as in the case of the historical-philological distance, diagnosed by Nietzsche as "historical sickness". Moreover, is this *Stimmung* (a "subtle thing" for Riegl) only a privileged moment, characterised by a state of grace of a godlike all-encompassing comprehension of all things (as they were before the Fall) and therefore absolutely time – and milieu – conditioned?²⁸ Is it rather an affect that is this time made possible by the fact of having an unusual perspective from the mountaintop (leading to forget about daily pressures and to be aware of harmony in nature),

²⁶ For a few comments on the formula (taken from Degas) *états d'yeux* see Gamboni 2010.

²⁷ Becker (2010: 172-3) cleverly (but in a too projectivist way) applies Riegl's pictorial criteria to Debussy.

²⁸ It is often uncritically repeated (see for example Wedekind 2010: 34) that a *Stimmungslandschaft* must rely on a distance, exhibit a chromatic omogeneity, express an atmospheric thickness and an action-lessness.

but that simply accentuates what could happen in other places and at other times?²⁹ Do common and daily situations really always deserve the name *Stimmung*, as if every sunset or Sunday morning would arouse the *Stimmung* of the sunset or the Sunday morning as such? Is *Stimmung* rather an axiological term merely corresponding to some rare and deep experiences showing the unmistakable presence of a new quality of the world³⁰? These and other possible questions clearly show the polivocity of this vague concept. This has encouraged the development of two relevant false myths.

3. *Dispelling two myths and a bit of history*

a) It is like a *mantra* saying that the word “*Stimmung*” is strictly untranslatable. It seems to me, on the contrary, that it is more uninterruptedly and cautiously translated rather than absolutely untranslatable³¹. Not to mention the fact that declaring something as untranslatable necessarily means having it somehow already translated (at least mentally) and somehow compared this translation with the original. It is abstractly true, of course, that, for example, “mood” seems to translate more the transient *Stimmung* (a moody mood) than the “basic mood” (*Grundstimmung*). And it is also abstractly true that neither English nor the Romance languages have a full equivalent for a term like this. The latter, in fact, is based on an analogy between music (tuning of instruments) and psychology (being in a mood, attuned with) and, above all, it means a state of merger with the world that, being neither only subjective nor only objective, is hard to define for vocabularies dualistically organized according to an inner/outer structure.

This does not mean, however, that the musical and ontological resonance of the German word as a whole is always fully and necessarily sacrificed in other cultures (think for example of attunement, and *accordo*, *intonazione*, *tonalità* in Italian, etc.), as also attested to by the widespread artistic application of what *Stimmung* means also outside

²⁹ Even without necessarily having a positive impact (mood of disturbance and uncertainty). Friedrich’s *Stimmungslandschaft*, for example, would imply not only *sublimitas* but also the *humilitas* easily traceable to the protestant God’s creation melancholy (see Wedekind 2010: 41-2, 45).

³⁰ For Krebs (2018: 238), for example, we are not always in a mood because we often don’t hang together affectively and fall to pieces.

³¹ As is happening once again in David (2004).

the German area and yet according to paths which are fully aligned with the German ones. Even if it were true that *Stimmung* usually embraces three phenomena (harmony, mood and atmosphere), whereas English and French counterparts only embrace one or two of them (Krebs 2018: 237), *Stimmung* has nothing to gain from overemphasizing its untranslatability. In other words: one should discuss the issue prompted by this concept without counting on any rhetorical and apologetic promotion of ineffability.

b) The second legend is about *Stimmung's* necessarily harmonious nature. Saying that every mood expresses the harmony (*Übereinstimmung*) between inner and outer world sounds like a somewhat forced late-romantic idea. I am well aware of the semantic history of the term *Stimmung*, previously brilliantly reconstructed by Leo Spitzer and dating back to a both archaeological and eschatological idea of world's harmony³², as well as of the philosophical, Kantian re-interpretation of the concept as an interplay between the faculties³³. But I continue to believe that the view of *Stimmung*/mood as a holistic-harmonious *Erlebnis* is no longer the most topical and useful idea.

It is perhaps a cognitivist prejudice, however, to distinguish a philosophical view of *Stimmung* (Kant) from the earlier psychological (Sulzer)³⁴ or even genetic (*ante litteram*)³⁵ as well as the subsequent (artistic) one. The latter, by defending *Wirkungsästhetik*, turns the soul's *Stimmung* from the content of a work of art to the condition of possibility of any successful communication (Welsh 2011: 137). But it is true that only with Kant *Stimmung* starts to acquire an eminently aesthetic meaning, even before Schiller interprets the Kantian free play as a spe-

³² Let us recall here its basic steps: music of spheres, correspondence between macro- and micro-cosm, in general the traditional repertory of images blending pagan cosmological harmonicist tradition and Christian mystics, for example Jacob Böhme's idea of a world as a musical ordered harmony, whose *signaturae* are musical correspondances-resonances (in a broad sense).

³³ Kant's disinterested pleasure, in fact, is certainly an explicit attack on psycho-physiological theories of resonance in use before but, although more organically based later, also after Romanticism.

³⁴ According to Sulzer – it is worthwhile remembering it – the subject cannot avoid feeling obscure representations acting on their own sensations (Welsh 2011: 134ff.).

³⁵ Gisbertz (2011: 190) reminds us that for a physiologist like Ewald Hering (1870) *Stimmungen* would even express an unconscious memory organically rooted into a plasma passed on from generation to generation.

cific aesthetic mood or attunement. But the special harmonious interplay between imagination and understanding that for Kant makes an aesthetic judgement possible when intuition is not inhibited by concepts, is more a general “disposition towards knowledge” than a real atmospheric tonality (Frei 2011: 81). And yet, this disposition, acting only “as if” it should produce knowledge, does arouse a feeling of furtherance of life that could also be easily understood in an aesthesiological sense, if it is true that even the *Stimmung* of a certain knowledge must be communicable in some way³⁶.

So far the tradition. But *now* “it is no longer necessary to associate *Stimmung* and harmony” (Gumbrecht 2012: 20). In my view, only a preliminary de-axiologization of *Stimmung*/mood (and of atmosphere too) renders them really useful concepts today.

4. A frustrating taxonomy

An established trend defines *Stimmungen* by negation in order to further prove their conceptless nature (see Bulka 2015: 52). Without any illusion of getting rid of every question only by simply pontificating on irreducibility of feelings to precisely classified abstract names, it could be said, in the most general terms, that *Stimmungen*/moods are (a subcategory of) emotions (Prinz 2004: 182-8) not focused on a relatively stable reality but providing a general tone, and maybe for this reason having an ever changing target (Elster 1941: 136). But also the usual comparison between moods and emotions³⁷ provides exceptions and surprises undermining the taxonomic starting point.

a) *Duration*. As more chronic than acute states, moods would last longer than emotions. Because of their slow appearing and disappearing under the influence of both organic life drive and unforeseen situations (Bollnow 1956: 136) they should not be ever confused with superficial moods³⁸.

And yet, their long duration might also depend only on the fact that their less conceptual nature makes them less subject to control than

³⁶ It should be noted that Friedrich Schlegel will talk later about a “logic” and intellectual *Stimmung* also necessary to science (see Reents 2011: 123-4).

³⁷ For a good overview (first of all because it is both anglophone and continental) of the most important differences see Bulka (2015: 52-71).

³⁸ They could be seen as the process through which a self becomes insubstantial (Costa 2014: 142).

emotions (Reisenzein, Siemer 2013: 109, fn. 54). Is, moreover, the fleeting moment atmospherically painted for example by Monet³⁹ really less a *Stimmung* than the long-lasting landscape physiognomy painted by Seurat? Or do both represent a specific moment, but expressing respectively something transitory and something lasting thanks to different techniques (Thomas 2011: 221-3)?

b) *Intensity*. As less intense affects, made possible by a tacit-intuitive ability (*Gespür*) “to emotionally consider a hidden and not really visible fact” (Meyer-Sickendiek 2012: 18; 2011) moods are seen as affective disorders only when they are really intense and pervasive, as when sadness becomes depression for example (Ben-Ze’ev 2000: 89-92).

And yet Heidegger can rightly claim, seeing in *Stimmung* the ontic side of the more general and ontological *Befindlichkeit* (see Kruse 1974: 59, fn. 1) that the latent *Stimmungen* (and thus maybe aware only *ex post*) are certainly the most powerful ones, i.e. those “to which we pay no heed at all, the attunements we least observe, those attunements which attune us in such a way that we feel as though there is no attunement there at all, as though we were not attuned in any way at all” (Heidegger 1995: 68)⁴⁰.

c) *Ubiquity*. Moods look ubiquitous and therefore hard to spatial-temporally locate (Fuchs 2013: 24). They are never absent, so much so that not feeling a mood could even be a mood in turn (Bude 2016: 22), and even protests “against overvaluations of harmony in works of culture” do belong to “a particular mood or cultural atmosphere” (Gumbrecht 2012: 12).

And yet, that *Stimmung*’s object is everything or nothing specific does not seem to exclude the feeling’s specificity, not to mention the fact that this term is often meant as the very rare stationary and harmonious affect resulting from a situation anything but ubiquitous like the one in which one affectively keeps it together without falling into pieces (Krebs 2018: 238).

d) *Unintentionality*. Unlike emotions, moods would be unintentional and have an indefinite and not precisely oriented focus (or

³⁹ Let us think of the many canvases dedicated by Monet to Rouen’s Cathedral in different hours and climatic conditions. See Mahayni (2002).

⁴⁰ There might be a difference, however, in terms of attention between high and depressed moods.

cause), thus revealing existence as such (existentialist option) or an inside situation rather than a state of the world (subjectivist option).

And yet, many examples seem to contradict this claim. There are, actually, specific spaces emotionally tonalised even regardless of the perceiver's viewpoint, affective values objectively codified, moods linked to specific-transitory objects (examination anxiety, afraid of the void, etc.), sometimes resulting from repeated emotional and also intentionally tonalized microexperiences (Parkinson *et al.* 1996: 21)⁴¹, moods that are "blind spots" for the one who feels them but perfectly identified by third parties as affects triggered by certain objects/situations and ruling the social life (Ciompi, Endert 2011: 27-8). The mood-inducing object, moreover, could be simply temporarily out of focus, or it could not be clearly identified just because the mood is indistinguishably triggered by many different but similar objects (Grossart 1961: 75-6; Reizenstein, Siemer 2013, 108-11). It should then not be ignored that there is also a primitive-not localized intentionality "directed at the world at large" or "with alternating objects" without implying a subject-object relationship and for which, significantly, one considers themselves more responsible than for affective disorders and emotions (Ben-Ze'ev 2000: 87, 91). Though apparently unintentional, or intentional in a primitive and pre-dualistic way, moods certainly act as pre-reflexive markers of the resulting situative meaningfulness, thus influencing lived experiences and selectively deciding what and how one should perceive. They act in the manner of a self-fulfilling prophecy (mood congruence) or, at least, as an empty slot waiting for consonant experiences (see Taylor 1985: 48; Slaby 2008: 176-7)⁴². This substantially contrasts, however, with the experience in which a certain mood, instead of focusing on syntonetic situations and forgetting about the discrepant ones, sometimes feels more intensively the latter. In Wilhelm Raabe's literary terms, a sad person takes nature's beauty as a mockery, as an insult, and starts to loathe all seven days of creation (Raabe 1954, quoted by Bollnow 1956: 56) or at least occasionally likes to let themselves be put into unpleasant moods.

e) *Pragmatic uncertainty and dispositionality*. It is said that moods, influencing more the way of perceiving than the perceptual content,

⁴¹ See also Costa (2014: 129-30, 138) and Morris (1989). Even Heidegger does not seem to rule out that a widespread emotion could actually "become" a mood.

⁴² Anyway, if this would always happen, no one could ever live moods and atmospheres incompatible with their previous mood (as is instead normally the case).

lead only indirectly to behavior rather than directly motivating emotions⁴³. They would only act (in the afinalistic mood – present – or thymic-space)⁴⁴ as orientative “dispositions” to foster (or also inhibit) further perceptions and actions⁴⁵. From these background emotions, core affects, etc., different figures can (gestaltically) emerge in the foreground⁴⁶, even antithetic attitudes, as, for example, fatalism and dissent from the “same” climate of irritability characterising late-capitalism, no longer justified by the illusion of a relentless economic growth. The fact of detesting Jago and at the same time feeling compassion for Desdemona indeed arises, as respectively tragic hate and tragic compassion, from an overall common (tragic) mood suggested by the work (Strasser 1956: 109-10).

And yet, one of *Stimmungskunst*’s tricks had always been, on the contrary, the ability of suggesting a certain mood through particular devices (natural or artificial borders and frames) and of precisely specifying the focus, thus placing those moods in the foreground.

f) *Non-producibility*. This very common claim is defended by Heidegger, Kaufmann⁴⁷ and Bollnow, among the others, both before and during Nazism, and cannot therefore be explained (as is Schmitz’s case instead) only as a post-war rejection of the Nazi propaganda’s *Stimmungsmache*. For Hugo von Hofmannstahl, for example, feelings are neither “outer” nor “inner” ones, which is why one must look outside for themselves (Hoffmanstahl 1924, II: 236), as well as for Emil Staiger, who aims at desubjectifying lyric poetry: “we are to be found

⁴³ Even in a physiognomic way: moods actually “do not have a particular facial expression”. Nor is “there [...] an obvious cause-and-effect relationship between our moods and events” (Ben-Ze’ev 2000: 88).

⁴⁴ At least from Binswanger (1953) and Straus (1935) on.

⁴⁵ This is well expressed by saying “being in mood to...” (Lersch 1962: 307). But “disposition” could mean different things: whereas Fuchs (2018: 25-6) reminds us of the reductionist (neurobiological) definition of *Stimmung* in terms of motivating dispositions, based on neuromodular and endocrinen functions and mediated by transmitters like noradrenalin, serotonin, acetylcholine and dopamine, Vendrell Ferran (2008: 147) explains dispositions not as psychic acts but as a way of being in the world eventually influenced by atmospheres and moods.

⁴⁶ This basic mood (*Grundstimmung*) would radiate a basic colour (*Grundfarbe*) that “assimilates” every other impression, obviously only if (Hellpach 1977: 186-7) the mood is intense enough and the outside world adapts enough to that (a low-land cannot by itself radiate violent emotions!).

⁴⁷ “A true *Stimmung* cannot be spontaneously intended; it rises up and overcomes me from the bottom of the reality overcoming me” (Kaufmann 1960: 114).

outside ourselves, outside!” (Staiger 1991: 83). The lyric poet would personally do nothing, but lets themselves go to an at least initially neither external nor internal atmospheric flow⁴⁸, thus limiting themselves to “evoke” a *Stimmung* without directly communicating it, but only preparing the perceiver to it. In other terms, unlike a situation of conventional solemnity, according to Hofmannstahl and Staiger a real festive mood of conviviality cannot be intentionally produced⁴⁹, so much so that the more one tries to create a mood, the less they manage to do that. In view of this non-producibility and unpredictability, it is however surely not enough to simply follow Bollnow, Heidegger and Schmitz and maintain that one is responsible, after an initial involving phase, for saying yes or no to a *Stimmung* or an atmosphere, for example by shaping it by means of a certain “posture” (see Bollnow 1956: 132, 154-61), because this would end up contradicting the previous emphasis on a deep affective involvement. Nor is it enough to say that one successfully fights against a mood only by opposing a contrary and more powerful mood to it, thus somehow using a mechanical-energetic explanation whose intentional governance contradicts the pathicity highlighted elsewhere again.

And yet, the argument of the non-producibility does not prove to be consistent with the widespread and evidently efficient practice of creating, amending or at least optimizing our own mood using drugs and stimulants of any kind, but also, in a more socially promoted way, simply by travelling, doing sport and enjoying art’s cathartic effect. Also media rely on this very possibility of emotional self-determination by human beings as “self-generated animals” (Sloterdijk), counting on *Stimmungen* which media stage and percipient wrongly believe to master. Studies on mood-and-mind-management and the so-called “cultural technologies of emotionalisation” (Hörisch 2011; Anz 2007) seem to actually deny the very influential and traditional theory of moods’ non-producibility.

The list of exceptions to traditional *Stimmungen*/moods’ properties could also go on. We could also point out how they are sometimes more cognitive than emotions⁵⁰, or that, more than other affective

⁴⁸ Which is, anyway, not the mystical whole but an ephemeral felt-bodily awareness.

⁴⁹ For this example, see Bollnow (1956: 52-3); see also Krüger (2013).

⁵⁰ “Emotions bias action, whereas moods bias cognition” (Klotz 2011: 206). See Krebs (2018: 238-9).

states, they can be distinguished according to a vertical dimension (depressed or high moods) or a basic polarity (pleasure -> activation; displeasure -> deactivation)⁵¹, and so on. In absence of a full agreement about their properties (a-f), their ontological (subjective or objective) status and even their role in art communication (are they qualities of the artist, the work or the spectator?), the only conclusion should be that *Stimmungen*/moods are not less hard⁵² to define than emotion as such⁵³. All this is made even more difficult by the fact that every discourse on the affective is linguistically, historically and geographically conditioned. In short: even my cursory glance at this taxonomy clearly shows (see Bulka 2015: 69-71) that it is very plausible without being completely consistent. And then, as we shall see, it is therefore better to think of the affective dimension as a whole in terms of a smooth continuum (Dammerling, Landweer 2007: 5), maybe depending on the degree of objectual focalization (Vendrell Ferran 2008: 146-7).

5. *Stimmungen and atmospheres*

If the widespread and plausible distinction between moods and emotions examined before has proved to be problematic, the distinction between moods and atmospheres is even more difficult. And invoking Heidegger is not of a great help. He says quite bluntly that “an attunement [*Stimmung*] is in each case already there, so to speak, like an atmosphere in which we first immerse ourselves [...] It does not merely seem so, it is so” (Heidegger 1995: 67). He adds that *Stimmungen* follow each other without an actual relationship or, as in the case of bad moods or dystonia, as a reaction to the previous ones⁵⁴. Facilitated in

⁵¹ It's James Russell's "circumplex model of affect": see Fuchs (2013, 27-9).

⁵² Provided that one does not, they think they could get away by simply breaking down a mood (Carroll 2003) into a somatic and a cognitive component.

⁵³ “The conflicting results of the research on the meaning of the word ‘emotion,’ as well as on the meaning and the structural dimension of the words which constitute the emotional lexicon of the languages we have studied thus far, lead researchers to think unanimously that it is currently not possible to identify a proper definition of ‘emotion,’ or to classify the emotional lexicon of a language” (Galati 2002: 143). Some studies even say that it is possible to list ninety definitions of emotion (Kleinginna, Kleinginna 1981).

⁵⁴ I'm not sure that for Heidegger the high moods are based on the depressed ones (Merker 2008: 643, fn. 10). See Heidegger (1962: 389ff.).

his task by avoiding the intriguing issue of meta-moods⁵⁵ as well as by the distinction between authentic and inauthentic⁵⁶, time does not seem to have significantly altered his first approach. Even if at the time of Zollikon Seminars he is far from the previous phenomenology of boredom as a basic *Stimmung*, “conservatively” aimed at overcoming the levitated existence (characterised by the inability to be really moved by something) through a new mission, he still says, thanks to an easy loophole, that moods are neither internal or external nor intentionally producible states.

The example of the young woman’s joyful encounter with her bridegroom. The joy, the so-called joyous affect, is not triggered by the encounter. When she sees him, she can only be joyful because she already was, and is, prepared for the joyful mode of *Da-sein*’s attunement. The man she encounters does not cause this joyful attunement as little as he might have triggered her anxiety earlier during times of illness. He, the man, surely did not change, but she, the woman, did. In fact, her whole relationship to the world changed in that she encounters people differently, especially this man, that is, according to this new “disclosedness” [*Erschlossenheit*]. She has become free for the potentiality-to-be in a joyful attunement. The man does not bring about the joyful attunement, but he fulfills it. The potentiality for the joyful attunement can be, and is, realized through his (the man’s) presence. (Heidegger 2001: 66)

In order to avoid exceptions undermining objectivistic and subjectivistic theories, according to which, respectively, one is either fully taken by external moods or the external reality is tinged by their personal mood⁵⁷, Heidegger and many others prefer to take refuge in the neither/nor or in both/and⁵⁸ escamotage. They repeat (*ad nauseam*!)

⁵⁵ Affective states related to one’s own affective state or someone else’s affective state. See Merker (2008: 646, fn. 14).

⁵⁶ Even applied to thrownness. See Tugendhat (1970: 315ff.). Unfortunately, Bollnow’s criticism of Heidegger, who would consider the entire existence inauthentic (excluding the moment of the decision) to favour the depressed moods and the individual at the expense of collective life (Bollnow 1956: 78-82), often only sounds like optimistically seeing the glass half full.

⁵⁷ Thus eluding Sartre’s either/or: “so a change *has* taken place during these last few weeks. But where? It is an abstract change without object. Am I the one who has changed? If not, then it is this room, this city and this nature; I must choose” (Sartre 1964: 4).

⁵⁸ One can say that “one’s feeling is experienced as something that tunes a space and viceversa, in which one cannot say what genetically comes first or later, what is causing or caused, what is the cause or effect” (Kruse 1974: 61, see also 64), and try to later analytically distinguish, contradictorily, between the impact of attuned

that moods are something “groundless” and “unfounded” (even if ontologically founded, Lipps 1977: 97-8), but thus without paying due attention to the difference between the Sunday mood (a “more” made by silence, slowness, etc.) of which we become probably aware only *ex post*, and the fact of seeing all rosy only because, at that very moment, we are thrilled.

What we are sure of is, instead, that atmospheres and moods are only a variant of that “yearning for presence” (Gumbrecht 2012: 20; see Griffero 2017b; 2018b) which the neo-phenomenological approach contributes to by focusing on the felt body (*Leib*).

Reading for *Stimmung* cannot mean “deciphering” atmospheres and moods, for they have no fixed signification. Equally little does reading for *Stimmungen* mean reconstructing or analyzing their historical or cultural genesis. Instead, it means discovering sources of energy in artifacts and giving oneself over to them affectively and bodily – yielding to them and gesturing toward them. (Gumbrecht 2012: 18)

Even a philosophically very neutral description of mood like this one does not seem to distinguish between moods and atmospheres.

Moods are situated, not just in the trivial sense that they are influenced by events and situations in the world, but in the sense that they are complexly interrelated with the world, in at least three different ways: i) the world provides cultural values and norms that influence how we feel and behave in mood, including how we regulate such feelings and behaviours; ii) the world is also something that we actively manipulate and modify to construct affective niches in which we can undergo moods that would otherwise be out of our unaided organism’s reach; and, finally, iii) sometimes our moods include experiencing aspects of the world as part of ourselves – either of our identity, or of our pre-reflective bodily self-awareness. (Colombetti 2017: 1449)

But there is no agreement also on the distinction between *Stimmungen*/moods and atmospheres. Some simply place moods and at-

spaces on the subject and the impact of one’s mood on the world (Kruse 1974: 61-4). Someone else can rightly claim that “*Stimmung* is I-feeling and world-feeling at the same time”, an “all-feeling” both transsubjective and transobjective (Strasser 1956: 115-7), but later, for better explaining its dynamic, try to distinguish on the one hand how thymic state tinges the reality and on the other hand how the I becomes an echo of external affective situations (Strasser 1956: 112).

mospheres alongside as stationary and even as combining or alternating forms of the vital feeling⁵⁹; for others “atmosphere” means an almost objective and spatially widespread felt reality, whereas *Stimmung* would mean a more subjective emotional state (Böhme 2013: 157) or a certain interpretation of the more objective milieu (Patzelt 2007: 197-8, 203). There are those who link moods to the social-cultural dimension rather than to the environmental one (Hasse 2014: 231), as if they were two poles of a single *Erlebnis* (Henckmann 2007: 45), and those according to whom *Stimmung* usually embraces three phenomena (harmony, mood and atmosphere, Krebs 2018: 237). Some, on the one hand, speak of an atmospheric mood, thus meaning a physiological-psychological whole habitus of nature, i.e. the combined effect of air tone and weather-image that becomes landscape (Hellpach 1946: 63-4)⁶⁰. Some others, on the other hand, say that *Stimmung* means the active-productive aspect of affective sphere and “atmosphere” instead the passive-receptive one (Meyer, Wedelstaedt 2018: 234). Moreover, there are some others who, with good arguments, give *Stimmung* a middle position between atmosphere and subjective feeling (but each time closer to the former or to the latter) within an affective space whose poles are environmental affective characters and felt-bodily resonance (Fuchs 2013). And one could certainly go on with the examples, thus proving how here we are confronted with a great and dizzying diversity of opinions.

6. Schmitz's version

At this stage Hermann Schmitz's neo-phenomenological version of the issue can no longer be overlooked. Here, however, I would like focus only on two points.

a) First of all on the identification of moods and atmospheres. Exactly because the neo-phenomenological approach does not begin with a crucial shift away from our ordinary immersion in the world, it

⁵⁹ Underlining, unfortunately, their common projective nature (Lersch 1962: 306, 309-10, 314-6).

⁶⁰ Thus significantly showing that a widespread nature-mood as, for example, “emptiness”, is not metaphorical at all, because it is not caused by the failure of human intentions or by an axiological nihilism. For an atmospherological and non-metaphorical interpretation of existential emptiness see Griffero (2014c).

is more interested than others in moods⁶¹. According to Schmitz, all feelings are *Stimmungen* and atmospheres in turn are *Stimmungen*, even if not all atmospheres are feelings (Schmitz 1969: 244). More precisely, atmospheres would be *Stimmungen*, or at least the spatial carriers of them understood as feelings covering a non-geometrical spatial extension (Schmitz 1969: 259). He distinguishes then between pure feelings (fulfillment/despair, nostalgia, or the spring mood), which, unlike commotions (always directed from narrowness to vastness), are moods lacking a precise orientation⁶², and other directional feelings-moods, whose extension is, however, based on the kind of extension which is typical of pure feelings' one⁶³. To simplify here a little Schmitz's real "hand-to-hand combat" with the affective sphere, we may say that he does not only distinguish among pure moods, pure arousals and intentional feelings (all with their fluid cross-border areas) but, above all, he brings to light a felt-bodily alphabet. The "letters" of this alphabet, which are combinable with each other, are 1) extension (filled or empty)⁶⁴, 2) depth and superficiality (in varying degrees), 3) directionality (unilateral or all-round, irreversible or reversible in a centripetal or centrifugal way), 4) centering into a condensation sphere and an anchoring point, 5) full centering, needing only a condensation sphere or also an anchoring point, or incomplete centering, 6) quietness or commotion (Schmitz 1969: 351-2). A single example can dispel the suspicion that all these distinctions, based almost for every feeling on three scales (full/empty, deep/superficial, uplifting/depressing) are redundant: for Schmitz a true resigned sadness, for example, is a special kind of sadness since it is quiet, unilaterally depressing and groundless (unlike melancholy and normal sadness, directing downwards), deep, filled and mostly entirely centered through a sphere of condensation and an anchoring point, but not oriented in every direction. The pure mood of total fullness, without being uplifting like joy, is instead a dense, non-directional and non-qualitative fullness and quietness, and so on.

⁶¹ For a survey on some examples of different moods-induced philosophies see Keenan, Ferber (2011).

⁶² They are therefore groundless in this technical sense and showing a full or empty extension in the vastness.

⁶³ "Pure *Stimmungen* come through all feelings" and "form the original layer, the ground or background of feelings" (Schmitz 1969: 263).

⁶⁴ Even if an extension could be felt as a full atmosphere at a certain level but as an empty atmosphere at a different and higher level (Schmitz 1969: 262).

b) The second point I would like to focus on is that according to Schmitz atmospheres and moods are unintentional states. Following a gestalt-psychological suggestion provided by Metzger (1941: 178-83), he explains the apparent intentionality of many (not all) feelings by showing that what appears to be their object is, according to the ground/foreground logic, rather only the point, regardless of whether it is misleading or not⁶⁵, “in which this feeling, as a chaotic and atmospherically effused field, is centred [. . .] thanks to a certain harmony of its proper stimulations” (Schmitz 1969: 311). Exactly just like one usually does not look at the sun directly but only at the things enlightened by it, one often confuses an even occasional condensation point of a feeling with its intentional object: within the atmosphere of, say, the “fear of the dentist”, it might be necessary to distinguish between the sphere of the condensation (the dentist, their tools, the office, the personnel, the whole practice perceived and feared by the patient) and its anchoring point – the real generative location – that is, the pain itself caused by the dentist’s practice, which even paradoxically decreases when waiting ends and one actually experiences it.

If feelings act as storage centers of a more widespread atmospheric irradiation (Schmitz 1969: 322) of culturally stratified feelings and also for this reason permeating a certain sphere of condensation without a true, identifiable, anchoring point (eventually identified only in a second and little more cognitive step), and have therefore an only apparent intentional object, in a sense, they are for Schmitz exactly what *Stimmungen* are⁶⁶. In this way, just as when a pre-*Gestalt* line fails to reach a final *Gestalt* one, moods and atmospheres could be considered as a good exemplification of the fact that an holistic affective situation sustains the eventually subsequent judgement⁶⁷. This explanation of

⁶⁵ In the sad light of the city abandoned by the lover, for example, “it is not the city the object of this sadness but the fact that that person abandoned the city” (Geiger 1911: 168), thus tinging that in a peculiar way. For Metzger (1941: 230) is not unusual to find the anchoring point even “at the opposite end of the condensation area”.

⁶⁶ However, to deny (Schmitz 1969: 319) that the ditched lover’s sadness is primarily caused not by the abandonment (anchoring point) but rather by the sad sensations provided by the environment (sphere of condensation) which remind them of the abandonment seems, maybe, to shift away from a rigorously phenomenological first-person perspective to a third-person causal-genetic one.

⁶⁷ It is (so to speak) the non-pathological variant of the vaguely widespread atmosphericization characterising a schizophrenia in its initial stage. See Conrad (1958:

apparent intentionality in terms of centering/condensing may also not be exhaustive⁶⁸, but certainly best outlines the very common experience of vaguely and holistically feeling atmospheric affordances without managing to focus on a single element. Without being necessarily the insatiable Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, is it not true that one does not love only a person as such but rather (or also) the situation that they temporarily, accidentally and often even inexplicably condense⁶⁹.

7. *The continuum shall remain fluid*

In conclusion, I deliver two suggestions to partially answer our thoughts on moods.

a) First of all it could be said that any distinction among moods, emotions and atmospheres seems unable to convincingly explain the circularity we experience. If a mood objectifies itself into an atmosphere (and even an emotion later, thanks to a more precise point of crystallisation), that mood, however, could be in turn already generated by a previous (pre-formatted in a sense) atmosphere (before triggered, maybe, even by repeated emotions of the "same" type, see Bollnow 1956: 36-7, 107)⁷⁰. Similarly, if an atmosphere subjectifies itself into a mood, for example by losing its thematic reference when entering the personal involvement⁷¹, it is likely that one could not perceive that atmosphere without a moody (pre-formatted as well) background. Well, this focusing-blurring alternation between emotions, moods and atmospheres is for me nothing but a specification of the more general intertwining among different affects, which Musil's idea that "there was neither an entirely specific nor an entirely nonspecific

43ff.) for the typical pre-delusional schizophrenic atmosphere (trema, apophany or *Aha-Erlebnis*, anastrophe, apocalipsis). See also Ratcliffe (2008; 2013).

⁶⁸ Is it possible, for example, that the same "object" is both the anchoring point and the condensation area, as for Schmitz (1980: 275; 1990: 302) in the case of "true" love?

⁶⁹ Something that "flares up inexplicably within the feeling's space of vastness" (Schmitz 1969: 322). It also applies to situations in which an anguishing object is nothing but the crystallized occasion for a more general anguish (Bollnow 1956: 38).

⁷⁰ A frustrated anger, for example, can generate a mood of resentment, which can consolidate into a trait, into a resentful person (Goldie 2000: 150-1).

⁷¹ Tellenbach (1968) claims something similar by distinguishing between atmosphere's impersonal reality and *Stimmung* as unity of I-feeling and world.

emotion" is based on (Musil 1995: 1307)⁷². In other words, exactly as an expression shapes and consolidates the mood into an emotion (without bringing it to an end)⁷³ and an emotion "may blur out of focus into non-specific form, continuing to colour your way of thinking of and feeling towards the world"⁷⁴, thus continuing "to resonate in some non-specific way in your psyche" (Goldie 2000: 148-9), a mood could (spatially) become more focused and thus turn into an atmosphere, whereas an atmosphere could in turn blur out of focus and thus turn into a mood. What is atmospherologically important is only not to conceive (especially in the case of prototypic atmospheres) this fluid temporal process of backgrounding and foregrounding⁷⁵ as something entirely depending on the subject's affective state.⁷⁶

b) It is certainly true that moods increasingly acquired a spatial meaning in the twentieth century (from Binswanger on, see Wellbery 2011: 157)⁷⁷, especially through a combination of Eduard von Hartmann's concept of "situation lyrics" and Schmitz's theory of situation as a multiple-chaotic whole with internally diffuse meaning (Meyer-Sieckendieck 2012: 38). Although moods and atmospheres certainly share a felt-bodily protopathic nature (unlike the more epicritic emotions) – that is, they are felt in a diffuse and not acute way – I would suggest to speak more precisely of atmosphere only when a feeling 1) belongs, unlike the more floating moods, to a certain (pre-dimen-

⁷² If an emotion (in a strict sense) is like "a creature with grasping arms", a mood instead "changes the world in the same way the sky changes its colours without desire or self, and in this form objects and actions change like the clouds" (Musil 1995: 1306).

⁷³ As soon as that arouses it becomes salient (Frijda 1993).

⁷⁴ "There is no 'mood' that does not include specific emotions that form and dissolve again; and there is no specific emotion that, at least where it can be said to 'radiate', 'seize', 'operate out of itself', 'extend itself' or operate on the world 'directly', without an external emotion, does not allow the characteristics of the non-specific emotion to peer through" (Musil 1995: 1307).

⁷⁵ For an application of this dialectics to poetics, even to abstract texts and their fundamental mood ("feeling of rightness"), see Jacobs, Lüdtke, Meyer-Sieckendieck 2013. Meyer-Sieckendieck (2012: 76, 84) suggests to think of the mood field as a "reversible imagine" depending on the prevalence, for various reasons, of the emotion-side, the mood-side or the atmosphere-side.

⁷⁶ See Bulka's (2015: 319) right objection to Goldie (2000: 148).

⁷⁷ Significantly, at the beginning of the nineteenth century the musicologist Hans-Georg Nägeli could still attribute affects to spatial arts and moods to temporal arts (see Klotz 2011: 199).

sional) space, even to a local space in the case of spurious atmospheres⁷⁸, and 2) has a status so objective-external for the perceiver's first-person perspective⁷⁹ to violently oppose the percipient's previous mood.

In short: it is not to deny that *Stimmungen*/moods have a mysterious nature, as Schnitzler brilliantly claims:

"I know the streets, the buildings, I understand the dialect the Viennes speaks, I can see the types of people and social circles, I know about promenading on the Ring, amusements in the Prater, music in Hofburg palace – but what gives these things their savour? Why is it that we are often pervaded by the city's soul, in all its poignant intensity, on a solitary walk in the Prater, or on the old square in front of the Minoritenkirche or at a word from a sweet Viennese girl, that's what I want to know!". "Well, yes", said Hans, "the mystery of the mood [*Stimmung*]!". (Schnitzler 2002: 183f.)

It would however be wrong, even in a philosophical context so open to vagueness and inexplicability of affective life like the atmospherological one (Heidegger 2017: 163), to be really content with mysteries like the one emphatically proclaimed by Schnitzler, thus following a kind of lazy thinking whose traces one may often find in romantic metaphors, for example in the anti-egoic aeolian harp. This wooden box is indeed ruled by the wind's whims rather than by human intentions, but, by continuing the metaphor, one should still explain how to build an aeolian harp in a way so that nature could find in it an adequate and effective sounding board. But here there are no guarantees, given that sometimes nature finds in a person's dispositional mood an insuperable obstacle. As Hamlet reminds Guildenstern:

You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. Sblood, do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, yet you cannot play upon me. (*Hamlet*, act III, scene 2)

⁷⁸ Unlike what Schmitz thinks. For my distinction among different kinds of atmospheric spaces as well as of prototypic, derivative and spurious atmospheres, see Griffero (2014a: 36-47; 2017a: 27-31).

⁷⁹ But a pre-subjective as well as pre-subjective nature for a third-person perspective (Hasse 2014: 229).

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