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The Historical Dimension of Human Existence. Philosophical Perspectives from
Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Narrative Approaches
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Daniele Nuccilli, Emiliano Trizio

Introduction

The historical dimension of human existence should occupy a central place in any philosophical reflection that aims to be radical and self-critical. The issues connected with it invest the very identity, purposes, and possibility of philosophy, which are all constantly brought into play by the evolution of thought. By deciding on them, philosophy decides on its own meaning and destiny. After all, a philosopher meets oneself as philosopher precisely on the terrain of history. However, the historical dimension is also the closest to individual and collective experience; it permeates the lives of individuals and societies primarily, though not solely, through the pervasive role that narratives play in them. This short volume brings together essays on these two only seemingly distant sides of this very broad and jagged field. The reader will find there a first group of essays focusing on the very definition of historicity and the role it plays in the development of philosophical thought. Unsurprisingly, several contributions focus on the phenomenological tradition and, in particular, on Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. The second group of essays, instead, will offer detailed analyses that illustrate how hi/stories and narrative play an essential role in every aspect of individual and collective life.

In his contribution, Filippo Nobili addresses the problem of the so-called “historical turn” in Husserl’s thought in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. By taking into account the cross-references between transcendental subjectivity, the history of philosophy, and the genealogical method, he challenges interpretations that attribute this shift solely to external factors. Instead, he highlights the internal premises that prepared phenomenology’s historicization from within, emphasizing the phylogenetic and ontogenetic dimensions of intentional constitution. In this perspective, the historicity of reason is not merely a theme of phenomenology, but its very transcendental condition, shaping its epistemological grounding. Husserl thus arrives at a new form of philosophical justification, in which historical explanation and epistemological grounding are intrinsically interwoven. In his contribution,

Gaëtan Hulot focuses on a more specific but fundamental aspect of Husserl's relation to historicity by exploring the historical and cultural shaping of sensory experience based on key elements of Husserl's phenomenology of perception. This article addresses current debates in sensory history and anthropology, raising the question of whether perception is historically determined or retains an ahistorical core. Through the lens of Husserl's genetic phenomenology, Hulot distinguishes between a stable core of sensory contents and their historical-cultural "framing" shaped by passive and active genesis. He shows how temporalization, association, receptivity, and evaluative acts contribute to the formation of sensory experience without implying a relativist position, as its foundational structures remain intact. Aris Tsoullos moves on to the subsequent great protagonist of the phenomenological tradition by examining Heidegger's analysis of the polysemic phenomenon of history within the framework of the "question of being" and the structure of *Being and Time*. The article argues that history – both as an object of study and as an intraworldly historical entity – is grounded in *Dasein*, which, as the primary historical entity, discloses the past world through its historicity. From this perspective, Heidegger explores historicity in its structural and modal dimensions, focusing on two key aspects: authentic existence, defined as "destiny" [*Geschick*], and *Dasein*'s inherent situatedness within a particular community and generation, which shape its self-understanding and interpretation of the world through its thrownness [*Geworfenheit*]. In conclusion, the article shows that historicity entails an openness to past generations, whose existential possibilities *Dasein* can repeat [*Wiederholung*], mainly through tradition, historical reflection, and the very question of being itself. In his article, Riccardo Valenti explores the role of expression in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, emphasizing its function in instituting and reinterpreting meaning through a sociogenetic lens. He argues that Merleau-Ponty's later work evolves from a focus on the subject to an ontology of the flesh, wherein expression becomes integral to the historical and temporal evolution of experience. Valenti connects this to Merleau-Ponty's concept of *institution*, where meaning is not fixed but is reconstituted by an ongoing, dynamic process. This dynamic process requires openness and intersubjectivity, as shown in artworks that gain meaning through historical reception. He goes on examining how this institution of meaning is an interplay of continuity and reinterpretation, distinguishing between two forms of historicity: one of "death" and one of "life". The former is a static, "cruel" history unable to grasp the true trajectory of artistic or intellectual evolution, while the latter represents a living, ongoing reconstitution, driven by successive generations. Valenti concludes by affirming that the creation and preservation of meaning

are communal, dynamic processes, sustained through writing, dialogue, and the institutional continuity of tradition. Marco Barbieri's article supplements this series of phenomenological analyses with a contribution that revolves around another *locus classicus*, namely the relation between philosophy of history and theology. More specifically, his contribution explores Pannenberg's concept of revelation within the framework of Löwith's conception of the philosophy of history, according to which Western philosophy of history is, in essence, a secularized form of Christian eschatology. Barbieri highlights how, in Pannenberg's perspective, history is interpreted as the sole medium of divine revelation, examining how this perspective reshapes our understanding of history as a whole. Furthermore, the article analyzes the philosophical and historiographical implications of Pannenberg's approach, arguing that theology and philosophy of history are not inherently incompatible but rather complementary. For this reason, the interaction between these two fields can offer a renewed perspective on the necessity of representing and interpreting historical experience.

The article by Letizia Cipriani and Roberta Lanfredini opens up the second series of contributions by exploring in a phenomenological perspective the relationship between past and narrative through the concept of *orma* (trace). Their analysis focuses on the ontological structure of *orma* and its three fundamental modes – connection, reception, and opening – linked to categories rooted in Husserl's phenomenology: motivational integration, passive synthesis, and variation. This approach allows for an understanding of how traces of the past influence narrative experience, even in the context of pain. Starting with a dataset of texts on the verbalization of pain, the authors show how language reflects the dynamic process of *ormare*, highlighting the role of narration in shaping experience as well as in therapeutic practice. Daniele Nuccilli's article explores three key aspects that shed light on Schapp's understanding of the relationship between human beings and history. The first concerns his theory of values, which is grounded in a historicist perspective on how humans create both abstract and material works as objects of value. The second centers on Schapp's theory of human entanglement in hi/stories, examining how embodied experience shapes the understanding of the past through narration. The third focuses on the theory of the positive world, which posits that individuals are born into and shaped by a world structured around overarching historical narratives and foundational myths that define both personal and collective identities. These three dimensions are deeply interconnected, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding how Schapp's philosophy of hi/stories can help interpret the emergence and comprehension of the past within hu-

man experience. Gigliola Bejaj's article closes the volume by addressing a specific case study, namely the influence of the *Kanun* in shaping Albanian social and historical identities. According to the author, the *Kanun*'s influence on Albanian common sense depends on its being not just a legal code but a cognitive and semiotic system. In a nation as Albany that has long lacked a central state authority and has continuously fought for its cultural and political autonomy, the *Kanun* has served as both legislation and a social contract, binding individuals and communities. The norms governing hospitality and honor function as guarantees of security and reciprocity within an oral culture, where a man's word, his commitment, and his promise hold paramount significance. This is why, according to Bejaj, the *Kanun* is not merely a relic of the past but a living framework through which Albanians continue to make sense of their collective identity, weaving a historical narrative from the time of Illyria to the present.

Finally, we would like to thank the editors of the *Giornale di Filosofia* for hosting this collection of essays and assisting with great patience our work throughout the process¹.

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Filippo Nobili

The Historical Nexus: Historicity, History and Historical Method in Husserl's Phenomenology

...ist das Historische zwar wirksam, aber verdeckt¹

Introduction²

The historical afflatus of Husserl's thought became manifest after the appearance of his last project on *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*³. The reader of the time might have been stunned by phenomenology's "unexpected" historical twist.

In 1949, for instance, Ricœur seemed taken aback and captivated by the "transformation of Husserl's set of problems", apparently at odds with "this thinker, naturally alien to political worries, – apolitical [...] by education, by taste, by profession, by concern for scientific rigour". According to Ricœur, it was the dreadful political situation in Germany during the 1930s, that is "the very tragedy of history that led Husserl to think historically" after decades spent dealing with logical problems and performing eidetic analyses hinged upon the pure Ego. Therefore, to Ricœur, it was only in the aftermath of Nazism's uprising that "the most unhistorical of professors was challenged by history to interpret himself historically". There is no doubt that relying on this merely exogenous explanation, and believing that "nothing in Husserl's earlier work" seemed "to prepare the way for a shift [...] towards a philosophy of history", one ended up disputing "the consistency of transcendental phenomenology"⁴.

¹ E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Ergänzungsband: Texte aus dem Nachlass 1934-1937* [Hua XXIX], Kluwer, Dordrecht 1993, p. 399.

² Unless otherwise stated, all translations from non-English works are my own.

³ As well known, this work stems from the lectures held by Husserl in Vienna and Prague, respectively, in May and November 1935. From those conferences, a partial version of *Crisis* came out in the periodical "Philosophia" (Belgrade) in 1936.

⁴ P. Ricœur, *Husserl et le sens de l'histoire*, in "Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale", 3/4, 1949, pp. 280-282. To be honest, in what follows Ricœur seems to soften his position by looking for

In this respect, it makes little difference if one antedates the “intrusion” of history from the prelude of WWII to WWI⁵. The point to consider is that no exogenous influence could have led to the magnitude of the *Crisis* project without any endogenous preconditions. In order to present itself as a historically relevant philosophy, transcendental phenomenology had to conceal in itself from the outset the reason and the resources to deal with the historical dimension⁶. Accordingly, instead of stressing a supposed discontinuity in Husserl’s philosophy regarding history, this latter reading accounts for its fundamental continuity. Transcendental phenomenology was progressively unfolding its endogenous historical reasons before those exogenous spurs could intervene accelerating and specifying its own ongoing development. As stated by Lembeck, “history seems to become less a theme of phenomenology than, conversely, phenomenology becomes a historical subject in its turn”⁷.

Since the appearance of *Crisis* unfinished project, the release of numerous unpublished lectures and manuscripts enabled many scholars to delve deeper into Husserl’s historical thinking, alternatively focusing on the historicity of transcendental (inter)subjectivity, on his reconstruction of the history of philosophy (as well as phenomenology’s place therein), and on the methodological presuppositions of any historical *Betrachtung*.

In this paper, my aim would not be to scope any of these topics in and for itself, but to highlight their mutual relationship and interdependence within Husserl’s phenomenology. Indeed, there is a kind of inevitable cross-reference among his understanding of the historicity of transcendental subjectivity, the history of philosophy and the historical (genealogical) method thereof. In order to make this *historical nexus* evident, I will first trace its origin in Husserl’s corpus (section 1), then address his conception of historicity according to its onto- and phylogenetic accounts (section 2), and finally outline his historical method as applied in his reading of the history of philosophy (section 3).

some premonitions of phenomenology’s historical “turn” in Husserl’s earlier works. Moreover, the impression of the irrelevance of history for phenomenology was fostered by Husserl’s criticism of “historicism as an epistemological aberration” in the 1911 essay *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft*, although even there he “fully acknowledge[d] the tremendous value of history in the broadest sense for the philosopher” (*Philosophy as Rigorous Science*, in “The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy”, II, 2002, p. 283).

⁵ Cfr. J. Farges, *Husserl et la Grande Guerre: l’irruption critique de l’histoire dans la phénoménologie*, in “Transversalités”, 132, 2015, pp. 43-59.

⁶ Cfr. L. Landgrebe, *Phänomenologie und Geschichte*, Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, Gütersloh 1968, chap. 1; Id., *Die Phänomenologie als transzendente Theorie der Geschichte*, in “Phänomenologische Forschungen”, 3, 1976, pp. 17-47.

⁷ K.-H. Lembeck, *Gegenstand Geschichte. Geschichtswissenschaftstheorie in Husserls Phänomenologie*, Kluwer, Dordrecht 1988, p. 3.

1. A very brief prehistory of Husserl's historical breakthrough

According to Melandri, from a transcendental phenomenological perspective “the premises for an adequate analysis of historicity” are the following: “a) genetic intentional analysis; b) phenomenology of *Zeitbewußtsein*; c) phenomenology of the pre-predicative (*Lebenswelt*); d) definition of spiritual sciences’ regional ontology; e) theory of intersubjectivity”⁸. Consequently, it is not surprising that Husserl came to history only after a long phenomenological apprenticeship, i.e. after having dealt with such preliminary themes and developed a suitable methodology. We can roughly reconstruct this apprenticeship by identifying some key stages of development⁹.

To begin with, let us focus on an interesting excerpt from 1898 on the relation between the history of philosophy and philosophy itself (in this case, theory of knowledge). Introducing the lectures on *Erkenntnistheorie und Hauptpunkte der Metaphysik*, Husserl complains to his students that, since “historically transmitted problems [...] of the main philosophical schools, remain intrinsically unclear [...], [he would] grant little room to historical matters”. This means that, as a result of such historical confusion, the “demand for scientific rigour” of philosophy could not be historically satisfied. Nevertheless, history is not discredited *sic et simpliciter*; its fruitfulness is rather subordinated to a preliminary philosophical clarification: “History is an informative book for those knowledgeable enough to understand how to read it. Anyone without a philosophy cannot learn anything from it. But we wish to possess a philosophy”¹⁰. The pursuit of a genuine philosophy prevails here, and the informative value of history heuristically depends on its prior acquisition.

The point is that, before clarifying his own philosophy, Husserl could not engage in a fruitful reading of the philosophical tradition, since he would lack “a framework against which to see a pattern in history”¹¹. Only in the early years of the 20th century, after the rupture with Brentano’s descriptive psychology and after mastering phenomenological reduction, did Husserl achieve this self-clarification. It was particularly between 1906 and 1908 that he came to understand phenomenology as

⁸ E. Melandri, *Logica e esperienza in Husserl*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1960, p. 234.

⁹ For a more comprehensive examination of Husserl’s conception of history see D. Carr, *Phenomenology and the problem of history: a study of Husserl’s transcendental philosophy*, NUP, Evanston 1974; K.-H. Lembeck, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ E. Husserl, *Allgemeine Erkenntnistheorie. Vorlesung 1902/03* [Hua Mat III], Kluwer, Dordrecht 2001, p. 228.

¹¹ R. Sokolowski, *Husserl’s Interpretation of the History of Philosophy*, in “Franciscan Studies”, 24, 1964, p. 262.

a transcendental discipline, articulating for the first time the main thesis of phenomenological idealism¹². Nearly concomitant with the transcendentalisation of phenomenology was the (re)discovery by Husserl of a genetic intentional analysis¹³, to be distinguished from the research of genetic psychology into the empirical (physiological) and causal origins of conscious states.

Two interrelated outcomes stem from this reassessment of phenomenology. The first concerns Husserl's rereading of the history of (ancient and modern) philosophy. Over the years, this led to a series of introductory courses to philosophy aimed at laying the groundwork for phenomenology¹⁴. It is only at this stage that history becomes *truly informative*. Once in fact the phenomenological canon is clearly established according to its fundamental principles, Husserl could profitably compare and contrast his own work with that of previous philosophers, identifying convergences or divergences, as well as anticipations of transcendental phenomenology. This is why the latter, prior to any exogenous input, could

¹² During the winter semester of 1906-07, the procedure of the epoché is fully described and aptly characterised as propaedeutic to a first philosophy distinct from psychology (cfr. E. Husserl, *Introduction to Logic and Theory of Knowledge. Lectures 1906/07* [CW XIII], Springer, Dordrecht 2008, chap. 5); in the summer of 1907, the themes of intentional correlation and constitution are explicitly addressed (cfr. Id., *The Idea of Phenomenology* [CW VIII], Springer, Dordrecht 1999); the main theses of phenomenological idealism are stated in some manuscripts dating from 1908 (cfr. Id., *Transzendentaler Idealismus. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1908-1921)* [Hua XXXVI], Kluwer, Dordrecht 2003, Nrr. 1-4), as well as the first occurrence of the locution "transcendental phenomenology" (CW XIII, p. 431). On Husserl's trajectory between *Logische Untersuchungen* and *Ideen I* see J.-F. Lavigne, *Husserl et la naissance de la phénoménologie (1900-1913)*, PUF, Paris 2005.

¹³ This topic is controversial, because many scholars usually trace back the birth of genetic phenomenology to later periods, mainly after the first volume of *Ideen* (1913), in works such as *Ideen II* (the first drafts date from 1912-1915), *Bernauer Manuskripte (1917-1918)* or *Analyses zur passiven Synthesis (1918-1926)*. Nevertheless, this contrasts with Husserl's statement to Natorp in 1918: "For more than a decade now, I have moved beyond the stage of static Platonism and given phenomenology as its main theme the idea of transcendental genesis" (K. Schuhmann, E. Schuhmann (a cura di), *Edmund Husserl. Briefwechsel* [Hua Dok III/1-10], Kluwer, Den Haag 1994, 5, p. 137). The key point here is that the transition to transcendental phenomenology authorises Husserl to develop a different conception of (intentional) genesis as opposed to that of genetic (empirical) psychology. The fact that the elaboration of Husserl's main genetic works follows by several years this turning point should not mislead us on this. Moreover, as aptly noted by A.J. Steinbock, "Husserl had already engaged in genetic analyses before phenomenology became aware of itself as having a quite distinct genetic dimension" (A.J. Steinbock, *Home and Beyond. Generative Phenomenology after Husserl*, NUP, Evanston 1996, p. 37).

¹⁴ Cfr. E. Husserl, *Einleitung in die Philosophie. Vorlesungen 1916-1920* [Hua Mat IX], Springer, Dordrecht 2012; Id., *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1911-1921)* [Hua XXV], M. Nijhoff, Dordrecht 1987, pp. 125-144; Id., *Einleitung in die Philosophie. Vorlesungen 1922/23* [Hua XXXV], Kluwer, Dordrecht 2002; Id., *First philosophy. Lectures 1923/24 and related texts from the manuscripts (1920-1925)* [CW XIV], Springer, Dordrecht 2019.

be historicised and conceptualised as “the secret yearning [*geheime Sehnsucht*] of all modern philosophy”¹⁵. Progressively, phenomenology develops into a historical phenomenon and acquires its historical relevance¹⁶.

The second outcome arises from Husserl’s analyses of time-consciousness undertaken from 1904-1905 onwards, and concerns the innermost structural junction among *temporality*, *genesis* and *history*¹⁷. We can already appreciate this breakthrough in some texts from 1907-1908, where Husserl describes intentional constitution as permeated by a kind of inner teleology. The point is that the acts of consciousness

are not free-floating particularities, coming and going in the stream of consciousness. Rather, [...] they display teleological *mutual inferences* [*Zusammengehörigkeiten*], and corresponding connections of fulfilment, corroboration, confirmation, and their counterparts. And everything depends upon the *interconnections* that present intelligible unity. And it is only in these interconnections that the objectivity [...] constitutes itself – not in one blow, but in a gradually ascending process.¹⁸

Accordingly, and correlatively to this temporal process of interconnected lived experiences, objectivity presents itself as historically constituted. In fact, “showing the origin of the presentation of the thing” – as Husserl specifies here, in non-psychological terms – implies “showing the ‘history’ of the presentation of the thing, i.e. attesting to the gradation of acts, teleologically built upon each other”¹⁹.

Hence, what is already ascertained at this stage is the necessary historical trajectory of transcendental phenomenology. If the latter is meant to clarify objectivity *via* the intentional accomplishments of consciousness and both objectivity and consciousness themselves present a temporal – that is, historical – organisation, then phenomenology must also be con-

¹⁵ Id., *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy I: General introduction to a pure phenomenology* [CW II], a cura di M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1982, p. 142, transl. mod. One could even argue that to clarifying this cryptic sentence the *Crisis* project is explicitly and ultimately devoted.

¹⁶ About a decade before *Crisis* this is confirmed in the *Fünf Aufsätze über Erneuerung* (in Id., *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)* [Hua XXVII], Kluwer, Dordrecht 1989, pp. 3-94) commissioned by the Japanese periodical ‘Kaizo’. Here, after the catastrophe of the First World War, Husserl attempts to address the issue concerning the renewal of European humanity by resorting to the phenomenological method.

¹⁷ Cfr. L. Ni, *Horizontal-Intention: Time, Genesis, History – Husserl’s Understanding of Their Immanent Relationship*, in D. Lohmar, I. Yamaguchi (a cura di), *On Time – New Contributions to the Husserlian Phenomenology of Time*, Springer, Dordrecht 2010, pp. 187-211.

¹⁸ CW VIII, p. 55, transl. mod.

¹⁹ Hua XXXVI, p. 13.

sidered, in certain respect, a historical science. Before questioning this specific aspect, let us see how the inner historicity of intentional constitution is confirmed in later works by Husserl:

- i. time-consciousness displays a “genetic ‘history’”²⁰;
- ii. for its part, “the Ego always lives in the *medium* of its ‘history’”²¹;
- iii. each “synthesis, as a synthesis having this form, has its ‘history’, evinced in the synthesis itself”²²;
- iv. “within its doctrine of genesis”, phenomenology reveals “the essence of transcendental subjectivity” as “thoroughly teleological”²³;
- v. thus, intentionally speaking, “history is a graduating process of constituting higher and higher formations of sense through which prevails an immanent teleology”²⁴;
- vi. consequently, “‘constitutive’ phenomenology, phenomenology of genesis, follows [...] the necessary history of this objectivation”²⁵.

2. Historicity: from ontogenesis to phylogenesis

For Husserl, “history in the usual sense of its relation to human culture is only a highest level”²⁶ with respect to the inner historicity of intentional constitution. But how to interpret this sentence? How to make sense of the attempt to explain human history by analogy with the historicity of human consciousness?

Of course, it is not easy to bridge the gap between the “genetic ‘history’” of a certain ego objectifying its own intentional correlate, and the proper history of humankind on Earth. It would require an analogical transition, so to speak, from an *ontogenetic* account to a *phylogenetic* one²⁷, that is the generalisation of the two intentional correlates: no

²⁰ E. Husserl, *Die “Bernauer Manuskripte” über das Zeitbewußtsein (1917/18)* [Hua XXX-III], Kluwer, Dordrecht 2001, p. 27.

²¹ Id., *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy II: Studies in the phenomenology of constitution* [CW III], Kluwer, Dordrecht 1989, p. 350.

²² Id., *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology* [CM], M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1960, p. 79.

²³ Id., *Psychological and transcendental phenomenology and the confrontation with Heidegger (1927-1931)* [CW VI], Kluwer, Dordrecht 1997, p. 102.

²⁴ Id., *Analyses concerning passive and active synthesis: Lectures on transcendental logic* [CW IX], Springer, Dordrecht 2001, p. 270.

²⁵ Ivi, p. 634.

²⁶ Ivi, p. 270.

²⁷ Of course, the two terms used by Husserl should not be understood in their biological sense, but in the context of a phenomenological “intentional” genesis (cfr. E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Dritter Teil (1929-35)*

longer an ego and its object, but humanity as a full-fledged intersubjectivity²⁸ and its life-world²⁹. It is not by accident that Husserl spent so many years dealing with these preliminary steps before he could properly thematise history³⁰.

In what follows, I am not covering in details these developments, nor questioning the legitimacy of Husserl's analogical transition. Instead, I will assume its viability in order to portray his conception. In addition, I will provide some methodological remarks so as to show how Husserl's *modus operandi* is the same in both scenarios – whether it be the individual historicity at stake or that of human communities.

2.1 Historical ontogenesis

As stated in a 1932 manuscript, according to Husserl, experience acquires a historical form via apperception³¹. In general, apperception refers to the way in which consciousness deals with pure experiential sense or sense-value (*Sinngehalt*), independent of the intuitive presentation of what is actually meant, i.e., in our case, aside from the intuitive loss of the historical past. Now, intentionally speaking, history is just a sense-formation resulting from the peculiar dynamic of sense-apperception.

Every such proper historicity is a layer of sense [*Sinnschicht*] that must have inserted itself into the already constituted capacity for constitution, one that obviously demands a founding original establishment [*Urstiftung*]. This applies to each individual object as historically understood and again to the

[Hua XV], M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1973, p. 595; Id., *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie. Analysen des Unbewusstseins und der Instinkte. Metaphysik. Späte Ethik. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1908-1937)* [Hua XLII], Springer, Dordrecht 2013, p. 98; Id., *Späte Texte über Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934). Die C-Manuskripte* [Hua Mat VIII], Springer, Dordrecht 2006, p. 170).

²⁸ Cfr. Id., *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Erster Teil (1905-1920)* [Hua XIII], M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1973; Id., *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Zweiter Teil (1921-1928)* [Hua XIV], M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1973; Hua XV.

²⁹ Cfr. Id., *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1916-1937)* [Hua XXXIX], Springer, New York 2008.

³⁰ Cfr. Id., *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Eine Einleitung in die phänomenologische Philosophie* [Hua VI], M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1976; Hua XXIX.

³¹ Cfr. Hua XXXIX, Nr. 44. In this manuscript Husserl emphasises the noetic side of apperception: "The title 'apperception' denotes the law according to which newly constituting experience not only originally establishes its acquisition or habituality for effective and potential repeating experiences, but also an implicit habituality for an entire genre of altered experiential sense, for experiences *as if* they had originally been established" (ivi, p. 503).

possible whole historical style of a given perceptual present. Once it has been constituted, a transposing apperception to every other similar real present that confronts me necessarily takes place, and again as a re-transposition to the surrounding past world [...].³²

For the late Husserl, apperception operates according to a dual modality: as a transposition (*Übertragung*)³³ of past (sedimented/experienced) sense onto new experiences *and* as a re-transposition (*Rückübertragung*) of new (bestowed/acquired) sense to the sedimented/experienced one³⁴. At the very heart of Husserl's understanding of intentional constitution, lies this kind of recursiveness. Experience should not be understood as a linear (temporal) process; rather, it is always characterised by a sort of retroactivity rooted in subjectivity, which enables and drives its development and enhancement.

This retroaction [*Rückwirkung*] on the past being value, this re-transposition of subsequently acquired apperceptions, knowledge, and corrections onto the mnemonic reservoirs [*Erinnerungsbestände*] is a universal fact and must be carefully elucidated.³⁵

So, we must consider this “fundamental dual pace [*Doppelschritt*] of constitution: as a constitution that proceeds and recedes [*fortschreitende und rückschreitende*]”³⁶. There is no doubt that this pivotal dynamic is prescribed to apperception by the inner structure of time-consciousness, and in particular by what Husserl calls the intertwining (*Verflechtung*) or the being in each other (*Ineinander*) of protentions and retentions³⁷.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ More occurrences in Id., *Experience and Judgement. Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic* [EJ], Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1973, p. 124 (translated as “transference”); Hua Mat VIII, pp. 15, 161, 210, 337; Hua XXXIX, *passim*.

³⁴ To fully grasp the process of intentional “sedimentation” would require further specifications and technicalities (see my *La prospettiva del tempo. L'idealismo fenomenologico di Husserl come autoesplicitazione della soggettività trascendentale*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2022, § 3.2). For our purposes here, the geological metaphor, to which each constitutive accomplishment precipitates (being preserved) in what Husserl calls secondary passivity, should suffice.

³⁵ Hua Mat VIII, p. 160.

³⁶ Hua XXXIX, p. 505.

³⁷ Cfr. Hua XXXIII, Nrr. 1-2. In a nutshell: each retention preserves former experiences (including previous protentions) synthesizing the unity of the elapsed phases of the stream of consciousness; on this (motivational) basis, each protention can anticipate experience to come and further phases of the stream (including further retentions) in a kind of stylistic projection of the past into the future, and so on. This interlacement of protentional and retentional tendencies gives consciousness its peculiar recursive dynamic of *protentional projection* beyond itself (forward to the transcendence of the

Due to this non-linear, i.e. recursive (self-)temporalisation, subjectivity penetrates the historical dimension:

The upward-advancing constitution into the future integrates the successive acquisitions of each new present phase, acquisitions that it habitually preserves. Thus, it is historical, as it constitutes the 'I' as a *historical being*.³⁸

At this point, we should underscore the *epigenetic* status of this historical being. The subject should not be considered historical from the outset; rather, it becomes historical by retaining (sedimenting) the sense-value of its previous experiences in a sort of “continuously integrally cohesive system of sediments existing in concealment”³⁹. This is the domain of what Husserl labels *secondary passivity*, describing it as a “constant reservoir [*beständige Reservoir*]”⁴⁰ or a “stock of sense [*Sinnesbestand*]”⁴¹, which is corroborated or reshaped over and over, in the light of every new experience. It is the domain of an “implication of consciousness [*Bewußtseinsimplikation*]”⁴², namely a stage of intentional latency in which “the sense remains identical, it has only become veiled, it has shifted from an explicit sense to an implicit one”⁴³. Nonetheless, this latency to which each “sense is still implicitly there in a ‘dead’ shape” and “without streaming life”⁴⁴ is the precondition for its actual preservation and possible reactivation.

Historicity is thus a noetically acquired form. But this is also true of the noematic side of constitution, in that this intentional retroactivity correlative involves objectivity. That is why “‘objects’ do not fall out of the sky into our consciousness”, but result from “an intentional hereditary transmission [*Vererbung*] [...] that henceforth co-shapes the present itself”. According to Husserl, the apperceptive noematic correlate of the noetic habitualisation of the ego is the formation of objective types. Here, too, we find the “formation [*Bildung*] and the continuous integration of a *permanent* intentional acquisition”, from which follows that “everything we perceive [...] is somehow already ‘apperceived’ already ‘apperceived’

world) and *retentional introjection* within itself (backward to its own immanence). See once more my *La prospettiva del tempo*, cit., § 2.3.2.

³⁸ Hua XXXIX, p. 506.

³⁹ CW IX, p. 234.

⁴⁰ Ivi, p. 227.

⁴¹ EJ, p. 34.

⁴² Hua XXXIII, p. 43.

⁴³ CW IX, p. 223.

⁴⁴ Ivi, p. 227.

according [*Typus*]"⁴⁵. This typification amounts to a pre-categorisation of reality, ensuring a schematic-apperceptive pre-cognition of actual experience. If "the type is forged and gets impressed on us [...] and it determines an apperceptive form"⁴⁶, then "at the first glance at the new we have a sense schema [*Sinneschema*] of what to expect"⁴⁷.

In the light of the above, the noetic-noematic (habitual-typical) system of sense sediments represents an epigenetically developed *a priori*, from which the meaningfulness of the surrounding world results. Since "each subsequent [case] *eo ipso* has the 'character of familiarity [*Bekanntheit*]' and creates 'apperception' *a priori*"⁴⁸, then the world always appears to us as filtered through a general "sense framework [*Sinnesrahmen*]", to which experience unfolds according to certain "sense predelineations [*Sinnesvorzeichnungen*]"⁴⁹. In the end, due to the implicit sedimentation of sense, we obtain a "typical pre-cognition [*Vorbekanntheit*]" of the world, which is always given to us according to a certain degree of "pre-knowledge [*Vorwissen*]" and "pre-validity [*Vorgeltung*]"⁵⁰.

Thus, also the world, apperceptively constituted as the total horizon of all possible experiences, reveals itself as historically become: "I do not assume the pre-given world in its pre-givenness and in its being so, but rather I make [*mache*] the pre-givenness of the world"⁵¹. "The lifeworld is always in motion [*im Bewegung*]", constantly "re-edited" by the apperceptive re-transposition of new "sense coverings [*Sinnesauflagen*]"⁵².

Finally, due to apperception, reality is thoroughly historicised:

the constitution of enduring realities, as to [their] seed [Keime], includes a moment of historicity. But in the advancement of experience [...] the far historicity is constituted in what is effectively remembered, and this then en-

⁴⁵ Id., *Natur und Geist. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1927* [Hua XXXII], Kluwer, Dordrecht 2001, p.145. On types see D. Lohmar, *Husserl's Type and Kant's Schemata: Systematic Reasons for Their Correlation or Identity*, in D. Welton (a cura di), *The New Husserl. A Critical Reader*, IUP, Bloomington (IN) 2003, pp. 93-124; E. Diaz, *Transcendental Anticipation: A Reconsideration of Husserl's Type and Kant's Schemata*, in "Husserl Studies", 36, 2020, pp. 1-23. See also A. Pugliese, *Rinnovamento e mediazione. Husserl e Dilthey di fronte alla storia*, in L. Auteri, M. Di Gesù, S. Tedesco (a cura di), *La cultura in guerra. Dibattiti, protagonisti, nazionalismi in Europa (1870-1922)*, Carocci, Roma 2015, pp. 265-274, for a possible derivation of the notion of *Typus* from Dilthey and its historical import.

⁴⁶ CW 3, p. 285, transl. mod.

⁴⁷ Hua XXXIX, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Ivi, pp. 10 f.

⁴⁹ CW IX, pp. 44 f.

⁵⁰ Cfr. EJ, § 8.

⁵¹ Hua Mat VIII, p. 41.

⁵² Hua XXXIX, p. 514.

ters in the apperception of new experiential typicalities. Thus, the typicality of becoming [*Typik des Werdens*] is constituted. But from the experiential typicality of realities, there occurs a constant re-transposition onto what was apperceived in an earlier past, so that it now apperceptively acquires a *historical form*.⁵³

At the ontogenetic level, historicity is rooted in this intentional retro-activity⁵⁴, that is in the capacity of consciousness to keep trace of and constantly remodel – through apperception – its constitutive achievements.

2.2 Historical phylogenesis

As mentioned above, the transition to phylogenetic history involves the shifting from the genesis of subjectivity to the *generativity* of intersubjectivity. In turn, this presupposes the passage from immanent time to *intersubjective* or *objective* time, i.e. a “socialised temporality”, through a sort of “intermonadic temporalization”⁵⁵. In *The Origin of Geometry*, Husserl reports that

the whole of historical time implied in [the present] is that of a historically unitary-unified humanity, unitary through its generative connection and constant communalization [*Vergemeinschaftung*] in cultivating what has already been cultivated before, whether in cooperative work or in reciprocal interaction, etc.⁵⁶

Just as the ontogenetic historicity implies the (self-)constitution of the individual subject, history in the phylogenetic sense presupposes the constitution of a plural subject (groups, communities, nations, etc.). Thus, hu-

⁵³ Ivi, p. 506.

⁵⁴ Speaking about the birth of the modern conception of history, R. Koselleck underscored “this retroactive structuration of the past”, remarking how “historical time acquired a quality of generating experience [*erfahrungsstiftende Qualität*], which, retroacting [*rückwirkend*], permitted the past to be seen anew” (R. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt A.M. 1995; transl. by K. Tribe, *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*, CUP, New York 2004, pp. 141 and 138, transl. mod.).

⁵⁵ See respectively L.M. Rodemeyer, *Intersubjective Temporality. It's About Time*, Springer, Dordrecht 2006; D. Lohmar, *On the Constitution of the Time of the World: The Emergence of Objective Time on the Ground of Subjective Time*, in D. Lohmar, I. Yamaguchi (a cura di), *On Time*, cit., pp. 115-136; A. Pugliese, *Unicità e relazione. Intersoggettività, genesi e io puro in Husserl*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2009, pp. 383 ff.; I. Yamaguchi, *Intermonadic Temporalization in Simultaneous Reciprocal Awakening*, in D. Lohmar, I. Yamaguchi (a cura di), *On Time*, cit., pp. 295-317.

⁵⁶ E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy* [C], NUP, Evanston 1970, p. 374, transl. mod.

man history in common sense can be seen as the intentional correlate of an ongoing process of humanisation, i.e. the (self-)constitution of humanity as a unitary whole: “Only once we have entered into the sense-formation of the all-humanity [*Sinnbildung der Allmenschheit*], we have this all-humanity”⁵⁷. The point is that our “social-historical world [...] is historical only through the inner historicity of the individuals”, but only insofar as their historicity is “together with that of other communalized persons”⁵⁸.

Husserl addresses this crucial aspect in a 1934 manuscript entitled *Menschliches Leben in der Geschichtlichkeit*. Here, he portrays different degrees of historicity, each corresponding to a particular stage of development of human society. Inspired by the works of the French anthropologist L. Lévy-Bruhl⁵⁹, the most primitive stage is characterised by a sort of “original animism”. At this level, we find a yet “latent” or “hidden historicity” according to which humanity lives in a “concrete historical present without an essential historical consciousness, if we understand by it the kind of knowledge that is generally accessible through the reconstruction of what we ‘call’ world history or national history”⁶⁰. The absence of an individual historical consciousness is precisely correlated with an underdeveloped degree of communalisation, i.e. to a lack of what Husserl elsewhere calls “communal self-cognition [*Gemeinschaft-Selbsterkenntnis*]”⁶¹.

While humans surpass animals in that they have steadily constituted the unity of their lifetime [*Lebenszeit*] and possess it as their horizon of life, [...] within the original communal historicity they do not yet possess a historical time in the full and usual sense, in which their individual-historical existence is consciously embedded. That is to say, they have not developed it as available knowledge, as objectualisation and explicitation of generative temporality – the totality of communal time-life – which allows the intersubjective coexistence [*Miteinander*] to be bound within [the] life community, as available community-past, community-present, and community-future [...]. Correlatively, the explicit history of the surrounding world is not fully developed.⁶²

For Husserl, the emergence of an explicit form of history – for example, in the Greek world with Herodotus and Thucydides – means

⁵⁷ Hua XXIX, p. 347.

⁵⁸ C, p. 372 n.

⁵⁹ Cfr. D. Moran, L. Steinacher, *Husserl's Letter to Lévy-Bruhl: Introduction*, in “The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy”, VIII, 2008, pp. 1-23.

⁶⁰ Hua XXIX, pp. 3 f.

⁶¹ CW XIV, p. 487.

⁶² Hua XXIX, p. 5.

acknowledging that “*historiography* is a function for a higher mode of human existence”⁶³. However, to penetrate this new existential dimension implies the pre-constitution of a “community horizon [...] for the multiplicity of the current co-representing, co-thinking, co-evaluating, co-operating, co-producing, a coexistence of conflict-free concordance or of conflicting disagreement”. Of course, the possibility of such a “communalisation of *cogit[at]iones*”, through “mutual understanding and doing”, requires an “empathising appresentation [*einfühlende Appräsentation*]” by which “one’s own perception and memory are complemented by those of others”. The result is a sort of “generative overlapping [*Überschiebung*]”⁶⁴ that unifies a multiplicity of life(time) trajectories in a whole historical community with its unitary communal history⁶⁵.

If, on the spatial axis, the historicisation both requires and has required human communalisation through exchange between different people or populations, on the temporal axis, the constitution of a “historical past” for a given community entails at least “a layer of living traditionalisation [*Traditionalisierung*]”. As much as the “unknown history of humanity is the analogue to the forgotten past of [individual] memory”⁶⁶, the making of tradition mirrors the above-mentioned process of sense sedimentation and reactivation via apperception. Husserl depicts geometry as traditionally shaped by a sort of intergenerational synthesis, wherein each spiritual accomplishment resumes all the previous ones and serves as a premise for further acquisitions⁶⁷.

Accordingly, each tradition is something like a “chain [*Kette*]” of sense, the rings of which are added to one another over time⁶⁸. Alternating phases of active production, passive preservation and reactivation of sense, this concatenation mimics the recursive dynamic of ontogenetic constitution. Indeed, the goals set by past generations in their original establishment (*Urstiftung*) “live on in sedimented forms [and] can be reawakened again and again” by means of their “reestablishment [*Nachstiftung*]”⁶⁹. Of course, as attested in *The Origin of Geometry*, this phylogenetic sedimentation requires the “linguistic embodiment [*Verleiblichung*]”⁷⁰ or,

⁶³ *Ibid.* Just as science in general, but before it becomes a proper science, historiography represents a “tendency of humanity”, its “motivation for developing a reconstruction [...] of epochs and, possibly, the entire past of a people”, through the “documentation of significant facts [...] memorials, inscriptions, literary objectivation” (*ibid.*).

⁶⁴ *Ivi*, pp. 6 f.

⁶⁵ Cfr. *ivi*, pp. 234 f.

⁶⁶ *Ivi*, p. 343.

⁶⁷ Cfr. *C.*, p. 355.

⁶⁸ *Ivi*, p. 363.

⁶⁹ *Ivi*, p. 71.

⁷⁰ *Ivi*, p. 358.

more broadly, some kind of documental reification of the underlying intention that enables the “virtual” communication across generations⁷¹.

The crucial point however is that, by virtue of a “passive taking-over [Übernahme] of being-validity”, “what was a passive sense configuration has now become one that is being shaped through active production”⁷². To reactivate a tradition always entails (re)articulating out (*herausartikulieren*⁷³) of its sedimented form the ‘original’ implicit intention, so that the latter undergoes “a more or less radical reshaping”⁷⁴. This clarifies why, on closer inspection, the “resumption [Wiederaufnahme]” of tradition is never a neutral operation, since “normally the taking-over and the correction combine with each other”⁷⁵.

Ultimately, the recursiveness of the dynamic is also evident in Husserl’s phylogenetic definition of history: “History is from the start nothing other than the vital movement of the being with and in each other [Miteinander und Ineinander] of original sense-formations and sense sedimentations”⁷⁶. Compared to the primordially of ontogenetic historicity, the difference lies in the amplitude of the same dual pace of constitution: “Through the intersubjectivity of existence, the finitude of the primordial world with its primordial spatiotemporality obtains an *expansion* in its backward and forward extensibility [Rückerstreckbarkeit und Vorerstreckbarkeit]”⁷⁷.

To complete the analogy between ontogenetic and phylogenetic historicity, we must reconsider the issue of the *a priori* and grasp its historical and generative significance – that is to decipher what Husserl terms “*a priori* of history”, “*a priori* of historicity” or “historical *a priori*”⁷⁸. Just as every individual experience is implicitly loaded with sedimented sense, each intersubjective “historical temporality” owns its “historical presuppositions”⁷⁹. These presuppositions are nothing but “sense implications concealed through sedimentation or traditionalization”⁸⁰, which confer upon a certain epoch and community a “unified traditional praxis”, shaped by the “performances of a sedimented style”. Throughout the generative *Sinnbil-*

⁷¹ Ivi, p. 361. Elsewhere Husserl stresses the “need for a recording of history” (Hua XXIX, p. 40).

⁷² C, p. 364, transl. mod.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Ivi, p. 71.

⁷⁵ Ivi, p. 393.

⁷⁶ Ivi, p. 371, transl. mod.

⁷⁷ Hua XXXIX, p. 501.

⁷⁸ See for example Hua VI, pp. 362 f., 380-383, 553; cfr. A.S. Aldea, A. Allen (a cura di), *Special Issue: Historical A Priori in Husserl and Foucault*, in “Continental Philosophy Review”, 49, 2016, with essays among other by D. Moran, J. Dodd, S. Crowell, D. Carr.

⁷⁹ Hua VI, p. 344.

⁸⁰ C, p. 52, transl. mod.

dung, the *a priori* of history precisely concerns the possibility to inscribe (*hineinschreiben*) and prescribe (*vorschreiben*) “a total lifeworld style” of experience⁸¹ within and to a certain historical community. Once again, considering the special status of this *a priori*, we are led back to the intentional implicitness of sense, albeit this time in a phylogenetic fashion:

The whole of the cultural present, understood as a totality, “implies” the whole of the cultural past in an undetermined but structurally determined generality. To put it more precisely, it implies a continuity of pasts which imply one another, each in itself being a past cultural present.⁸²

For this reason, “to understand geometry or any given cultural fact is to be conscious of its historicity, albeit ‘implicitly’”, since only in the light of this “*inner structure of sense*” or “ground of sense [*Sinnesboden*]”⁸³ can one think or act meaningfully, partaking of this socio-historical framework of meaning.

At this point we should question, as Husserl does, the peculiar status of such a historical *a priori*, trying to escape from what seems to be an inexorable *contradictio in adiecto*. How can we reconcile the ideal validity of the *a priori* with its historical origin, that is, with its being “a formation within human, in us who form it”? In other words: “Historical facts [...] are objective only on the basis of the *a priori*. Yet the *a priori* presupposes historical being?”⁸⁴.

Without pretending to solve the question here, I would distinguish, on the one hand, 1) the formal ideality and universal validity of the laws governing the historical formation of certain sense configurations (i.e. the *aprioricity* of history, its *historicity*); on the other, 2) the specificity, the contingent and historically developed determinacy of this configuration (the *historicity* of the *a priori* itself, its *generativity*)⁸⁵.

⁸¹ Hua XXIX, pp. 345 f.

⁸² C, p. 371.

⁸³ Ivi, pp. 370 f., transl. mod.

⁸⁴ Ivi, pp. 349 f.

⁸⁵ Let us clarify with an example: the crisis of Western rationality described by Husserl in his last work is by no means a historical necessity (counterfactual alternatives are easily conceivable). Rather, it is a spiritual (sense) formation resulting from a specific contingent course of history, shaped by a particular generativity. Nevertheless, this crisis is implicitly sedimented within the Western community and permeates the *Zeitgeist* of the current epoch, by and large pre-determining people’s attitudes, actions, thoughts, values, etc. In this sense, with respect to this specific epoch, it could and should be considered a “historically developed *a priori*” according to 2) but not 1). Conversely, the “*a priori* of history” in terms of 1) refers to what constitutes *historicity* as such – both ontogenetically and phylogenetically – namely, the eidetic laws (habitualisation, typification, communalisation, traditionalization, etc.) that necessarily govern any possible historicisation in terms of 2).

The validity of 2) is “*a priori*” only insofar as it acts as a “hidden spiritual heritage”⁸⁶, uncritically permeating and swaying a given epoch or society, as it were, as an ideology. This is why it is crucial for Husserl to understand the ideality of 1), in order to reveal the contingency of 2), whose validity remains “*a priori*” as long as its genesis is not uncovered and its sense-value is not criticised.

3. Historical method and the history of philosophy

3.1 From intentional historicity to historical method

In the 1920s, the discovery of the process of sedimentation and the attempt to develop a “doctrine of intentional intertwinement”, i.e. a “doctrine of implications”⁸⁷, led Husserl to specify and rephrase his own phenomenological method. If “[the solving of] all secrets lie[s] in the clarification of implication”⁸⁸, phenomenology must achieve the explicitation (*Auslegung*) of such intentional implicitness. Thus, at the end of the 1920s, the notion of *Auslegung* was employed by Husserl to reformulate the two branches of phenomenological analysis in terms of “*statische intentionale Auslegung*” and “*intentionale Auslegung der Genesis*”⁸⁹.

This new insight becomes paramount to the point of equating phenomenological idealism as such with transcendental subjectivity’s self-explicitation (*Selbstausslegung*)⁹⁰. Therefore, in the 1930s, after the failed attempt to reorganise the *Pariser Vorträge* into a full-fledged phenomenological system⁹¹, the new paradigm of the *Auslegung* becomes the innermost tenet of the *Crisis* project. In fact, Husserl’s aim here is to make explicit the specific *telos* latently hidden in the history of thought and expressing the historical need for transcendental phenomenology. But what does Husserl’s methodological self-clarification consist of? To what extent can this method be considered inherently historical?

As F. Schiller pointed out, the principle of historical reflection requires the historian to begin by considering a present state of affairs, and, only

⁸⁶ Hua VI, p. 488.

⁸⁷ CW XIV, p. 516.

⁸⁸ Ivi, p. 571 n.

⁸⁹ E. Husserl, *Formal and transcendental logic* [FTL], M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1969, Appendix II, § 2a-b.

⁹⁰ FTL, § 104; CM, § 41. More on that in my *La prospettiva del tempo*, cit., chap. 4.

⁹¹ Cfr. I. Kern, *Einleitung des Herausgebers*, in Hua XV, pp. xv-xx; D. Welton, *The Other Husserl. The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology*, IUP, Bloomington 2000, pp. 117-130.

then to move upstream to the origins of the state in question: “World history thus begins from a principle that stands in direct opposition to the beginning of the world”. Historical research cannot escape the assumption of one or more alleged starting points capable of steering the analysis through the past, towards its own goal. Accordingly, the historian openly contrasts the actual order of succession of events: she “climbs up in thought [*in Gedanken hinaufsteigt*]” the unfolding of history in order to *regressively* collect those facts that contain the explanation of the following ones. In so doing, the historian relies on the resulting collection of facts as a set of “guiding threads [*Leitfäden*]” to *progressively* reconstruct, according to nexuses of causal or motivational dependence, the effective course of such development⁹². More recently, but in a similar vein, M. Bloch has emphasised such a “backwards [*à rebours*]” reading of history, the “prudently retrogressive method” of the historian, whose attempt is “first to unwind the spool in the opposite direction to that in which the shootings were taken”⁹³.

Not surprisingly, this account of the work of the historian aligns with the procedure of genetic phenomenology. The latter consists of a double movement of *Abbau-* and *Aufbau-Analyse*⁹⁴ that reverses the ordinary course of constitution. Assuming certain (already constituted) sense-validities or configurations as many *Leitfäden*⁹⁵, Husserl performs his well-known *backward questioning* (*Rückfrage*) to retrace the intentional genesis of what was merely presupposed.

The *Rückfrage* consists of a kind of “deconstructive reduction [*Abbau-Reduktion*]”, whose purpose is to dismantle all the “deconstructive layers [*Abbauschichten*]”⁹⁶ corresponding to as many constitutive achievements as have been sedimented all along the *Sinnbildung*. This

⁹² F. Schiller, *Was heißt und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?* [1789], in R. Boxberger (a cura di), *Schillers Werke. X/1 Universalgeschichte*, De Gruyter, Berlin-Boston 1974, pp. 14 f. A digital edition is available here: https://www.deutschestextarchiv.de/book/show/schiller_universalgeschichte_1789 (pp. 24 f.)

⁹³ M. Bloch, *Apologie pour l'histoire ou métier d'historien* [1940-43], Armand Colin, Paris 1949; transl. by P. Putnam, *The Historian's craft*, Vintage Books, New York 1953, pp. 45 f., transl. mod.

⁹⁴ Cfr. E. Fink, VI. *Cartesianische Meditation*. Teil II: *Ergänzungsband* [Hua Dok II/2], Kluwer, Dordrecht 1988, pp. 6 ff.; Hua Mat VIII, pp. 69, 185 ff.

⁹⁵ The preliminary eidetic clarification (*Aufklärung*) of these sense-validities is the assignment of static phenomenology viewed as the “phenomenology of guiding threads, phenomenology of the constitution of guiding types of objectualities” (Hua XIV, p. 41).

⁹⁶ Hua Mat VIII, p. 394. More occurrences of the *Abbau-Analyse* in *ivi*, pp. 50, 53, 89 n., 107 n., Nr. 23, 134 f., 166, 224, 402; CW IX, p. 516; Id., *Zur phänomenologischen Reduktion. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1926-1935)* [Hua XXXIV], Kluwer, Dordrecht 2002, p. 386; cfr. J. Claude Evans, *Phenomenological Deconstruction: Husserl's Method of Abbau*, in “Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology”, 21, 1, 1990, pp. 14-25.

first *regressive* movement amounts to what Husserl labels “phenomenological archaeology”⁹⁷. Thence, a second movement conducts a *progressive* reconstruction (*Neuaufbau, Rekonstruktion*)⁹⁸ of what has previously been dismantled, rebuilding the intentional nexuses and explaining (*Erklärung*) the genesis of the actual *Sinngebilde* according to its teleological development.

Having outlined the historical-genealogical character of Husserl’s method, let us now examine how it is productively applied in the *Crisis* project. In doing so, the essential link between phenomenology and history will appear fully evident.

3.2 Inner historiography and performative teleology

When Husserl claims that “what is historically primary in itself is our present”⁹⁹, he is in fact acknowledging the *situational perspectivity* presupposed by any historical reflection¹⁰⁰. If “the most essential of the historical performances” is the one that “from humanity’s actual self-consciousness [...] inquires back to the past that is contained in it”¹⁰¹, then we should not overlook the “higher form of self-responsibility” that characterises the historian as “co-living [*Mitlebender*]”¹⁰² in a certain communal world¹⁰³.

⁹⁷ Hua Mat VIII, p. 356; cfr. CW XIV, p. 234; Hua Dok III/2, p. 260. Cfr. B. Bégout, *La généalogie de la logique. Husserl, l’antéprédicatif et le catégorial*, J. Vrin, Paris 2000, pp. 241-248.

⁹⁸ Cfr. Hua Mat VIII, pp. 157, 437.

⁹⁹ C, p. 373.

¹⁰⁰ According to R. Koselleck, a first understanding of the historian’s standpoint constraint or commitment (*Standortbindung*) and the consequent “temporalisation of the historical perspective” goes back to the work of J.M. Chladenius in the 18th century. Precisely this understanding led to the abandonment of the naïve belief in the historian’s suprapartisanship (*Überparteilichkeit*) in favour of a growing pressure for actively participating to (*Parteizwang*), for taking sides in the course of history, especially after the French Revolution (*Futures Past*, cit., chap. 9). On the same issue, see also the lecture on “History, Science and Morality” by E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, Penguin, London 1990, chap. 3. Similarly, Husserl would criticise “the popular demand to exclude all ‘value judgements [*Wertungen*]’ of the historian, as contrary to the pure science of the historian” (Hua XXIX, p. 243). More on this in D. De Santis, *Il “mestiere” dello storico. Husserl e la fondazione fenomenologica della storiografia*, in E. Husserl, J. Klein, *Fenomenologia e metodo storico*, ETS, Pisa 2023, pp. 11-25.

¹⁰¹ Hua XXIX, p. 238.

¹⁰² Ivi, p. 241.

¹⁰³ Since I cannot address the ethical-political implications here, I will simply emphasise that it is by penetrating such social-historical responsibility that the phenomenologist’s transition from the “nonparticipating spectator” (C, 285) to the “functionar[ly] of mankind” (ivi, p. 17) – “as participating scientist, participating philosopher” (ivi, p. 492) – takes place.

Accordingly, the current crisis of rationality¹⁰⁴ represents the starting point of Husserl's regressive and progressive analysis, whose dual goal is, at once, to track down the historical roots of the present state of affairs and to trace a "teleological-historical path to [...] transcendental phenomenology" as a way out of the crisis¹⁰⁵. Husserl's aim is thus twofold: *diagnostic* and *therapeutic* at the same time. To fulfil this aim, he patrols and tackles the history of philosophy just like any other sense-formation, *deconstructing* its main stages of development and *explicating* the intentional accomplishments that have led to its actual critical configuration, while also hinting at the advent of phenomenology.

On the one hand, going back to the "first beginnings of science" is only possible "by dismantling [*Abbau*] the theoretical convictions we actually hold, [...] inherited from tradition"¹⁰⁶. On the other hand, the awakening of "the a priori structure contained in this historicity" implies the "historical disclosure [*Enthüllung*]" or "explication [*Explikation*]"¹⁰⁷ of its sedimentations, that is the "*Auslegung* of its hidden, innermost motivation"¹⁰⁸.

What results is Husserl's model for an "inner historiography [*innere Historie*]"¹⁰⁹ or "intentional history", as J. Klein has rephrased it in an attempt to highlight the relevance of this approach to the history of science¹¹⁰. This "internal historicity" is distinguished from the "external

¹⁰⁴ On the specific nature of this crisis see E. Trizio, *What is the Crisis of Western Sciences?*, in "Husserl Studies", 32, 2016, pp. 191-211. More broadly, on Husserl's last work cfr. J. Dodd, *Crisis and reflection: An essay on Edmund Husserl's Crisis of the European Sciences*, Kluwer, Dordrecht 2004; C. Majolino, F. De Gandt (a cura di), *Lectures de la Krisis de Husserl*, J. Vrin, Paris 2008; D. Moran, *Husserl's crisis of the European sciences and transcendental phenomenology*, CUP, Cambridge 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Hua VI, p. 435. In the summer of 1937, Husserl expresses the need to establish phenomenology as a "universal historical problem" and regards this "historical way" as "more principled and systematic" than the introduction provided in *Ideen I* (Hua XXIX, 426).

¹⁰⁶ Hua VI, p. 498.

¹⁰⁷ C, pp. 369 f.

¹⁰⁸ Ivi, p. 11. More on the necessity to explicate/explicitate (*explizieren*, *auslegen*) the main representatives of modern thought, such as Galilei and Descartes in Hua XXIX, p. 348; Hua VI, p. 425; C, pp. 49, 75, *passim*.

¹⁰⁹ Ivi, p. 378, transl. mod.

¹¹⁰ J. Klein, *Phenomenology and the History of Science*, in M. Farber (a cura di), *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl*, HUP, Cambridge 1940, pp. 143-163. On Klein and Husserl on this point cfr. D. Manca, *Un'intenzionalità da vero storico? Jacob Klein e la storia come problema fondamentale della fenomenologia di Husserl*, in E. Husserl, J. Klein, *Fenomenologia e metodo storico*, cit., pp. 51-70. More broadly, on Klein's overall philosophical project cfr. B.C. Hopkins, *The Origin of the Logic of Symbolic Mathematics. Edmund Husserl and Jacob Klein*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington-Indianapolis 2011; I. Chiaravalli, *Nostalgia del concreto: il moderno di Jacob Klein*, in J. Klein, *Dalla forma al simbolo. La logistica greca e la nascita dell'algebra*, ETS, Pisa 2018, pp. 7-35.

historicity”¹¹¹ or the “factual history”¹¹² in the empirical sense. However, it should not be seen as an alternative but rather as complementary to the ordinary procedures employed by philologists and historians, insofar as this phenomenological or “transcendental history corresponds to natural human history”¹¹³.

Just like the natural sciences, historiography must also be complemented by phenomenology’s critical insight, since “only this disclosure enables [an] effectively comprehending historiography, insightful and genuinely scientific in the proper sense”¹¹⁴. According to Husserl, phenomenology could help historians to unravel the eidetic laws governing historical development, i.e. the *a priori* structure of historicity¹¹⁵, and more broadly to (self-)explicate the unthematized intentional performances at work in thematising and “describing” the historical past¹¹⁶.

Thus, in the *Crisis*, Husserl’s procedure is primarily that of a “*historical and critical retrospection* [*Rückbesinnung*]”, a method that, according to the epoché, proceeds with a “skeptical [...] spiritual attitude [...] through the crust of the externalized [*veräußerlicht*] ‘historical facts’ of philosophical history, interrogating, exhibiting, and testing their inner sense and hidden teleology”¹¹⁷. Only after

¹¹¹ Hua XXIX, p. 417.

¹¹² C, p. 371.

¹¹³ Hua Mat VIII, p. 170.

¹¹⁴ C, p. 372, transl. mod.

¹¹⁵ To do so, Husserl’s method of free-phantasy variation can be used for a counterfactual examination of a certain historical world (C, pp. 374 f.), to individuate “its essential form structure, as the apodictic invariant in all its change, in all its relativity” (Hua VI, p. 399).

¹¹⁶ The fruitfulness of phenomenology for such historical epistemology is stressed for example by P. Veyne, *Comment On écrit l’histoire: essai d’épistémologie*, Édition du Seuil, Paris 1971; transl. by M. Moore-Rinvolucri, *Writing History. Essay on Epistemology*, WUP, Middletown 1984; and more recently by T. Breyer, D. Creutz, *Historische Erfahrung: Ein phänomenologisches Schichtenmodell*, in Id. (a cura di), *Erfahrung und Geschichte. Historische Sinnbildung im Pränarrativen*, de Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2010, pp. 332-363.

¹¹⁷ C, pp. 17 f., transl. mod. In light of this retrospective deconstruction of factual history, we stress that *Krisis* as a whole should not be regarded as a paradigmatic example of intentional historiography. Rather, this standard applies strictly to the supplement *Von Ursprung der Geometrie*, where the reconstruction of the genesis of geometry is purely internal – that is, carried out independently of any empirical data or presuppositions. Accordingly, the narrative in the first parts of *Krisis* can be described as “*an example of factual history informed by the a priori of history*” (E. Trizio, *Philosophy’s Nature: Husserl’s Phenomenology, Natural Science, and Metaphysics*, Routledge, New York-London 2021, p. 255). I wish to thank Emiliano Trizio for helping me clarify this point. Finally, as we shall see, the analysis of modern philosophy in *Krisis* – and more broadly, Husserl’s late lectures on the history of philosophy – should be considered propaedeutic, at least to some extent, to an intentional (pre)history of that *philosophia perennis* which transcendental phenomenology is ultimately meant to realize. However, to trace its genesis,

this archaeological digging can the philosophical tradition be *internally* reconstructed¹¹⁸, according to the unveiled tendency underlying its development, i.e. the goal that philosophy is supposed to fulfil throughout its history.

At this point, I would like to emphasise that this inner teleology should not be taken as a given datum, present from the outset. Rather, the ultimate *telos* of philosophy results from an ongoing process of sense-formation, being the product of philosophers' apperceptive (re-)transposition and reactivation of what they have inherited from the tradition. It is the outcome of their active participation in the making of the history of philosophy itself. As Husserl specifies:

The “teleology” we have exhibited in modern philosophy can only become teleology in the proper [sense] if we ourselves intervene with our freedom in history – of which [we] are participants –, thereby making it an actual teleology, i.e. for such a historical movement in which an intersubjectively reaching-through goal idea [*durchreichende Zweckidee*] is effectively realised.¹¹⁹

Therefore, if “philosophy since Descartes reveals nothing less than the image of a teleology that accomplishes itself”, it is simply because – by means of our “critical questioning back” and “taking-over” Descartes, who, “as it were, we carry [...] within ourselves”¹²⁰ – we are “the bearers of this teleology, its co-executors [*Mitvollzieher*] in our personal deliberateness [*Willentlichkeit*]”¹²¹.

In the end, Husserl's scouting within the history of philosophy reveals an essentially *performative* trait, whose “task [is that] of raising up [philosophy] to transcendental phenomenology”¹²². In fact, such “‘teleological’ historical consideration” is nothing more than the “methodical function for the definitive construction of a transcendental phenomenology which satisfies its most proper meaning”¹²³. For this reason, teleology should not be seen as a metaphysical burden encumbering Husserl's reflection, but rather as the unifying principle underpinning any genealogical reflection that seeks to meaningfully investigate *a* given history.

it would first be necessary, as in the case of a well-established science such as geometry, to fulfill the foundational task of also establishing phenomenology as a rigorous science.

¹¹⁸ Cfr. Hua XXIX, pp. 381, 396.

¹¹⁹ Ivi, p. 397.

¹²⁰ Ivi, p. 398.

¹²¹ C, p. 70, transl. mod.

¹²² Hua VI, p. 364; cfr. ivi, p. 438.

¹²³ C, p. 98.

Even if history, taken as a “whole” and by means of a certain “sense-bestowing”, is nothing but a “unity of sense fulness [*Sinnhaftigkeit*]”, this “very sense [...] is not outlined in advance as [the] sense of the goal [*Zwecksinn*]”. In fact, although “human existence” is “always [an] already historical life”, humans “are not in function of an idea of the goal [*Zweckidee*]”, unless “the goal [...] has itself already become historical”¹²⁴. Ultimately, a degree of teleology is implicit in any historical reconstruction that does not fall prey to naive realism, namely, one that does not claim to be a mere mirroring of the past¹²⁵, but takes into account the standpoint from which the inquiry is undertaken¹²⁶, as well as the specific (theoretical or practical) interest that drives the research.

3.3 From history of philosophy to (methodological) infinity

As we have seen, it is precisely the *Sinnhaftigkeit* of the *telos* that “unifies the whole movement of philosophical history in the modern period”¹²⁷. This *telos* is nothing other than a methodological function of historiography, the means by which philosophers actively participate in the making and writing of history (*Geschichtsschreibung*).

By virtue of its “spiritual generativity”, inner historiography produces the “unity of the community of thinkers through and across the ages”. Accordingly, the history of philosophy is not a temporal succession or mere juxtaposition of past philosophers, but rather a “supratemporal process”, a “continuity of actual co-working” sustained by the “philosophers of the millennia” in their “supratemporal communalisation”¹²⁸.

In the *Crisis*, this teleological unification, which is at the same time a kind of “transhistorical” communication, roughly matches the following pattern. After the Cartesian *Urstiftung* and the Kantian *Nachstiftung* – after “the most general concept of the ‘transcendental’” has acted throughout modern philosophy as the “driving force of its development”¹²⁹

¹²⁴ Hua VI, pp. 502 f.

¹²⁵ Cfr. R. Koselleck, *Futures Past*, cit., p. 130.

¹²⁶ Cfr. Id., *Geschichte, Historie*, in O. Brunner, W. Conze, R. Koselleck (a cura di), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, E. Klett, Stuttgart 1975, 2, p. 662: “It is only through the subjective, perspective-bound performance of the historian that the unity of history reveals itself – a unity that was then increasingly sought within historical reality itself”.

¹²⁷ C, p. 70.

¹²⁸ Hua VI, p. 444.

¹²⁹ C, p. 98.

– the transcendental motif can now reach its “final establishment [*Endstiftung*]”¹³⁰ with Husserl’s phenomenology.

It would be misleading to read in this conclusion the end of (the history) of philosophy. Quite the opposite, this last institution

is accomplished when the task is brought to consummate clarity and thus to an apodictic method which, in every step of achievement, is a constant avenue [*Durchgang*] to new steps having [...] the character of apodictic steps. At this point philosophy, as an infinite task, would have arrived at its apodictic beginning, its horizon of apodictic forward movement.¹³¹

If the apodicticity or “the undoubtedness [*Zweifellosgkeit*] concerns the method”¹³², then we are led back from history to phenomenology itself. In the end, Husserl’s procedure allows for a historical examination whose result is the self-clarification and self-justification of his own method. As a matter of fact, “the clarifying justification of our historical method [...] is to employ the history of philosophy for the discovery of the true method of philosophy [...], for the discovery of ‘philosophy itself’”¹³³. We arrive here at a kind of virtuous circularity between theory and history, that is the mutual and recursive deepening of their heuristic potential – historical analysis strengthens theoretical initiative, and vice versa.

Given this constant interplay between theory and history, Husserl’s idea of a “*philosophia perennis*” is that of “a true and genuine universal science ultimately grounded”¹³⁴. Since this science emerges as a “revitalisation [*Wiederverlebendigung*]”¹³⁵ of a certain historical ambition, then we witness to the “infinite task [*Verunendlichung*]” of its grounding task – namely, of its method. That is why, historically understood, phenomenology reveals the historical nature of philosophy as a “systematics of going-further [*Systematik des Weitergehens*]”¹³⁶.

Because of its historicity, phenomenology is not so much a specific doctrine or a set of principles as it is the institution of a “system of discovery”, the “order of [a] systematic discovery of principles”¹³⁷. It thus represents a methodological framework designed to coordinate and

¹³⁰ Ivi, pp. 72 f.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Hua VI, p. 492.

¹³³ Ivi, p. 445. Elsewhere, Husserl regards transcendental reduction as “the original method [*Urmethode*] of all philosophical methods” (Hua Mat VIII, p. 16).

¹³⁴ C, p. 197.

¹³⁵ Hua VI, p. 489.

¹³⁶ Ivi, p. 500.

¹³⁷ Hua XXXV, p. 394.

promote collaborative and shared research work. Like the natural sciences, phenomenology “can master the infinity of its subject matter only through infinities of method”¹³⁸, that is, only through the intergenerational and socialised fulfilment of its scientificity: “*Philosophy as the practice of philosophers in the sociality of scientists*”¹³⁹. This is how Husserl describes this cooperative endeavour, emphasising its historical and systematic nature:

This is the possession of time [*Habe der Zeit*], the field of work that exists because of time, primarily the realm of what has been achieved because of time and has reached systematic intertwining [...]. Obviously, for each present, this [possession] generates a fundamental trait [*Hauptzug*] for the entire work, that of the communal work of the scientists; [...] This ready-made acquisition is the *communis opinio* of the science of a given ‘era’ or ‘present’. In this field, everyone works [...] on his own partial problems and sub-areas. Within this field, as far as it extends, there naturally prevails an inner context of sense [...] so that even those working on different tasks and areas must not overlook what those in the broader fields are pursuing.¹⁴⁰

All in all, “rigorous science is not objective being, but becoming an ideal objectivity; and if [it] is essentially only in becoming, then the idea of true humanity and its method of self-formation [*Selbstgestaltungsmethode*] are also only in becoming”¹⁴¹.

Conclusions: history as method

In some respects, the trajectory of Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology resembles that of the birth of the philosophy of history between the 18th and 19th centuries: “Once philosophy had systematised history, this history could retroact upon philosophy and understand it historically”¹⁴².

If transcendental phenomenology began with the discovery of the absolute stream of consciousness¹⁴³, it culminated in evoking “*history [a]s the grand fact of absolute being*”¹⁴⁴. As I have tried to show, the compat-

¹³⁸ C, p. 56.

¹³⁹ Hua VI, p. 494.

¹⁴⁰ Ivi, p. 493.

¹⁴¹ Hua XXVII, p. 55.

¹⁴² R. Koselleck, *Geschichte, Historie*, cit., p. 671.

¹⁴³ Cfr. CW XIII, p. 243.

¹⁴⁴ CW XIV, p. 633.

ibility of these two statements rests on the inner historicity that characterises intentional constitution in both its ontogenetic and phylogenetic dimensions.

The analogy between these two dimensions leads Husserl to expand his analysis to explore history as that domain in which phenomenology can be philosophically justified, i.e. historicised as the realisation of a certain *telos*. According to this *telos*, “history of philosophy, seen from within”, is the intentional accomplishment of “humanness [*Menschentums*] wrestling for its self-understanding”¹⁴⁵; or, put differently, the “movement of disclosure of universal reason, ‘inborn’ in humanness as such”¹⁴⁶.

Finally, we have seen how the historicity of reason reverberates in Husserl’s understanding of its own method, revealing the inescapable “interweaving of historical investigations and the systematic investigations”¹⁴⁷. For an utterly historicised phenomenology, “everywhere the problems, the clarifying investigations, the insights of principle are *historical*”. In the light of this historicity one cannot help but stigmatise “the ruling dogma of the separation in principle between epistemological elucidation [*Aufklärung*] and historical, even humanistic-psychological explanation [*Erklärung*], between epistemological and genetic origin, [as] fundamentally mistaken”¹⁴⁸.

Indeed, Husserl’s new paradigm for an intentional history ultimately equates the two dimensions by means of a hendiadys: “the inner-historical, the epistemological” twofold aspect of the same “genuine problem”¹⁴⁹ of justifying knowledge. It is now clear that, considering “the historical a priori as the universal source of all conceivable problems of understanding”, the “historical explanation comes together, in the case of the sciences, with ‘epistemological’ grounding or clarification”¹⁵⁰.

After all, transcendental phenomenology is aptly understood as “the theoretical function of a praxis” since, by criticising current sense-validities and uncovering their genesis, “it theoretically frees us from the absolutisation of this world”¹⁵¹. In striving for “our libera-

¹⁴⁵ C, pp. 13 f., transl. mod.

¹⁴⁶ Ivi, p. 16.

¹⁴⁷ Ivi, p. 351.

¹⁴⁸ Ivi, pp. 369 f.

¹⁴⁹ Ivi, p. 378.

¹⁵⁰ Ivi, p. 373.

¹⁵¹ E. Husserl, *Erste Philosophie* (1923/4). *Erste Teil: Kritische Ideengeschichte* [Hua VII], M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1956, p. 283.

tion [*Befreiung*]” from “the spell [*Bann*] of these times”¹⁵², then Husserl might have also favourably endorsed F. Jameson’s motto: “Always historicize!”¹⁵³.

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¹⁵² C, pp. 58 f., transl. mod.

¹⁵³ F. Jameson, *The Political Unconscious. Narrative as a socially symbolic act*, Routledge Classics, London 2002, p. ix.

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Gaëtan Hulot

Framing the Senses: Husserl and the Historical and Cultural Shaping of Sensory Experience

Introduction

In the 1980s and 1990s, French historian Alain Corbin initiated the field of “sensory history” or “history of the senses” by exploring past perceptions and the significance of smell and noise in the 18th and 19th centuries¹. This field grew alongside “sensory anthropology”, inspired by thinkers like Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, and Edward T. Hall, who explored the cultural variation in the valorization of the senses. From the 1990s onwards, scholars such as David Howes, Constance Classen, Kathryn Linn Geurts, Mark Smith, and William Tullett, advanced sensory history and anthropology, which are now part of the broader field of “sensory studies”². The central claim of the “history of the senses” is sometimes encapsulated in a quote by Karl Marx: “The forming of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present”³. According to sensory scholars, our sensory experience, should not be understood as a fact of nature, but as a product of culture, suggesting that “[...] people from different cultures [...] inhabit different sensory worlds”⁴.

Is this idea sound, and how should it be interpreted? How must we understand the historical and cultural shaping of our sensory experience? In this paper, I explore this notion from a phenomenological, Husserlian perspective. Should we accept the idea of a historical determination of the senses, or should we defend the view that our sensory experience is ahistorical?

¹ A. Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant. Odor and the French Social Imagination*, tr. M.L. Kochan, R. Porter, C. Prendergast, B. Publishers, Leamington Spa, 1986; A. Corbin, *Village Bells. Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside*, tr. M. Thoms, European Perspectives, Columbia University Press, New York 1998.

² D. Howes, *The Sensory Studies Manifesto. Tracking the Sensorial Revolution in the Arts and Human Sciences*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto-Buffalo-London 2022.

³ K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844 and the Communist Manifesto*, tr. M. Milligan, Prometheus Books, Amherst 1988, p. 109.

⁴ E.T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension*, Anchor Books, New York 1990, p. 2.

In Section I, I examine Husserl's genetic account of sensory experience, which maintains that while there is a core aspect of our senses unaffected by historical and cultural factors, there is also a more superficial "framing" of the senses that is subject to these influences. In Section II, I consider passive syntheses, namely temporalization and association, and question how they can account for the historical and cultural shaping of the senses. In Section III, I analyze active mechanisms – receptivity and higher-level activity, namely cognitive, evaluative, and practical activity – and explore their contributions to the historicization of the senses.

I. Is our sensory experience a product of history?

Here I examine the idea that personal and cultural history influences the phenomenality of sensory contents, and I do so within the framework of Husserlian phenomenology. In this section, I first examine two theories to account for the social and cultural influence on the senses. The first theory argues that history shapes sensory content through cognitive functions, which, in turn, affect lower-level sensory processes. Supporters of this view believe that how individuals perceive colors is influenced by the color categories in their language or the significance of colors in their cultural traditions. The second version posits that history influences sensory content through direct exposure to past or present sensory experiences, without cognitive mediation. Advocates of this view maintain that repeated exposure to certain colors attunes perceivers to noticing them more readily or that surfaces, inherently colorless, acquire their appearance only in contrast to their surroundings. After I show that both claims are rejected by Husserl, I consider his likely perspective on the broader question of a social and cultural determination of the senses.

In *Ideas I*, Husserl makes a well-known distinction between acts or *noesis* and sensory contents or *hyle*. The former are intentional, while the latter lack intentionality. However, this distinction is made within a specific context – that of the abstraction of time constitution⁵. Sixteen years later, in *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, Husserl acknowledges that, while useful for beginners, this distinction leads to a fallback into the

⁵ E. Husserl, *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, tr. D.O. Dahlstrom, Hackett, Indianapolis-Cambridge 2014, pp. 156-165.

problematic “sensualism of data” [*Daten-Sensualismus*]⁶. Indeed, Husserl had long recognized that hyletic or primary content is itself the result of a process of constitution involving intentionality. Rather than being limited to the level of *noesis*, the model of intentionality also applies to *hyle*: “the sensuous data [...] are themselves also already the product of a constitutive synthesis”⁷. Husserl’s lectures on time and subsequent manuscripts on time constitution from 1905-1911 and 1917-1918, clarify the roles of retentive and protentive intentionalities. Meanwhile, his lessons on transcendental logic in the 1920s explore the role of associative intentionalities in the shaping of *hyle*. The original distinction between *noesis* and *hyle* can then be clarified by introducing two levels of intentionality: higher-level intentional acts of receptivity and intellectual activity, and lower-level intentional, passive syntheses of temporalization and association.

This distinction allows us to reject a criticism often directed against static phenomenology, accused of dealing with essentially inert, “dead” data, and to fall back into sensualism, or even, atomism. In order to avoid sensualism and atomism, Gestalt psychologists from the Berlin school emphasized the importance of dismissing the “constancy hypothesis” [*Konstanzannahme*], according to which sensory contents exist independently of the meanings attributed to them and remain constant despite the acts that inform them, a position that Husserl still upheld⁸. Indeed, Husserl accepted both the idea that “one and the same stock of hyletic data” could form “the common support for two overlapping apprehensions”⁹, and the converse idea, that various hyletic data could support one and the same perception:

We have already mentioned the evidence indicating that the complex of the contents of sensation is quite varied, and yet the corresponding perceptions, by their very essence, pass themselves off as perceptions of the same object. Conversely, it is also holds that the same complex of contents of sensation can be the basis of diverse perceptions, perceptions of diverse objects, as every

⁶ E. Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, tr. D. Cairns, M. Nijhoff, The Hague 1969, p. 286.

⁷ Id., *Experience and Judgment. Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, a cura di L. Landgrebe, tr. J.S. Churchill, K. Ameriks, Northwestern University Studies in Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1973, p. 73.

⁸ E. Holenstein, *Phänomenologie der Assoziation. Zu Struktur und Funktion eines Grundprinzips der passiven Genesis bei E. Husserl*, Martinus Nijhoff-Springer Netherlands, Den Haag 1972, pp. 283-86, pp. 293-96.

⁹ E. Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis. Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, tr. A. Steinbock, in “Edmund Husserl Collected Works”, vol. 9, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht-Boston 2001, p. 73.

mannequin proves, inasmuch as here, from a fixed viewpoint, two perceptions stand in conflict, that of the mannequin as a thing and that of the presented man, both constructed on the same fundament of sensation.¹⁰

As Gurwitsch notes, “The constancy hypothesis is admitted by Husserl and implicitly by von Ehrenfels. Both authors maintain that sense-data are not modified nor are they qualified by the sensory facts of a higher order which they found and support”¹¹. By contrast, the Berlin school of Gestalt psychology views sensory content as a by-product of analysis, lacking absolute properties. However, in Husserl’s view, introducing genesis to the level of sensory contents is the only way to avoid the “sensualism of ready-made data”, and that’s why Gestalt psychology – from both the Graz and Berlin schools – failed to reject sensualism¹².

It is now clear that Husserl would refuse the cognitive theory of the influence of social and cultural history on sensations, namely the idea that cognitive (intentional in the strong sense) functions “penetrate” low-level sensory functions.

Yet, by introducing the idea of genesis at the level of sensory content, Husserl seems to open a possibility for our sensory experience to be shaped by both personal and collective history at the sensory level. Our visual experience of color patches, our auditory impressions of sounds, our tactile encounters with texture, heat, and pressure, and our olfactory and gustatory sense of smells and tastes are all determined by the context in which they are given, but also by our prior acquaintance with sensory content, our current sensitivity, and the physical and cultural environment in which we grew up, and possibly by the cultural context of our time.

In the remainder of this section, I examine the second theory of the claim that history influences hyletic data without the mediation of cognitive functions, through exposure to similar content. I conclude that, according to Husserl, a core or nucleus of sensory content remains unaltered by any historical influence.

¹⁰ E. Husserl *Thing and Space. Lectures of 1907*, tr. R. Rojcewicz, Springer, 1998, p. 39; see also M.K. Shim, *Representationalism and Husserlian Phenomenology*, in “Husserl Studies”, 27, n. 3, 2011, pp. 197-215, doi:10.1007/s10743-011-9093-y.

¹¹ A. Gurwitsch, *The Field of Consciousness. Phenomenology of Theme, Thematic Field, and Marginal Consciousness*, a cura di R.M. Zaner L. Embree, Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901-1973), vol. III, Springer, Dordrecht-New York 2010, p. 88.

¹² E. Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, p. 286; Id. *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, a cura di S. Strasser, Hua I, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 1991, pp. 76-77; E. Husserl, M. Heidegger, *Psychological and Transcendental Phenomenology and the Confrontation with Heidegger, 1927-1931*, tr. T. Sheehan and R.E. Palmer, Husserliana: Edmund Husserl – Collected Work 6, Springer, Dordrecht 1997, p. 220.

This stance is held by Carl Stumpf, one of Husserl's two mentors, who regularly opposes "relativism" in the domain of sensory experience, for example, in the first volume of his *Tone psychology*¹³ or in "Erscheinungen und psychische Funktionen":

The tone which is followed by other sounds won't be subsequently endowed with a height and an intensity by those which follow it; it must already have possessed them during its lifetime and in isolation. The objection that the height of a sound consists only in its relations to other sounds would become entangled in the absurdities of a theory of relativity that I have characterized elsewhere.¹⁴

As Arnaud Dewalque puts it, "The best way to summarize Stumpf's thesis, it seems to me, lies in the following idea: we never deal with an indeterminate hylè or any kind of phenomenal material, but always with sensible phenomena endowed with determined properties"¹⁵. This thesis suggests that sensory contents have determined properties as objective features that constrain our sensory experience of them, rather than being influenced by the subject or context. Until the end of his life, Stumpf continued to affirm the existence of "purely sensory properties" or "absolute properties" of sensations, thus opposing his former disciples from the Berlin school of Gestalt psychology¹⁶. The absolute properties that sensory contents intrinsically possess are, in the case of a *datum* of sound, its duration, its spatial extension and location, its quality or pitch/height [*Tonhöhe*], its intensity [*Stärke*]¹⁷; in the case of a sensation of color, its duration, its spatial extension and location, its quality or hue [*Farbenton*], its lightness [*Helligkeit*], and its intensity [*Stärke*]¹⁸. Sensory contents must not only possess the relevant properties of their category to belong to it; these properties must also have a determined value regardless of the context in which they are given.

¹³ C. Stumpf, *Tone Psychology*, tr. R.D. Rollinger, Classic European Studies in the Science of Music 1, Routledge, Abingdon New York (NY) 2020, pp. 5-12.

¹⁴ C. Stumpf, *Erscheinungen Und Psychische Funktionen*, Verlag der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften vom Jahre 1906, Berlin 1907, p. 22.

¹⁵ A. Dewalque, *Intentionnalité cum fundamento in re. La constitution des champs sensoriels chez Stumpf et Husserl*, in "Bulletin d'Analyse Phénoménologique", n. 1, 2012, p. 91, my translation.

¹⁶ C. Stumpf, *Erkenntnislehre. Band 1*, Johann Ambrosius Barth, Leipzig 1939, p. 250.

¹⁷ C. Stumpf, *Tone Psychology*, cit., pp. 89 ss.

¹⁸ C. Stumpf, *Die Attribute der Gesichtsempfindungen*, Abhandlungen der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften – Philosophisch-Historische Klasse 8, Verlag der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 1917, pp. 85–87.

Similarly to Stumpf, Husserl rejects relativism and acknowledges the existence of absolute properties of sensations, though he articulates this less explicitly. In his lessons on passive syntheses, he speaks of immanent data and their color as they are “originally” “in themselves”:

[...] these surface color moments are immanent data, and we are thus conscious of them in themselves just as originally as, say, red or black. The manifold changing red-data in which, e.g., any surface side of a red cube and its unaltered red is exhibited, are immanent data.¹⁹

In *Experience and judgment*, he also examines the role of syntheses of homogeneity in forming hyletic unities such as a splatter of red stains against a white background. Red patches blend – at a distance – because they are inherently similar, or affine, while they remain distinct from the white background due to the differences in their inherent properties²⁰. In other words, rather than the broader context shaping the properties of sensuous data, it is the inherent properties of the sensuous data themselves that ground the syntheses of homogeneity, which, in turn, shape the general context. As Holenstein concludes, “This means that he [Husserl] did not go beyond the position of his teacher Stumpf”²¹.

In conclusion, Husserl rejects both theories I had suggested to account for the cultural relativism of sensory data. Sensory data are not influenced by cognitive function, nor by the sensory context in which they take place. In line with this rejection of the relativism of data, does Husserl reject historical and cultural relativism altogether?

Any discrepancy in appearances between two subjects cannot be ascertained by directly experiencing the other’s sensory fields, as the other’s experience lies beyond the reach of my direct grasp. Indeed, as Husserl repeatedly emphasizes, having an original experience of another’s stream of consciousness – as opposed to experiencing it through the “mediate intentionality” of presentation – is absurd, for it would render that experience my own rather than the other’s²². Under these conditions, rejecting historical relativism can only rely on indirect arguments. In addition, the universality of the senses can only be contingent rather than necessary, as sensory contents are governed by a “‘contingent’ *A priori*”²³.

¹⁹ E. Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, cit., p. 54.

²⁰ E. Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, cit., p. 74; see also *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, cit., p. 178, p. 185.

²¹ E. Holenstein, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

²² E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, tr. D. Cairns, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1982, p. 109.

²³ E. Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, cit., p. 29.

This seemingly paradoxical concept means that if a subject has auditory experiences, these must, by the essence of sounds, possess attributes such as intensity or pitch. However, there is no necessity for subjects to have sensory experiences of a certain type at all²⁴.

Although Husserl does not explicitly reject historical relativism, his work contains three indirect, contingent, arguments against the cultural relativism of the senses: the thought experiment of removing cultural layers, the possibility of scientific objectivity, and the correspondence between bodily features and sensations, as demonstrated by somatology. How do these arguments manifest in Husserl's confrontation with relativism?

1. The existence of an unaffected core in our sensory experience is first evidenced by the ability of members of different cultures to agree on a pure experience of nature. To emphasize the specificity of the cultural world, Husserl sometimes alludes to anthropology. For example, "the European world of culture [...] is not readily experienceable" for the Chinese²⁵, and conversely, Europeans may not grasp the cultural features of Chinese art²⁶. However, despite disagreements about the cultural life-world, there is a shared understanding of the natural world. Thus, the Bantu, who does not understand the cultural features of European buildings, still perceives them as spatial objects:

The Bantu would 'see' our 'park', our houses, our churches, and there would be spatial things for him, and things that, perhaps, would have, for him as well, the character of constructions, of gardens. But there is a difference here. Regarding the spatiotemporal determinations, the pure nature, a common ground must exist, but regarding what the architect aimed at with this building, and regarding what holds a 'sense', an aesthetic and practical one, correlatively to this building as such, that, the Bantu cannot understand.²⁷

In this regard, the fundamental interindividual and intercultural agreement about the "natural nucleus of the world" [*der naturale*

²⁴ E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, tr. R. Rojcewicz, A. Schuer, Martinus Nijhoff-Kluwer Academic Publishers, The Hague-Dordrecht-Boston 1989, pp. 85-86; E. Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, cit., p. 30.

²⁵ E. Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, a cura di T. Nenon and H.R. Sepp, Hua XXVII, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 1989, p. 163.

²⁶ E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. 3. Dritter Teil. 1929-1935*, a cura di I. Kern, Hua XV, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1973, p. 442.

²⁷ E. Husserl, *Phänomenologische Psychologie. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925*, a cura di D. Lohmar, Hua IX, Meiner, Hamburg 2003, p. 498.

Kern der Welt]²⁸ makes possible the “constitution of a common world of the senses”²⁹, where “even what is straightforwardly perceptual is communalized”³⁰. While our experience of the world can be affected by our culture and history, a sensory core remains which is unaffected by cultural and historical differences, and as such, universally shared across cultures.

Husserl acknowledges intercultural differences and the relativity of cultures and historical formations. In this context, he uses the concept of lifeworld or *Lebenswelt*, albeit in a rather ambiguous way. At times, the concept of “lifeworld” points at a particular, historical world correlating to a specific “humanity” or people, and differing from one culture to another – this is oftentimes labeled as “concrete lifeworld”. But, elsewhere, *the* lifeworld is the universal, perceptual, pre-cultural world which serves as a foundation for science: “Husserl speaks of the life-world both in the singular and plural. In the plural, it refers to relative, local, and cultural environments [...]; on the other hand, all plural worlds get their sense from the life-world for which a plural gets no sense”³¹. If the concrete lifeworlds of members of different cultures are variegated, it seems that this does not apply to sensory contents, which are thus part of the universal lifeworld:

But when we are thrown into an alien social sphere, that of the Negroes in the Congo, Chinese peasants, etc., we discover that their truths, the facts that for them are fixed, generally verified or verifiable, are by no means the same as ours. But if we set up the goal of a truth about the objects which is unconditionally valid for all subjects, beginning with that on which normal Europeans, normal Hindus, Chinese, etc., agree in spite of all relativity – beginning, that is, with what makes objects of the life-world, common to all, identifiable for them and for us (even though conceptions of them may differ), such as spatial shape, motion, sense-quality, and the like – then we are on the way to objective science.³²

²⁸ E. Husserl, *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen Der Vorgegebenen Welt Und Ihrer Konstitution. Texte Aus Dem Nachlass (1916-1937)*, a cura di R. Sowa, Hua XXXIX, Springer, New York 2008, p. 275.

²⁹ E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. 2. Zweiter Teil. 1921-28*, a cura di I. Kern, Hua XIV, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague 1973, p. 196.

³⁰ E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, tr. D. Carr, Studies in “Phenomenology & Existential Philosophy”, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1984, p. 163.

³¹ D. Moran, ‘*Even the Papuan is a man and not a beast. Husserl on universalism and the relativity of cultures*, in “Journal of the History of Philosophy”, 49, n. 4, 2011, p. 486, doi:10.1353/hph.2011.0088; see also G. Soffer, *Husserl and the Question of Relativism*, Kluwer Academic, Dordrecht-Boston 1991, pp. 149 ss.

³² E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, cit., p. 139.

Certainly, variations can be found, both within a certain individual across time and between individuals, depending on the spatial location of the observers, their momentary bodily disposition (intake of *santonin*, wearing glasses with colored filters), the proper functioning of their sensory organs (color blindness, hearing loss), and the external conditions (lightning). However, a common ground exists. First, we assume *normal* external conditions of perception: clear daylight, vision in air, touching by immediate contact, etc.³³. In addition, we assume “a ‘normal’ Ego-community and Bodies of ‘normal,’ i.e., typically ‘standard,’ structure”, which warrants the “exchangeability” of perspectives, in such a way that “we see the ‘same’ Object, each of us from his own position, but also with the mode of appearance which would be ours if we were, instead of here, there in the other’s place”³⁴.

2. The independence of the layer of nature from culture is further confirmed by the possibility of establishing a shared scientific knowledge about nature. The existence of natural sciences demonstrates that the senses are not entirely subjective or culture-bound; instead, they transcend cultural boundaries and personal dispositions. Natural sciences consist mainly of an intersubjective understanding of the world about abstract shapes in space-time. But even “subjective” experiences, such as those of secondary qualities – colors, sounds, heat, odors – can indirectly be incorporated into natural sciences and made intersubjective, i.e., objective, through their linkage to underlying spatial objects, with their extension, shape, and movement – frequency, wavelengths, thermal radiation, odorant particles, etc. This process, initiated by Galileo, is termed by Husserl the “mathematization of the ‘plena’”³⁵. It results in a tendency to universalize subjective qualities. Yet, it must be noted that the mathematization of colors is still an ongoing debate. As a matter of fact, the traditional association between wavelength and colors fails to account for the full range of color experiences³⁶. Physicalist theories of colors, particularly the surface spectral reflectance (SSR) theory advocated by Byrne and Hilbert³⁷, remain under discussion, as they continue to be challenged by primitivist and dispositionalist accounts.

³³ E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, cit., p. 65.

³⁴ *Ivi*, p. 321.

³⁵ E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, cit., pp. 34-37.

³⁶ C.L. Hardin, *Color for Philosophers. Unweaving the Rainbow*, Hackett Pub. Co, Indianapolis 1988, pp. 2-3.

³⁷ A. Byrne, D.R. Hilbert, *Color realism and color science*, in “Behavioral and Brain Sciences”, 26, n. 1, 2003, pp. 4-63, doi:10.1017/S0140525X03000013.

3. Lastly, the universality of the senses is indirectly confirmed by the correspondence between bodily features and inner sensations, as studied by somatology. This argument is not based on the similarity of experience, rather on the similarity of objective bodily features. From a first-person perspective, the relationship to the body is experienced as a “realizing connection” [*realisierende Anknüpfung*], through which the sense fields are connected to the soma [*Leib*]³⁸. This connection is not limited to a vague correspondence between the sense fields and the body but involves a detailed one-to-one correspondence between sense fields and sense organs: “Thus, the universum of sensations (of the sensuous impressions) of every ego receives a relationship to the soma and to its parts, characterized thereby precisely as ‘sense organs’”³⁹. An argument can be made that the converse is also true: despite not having direct access to the first-person experience of others or animals, we can gain indirect access to their surrounding world [*Umwelt*] by understanding their sense organs in analogy to our own⁴⁰. In the experience of empathy, differences in sense organs (such as an injured hand or eye, or missing or additional organs) influence the empathetic apperceptive transfer of my experience onto the other; I represent the other as having altered sense fields compared to mine⁴¹. Thus, the similarity – or difference – in my bodily organs and those of another provides a clue to the similarity – or difference – in our sensory experiences.

In conclusion, much like his mentor Stumpf, Husserl rejects relativism by asserting that a qualitative core of sensory content remains unaffected by personal or collective history. The redness of a colored patch is not subject to cultural or historical influence, but belongs to the sensory content itself or, in the objective view, to the natural properties of things that lie beyond cultural influence.

At the same time, Husserl acknowledges that sensory data arise through a process of transcendental constitution or genesis. While the core of sensory data remains solely determined by the original impression, the constituted sensory unity is also shaped by its context. For example, the intensity of a sudden noise may seem amplified when I am focused on my research at my desk. Similarly, regular exposure to hot pepper

³⁸ E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Phenomenology and the Foundations of the Sciences, Third Book*, tr. T.E. Klein, W.E. Pohl, Martinus Nijhoff-Kluwer Academic Publishers, The Hague-Dordrecht-Boston 1980, p. 5.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, modified translation.

⁴⁰ E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Zweiter Teil*, cit., p. 116.

⁴¹ Ivi, p. 88.

makes it feel less intense, just as coffee or wine are “acquired tastes.” On a historical scale, in eras where pungent smells are common or bells hold significant meaning, people become less sensitive to the former and more attuned to the latter⁴². Thus, Husserl’s doctrine of affection seems to leave room for a historical and cultural influence on the senses. What mechanisms of passive and active syntheses account for sensitization or desensitization, i.e., the historical determination of the senses?

II. Passive mechanisms involved in the determination of the senses

In Section II, I review the mechanisms of passivity involved in the historical determination of the senses. Passivity can be defined as the domain of consciousness that lies below the threshold of the affected, alert ego. It encompasses two mechanisms: temporalization and association.

Temporalization is the intentional process through which a sensory content is anticipated, gains a starting point, duration, end-point, and a rhythm of change, and then recedes into the background, sinking into oblivion while retaining a fixed position in the sequence of inner time, until it is eventually recalled through associative awakening and remembering.

Husserl defines association as any passive, intentional synthesis between two or more contents – whether simultaneous or separated in time – that results in both contents being identified as one and the same, or paired (e.g., this cup and that cup, her body and mine, signifier and signified, model and image). Association operates first at the most fundamental level of passivity, in the formation of sensory content itself, where it is referred to as pre-affective association. For example, red specks form a unity that stands out against a white background⁴³, although no explicit focus of the ego is required. Association also plays a role in the transition toward affection, where an already affecting content spreads its affective power to a content not yet noticed by the ego; for instance, when a single light in the Rhine valley becomes affective, it draws attention to the entire string of lights⁴⁴. Finally, association can occur between contents of which the ego is already aware, in such a way that the meaning of one is analogously transferred to the other. This “post-affective” association can take place within the sphere of presence, as a consciousness of duplication (e.g., her body and mine appear as “paired”), or across temporal distance, as reproduction and anticipation on one hand, and typification

⁴² A. Corbin, *The Foul and the Fragrant*, cit.

⁴³ E. Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, cit., p. 185.

⁴⁴ Ivi, p. 202.

on the other (e.g., a distant pair of scissors from my childhood continually shapes how I perceive newly encountered pairs of scissors)⁴⁵.

While temporalization and association are always intertwined, they can be distinguished by the fact that temporalization operates regardless of content, whereas association is content-sensitive. Do temporalization and association play a role in the historical determination of the sensory contents we experience?

At first glance, the automatism and formality of the temporalizing process, with its disregard for specific content, might seem to sideline it. The “general form” of time-consciousness processes any occurring content in the same way: it is first anticipated, then presented, held in retention for a moment, and finally, it sinks into oblivion. Certainly, echoes of the history of consciousness can be sensed along the protentional path of time-constitution: the content of expectations is shaped by retentive memory⁴⁶, and the satisfaction or disappointment of these expectations is accompanied by feelings of confirmation or surprise. It is understandable, then, that prior exposure to certain types of sensory content can lead to sensitization or desensitization: if I have learned to associate the color of a ripe fruit with a sweet taste, I will expect that taste every time I am about to bite into a fruit of that color. The shaping of protentions by retentions is an associative process⁴⁷, where present experience awakens expectations based on past experience.

But could it be that the *form* of time-constitution itself is affected by past experience? Husserl makes a passing remark that opens the door to this possibility when he suggests that the “general form of time” is a mere abstraction⁴⁸. This implies that the time-constituting process is itself constituted and may be dependent on the history of consciousness. A possible manifestation of this phenomenon could be that the duration, rhythm (experienced cyclicity), or tempo (speed) of appearing sensory units are influenced by the type of content, such as the type of qualia. This is supported by experiments demonstrating that durations are judged shorter for visual signals than for auditory ones⁴⁹ and that they depend on arousal and attention⁵⁰, which are themselves influenced by associative processes.

⁴⁵ E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, cit., p. 111.

⁴⁶ E. Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, cit., p. 237.

⁴⁷ Ivi, pp. 119-120.

⁴⁸ Ivi, p. 173.

⁴⁹ S. Droit-Volet, W.H. Meck, T.B. Penney, *Sensory modality and time perception in children and adults*, in “Behavioural Processes”, 74, n. 2, 2007, pp. 244-250, doi:10.1016/j.beproc.2006.09.012.

⁵⁰ S. Gil, S. Rousset, S. Droit-Volet, *How liked and disliked foods affect time perception*, in “Emotion”, 9, n. 4, 2009, pp. 457-463, doi:10.1037/a0015751.

Additionally, living conditions – such as climate, environment, and life-style – affect the perception of time⁵¹. Some cultures encourage stretching time to the point that it seems to stand still, as in the state of *nirvana*, while others put a different emphasis on the passing of time. Duration of events can then be perceived differently depending on prior experience and cultural values.

Association plays a key role in the framing of sensory contents. It first comes into play prior to affection, participating in the unification of hyletic data into a sensory unity – such as a sound, a color patch, or a smell. Through association, a content is granted its temporal and, in most cases, spatial unity: a sound persists from a beginning to an end-point, and a color patch extends from one portion of the visual field to another. The “traditional laws of the association of similarity, contiguity, and contrast”⁵² are responsible for the prominence of a content as it is given, within the boundaries of its temporal and spatial extension. Are similarity, contiguity, and contrast shaped by the history of consciousness, or does the associative synthesis operate exclusively within the living present?

Husserl answers this question by acknowledging the relativity of affective tendencies, which leaves room for a historical determination of association. While each sensory content possesses an inherent affective force due to its contrast with its surroundings, all sensory contents compete for the attention of the ego, and it is the respective weight of all contents that determines which datum consciousness will focus on. The affective force of a sensory content is not only relative to affective forces exerted by other contents within the field of presence, but also to past contents exerting their affective forces and propagating their affectivity to currently affecting contents, as I’ll show later. This means that the intensity of a sound, for instance, is not a relative property that depends on past or present sounds. The intensity is an absolute property of the sound in itself. The effect of contrast is to increase the sound’s *affective tendency*, not its volume. When the explosion resounds, its pull on the ego is enhanced by this sudden break of silence, but the sound itself doesn’t gain increased intensity.

However, Husserl’s account of sensory experience is challenged by Gestalt theory and the criticisms of the “constancy hypothesis” that have been mentioned in Section I. According to these criticisms, properties of

⁵¹ R. Levine, *A Geography of Time. The Temporal Misadventures of a Social Psychologist, or How Every Culture Keeps Time Just a Little Bit Differently*, Basic Books, New York 1999, pp. 30-31.

⁵² E. Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, cit., p. 231.

sensory content (and not just its affective force) should be seen as relative to the surrounding field of contents. In other words, the assumption that a color patch has an intrinsic color, which is then modified by its insertion into a field of other patches, is fundamentally flawed. Psychologists and neuroscientists have created images that challenge the idea of a constant underlying sensory quality. For example, applying a colored filter or illumination to the surroundings (e.g., blue) can make a neutral gray surface appear to be the opponent color (e.g., yellow) to that of the filter⁵³. How should we interpret this effect? Should we say that a color patch seen as gray is subsequently reinterpreted as yellow? Is its grayness unconscious? Similarly, the “checker shadow illusion” challenges the notion of a constant, intrinsic lightness: a square of the same lightness (dark gray) can appear black when perceived as being directly illuminated and white when perceived as being in the shadow of another object⁵⁴. These examples demonstrate the role of surroundings in determining the phenomenality (quality, lightness, affectivity) of a given content. The same argument can be made about the influence of personal and cultural history: don’t they co-determine the quality of sensory contents in such a way that maintaining absolute properties of sensory contents is an illusion to which Husserl falls prey? It seems that the only way to avoid this objection is to admit an unconscious gray surface and to distinguish from it an illusory yellow color, a postulate that proponents of Gestalt theory were unwilling to support.

Association is also the underlying mechanism by which a content crosses the threshold of affection, and brings the ego to turn to it. Association is finally at work in the pairing of objects that have crossed the threshold of affection and of which the ego has become aware. Husserl labels this form of passivity “secondary passivity” because it occurs after an activity of the ego has taken place. He also speaks of habitualities. Both associations involve the so-called “laws of the propagation of affection”⁵⁵. A content possesses a certain inherent tendency to affect, which it owes to contrast, while the propagation of affection refers to the “push” a content receives from other contents. Husserl describes four different instances of the propagation of affection: 1. Propagation within the spatial field (e.g., a flash of light in one place reveals the rest of a

⁵³ See the Rubik’s cube in D. Purves, R.B. Lotto, S. Nundy, *Why We See What We Do*, in “American Scientist”, 90, n. 3, 2002, p. 236, doi:10.1511/2002.9.784; and strawberries by A. Kitaoka, *Strawberries*, 2018, <https://x.com/AkiyoshiKitaoka/status/1075204290375905282>.

⁵⁴ E.H. Adelson, *Checker Shadow Illusion*, MIT, 1995, <https://persci.mit.edu/gallery/checkershadow>.

⁵⁵ E. Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, cit., p. 198.

string of lights); 2. Propagation within the extended now (e.g., a tonal phrase “points back” to the rest of the melody still held in fresh retention and awakens it); 3. Propagation from present to past (e.g., a current event awakens a long-lost memory); 4. Propagation from past to present or present to future (e.g., a past or current event shapes expectations about the future).

Historical influence on sensory contents belongs to the last type of propagation, which Husserl describes as analogous to empirical reasoning: if p has once surfaced in connection with q , any occurrence of p' is expected to be accompanied by q ⁵⁶. Thus, the odor of a meal once associated with a particular taste makes me expect a similar taste when I encounter the smell again; in other words, this previous encounter makes the likelihood of this taste being co-presented more affective. This phenomenon is amplified through repetition: “It is further evident that the anticipatory belief of expectation has a differentiation of force, that is, a gradation, and that this force grows with the number of inductive ‘instances’, that is, with the frequency of what has occurred under similar circumstances”⁵⁷. This account is flawed in that it doesn’t explain desensitization through exposure, as demonstrated in cross-cultural taste detection experiments⁵⁸.

In conclusion, passive phenomena can account for a historical determination of sensory contents. The temporalizing process, which retains a fixed structure, can be affected as the history of consciousness influences the pace of inner time. Association also influences sensory experience, by means of an effect on the content’s affective tendency, while leaving intact its absolute properties. The effect of association is felt prior to affection, in the conversion to affection and after the affection.

III. Active mechanisms involved in the determination of the senses

The phenomenality of sensory contents is also influenced by active mechanisms, in which the ego plays an explicit role. Activity roughly consists of two steps: first, the “lowest level of the activity of the ego”⁵⁹, namely receptivity, where pregiven sensory units are converted into given objects under the ego’s gaze; and second, higher-level activity, which

⁵⁶ Ivi, p. 237.

⁵⁷ Ivi, p. 238.

⁵⁸ D. Trachootham *et al.*, *Differences in Taste Perception and Spicy Preference. A Thai-Japanese Cross-cultural Study*, in “Chemical Senses”, 43, n. 1, 2018, pp. 65-74, doi:10.1093/chemse/bjx071.

⁵⁹ E. Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, cit., p. 76.

includes doxic acts, such as judgment and conceptualization, e.g., judging that a book is green and the general notions of “fish” or “thing”, as well as valuing and practical functions, like appraising the beauty of a landscape or orienting the will towards a mountain top taken as the goal of a hike.

Receptivity corresponds to the turning of the ego toward affecting contents and the grasping of an object proper in thematic attention. A counterpart to doxic, thematic attention exists in the sphere of emotion and will, for example, when I contemplate a piece of art or am entirely devoted to a task. Attention, whether doxic, affective or practical, marks the first step into active territory, characterized by the implication of the attentive ego: “All genuine activity is carried out in the scope of attentiveness”⁶⁰. Yet, contrary to what the spotlight metaphor suggests, attention needs not be experienced as a voluntary shift of the ego’s glance⁶¹. Rather it be understood as a gradation from early, passive forms, to full-fledged voluntary attention, a progression charted by Steinbock⁶².

Is receptivity affected by the past of consciousness and cultural history at large? It should first be noted that attention does not alter the content itself, as Bégout remarks using the language of noema and noesis: “Whereas attention brings constantly to light new aspects of the object, Husserl considers however that the noematic core on its side doesn’t change. The attentional mutation affects directly the relation between noesis and noema, but not the internal components of the noema”⁶³. This leaves room for an influence of culture and history on the “relation between noesis and noema”. And indeed, in the last decades, substantial evidence has shown that cultural exposure influences modes of attention. American subjects tend to notice changes around the center of an image, while Japanese subjects are more likely to detect changes in the margin or in the background, reflecting a more general bias towards local feature in Western subjects and towards global features in Eastern subjects⁶⁴. In

⁶⁰ E. Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, cit., p. 276.

⁶¹ H. Jacobs, *A Phenomenology of the Work of Attention*, in “Journal of Speculative Philosophy”, 36, n. 2, 2022, pp. 264-276.

⁶² A.J. Steinbock, *Affection and attention. On the phenomenology of becoming aware*, in “Continental Philosophy Review”, 37, n. 1, 2004, pp. 27-28, doi:10.1023/B:MAWO.0000049298.44397.be.

⁶³ B. Bégout, *Husserl and the Phenomenology of Attention*, in L. Boi, P. Kerszberg, F. Patras (a cura di), *Rediscovering Phenomenology*, vol. 182, Springer Netherlands, Dordrecht 2007, pp. 8-9, doi:10.1007/978-1-4020-5881-3_1.

⁶⁴ T. Masuda, R.E. Nisbett, *Attending holistically versus analytically. Comparing the context sensitivity of Japanese and Americans*, in “Journal of Personality and Social Psychology”, 81, n. 5, 2001, pp. 922-934, doi:10.1037/0022-3514.81.5.922; Y. Miyamoto, R.E. Nisbett, T. Masuda, *Culture and the Physical Environment. Holistic Versus Analytic Perceptual*

other words, Western cultures are characterized by an analytic thinking style, while Eastern Asian cultures tend to be holistic. Classic observations by anthropologists about the acuity of indigenous hunters, compared to Western anthropologists, in spotting prey in dense jungles can also be explained by a specific orientation of attention and attunement to certain types of content, and not by physical differences⁶⁵.

Receptivity encompasses a second aspect. According to Husserl, thematic attention can be supplemented by doxic “explication” – the detailing of the properties of an object. Just as history can direct attention to local or global features of a scenery by focusing either on the object or on the background, attention can selectively overlook or highlight the details of an object. Americans tend to detect changes of features in salient objects more easily than Japanese subjects, as demonstrated about color changes⁶⁶.

The influence of history on receptivity and attention mean that these must be conceived as acquired dispositions. The history of consciousness, including certain practices learnt at a young age and familiarity with certain types of contents, shapes our sensitivity by orienting our attention: we become more attuned to certain contents or contrasts, and we “scan” the environment in certain ways that make us more sensitive to certain phenomena.

Higher-level activity involves both intellectual operations, such as judging or generalizing, and axiological and practical operations, such as assigning value to an object or turning it into a goal for action. Judgment and conceptualization often frame sensory contents through linguistic expression. Linguistic categorization of colors is known to vary across cultures, with some languages having as few as two basic color terms and others having up to eleven or twelve⁶⁷. Evidence shows that these categorizations, which do not influence early sensory processes, allow for faster decisions in tasks that require color matching⁶⁸.

Affordances, in “Psychological Science”, 17, n. 2, 2006, pp. 113-119, doi:10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01673.x.

⁶⁵ As already noticed by Rivers and Meyers in 1901, in A.C. Haddon et al., *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits. Volume 2*, in *Physiology and Psychology* (1901), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.

⁶⁶ A. Boduroglu, P. Shah, R.E. Nisbett, *Cultural Differences in Allocation of Attention in Visual Information Processing*, in “Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology”, 40, n. 3, 2009, pp. 349-360, doi:10.1177/0022022108331005.

⁶⁷ B. Berlin, P. Kay, *Basic Color Terms. Their Universality and Evolution*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1969.

⁶⁸ J. Winawer et al., *Russian blues reveal effects of language on color discrimination*, in “Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences”, 104, n. 19, 2007, pp. 7780-785, doi:10.1073/pnas.0701644104.

Axiological and practical acts also belong to higher-level activity. As Husserl notes, the objects of these acts “are laden with objective value predicates” which “arise from the intentionality of feeling”⁶⁹. In our experience, sensory objects receive value predicates founded upon the feelings they awake: red is “aggressive”, blue is “soothing”, etc. While the sensory feelings can natively be awakened by sensory contents as such, it is also possible that cultural history mediates this awakening. Indeed, cultures promote worldviews, which consist of cognitive but also of value judgments, and they establish models for action: some foods are considered suitable for everyday consumption, appropriate only on certain occasions or for specific categories of people, harmless or dangerous in large amounts, or they should or should not be eaten in combination with other foods. Through education, repetition and exposure, value predicates such as “dangerous” or “not suitable” can awaken sensory feelings, which form the basis for the endorsement of the value predicates by the child. Among the value judgments, are found color preferences. As often pointed out, a preference for blue can be observed across time and space in many cultures. Yet, the available evidence points to cultural explanations, as there are other cultures, i.e., the Himba, where no evidence could be found of the “so-called ‘universal’ preference for bluish hues or aversion to yellow-green, which can be clearly seen in the British data”⁷⁰.

Both senses as such – sight, touch... – and particular sensations are imbued with cultural significance, value and symbolism. This cultural inscription is the level of analysis that sensory history and anthropology emphasize: “It is the task of the scholar to uncover the distinctions and interrelationships of sensory meaning and practice particular to a culture”⁷¹; in sum, to unearth the *sensory model* of a given culture.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have investigated Husserl’s account of the influence of history and culture on sensory experience. Section I demonstrated that Husserl and Stumpf oppose relativism by rejecting the idea that the properties of sensory contents depend on sensory context or personal and cultural history. While sensory contents possess a “core” of absolute

⁶⁹ E. Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, cit., p. 279.

⁷⁰ C. Taylor, A. Clifford, A. Franklin, *Color preferences are not universal*, in “*Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*”, 142, n. 4, 2013, p. 1019, doi:10.1037/a0030273.

⁷¹ C. Classen, *Foundations for an anthropology of the senses*, in “*International Social Science Journal*”, 49, n. 153, 1997, p. 401, doi:10.1111/j.1468-2451.1997.tb00032.x.

properties unaffected by history, they are also “framed” by passive and active genesis. Section II illustrated how passive genesis manifests through temporalization and association, the latter prior to affection, at the time of affection, and posteriorly. Section III examined how active genesis manifests through receptivity and differential attentiveness, as well as higher-level activity, including cognitive, evaluative and conative acts.

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<https://persci.mit.edu/gallery/checkershadow>.
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Aris Tsoullos

Geschichte als existenzial-ontologisches Phänomen

Einführung

In seinem Hauptwerk *Sein und Zeit* [SZ] analysiert Heidegger das Phänomen der Geschichte im Kontext der *Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein überhaupt* ("Seinsfrage") und auf der Grundlage einer *Analyse des existierenden, seinsverstehenden Daseins*.¹ Heidegger ist der Ansicht, dass das Wort "Geschichte" verschiedene, aber zusammenhängende Bedeutungen hat und dass die philosophische Tradition gerade ihren ursprünglichsten Sinn übersehen hat. Diesen bezeichnet er als "Geschichtlichkeit", welche den abschließenden und vollständigen Ausdruck des Seins (Existenz) des menschlichen Daseins in SZ darstellt. Diesbezüglich leistet Heidegger einen originellen Beitrag zur philosophischen Diskussion der Geschichte: "Geschichtlich" kann zwar etwas Vergangenes oder ein mögliches Forschungsobjekt für die historische Wissenschaft bezeichnen, aber vor allem *sind wir selbst Geschichte* aufgrund der zeitlich bestimmten Geschehensstruktur der Geschichtlichkeit. Im Folgenden erfolgt eine systematische Diskussion dieser These.

Die Seinsfrage und die Geschichtlichkeit sind eng miteinander verflochten. Obwohl deren Aufweisung erst im vorletzten Kapitel von SZ stattfindet, wird schon in der *Einleitung* die geschichtliche Dimension der Seinsfrage hervorgehoben: "Das Fragen nach dem Sein [...] ist selbst durch die Geschichtlichkeit charakterisiert [...]" und muss daher "die Anweisung vernehmen, seiner eigenen Geschichte nachzufragen, d.h. historisch zu werden [...]"². Dieser Anweisung entspringt die Aufgabe einer "Destruktion" (Abbau) der Geschichte der Ontologie im Lichte der durch die Temporalitätsproblematik zu beantwortenden Seinsfrage, die für den ungeschriebenen zweiten Teil des Werks vorgesehen war. Wir verzichten auf eine ausführliche Diskussion der Destruktionsaufgabe, werden jedoch ihre systematische Fundierung in der Daseinsanalytik, insbesondere im Hinblick auf die Geschichtlichkeit, darlegen.

¹ M. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer, Tübingen 2006 [= SZ].

² SZ, p. 20 s.

Zunächst müssen wir uns die Systematik der Seinsfrage vergegenwärtigen. In SZ fragt Heidegger nach dem Sein im Sinne der "ontologischen Differenz": "Sein ist nicht so etwas wie Seiendes" (scheidendes Moment), aber ständig "Sein *des Seienden*" (bindendes Moment)³. Sein verstehen wir ständig und irgendwie, wenn auch zumeist nur latent. Bereits Aristoteles zeigte, dass das Seiende als solches auf verschiedene Weise gesagt wird. Es ist ein *πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον*⁴. Heidegger greift dies im Lichte der ontologischen Differenz auf. Das Sein ist nicht einförmig, sondern weist verschiedene Modi auf: die "Seinsweisen" (Existenz, Vorhandenheit, Zuhandenheit usw.). Ziel von SZ ist, *alle* Seinsweisen in einer "Idee des Seins überhaupt"⁵ aufzuweisen und sodann das Sein selbst nach seinem ebenso vielfältigen Sinn zu befragen, d.i. die ursprüngliche, differente Zeit ("Zeitlichkeit" und "Temporalität") im Gegensatz zur ontischen Zeit (das raumzeitliche Kontinuum, die gebrauchte Zeit usw.)⁶. Die Behandlung der Seinsfrage beruht auf einer "vorläufigen" Analyse des Seins desjenigen Seienden, das wir je sind: Dieses thematisiert Heidegger als das "existierende Dasein".

Das Sein ist "das, worin die Verständlichkeit von etwas hält" bzw. "Sinn"⁷. Gleichursprünglich ist es auch die *ontologische Bestimmung*

³ Vgl. ebd., p. 4, 6, 9, 37; M. Heidegger, *Geschichte der Philosophie von Thomas von Aquin bis Kant*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 2006, Gesamtausgabe Band 23 [= GA 23], p. 30; Id., *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1997, Gesamtausgabe Band 24 [= GA 24], p. 22, 77, 109; id., *Vorträge. Teil 1: 1915-1932*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2006, Gesamtausgabe Band 80.1 [= GA 80.1], p. 204 ss. Die folgende Erläuterung der Seinsfrage und der hermeneutischen Phänomenologie des Daseins basiert auf den Werken F.-W. v. Herrmanns, besonders *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Eine Erläuterung von "Sein und Zeit"*. Band 1. "Einleitung: Die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein", Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1987, Id. *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Ein Kommentar zu "Sein und Zeit"*, Band 2, "Erster Abschnitt: die vorbereitende Fundamentalanalyse des Daseins" § 9 – § 27, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2005, Id. *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Ein Kommentar zu "Sein und Zeit"*, Band 3, "Erster Abschnitt: Die vorbereitende Fundamentalanalyse des Daseins" § 28 – § 44, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2008.

⁴ Vgl. Aristoteles, *Met. Δ*, 1, 1003a30, Z, 1, 1028a10. Diese These betrifft streng genommen zwar nur die Seinsweisen (Existenz, Vorhandenheit, Zuhandenheit usw.), also nur das Sein als solches, jedoch kann man sich auf sie auch für diejenigen Phänomene der Phänomenologie berufen, die verschiedene, sowohl ontologische *als auch ontische* Bedeutungen haben, wie z.B. Welt, Zeit, Jetzt und Geschichte.

⁵ SZ, p. 197, 241, 366, 403, 464 s.

⁶ Vgl. ebd., p. 17 ss., 324 ss. Für die Zeitproblematik verweisen wir auf die Werke von I. Römer, *Das Zeitdenken bei Husserl, Heidegger und Ricoeur*, Springer, Dordrecht/Heidelberg/London/New York 2010; G. Neumann, *Phänomenologie der Zeit und der Zeitlichkeit bei Husserl und Heidegger*, in "Heidegger-Studien", vol. 39, 2023, pp. 149-208 und F.W. v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie der Zeitlichkeit des Daseins. Zwei Freiburger Seminare zu Martin Heideggers "Sein und Zeit"*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2023.

⁷ Ebd., p. 151, 324.

(“Seinsverfassung”) bzw. “Grund” des Seienden⁸. Das Sein meint die Weise (das “Wie”), *wie das Seiende gemäß seinen Möglichkeiten ist und sich von ihm selbst her zeigt*, sobald das Dasein dieses Seiende im Lichte einer dieser Seinsmöglichkeiten, welche es im Vorhinein beim Existieren zumeist nur latent erschlossen hat, “entdeckt”. Die verstandene Seinsmöglichkeit wird im apriorischen Geschehen der “Auslegung” “zugeeignet” und “ausgebildet” (“artikulierte”) ⁹. Das Seiende, zu dem wir uns verhalten, tritt nicht als eine reine Bedeutung auf, der wir in einem zweiten Moment Qualitäten und Werte hinzufügen, sondern zeigt sich auf eine artikulierte Weise gemäß der hermeneutischen “Als-Struktur” des “Etwas als Etwas” und der “Vorstruktur des Verstehens”¹⁰. Diese besteht aus der “Vor-habe” des Verstandenen (z.B. einer Bewandnis-ganzheit im alltäglichen Besorgen, der Dinglichkeit des Dinges usw.), der “Vor-Sicht”, die die Entdeckung “auf eine bestimmte Auslegbarkeit hin ‘anschneidet’”¹¹, und dem “Vor-Begriff”, d.i. einem vorläufigen aber revidierbaren Verfügen über eine bestimmte Begrifflichkeit beim Entdecken und Ansprechen des Seienden.

Indem es existiert, “entwirft” das Dasein sich auf Möglichkeiten-zu-sein in der Welt, die es zugleich faktisch-existenziell vollzieht. Dabei erschließt es auch auf eine selbstverständliche – zunächst und zumeist nur latente – aber nicht willkürliche Weise das Sein des Seienden *überhaupt*, d.h. sowohl der “Welt” als auch seines selbst als jeweilig Existierenden¹². Das zum Sein des Daseins (Existenz) gehörende einheitliche Seinsverständnis ist daher “selbsthaft-ekstatisch-horizontal”¹³, weshalb die vorläufige Daseinsanalytik den Boden für die Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein *überhaupt* darstellt. Die vorläufige Daseinsanalyse zielt auf eine einheitliche Interpretation des Seins des Daseins ab. Dabei werden auch die signifikanten Modifikationen des im latenten Seinsverständnis verstandenen Seins an den signifikanten Modifikationen des Existenzvollzugs des Daseins – ausgehend von seiner nächsten Alltäglichkeit – erforscht und beschrieben.

In seiner nächsten Alltäglichkeit verhält sich das Dasein zum innerumweltlichen Seienden nicht im Sinne des theoretischen Betrachtens, sondern des Hantierens, Umgehens, Verwendens usw., sodass ihm Seiendes nicht als objektives, allgemeingültiges “Ding mit Eigenschaften”, son-

⁸ Ebd., p. 35, 152.

⁹ Vgl. ebd., p. 161 ss.

¹⁰ Ebd., p. 148.

¹¹ Ebd., p. 150.

¹² Ebd., p. 56 s., 183, 437, 404; GA 24, p. 453 ss.

¹³ F-W. v. Herrmann, *Subjekt und Dasein. Grundbegriffe von “Sein und Zeit”*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2004, p. 92 ss.

dern als "zuhandenes Zeug" begegnet. Wie z.B. die Flasche *zum* Trinken oder das Zimmer *zum* Aufwärmen verweist, so auch das innerumweltliche Seiende ontologisch auf etwas¹⁴. Seine Struktur ist das "Um-Zu". Das Ganze dieser Um-Zu-Bezüge ist die nächste "Werkwelt". Das Zuhandene ist in der ontologischen Struktur der "Bewandtnis" fundiert: "es hat mit ihm bei etwas sein Bewenden"¹⁵. Die Bewandtnisbezüge gehen nicht weiter ins Unendliche, sondern hören bei demjenigen Seienden auf, bei dem es keine Bewandtnis mehr hat, weil es nicht zuhanden ist, sondern "umwillen seiner" existiert. Beim Dasein geht es in seinem Sein (Existenz) um dieses Sein selbst¹⁶. Gleichursprünglich entwirft es eine Welt, d.h. ein mögliches Sein des nichtdaseinsmäßigen Seienden (Zuhandenheit bzw. Bewandtnis), woraufhin das Dasein im alltäglichen und vertrauten Existenzvollzug Seiendes in der Umwelt als geeignetes oder ungeeignetes Zeug entdecken kann. Das umweltliche Seiende, das zunächst als Zeug entdeckt wird, ist folglich "weltzugehörig" und "innerweltlich"; und zwar nicht, weil "Weltzugehörigkeit" und "Innerweltlichkeit" seine intrinsischen Bestimmungen sind, sondern weil das Dasein, welches Welt erschließen kann, es *als weltzugehöriges, innerweltlich* begegnendes Zeug entdeckt. Die Entdeckung *fügt* dem entdeckten Seienden *nichts hinzu*, sondern sie lässt nur das entdeckte Seiende sich von ihm selbst so zeigen, wie es gemäß einer *seiner (der Sache selbst)* Möglichkeiten ist¹⁷. Das betrifft nicht nur das Seiende als zuhandenes Zeug, sondern alle Seinsweisen¹⁸. Eine signifikante Modifikation des Entwurfs ist die Übernahme der theoretischen Verhaltung. Wissenschaft und Philosophie sind selbst Existenzmöglichkeiten oder "Seinsart[en]" (Wie) des Daseins¹⁹. Sie bestehen im Grundakt der „Thematisierung“²⁰, wodurch das Dasein das horizontale Sein (Welt), d.h. das Sein des vorhin schon z.B. als zuhandenen Zeugs bekannten Seienden, nun als Vorhandenheit im engen Sinne entwirft. Daher leitet sich die theoretische Existenzweise vom alltäglichen Existieren ab als eine eigentümliche, außerordentliche Möglichkeit des Daseins. In der üblichen Wissenschaft entwirft das Dasein das Sein des thematisierten Seienden nur latent. In der Philosophie fragt es hingegen ausdrücklich nach dem Sein des Seienden. Doch nur in der hermeneutischen Phänomenologie, d.i. die Existenzmöglichkeit, die wir auch

¹⁴ Vgl. SZ, p. 66 ss.

¹⁵ Ebd., p. 86.

¹⁶ Vgl. ebd., p. 12, 84.

¹⁷ Vgl. GA 24, p. 96 ss.

¹⁸ Vgl. z.B. Ebd. 24, p. 240.

¹⁹ SZ, p. 19 s., 356 ss.; vgl. auch M. Heidegger, *Der Begriff der Zeit*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2004, Gesamtausgabe Band 64 [= GA 64], p. 95.

²⁰ Ebd., p. 363.

hier und jetzt vollziehen, thematisiert es das im alltäglichen Existieren nur latent und a priori entworfene Sein mit Berücksichtigung der ontologischen Differenz und der phänomenologischen Methode²¹.

Im Folgenden (1) werden wir zunächst Heideggers These der Vieldeutigkeit des Phänomens "Geschichte" darlegen, um die abgeleiteten Bedeutungen von Geschichte zu erörtern und ihre Fundiertheit im Dasein zu erklären. Schließlich (2) werden wir eine Analyse der Geschichtlichkeit als Sein des Daseins vornehmen, zuerst (2.1) mit Blick auf die die Seinsfrage vorbereitende Daseinsanalyse, danach (2.2) im Lichte ihrer Strukturmomente inklusiv ihrer möglichen Eigentlichkeit und (2.3.) der Interexistenzialität (Mitsein). Abschließend werden wir näher betrachten, wie (2.4) ein ausdrückliches Verhalten zur Vergangenheit möglich ist, wie (2.5) genau Geschichtlichkeit und Interexistenzialität die Daseinsauslegung bestimmen, und wie (2.6) Tradition, Historie und Seinsfrage in der Geschichtlichkeit gründen.

1. Geschichte als *πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον* und ihre abgeleiteten Bedeutungen

Auch im Hinblick auf die Geschichte lässt sich die Grundthese der antiken Ontologie heranziehen: Geschichte ist ein *πολλαχῶς λεγόμενον*, also etwas, das in mannigfaltiger Weise ausgesagt wird²². Näher betrachtet handelt es sich hierbei um ein vielfältiges und vielstufiges Phänomen dessen ursprünglicher Sinn, die Geschichtlichkeit als Seinsverfassung des Daseins, versäumt wurde. In ihm sind die abgeleiteten Bedeutungen von Geschichte fundiert, die in ihren Grenzen "berechtigt" sind²³. Diese lassen sich in Übereinstimmung mit Heideggers Analyse in SZ nach drei Ebenen der Existenz bzw. der Existenzanalyse einordnen.

Die erste existenziale Ebene ist jene der *theoretischen Forschung*, aus der zwei Bedeutungen von Geschichte entspringen: die Historie (Wissenschaft) und ihr Gegenstand, die "geschichtliche Wirklichkeit"²⁴. Für die hermeneutische Phänomenologie ist die Historie nicht primär eine Disziplin, sondern eine im alltäglichen Existenzvollzug fundierte *Existenzmöglichkeit*, in der das geschichtliche Seiende, das uns bereits vor der Übernahme der theoretisch-objektivierenden Einstellung bekannt ist, als ein der Vergangenheit zugehörendes Objekt vergegen-

²¹ Vgl. GA 24, p. 28 ss.

²² Vgl. SZ, p. 378.

²³ Vgl. Ebd., p. 374.

²⁴ Ebd., p. 378.

ständiglicht wird²⁵. Die Existenzialanalyse der "Historie als Wissenschaft zielt einzig auf den Nachweis ihrer ontologischen Herkunft aus der Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins"²⁶. Vor der Aufweisung der Geschichtlichkeit thematisiert Heidegger noch das Verständnis von Geschichte und Vergangenheit im alltäglich-vortheoretischen Existenzvollzug und gemäß der alltäglichen Ausgelegtheit.

Die zweite Existenzebene entspricht dementsprechend dem *alltäglichen, vortheoretischen und a-reflexiven Existieren*. Dabei ist das Seiende Geschichte als das "nicht notwendig objektivierte Seiende selbst" bekannt. Deren Verständnis erscheint zunächst als fragmentarisch, weshalb Heidegger vier "vulgäre" Definitionen angibt²⁷. Vulgar heißt, dass sie nur ontische Auslegungen sind, die zunächst und zumeist von der Uneigentlichkeit und der ontologischen Rückstrahlung bestimmt sind:

1) Geschichte ist etwas, das der Vergangenheit angehört, wobei das Vergangene entweder ein "nicht mehr vorhandenes" oder ein "noch vorhandenes" ist, das ferner entweder ohne "Wirkung" auf die "Gegenwart" oder als ein "noch nachwirkendes" sein kann. Es gehört zur Vergangenheit, aber ist irgendwie noch "jetzt";

2) Geschichte meint ferner die "Herkunft" aus der Vergangenheit. Der Akzent liegt hier darauf, dass etwas "im Zusammenhang eines Werdens steht", also eine Geschichte hat oder macht, wie z.B. Bücher, Städte oder Personen;

3) Geschichte meint auch eine "Region des Seienden" gegenüber einer anderen, nämlich "das Ganze des Seienden, das sich 'in der Zeit' wandelt [...] die Wandlungen und Geschehnisse von Menschen, menschlichen Verbänden und ihrer 'Kultur'" *im Gegensatz* zur Natur. Aus fundamentalontologischer Perspektive sind allerdings beide im Sinne der "Innerzeitigkeit" (als in-der-Zeit, in-der-Geschichte) des nichtdaseinsmäßigen Seienden verstanden;+

4) Schließlich ist "das Überlieferte als solches" geschichtlich, unabhängig davon, ob es in seiner Herkunft erkannt oder zum Objekt der Historie gemacht wurde.

²⁵ Vgl. F.-W. v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Eine Erläuterung von "Sein und Zeit"*, Band 1, "Einleitung: Die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein", *op. cit.*, p. 208.

²⁶ SZ, p. 376.

²⁷ Vgl. ebd., p. 378 s.

Heidegger formuliert den "vulgären Begriff der Geschichte"²⁸ aus diesen Bedeutungen heraus: "Geschichte ist das in der Zeit sich begebende spezifische Geschehen des existierenden Daseins, so zwar, dass das im Miteinandersein 'vergangene' und zugleich 'überlieferte' und fortwirkende Geschehen im betonten Sinne als Geschichte gilt"²⁹. Diese Definition bezieht sich auf das Seiende Mensch als "Subjekt der Ereignisse" und dient als Grundlage für die existenzial-ontologische Aufweisung und phänomenologische "Konstruktion" der Geschichtlichkeit.

Zuvor unterscheidet Heidegger noch schärfer zwischen dem daseinsmäßigen und dem nichtdaseinsmäßigen Seienden. Inwiefern ist es berechtigt, sich auf beides als auf geschichtliche Seiendes zu beziehen³⁰? Wir sagen zum Beispiel, dass ein Gerät, eine Sprache oder eine Ruine einer Stadt der Vergangenheit angehören. Heidegger geht gemäß seiner Weltanalyse vom zuhandenen Zeug aus. Das alte Zeug ist noch da. Das Schwert ist im Museum aufbewahrt, obwohl niemand mehr mit ihm kämpft. Ebenso die Münze aus der Zeit der römischen Kaiser, mit der heute kein Brot mehr gekauft wird. Der Vergangenheitscharakter des Zeugs liegt weder in der bloßen Vergänglichkeit noch in der Summe der Jetzt-Momente von der Herstellung bis heute, sondern in seiner *Zugehörigkeit* zu einer vergangenen Welt. Diese "*Welt* ist nicht mehr. Das vormalig Innerweltliche jener Welt aber ist noch vorhanden"³¹. Der Vergangenheitscharakter eines Zeugs gründet also in der "Zugehörigkeit und Herkunft" aus einer "gewesenen Welt eines da-gewesenen Daseins"³². Wie wir schon besprochen haben, ist Welt ursprünglich keine ontologische Bestimmung des nichtdaseinsmäßigen Seienden, sondern des Da-

²⁸ Ebd., p. 382.

²⁹ Ebd., p. 379.

³⁰ Für H.-H. Gander, *Existenzialontologie und Geschichtlichkeit*, in Thomas Rentsch (a cura di), *Sein und Zeit, Klassiker Auslegen*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin, 2007, p. 235, ist "Heideggers Versuch, am Zeugcharakter das Problem der Geschichtlichkeit zu exponieren [...] gar nicht [überzeugend]". Die Dienlichkeit des Zeugs habe nichts mit der Geschichtlichkeit zu tun. Ferner „lässt sich schwerlich ein triftiger Unterschied zwischen dem mehr als zweihundert Jahre alten Schreibtisch und dem heutigen feststellen“. Dieser Einwand ist nichtzutreffend. Wir sprechen sowohl von nicht-daseinsmäßigen Seienden als auch vom Dasein als von geschichtlichen, z.B. vergangenen Seienden – aber mit welchem Recht? Heidegger will zunächst nur die undifferenzierte Rede von "geschichtlich" differenzieren, bevor er sich mit der (echten) Geschichtlichkeit (des Daseins) beschäftigen kann, SZ p. 376: "Hierbei muß deutlich werden, was ursprünglich als geschichtlich angesprochen wird". Daher muss zuerst das eigentlich geschichtliche Seiende in Abgrenzung vom *abgeleiteten*, weltgeschichtlichen Seienden identifiziert werden. Laut Heidegger ist ein Zeug nicht intrinsisch geschichtlich, sondern wird (welt)geschichtlich, sobald es von einem welterschließenden, geschichtlich existierenden Dasein entdeckt wird.

³¹ SZ, p. 380.

³² Ebd., p. 381.

seins, das das nichtdaseinsmäßige Seiende als innerweltlich, also auch innerzeitig (in-der-Zeit, in-der-Geschichte) entdecken kann.

Aufgrund dieses existenzial-ontologischen Fundierungszusammenhangs unterscheidet Heidegger die Vergangenheit des nichtdaseinsmäßigen Seienden von der "Gewesenheit" des Daseins, das nie vergangen im Sinne der *Innerzeitigkeit* ("jetzt nicht mehr vorhanden bzw. zuhanden"³³) sein kann, weil es existiert³⁴. Die existenziale "Vergangenheit" des Existierenden ist also eine andere als die jetztartige Vergangenheit des Vorhandenen. Dasein ist "da-gewesen". Dieses ist also das "primär Geschichtliche"³⁵, während das nichtdaseinsmäßige Seiende, das Heidegger "das Weltgeschichtliche" nennt, geschichtlich in einem sekundären, abgeleiteten Sinne ist. Weltgeschichte ist nicht nur das zuhandene Zeug, sondern das nichtdaseinsmäßige Seiende überhaupt, wie z.B. die "Umweltnatur als 'geschichtlicher Boden'"³⁶. Es existiert nicht geschichtlich wie das Dasein, d.h. aus der Zukunft her, sondern wird vom Dasein als in der (Welt-)Geschichte entdeckt, worauf der Vorrang der Vergangenheit beruht. Geschichtlich-sein und In-der-Geschichte-sein sind aber zwei verschiedene mögliche Weisen, zeitlich zu sein.

³³ Ebd., p. 380.

³⁴ Diesbezüglich behauptet G. Figal, *Martin Heidegger. Phänomenologie der Freiheit*, Beltz Athenäum, Weinheim, 2008, p. 313, das ganze Kapitel sei "unglücklich platziert". Denn Heidegger erörtere "Geschichte und Geschichtlichkeit" vor der vollen Exposition seiner Konzeption der Zeit. Daher "gelingt es ihm auch nicht, die spezifische Zugänglichkeit der Geschichte zu klären, denn wo die Geschichte diskutiert wird, steht die Klärung der Weltzeit und des vulgären Zeitverständnisses noch aus". Laut Figal wird dieses Problem auch von Heidegger selbst erkannt. Figal bezieht sich diesbezüglich auf eine Stelle (SZ, p. 377), die jedoch nicht als ein solches Zugeständnis, sondern nur als eine Antizipation des nächsten Kapitels interpretiert werden kann. Wie Figal, so sieht auch J. Greisch, *Ontologie et Temporalité*, Épiphiée, Paris, 1994, p. 358, die Erörterung der Geschichte vor der Exposition der Zeit problematisch. Denn wie kann die Geschichtlichkeit hier vorgezogen werden, obwohl sie doch gleichursprünglich wie die Innerzeitigkeit ist? Es handelt sich hierbei um ein "énigme", wenn nicht sogar eine "aporie". Das ist allerdings ein Scheinproblem. Vgl. dazu was Heidegger z.B. über die Analyse des In-der-Welt-seins und die "Gleichursprünglichkeit" sagt, SZ, p. 53 ss, M. Heidegger, *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffes*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 1979, Gesamtausgabe Band 20 [= GA 20], p. 211. Heidegger will zunächst nur die undifferenzierte Rede von Geschichtlichkeit differenzieren, um sich später auf die Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins zu konzentrieren. Für diese Differenzierung kann Heidegger sich lediglich auf den bereits aufgezeigten Fundierungszusammenhang von Innerweltlichkeit und Weltzugehörigkeit des nicht-daseinsmäßigen Seienden im welterschließenden Dasein sowie auf den Paragraphen über die Transzendenz der Welt (§ 69 c) berufen, weshalb er die Rede von "geschichtlich" für das (welt-geschichtliche, nichtdaseinsmäßige) Seiende auf das die Welt erschließende und das Seiende als innerweltliches, weltzugehöriges und *weltgeschichtliches entdeckende* Dasein zurückführen kann (vgl. auch SZ, p. 388 s.).

³⁵ SZ, p. 381.

³⁶ Ebd.

Bezüglich der abgeleiteten Bedeutungen von Geschichte stellt Figal deren Berechtigung in Frage³⁷. Hierauf ist zu erwidern, dass diese jedoch durchaus berechtigt sind, sofern sich diese auf das nichtdaseinsmäßige Weltgeschichtliche und das in der historischen Forschung objektivierte Dasein selbst beziehen. *Dabei bleibt der Vorrang der Vergangenheit gewahrt*. Das vulgäre Geschichtsverständnis erkennt zwar das Primat des "Subjekts", aber aufgrund des Ausbleibens einer vorläufigen Analytik des Seins dieses Seienden wird es undifferenziert als ein übliches, weltgeschichtliches Vorhandenes verstanden. Das weltgeschichtliche Seiende steht im Gegensatz zum Geschichtlich-Sein des Daseins, *bei dem die Zukunft als Sich-Entwerfen den Vorrang hat*. Die theoretischen Bedeutungen sind ferner legitim, da die Historie als Existenzmöglichkeit im Dasein fundiert ist. Sie ermöglicht es, das bereits bekannte geschichtliche Seiende zum historischen Objekt zu machen. Nun gehen wir auf die Frage nach der Geschichtlichkeit als Seinsverfassung des Daseins ein.

2. Dasein als Geschichte und Existenz als Geschichtlichkeit

Die dritte Analysestufe entspricht immer noch dem alltäglich existierenden Dasein, das eindeutig als das primär geschichtlich Seiende bestimmt wurde und nun im Lichte der Zeitlichkeit hinsichtlich seines Seins und der Modalitäten der Existenz (Eigentlichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit) auszulegen ist. Heidegger identifiziert an vielen Stellen Geschichte in ihrem ursprünglichsten *ontischen* Sinne mit dem Dasein. Wie dieses ist die Geschichte durch Jemeinigkeit charakterisiert: "Das Dasein hat faktisch je seine 'Geschichte'"³⁸; "Geschichte geschieht mit mir selbst; ich bin dieses Geschehen"³⁹. Dasein hat je "seine" Geschichte zu übernehmen und zu vollziehen. Nun thematisiert Heidegger am Geschehen des Daseins, mit Rückführung auf die bereits gewonnenen Existenzialien der Sorge und der vorlaufenden Entschlossenheit (phänomenologische "Konstruktion"⁴⁰), die *ontologisch-zeitliche* Struktur der Geschichtlich-

³⁷ Vgl. G. Figal, *op. cit.*, p. 312.

³⁸ SZ, p. 382.

³⁹ GA 80.1, p. 153.

⁴⁰ H.-H., Gander, *op. cit.*, p. 232, hebt zu Recht hervor, dass die phänomenologische Konstruktion, die immer auch mit Destruktion (und Reduktion) verbunden ist, erst in diesem späteren Kapitel von SZ ausdrücklich erwähnt wird. Allerdings wendet Heidegger diese Methode z.B. bereits im Kapitel über den Tod an, wo er vom uneigentlichen Sein zum Tode das eigentliche Sein zum Tode (zunächst nur) entwirft (§ 53), und in der Analyse des Phänomens der Schuld (§ 58), in der er durch das "Zurückleiten" der vulgären Interpretation von Schuld, die von der Zuhandenheit bestimmt ist, auf die ontologische Verfassung des Daseins und dessen Existenzialien (Angst, Befindlichkeit, Rede usw.) das

keit, die in SZ als die ursprünglichste, weil vollste Auffassung des Seins des Daseins auftritt. Als erstes vergegenwärtigen wir uns die wichtigsten Etappen der Daseinsanalyse.

2.1. Von der Sorge zum ursprünglichen Sinn von Geschichte

In seinem Sein (Existenz) geht es dem Dasein um dieses sein Sein⁴¹ "als das eigene"⁴². Es existiert umwillen seiner. Existenz heißt ferner, sich auf Existenzmöglichkeiten in der Welt zu entwerfen und sie zugleich faktisch zu vollziehen. Dasein ist also "ihm selbst in seinem Sein je schon vorweg"⁴³. Weil es kein zunächst von der "Welt" und den Anderen isoliertes Seiendes ist, ist das Dasein "je schon in eine Welt geworfen"⁴⁴. Beim Sich-Entwerfen ist das Dasein in Existenzmöglichkeiten bereits geworfen und in den "Befindlichkeiten" (Furcht, Langweile, Angst usw.) hat es das Sein des Seienden auch bereits erschlossen. Dabei existiert es ständig bei der "Welt" und den Dingen, die es begegnen bzw. sein lässt. Daher fasst Heidegger die gleichursprünglichen Momente des in der Existenz eingebauten Erschließens von Sein in folgender Formel zusammen: "Sich-Vorweg-schon-sein-in-(der-Welt-) als Sein-bei (innerweltlich begegendem Seienden)"⁴⁵. Diese Formel wird als "Sorge" interpretiert, die am Ende des ersten Abschnittes als Titel für das Sein des Daseins auftritt⁴⁶.

Nun ist das Dasein nicht "indifferent ein geworfenes In-der-Welt-sein-können"⁴⁷. Denn es ist so wenig ein zunächst isoliertes Subjekt, dass es sich nicht nur ständig zu den nicht-daseinsmäßigen und daseinsmäßigen Seienden sowie zu sich als Seienden verhält, *sondern sich zunächst und zumeist aus diesen her statt aus sich selbst versteht bzw. auslegt*. In seiner Alltäglichkeit tendiert das selbsthaft-ekstatisch-horizontal erschlossene Dasein dazu, sich aus der "Welt" und deren Sein (Vorhandenheit) im

existenziale Phänomen des "Schuldigseins" als "Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit" herausdestilliert. Die hermeneutisch-phänomenologische Konstruktion ist weder eine Deduktion noch freischwebend, sondern eine intuitiv-apriorische Methode. Vgl. dazu SZ, p. 376.

⁴¹ Vgl. SZ, p. 12, 84.

⁴² Ebd., p. 231.

⁴³ Ebd., p. 191.

⁴⁴ Ebd., p. 192.

⁴⁵ Ebd., p. 191.

⁴⁶ Zu den in diesem Paragraphen diskutierten Phänomenen, vgl. auch E. Cheong, *Die Geschichtlichkeit des Menschen und die Geschichte des Seins*, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin 2000, p. 52 ss., I. Römer, *op. cit.*, p. 143 ss., und F.-W. v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie der Zeitlichkeit des Daseins. Zwei Freiburger Seminare zu Martin Heideggers "Sein und Zeit"*, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ SZ, p. 192.

Sinne der “ontologischen Rückstrahlung”⁴⁸ sowie aus den Anderen her zu verstehen. Heidegger spricht diesbezüglich von einem “Verfallen” an die “Welt” und die Anderen, das die uneigentliche Existenzweise charakterisiert, die von der latenten “Unheimlichkeit” “beruhigt”.

Zunächst und zumeist unterscheidet sich das Dasein nicht von den Anderen. Es existiert im Modus des “Man”⁴⁹. Es handelt, denkt, macht usw., wie und was die anderen handeln, denken, machen. Innerhalb der Existenzialanalyse betrifft das Man primär nicht, *was* getan wird, sondern *wie* es getan wird, d.h. die *Wahl* der Existenzmöglichkeiten. Im Modus des Man entwirft und vollzieht das Dasein seine Existenzmöglichkeiten, ohne diese *selbst zu wählen*. Die Anderen oder die besorgte “Welt” haben ihm seine Möglichkeiten vorgegeben, die es ohne Selbstwahl vollzieht. Daher bezeichnet Heidegger die uneigentliche Existenzweise als eine Art “Flucht” vor sich selbst in das Man. Die Flucht oder das “Verfallen” befreit das Dasein von dem “Lastcharakter” der vollen Übernahme der Existenz⁵⁰. Sie entspricht der Weise, wie das Dasein “zunächst und zumeist” in seiner Alltäglichkeit ist, weshalb Heidegger in SZ an vielen Stellen *scheinbar* Alltäglichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit gleichsetzt⁵¹. Grundbefindlichkeiten wie die Angst oder die Langweile können diese Verlorenheit in das Man erschüttern und die existenziale Situation für die Übernahme der eigenen Existenz schaffen, wobei die eigene

⁴⁸ Für die “ontologische Rückstrahlung” verweisen wir auf C. Ivanoff-Sabogal, A. Tsoullos, *Der zeitliche Sinn der ontologischen Rückstrahlung in Sein und Zeit*, in “Heidegger Studien”, 37, 2021, pp. 9-27.

⁴⁹ SZ, p. 126.

⁵⁰ Ebd., p. 134, 175 ss.

⁵¹ Vgl. ebd., p. 16, 43 s., 106, 122, 178, 313, 331, 370, 376. Es stellt sich die Frage, ob die Identifizierung von Alltäglichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit phänomenologisch gerechtfertigt ist. F.-W. v. Herrmann schlägt hierzu vor, dass zwischen “gehaltlicher” und “modaler” Alltäglichkeit zu unterscheiden wäre (id., *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Ein Kommentar zu “Sein und Zeit”. Band 3. “Erster Abschnitt: Die vorbereitende Fundamentalanalyse des Daseins”* § 28 – § 44, op. cit., p. 15 ss., 66 ss.). Es erscheint wenig plausibel, dass ein eigentliches Dasein keine Alltäglichkeit besitzen könnte, auch wenn es im Gegensatz zum uneigentlichen Dasein, das sich im Man und im Besorgen verliert, in dieser nicht aufgeht. Ohne Alltäglichkeit wäre das Dasein entweder ein “isoliertes Subjekt” oder eine engelhafte Existenz – beides unphänomenologische Konstruktionen. Beispielsweise ist die alltägliche Nutzung von Verkehrsmitteln zur Arbeit weder eigentlich noch uneigentlich, sondern eine existenzielle Möglichkeit (ein Was), die entweder im Modus der Selbstwahl oder im Modus des Man vollzogen werden kann (Wie). Zu beachten ist außerdem, dass Heidegger das Sein des Daseins nicht aus einer “Idee der Existenz” ableitet, weshalb er zunächst die Alltäglichkeit *undifferenziert* analysieren muss. Im Verlauf der Untersuchung wird die eigentliche Existenz aus der uneigentlichen heraus bezeugt *und differenziert*, wodurch die Alltäglichkeit und die Uneigentlichkeit nicht aufgehoben, sondern überhaupt erst verständlich gemacht werden. Die Hinweise auf die “modale Indifferenz” (vgl. SZ, p. 53, 232, 331) können in dieser Richtung interpretiert werden.

Selbstwahl immer dem jeweilig existierenden Dasein *selbst* obliegt. In der Grundbefindlichkeit der Angst ängstigt sich das Dasein nicht um ein nicht-daseinsmäßiges Seiendes wie in der Befindlichkeit der Furcht, die innerweltliches Seiendes als furchtbares begegnen lässt, denn in der Angst verliert die "Welt" als Ganzes ihre Bedeutsamkeit⁵², während die latente "Unheimlichkeit" sich offenbart. Worum sich das Dasein in der Angst ängstet, ist das In-der-Welt-sein als Ganzes, d.h. seine Existenz. So wird dem Dasein im Sinne der latenten "Unheimlichkeit" auffällig, dass es existiert und zu sein hat, d.h., dass das Wählen seiner Möglichkeiten nur ihm selbst obliegt.

Das "Strukturganze" der Sorge ist zwar eine hermeneutisch-phänomenologische, sachimmanente Deskription des Seins des Daseins, jedoch werden dabei weder die mögliche Ganzheit noch die mögliche Eigentlichkeit des Daseins berücksichtigt.

Das Ganzsein, das im Sinne der Existenz ein "Ganzseinkönnen" (Existenzmöglichkeit) ist, wird zunächst im Hinblick auf das Phänomen des Todes als "Ende" des Daseins thematisiert. Für die alltägliche und uneigentliche Auslegung ist der Tod ein zukünftiges Ereignis, das zwar noch nicht, aber irgendwann in einer unbestimmten Zukunft uns alle treffen wird⁵³. Er ist also ein innerzeitig Vorhandenes. Der so aufgefasste Tod ist nicht etwas, das das jeweilige Dasein und nur es betrifft, sondern etwas, das alle trifft, und zwar auf gleiche Weise. Hingegen ist der Tod auf der sachimmanenten Perspektive der Daseinsanalytik ursprünglich eine Existenzmöglichkeit des Daseins, nämlich die äußerste und eigenste, weil sie die "*Möglichkeit [...] der Unmöglichkeit der Existenz überhaupt*" darstellt⁵⁴. Dementsprechend ist der Tod kein nicht-daseinsmäßiges Seiendes (innerzeitiges Ereignis), sondern das Dasein selbst: "Ich selbst bin die Möglichkeit meines Todes"⁵⁵; Der Tod als Möglichkeit ist "kein Was, sondern [...] das eigentliche Wie meines Daseins"⁵⁶. Zum Tode in diesem Sinne kann sich das Dasein als "Sein zum Tode" verhalten, d.h. als Sich-Entwerfen auf die äußerste Möglichkeit der Unmöglichkeit des eigenen In-der-Welt-seins. Das Sein zum Tode kann uneigentlich oder eigentlich sein. Der Tod ist diesbezüglich eine ausgezeichnete Existenzmöglichkeit, in der das Dasein sich selbst als endliches Seiendes erfahren kann, weil "[k]einer [...] dem Anderen sein Sterben abnehmen [kann]"⁵⁷. Diesbezüglich kann das Dasein vor der

⁵² Vgl. ebd., p. 186 ss.

⁵³ Vgl. ebd., p. 253.

⁵⁴ Ebd., p. 262.

⁵⁵ GA 80.1, p. 141.

⁵⁶ GA 64, p. 117.

⁵⁷ SZ, p. 240.

Übernahme des Todes als verendlicher Seinsmöglichkeit der Existenz im Ganzen fliehen, indem es den Tod zu einem zukünftigen, nicht-daseinsmäßigen Ereignis reduziert (uneigentliches Sein zum Tode), der alle gleich angehen wird, oder es kann sich im Hinblick auf den Tod als äußerste, eigenste Seinsmöglichkeit so entwerfen, dass es seine eigene Existenz als Ganzes im Sinne dieser enthüllten Endlichkeit entwirft (eigentliches Sein zum Tode).

In der Sorge wurde nicht die Eigentlichkeit berücksichtigt, da sie nur ein formales Struktur Ganzes bezeichnet. Die Darstellung der eigentlichen Existenz erfolgt im Rahmen einer Analyse des Phänomens des Gewissens, das den Charakter eines "Rufs" hat⁵⁸. Dieser Ruf des Gewissens ist ständig da, nur dass er vom Lärm des Mans und des Verfallens im Besorgen verstummt wird. Das Dasein hat ebenso ständig die Möglichkeit, auf den Ruf zu hören, anstatt sich vom Man überreden bzw. leiten zu lassen, weil der Ruf weder von "draußen" (der "Welt") noch von den Anderen (dem Man), sondern *vom eigenen Gewissen bzw. Selbst* kommt. Im Gegensatz zum Man, das dem Dasein jederzeit sagt, *was* zu machen ist, sagt der Ruf des Gewissens gar nichts (kein Was) – und trotzdem wird das Dasein unmissverständlich angerufen. Das Gewissen macht im Modus des Schweigens nur deutlich, dass das Dasein seine Existenzmöglichkeiten selbst wählen soll – *das Wie*. Es macht deutlich, dass die Wahl und Übernahme der Existenz in ihrem Lastcharakter immer *nur ihm selbst* obliegt. Hört das Dasein auf den Ruf, dann vollzieht es ein eigentliches, existenzielles "Gewissen-haben-wollen", dessen existenzial-ontologische Struktur die "Entschlossenheit" ist⁵⁹.

In einem letzten Schritt bringt Heidegger die Frage nach dem möglichen Ganzsein des Daseins und jene nach der möglichen Eigentlichkeit zusammen. Das ist keine äußerliche Verkoppelung, da die Entschlossenheit ihrer "Seinstendenz" nach dazu tendiert, sich als ein eigentliches Sein zum Tode, d.h. nicht als bloßer eigentlicher "Entschluss" in diese oder jene Situation, sondern als *eigentliches Ganzseinkönnen* zu bestimmen⁶⁰. Die volle und eigentliche Existenz wird (vorläufig) als "vorlaufende Entschlossenheit" bestimmt, die als Ausdruck für das eigentliche Sein des Daseins auftritt. Im Gegensatz zur Sorge, die auch das Sein des Daseins bezeichnet, wird in ihr sowohl das Ganzseinkönnen als auch die Eigentlichkeit berücksichtigt. Anschließend gibt Heidegger eine erste Antwort auf die Frage nach dem Sinn des Seins des Daseins. Der Seinsinn der Existenz ist die Zeitlichkeit, d.h. die "ekstatische" Einheit "des

⁵⁸ Ebd., p. 272 ss.

⁵⁹ Ebd., p. 288, 297.

⁶⁰ Ebd., p. 305 s.

‘Auf-sich-zu’, des ‘Zurück auf’ [und] des ‘Begegnenlassens-von’⁶¹, die den ursprünglichen-existenzialen Phänomenen (“Ekstasen”) von Zukunft, Vergangenheit (Gewesenheit) und Gegenwart entsprechen. Im Modus der Eigentlichkeit heißen sie “Vorlaufen”, “Wiederholung”⁶² und “Augenblick”. Die Ekstasen sind zwar gleichursprünglich, jedoch besteht ein eigentümlicher Vorrang der Zukunft, der sich am Phänomen des Vorlaufens am deutlichsten zeigt.

2.2. Existenz als Geschichtlichkeit und eigentliches Ganzseinkönnen als Schicksal

In diesem, in der Seinsfrage eingebauten systematischen Kontext der Analytik der Existenz und der Zeitlichkeitsanalyse, kommt die Frage nach der Geschichte bzw. der Geschichtlichkeit auf. Mit der vorlaufenden Entschlossenheit wurde das eigentliche Ganzseinkönnen des Daseins aufgezeigt und eindeutig von der uneigentlichen Existenzweise differenziert. Jedoch wurde das Ganzsein nicht nach allen Seiten (“Enden”) betrachtet, sondern nur im Hinblick auf den Tod. Dieser ist “das *eine* Ende, das die Daseinsganzheit umschließt”⁶³. Das andere Ende ist der Anfang, d.h. die Geburt. Wie der Tod ist die existenzial-ontologisch thematisierte Geburt des Daseins kein bloßes Ereignis, das alle gleichermaßen betrifft, an einem bestimmten Tag und zu einer bestimmten Uhrzeit stattfand, jetzt nicht mehr ist und dennoch noch irgendeine Wirkung hat. Die Geburt ist eine bestimmende Seinsmöglichkeit des Daseins. Wie bei dem Tod spricht Heidegger auch hier von einem “Sein zum Anfang” sowie von “gebürtig existieren” und “gebürtig [sterben]”⁶⁴. Zugleich wird die ganze “Erstreckung” zwischen beiden Enden als das Geschehen des Daseins selbst thematisiert, das nun im Lichte der schon gewonnenen Existenzialien der Sorgestruktur, der eigentlichen Existenz und der Zeitlichkeit im Sinne der hermeneutisch-phänomenologischen “Konstruktion” auszulegen ist.

Einige Interpreten, wie Greisch, haben Heidegger vorgeworfen, dass er das “Sein zum Anfang”, der im Text mit der Geburt identifiziert wird, zwar von einer bloß vorhandenen Tatsache unterschieden hat, ohne jedoch dabei den existenzialen Sinn der Geburt richtig zu erörtern⁶⁵. Dieser

⁶¹ Ebd., p. 328 s.

⁶² Zur Wiederholung vgl. auch F-W.v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie der Zeitlichkeit des Daseins. Zwei Freiburger Seminare zu Martin Heideggers “Sein und Zeit”*, op. cit., besonders p. 93, 104, 185 ss.

⁶³ SZ, p. 373.

⁶⁴ Ebd., p. 373 s.

⁶⁵ J. Greisch, op. cit., nennt vier Argumente dafür, p. 354: 1) Philosophen interessieren sich mehr für den Tod als für die Geburt; 2) Heideggers Fokus auf die “Erstreckung zwischen

Vorwurf ignoriert, dass die Aufweisung der Geschichtlichkeitsstruktur gerade eine schärfere Bestimmung des Existenzialen der Geworfenheit darstellt, die nun die Geburt als verendlichendes Moment der Existenz einschließt. In der bisherigen Daseinsanalyse bleibt unbestimmt, „woher überhaupt die Möglichkeiten geschöpft werden können, auf die sich das Dasein faktisch entwirft“⁶⁶. Ziel dieses Kapitels ist es, unter Berücksichtigung sowohl des möglichen Ganzseins als auch der schon aufgezeigten möglichen Eigentlichkeit des Daseins den „vollen Begriff“⁶⁷ der Geworfenheit zu gewinnen⁶⁸. Früher wurde die Geworfenheit nur strukturell und statisch, d.h. nur im Hinblick auf die jeweils konkret faktische Lage, ohne Bezug auf die ganze Erstreckung und ihre Implikationen, analysiert. Mit der Berücksichtigung der vollen Zeitlichkeitsstruktur und des Ganzseinkönnens wird nun offenbar, dass die eigene Vergangenheit für das Dasein nicht gleichgültig, sondern wesensbestimmend ist. Denn dieses zeitliche Seiende ist durch Geschichtlichkeit und Mitsein konstituiert, weshalb es seit seiner Geburt ständig in eine bestimmte Daseinsausgelegtheit geworfen und in ihr aufgewachsen ist. Wie wir noch sehen werden, übersteigt die eigene Vergangenheit sowohl die Grenzen der Geburt als bloße Tatsache, weil sie offen für die Vergangenheit da-gewesener Daseins, d.h. der vergangenen Generationen und „Welten“, ist, als auch des isolierten Subjekts, weil sie durch das Mitsein konstituiert ist.

Heidegger hat schon die eigentliche Existenz bezeugt, die ursprünglicher als die uneigentliche Existenz ist, welche sie auch erhellt, weshalb er

Geburt und Tod“ hebe das Phänomen der Geburt lediglich hervor; 3) Der Vorrang der Sorge in der Analyse verdecke „les modes spécifiques du souci en rapport au phénomène de la naissance et tout ce qu’il présuppose, la différence sexuelle, la ‘génération’, etc.”; 4) Heidegger versäume das von Franck entdeckte Phänomen des Leibes (vgl. dazu D. Franck, *Chair et corps. Sur la phénoménologie de Husserl*, Les éditions de Minuit, Paris 1993). Diese Einwände sind jedoch unzutreffend, da Heideggers Daseinsanalyse ontisch-existenziell keine Ansprüche auf Vollständigkeit erhebt, weil diese nur als Mittel zur Beantwortung der Seinsfrage dient (vgl. SZ, p. 15 ss., 372). Dass sich Philosophen mehr für den Tod als die Geburt interessieren, könnte indessen daran liegen, dass diesem tatsächlich eine größere philosophische Relevanz zukommt als jener. Die Geburt mag aus anderen Perspektiven weiter erforscht werden, Phänomene wie die „sexuelle Differenz“ jedoch dürfen im Sinne von Heideggers *Methode und Seinsbegriff* nicht verontologisiert werden. Es drohen absurde Folgen, wie etwa die Annahme, dass (je nach Belieben) entweder Männer oder Frauen nicht in der Lage sind, ein Zeug als Zeug zu erkennen oder eigentlich zu existieren.

⁶⁶ SZ, p. 383.

⁶⁷ Ebd.

⁶⁸ Das Kapitel kann ferner als eine schärfere Bestimmung der Ekstase der Gewesenheit (vgl. P. Ricoeur, *Temps et récits, tome III*, Seuil, Paris 1985, p. 109; J. Greisch, *op. cit.*, p. 358; I. Römer, *op. cit.*, p. 173) sowie der selbsthaften Erschlossenheit gelesen werden. Zum Phänomen der Gewesenheit, vgl. auch F.W.v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie der Zeitlichkeit des Daseins. Zwei Freiburger Seminare zu Martin Heideggers „Sein und Zeit“*, *op. cit.*

in der Analyse von dieser ausgeht. Das heißt aber nicht, dass die nun aufzuweisenden Existenzialien nur die eigentliche Existenz betreffen. Denn früher wurden aus der Indifferenz von Alltäglichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit Existenzialien enthüllt, die auch die eigentliche Existenz betreffen oder im Sinne der eigentlichen Existenz eine Modalisierung erfahren können (z.B. Geworfenheit, Verstehen, Rede)⁶⁹.

In der Entschlossenheit kommt das Dasein auf sich selbst zurück aus seiner Verlorenheit in das Man. Die eigentlichen Existenzmöglichkeiten, die sie erschließt, werden weder von nirgendwo noch aus dem Tode⁷⁰, sondern „aus dem Erbe“ geschöpft, „das sie als geworfene *übernimmt*“⁷¹. Das eigentliche Ganzseinkönnen nimmt die Existenz in ihrer vollen Erstreckung in Anspruch. Eigentliche Existenz ist keine Verabschiedung vom eigenen Gewesensein, d.h. zunächst der bisher im Modus der Uneigentlichkeit vollzogenen Existenz. Wäre dies nicht der Fall, dann hätte die Entschlossenheit den Charakter einer Entlastung bzw. einer Flucht vor der eigenen Geschichte, also vor sich selbst. Die die Existenz verendlichende Entschlossenheit ist „keine weltflüchtige Abgeschiedenheit“⁷², sondern gerade *das Gegenteil* einer Flucht und einer Entlastung. Sie hat die Bedeutung eines *vollen* Zurückkommens auf sich, eines *vollen* Zurückgewinnens des eigenen Selbst aus der Verlorenheit in das Man und einer *vollen* Übernahme der eigenen geworfenen Existenz in ihrem *vollen* Lastcharakter. Das eigentliche Zurückkommen auf die eigene Geworfenheit in ihrer Erstrecktheit „birgt ein *Sichüberliefern* überkommener Möglichkeiten [...]” obzwar nicht notwendig als überkommener⁷³ (im Modus der Unausdrücklichkeit).

Die Berücksichtigung des anderen Endes vervollständigt die existenzverendlichende und bestimmende vorlaufende Entschlossenheit, die nun als ein „wählendes Finden“ erscheint. Mit Blick auf das Erbe werden die eigentlich zu übernehmenden Existenzmöglichkeiten sozusagen auf das Wesentliche und Eigenste hin verringert. Die volle Entschlossenheit bringt das Dasein somit „in die Einfachheit seines *Schicksals*“⁷⁴.

⁶⁹ SZ, p. 387: „Gehört die Geschichtlichkeit zum Sein des Daseins, dann muss auch das uneigentliche Existieren geschichtlich sein“. Vgl. F.-W.v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Eine Erläuterung von „Sein und Zeit“*. Band 1. „Einleitung: Die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein“, op. cit., p. 208: „Geschichtlichkeit ist eine grundsätzliche Verfaßtheit des Seins des Daseins (§ 76, zweiter Absatz). Das besagt, dass das Dasein nicht nur gelegentlich geschichtlich existiert, sondern ständig in allen ihm möglichen Seinsarten“.

⁷⁰ Ebd., p. 383: „Die faktisch erschlossenen Möglichkeiten der Existenz sind aber doch nicht dem Tod zu entnehmen“.

⁷¹ Ebd.

⁷² Ebd., p. 310.

⁷³ Ebd., p. 383.

⁷⁴ Ebd., p. 384.

Schicksal ist die letzte Bestimmung in SZ für die Existenz im Modus der Eigentlichkeit, die Heidegger zuvor als vorlaufende Entschlossenheit charakterisierte. Es ist „das in der eigentlichen Entschlossenheit liegende ursprüngliche Geschehen des Daseins, in dem es sich frei für den Tod ihm selbst in einer ererbten, aber gleichwohl gewählten Möglichkeit überliefert“⁷⁵. Wie das eigentliche Sein zum Tode verendlicht, so verendlicht die eigentliche Übernahme des Erbes das Dasein weiter und vollständig. Jene ist eine Endlichkeit „nach vorne“, diese eine Endlichkeit „nach hinten“⁷⁶. Das Schicksal obliegt dem jeweiligen Dasein selbst und *nur ihm*. Es kann *nur von ihm* enthüllt und übernommen werden. Daher ist zwar das Wählen nicht einfach, jedoch ist die Wahl einfach, weil sie die *eigene* und *ganze* Geschichte betrifft. Ihre Übernahme geht ferner mit dem Ausschließen von zufälligen, unwesentlichen Möglichkeiten einher. Aus diesen Gründen verwendet Heidegger in diesen Passagen häufig die Singularform⁷⁷.

Wir können versuchen, das Phänomen des Schicksals hinsichtlich seines bestimmenden, verendlichenden Charakters näher zu verstehen, wenn wir an den in ihm implizierten Verzicht auf Existenzmöglichkeiten und Verhaltensweisen denken, die letztlich nicht relevant sind oder bloße Ablenkungen darstellen. Und das sind gerade jene Existenzmöglichkeiten, die die alltägliche, uneigentlich geschichtliche Existenz im Sinne eines Verfallens an das nächste Besorgen der „Welt“ *zerstreuen*. Der Verzicht kann hart sein, aber für das entschlossene Dasein ist er eine Freude, weil er zum gefundenen bzw. gewählten Schicksal (Selbst) gehört. Man könnte sich dies am Beispiel eines Elternteils vergegenwärtigen, das freudig und ohne Bedenken auf etwas verzichtet, wenn es um das Wohl und das Glück seiner Kinder geht; oder am Beispiel eines Forschers oder Sportlers, die sich ganz einer Sache widmen und dabei vieles opfern, weil sie dies als ihre gewählte Aufgabe ansehen. Das muss selbstverständlich mit der ausdrücklichen Wahl dieser Existenzmöglichkeiten zusammengehen und darf nicht einfach als passive Unterwerfung unter das verstanden werden, was sich aus dem alltäglichen Besorgen ergibt oder versagt⁷⁸.

⁷⁵ Ebd.

⁷⁶ Vgl. C. Ivanoff-Sabogal, *El “ante-qué” de la huida existencial-ontológica en Ser y Tiempo*, in: inserire: Ivanoff-Sabogal (a cura di), *Ontología fundamental y fenomenología hermenéutica*, Editorial Universitaria Quito, 2024, p. 209 ss.

⁷⁷ Z.B. SZ, p. 384, “[...] in einer ererbten [...]”; ebd., p. 385; “[...] die eigentliche Wiederholung einer gewesenen Möglichkeit [...]”, “[...] seinen Helden wählt [...]” [Kursiv von A.T.]. Dieses Ausschließen hängt vom eigentlichen Sein zum Tode ab, ebd., p. 384: “Nur das Vorlaufen in den Tod treibt jede zufällige und ‘vorläufige’ Möglichkeit aus”.

⁷⁸ Die Komplexität des Phänomens kann zwar nicht auf solche Beispiele reduziert werden, doch einige wesentliche Aspekte desselben lassen sich hierdurch dennoch veranschaulichen.

Heidegger betont auch eine gewisse Gradualität in der Übernahme des Erbes, im wählenden Finden des eigenen Schicksals: "Je eigentlicher sich das Dasein entschließt, das heißt unzweideutig aus seiner eigensten, ausgezeichneten Möglichkeit im Vorlaufen in den Tod sich versteht, umso eindeutiger und unzufälliger ist das wählende Finden der Möglichkeit seiner Existenz"⁷⁹.

Das Schicksal ist je meines. Denn das jeweilige Dasein und nur es hat die Aufgabe, seine eigene Geschichte im Entwurf auf ein eigentliches Ganzseinkönnen voll zu übernehmen. Das Schicksal ist jedoch keine, bereits seit der Geburt geschriebene Geschichte wie das *fatum*, das einen Sterblichen wahllos einkettet. Denn die Freiheit des Daseins, die im "Wie" liegt, ist Voraussetzung sowohl für das Wählen als auch für das Fliehen⁸⁰.

In den zeitnahen Vorlesungen erläutert Heidegger die Übernahme unserer vollen Geworfenheit vom eigentlichen Sein zum Tode her als eine radikale "Individuation", die uns zurück in die "einzige Diesmaligkeit des einzigen Schicksals" bringt: "Diese Individuation hat das Eigentümliche, dass sie es nicht zu einer Individuation im Sinne der phantastischen Herausbildung von Ausnahmeexistenzen kommen lässt; sie schlägt alles Sich-heraus-nehmen nieder"⁸¹. Wir entscheiden nicht alles in unserem Leben, das immerhin unser Leben ist. Ebenso ist dies unsere "Welt", in die wir seit der Geburt geworfen sind. Manchmal möchten wir gerne von der belastenden *Geworfenheit* fliehen, etwa wenn wir uns mögliche, wunderbare Welten oder außergewöhnliche Lebensmöglichkeiten vorstellen. Das ist eine Flucht, die den Charakter einer Beruhigung hat. Sie entlastet uns von der vollen Übernahme unserer Endlichkeit.

"Wozu sich das Dasein *je faktisch* entschließt, vermag die existenziale Analyse grundsätzlich nicht zu erörtern"⁸². Dies betrifft nur das Was. Die Existenzanalytik hat jedoch die Aufgabe, das Wie bzw. die Modalität(en) des Sich-Entwerfens zu thematisieren und zu beschreiben. Dieses Wie bildet gerade den Kern der Eigentlichkeitsproblematik. Mit der eigentlichen Existenz als wählendem Finden, d.h. als voller und entschlossener Übernahme der eigenen Geworfenheit aus dem Vorlaufen zum Tode, meint Heidegger keine extravagante, außerordentliche oder heldenhaf-

⁷⁹ SZ, p. 384.

⁸⁰ Wie I. Römer, *op. cit.*, p. 174, zu Recht betont: "Es meint nicht etwas Vorherbestimmtes, das uns überfällt und das wir quasi passiv über uns ergehen lassen, sondern es ist genau umgekehrt das eigentliche Übernehmen der eigenen Freiheit, die gewesenen Möglichkeiten – die sich mir oder einem anderen Dasein, das möglicherweise vor mir lebte, boten – zu wiederholen".

⁸¹ GA 64, p. 124; vgl. auch SZ, p. 310.

⁸² SZ, p. 383.

te Modalität der Existenz, sondern etwas möglichst Bescheidenes. Das entschlossene Dasein, das seine Endlichkeit nach vorne und hinten akzeptiert hat, übernimmt keine Existenzmöglichkeiten, die sich nach dem eigenen Wunsch oder der Willkür zugeschnitten haben. Dies wäre eine Illusion. Eigentliche Existenz ist hingegen „illusionsfrei“⁸³, wenn das Dasein begreift: Das ist es, das bin ich, das ist meine Welt usw. Anstatt sich in Illusionen zu verlieren, übernimmt das entschlossene Dasein die eigene, bisher seit der Geburt vollzogene, da-gewesene Existenz, nun aber im Modus (Wie) des Sich-Selbst-Gewählt-Habens, der Eigentlichkeit. Daher wird in *Der Begriff der Zeit* (GA 64) die eigentliche Existenz charakterisiert als

[...] das Zurückkommen des Daseins auf seine Alltäglichkeit, *die es noch ist*, so zwar, dass das Vorbei als eigentliches Wie auch die Alltäglichkeit in ihrem Wie aufdeckt, in ihrer Geschäftigkeit und ihrem Betrieb in das Wie *zurücknimmt* [kursiv von A.T.]. Alles Was und Sorgen und Plänemachen bringt es in das Wie zurück⁸⁴.

Diese Änderung in der Einstellung (Wie) zu der bisher vollzogenen Existenz wird ferner in SZ als eine Umwandlung der Ohnmacht – wir entscheiden nicht vieles in unserem Leben – der Geworfenheit in die Übermacht ihrer vollen und entschlossenen Wahl dargestellt – aber wir entscheiden das Wie: „Wenn das Dasein vorlaufend in den Tod in sich mächtig werden lässt, versteht es sich, frei für ihn, in der eigenen *Übermacht* seiner endlichen Freiheit, um in dieser, die je nur ‘ist’ im Gewählthaben der Wahl, die *Ohnmacht* der Überlassenheit an sich selbst zu übernehmen und für die Zufälle der erschlossenen Situation hellsichtig zu werden“⁸⁵.

Aus der eigentlichen Geschichtlichkeit erhellt Heidegger auch die uneigentliche, die er mit der *modalen* Alltäglichkeit identifiziert. Zunächst und zumeist verliert sich das Dasein an dem, was es alltäglich, im Heute besorgt, und an der öffentlichen Ausgelegtheit des „Man“, die ihm die Wahl seiner Existenzmöglichkeiten abnehmen: „Unständig als Mensch selbst gegenwärtigt das Dasein sein ‘Heute’. Gewärtigt des nächsten Neuen hat es auch schon das Alte vergessen“⁸⁶. Im Sinne der ontologischen Rückstrahlung des Weltverständnisses auf die Daseinsauslegung tendiert es dazu, sich aus dem Vorhandenen und Zuhandenen, zu dem es sich ständig verhält, auszulegen. Gleichursprünglich dazu „verstehen es seine

⁸³ Ebd., p. 391; vgl. auch ebd., p. 310.

⁸⁴ GA 64, p. 117.

⁸⁵ SZ, p. 384.

⁸⁶ Ebd., p. 391.

Geschichte zunächst welt-geschichtlich”⁸⁷ statt als es selbst bzw. seine Seinsverfassung. Diese existenzial-zeitliche Bewegung der Auslegung hat die Form einer *innerzeitigen Rückstrahlung*. Dasein existiert geschichtlich je aus seiner Zukunft her und hat die Möglichkeit, seine eigene Vergangenheit ganz und ausdrücklich in der Entschlossenheit zu übernehmen. Jedoch tendiert es dazu sich am Modell des nichtdaseinsmäßigen Seienden als ein in der Geschichte, in der Zeit Seiendes zu verstehen. Nichtsdestotrotz überliefert auch das uneigentlich geschichtliche Dasein Existenzmöglichkeiten des da-gewesenen Daseins, nämlich im Modus der Vergessenheit.

2.3. Geschichtlichkeit und Mitsein

Nun ist auch diese Betrachtung des vollen Seins des Daseins unvollständig, weil sie das Mitsein nicht ausdrücklich berücksichtigt. Wie Aristoteles sagte, ist der Mensch *wesentlich* ein gemeinschaftliches Seiendes: ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῷον⁸⁸. Er kann nicht allein oder isoliert leben, denn dies vermag nur das Wildtier oder eine Gottheit – und zwar nicht nur des Überlebens, sondern auch der Realisierung seiner Wesensvollkommenheit und Glückseligkeit sowie des Guten willen⁸⁹. Für die Fundamentalontologie ist das Dasein als ekstatisches *ontologisch* kein isoliertes Seiendes. Es ist so wenig zunächst von der “Welt” und *den Anderen*, d.h. auch von den Gemeinschaftsformen getrennt, dass es sich zunächst und zumeist aus diesen statt aus sich selbst her versteht. Diese Nicht-Isoliertheit des Daseins ist nun im Lichte des vollen Begriffs der Geworfenheit inklusive der Geburt auszulegen. Das Dasein ist als geschichtliches Seiendes ekstatisch offen für Existenzmöglichkeiten des da-gewesenen Daseins *überhaupt*, d.h. sowohl für *seine* da-gewesenen Existenzmöglichkeiten als auch, da es ein radikal nicht-isoliertes Seiendes bzw. ein interexistenzial-bestimmtes Dasein ist, für die Existenzmöglichkeiten da-gewesenen Daseins *anderer*⁹⁰.

⁸⁷ Ebd., p. 389.

⁸⁸ Aristoteles, *Pol.*, 1, 1253a.

⁸⁹ Das Politische und das Gute (Ethik) sind allerdings ontisch-existenzielle Phänomene, die im Rahmen der Seinsfrage nicht thematisiert werden, da sie zur “Metontologie” gehören, vgl. M. Heidegger, *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2007, Gesamtausgabe Band 26 [= GA 26], p. 198 ss.

⁹⁰ Vgl. F-W. v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Eine Erläuterung von “Sein und Zeit”*. Band 1. “Einleitung: Die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein”, op. cit., p. 203.

Die volle und entschlossene Übernahme der eigenen Existenz mit Berücksichtigung der Gewesenheit impliziert einen *ausdrücklichen* Bezug zu den Anderen als Gemeinschaft. Heidegger führt in diesem Kontext die Begriffe der geschichtlich und zeitlich bestimmten Gemeinschaften, des "Volkes" und der "Generation" ein. Im Lichte des Mitseins ist das Schicksal zugleich ein "Mitgeschehen und bestimmt als *Geschick*. Damit bezeichnen wir das Geschehen der Gemeinschaft, des Volkes" bzw. "das Geschehen des Daseins im Mitsein mit Anderen"⁹¹. Neben dem Volk, das weit über die Erstreckung des individuellen Lebens hinausreicht, ist Dasein sodann ebenso in eine Generation geworfen: "Das schicksalhafte *Geschick* des Daseins in und mit seiner ‚Generation‘ macht das volle, eigentliche Geschehen des Daseins aus"⁹².

"Geschick" ist einer der dunkelsten Begriffe in SZ⁹³. Es gründet im Schicksal, wobei beide gleichursprünglich sind⁹⁴. Denn das *Geschick* ist nicht die bloße Summe der einzelnen Schicksale, sondern ergibt sich aus einer beidseitigen und freien Interaktion zwischen Dasein und Miteinandersein *innerhalb einer Kollektivität*. Die Vollzugsformen dieser Interaktion sind die "Mitteilung" und der "Kampf". Die Mitteilung "vollzieht die 'Teilung' der Mitbefindlichkeit und des Verständnisses des Mitseins", d.h. eines bestimmten Seins zum Seienden überhaupt ("Welt"), die *schon*

⁹¹ SZ, p. 384, 386.

⁹² Ebd., p. 384 s.

⁹³ P. Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 111 ss., spricht zwar zu Recht von einer „passage abrupte d'un destin singulier à une destinée commune“, dessen Rechtfertigung durch das Mitsein nicht unmittelbar nachvollziehbar ist. Doch seine Interpretation zeigt gerade die subjektivistischen Züge, die das Verständnis von Phänomenen wie dem Mitsein erschweren: „caractère monadique de l'analyse“; „c'est de moi à moi-même que je me transmets et que je me reçois comme héritage de potentialités“. Diesbezüglich erhebt er auch folgenden Einwand: „Est-il vrai, toutefois, qu'un héritage se transmette de soi à soi-même ? N'est-il pas toujours reçu d'un autre ?“ Zwar handelt es sich um ein *Sich*-Überliefern, aber da das Dasein, welches sich zunächst und zumeist von den Anderen nicht unterscheidet, das Gegenteil eines „isolierten Subjekts“ darstellt, wird dieses *Sich*-Überliefern wesentlich und ständig durch die Offenheit für das Andere bestimmt, wie wir bereits gezeigt haben. Weiterhin führt Ricoeur aus, dass die Analyse des *Geschicks* auf einer schwachen „Homologie“ zwischen individueller und gemeinschaftlicher Bestimmung beruht, weshalb die Übertragung von Existenzialen von einem Plan auf den anderen fraglich erscheint. Obwohl das *Geschick* ein dunkler Begriff ist, stellt es eindeutig ein Phänomen der Existenz dar, da eine menschliche Kollektivität kein Vorhandenes ist, sondern dieselbe Seinsart wie das Dasein hat. Daher muss das Geschehen einer Kollektivität ursprünglich nicht aus einer theoretischen Perspektive, wie etwa durch soziologische *Kategorien*, sondern phänomenologisch und sachimmanent aus dem Vollzug des Daseins und dessen *Existenzialen* heraus thematisiert und beschrieben werden.

⁹⁴ SZ, p. 386: "[...] in ihm gründet mit [...]".

offenbar ist, sowie eine bestimmte Daseinsauslegung⁹⁵. Der Kampf betont, dass das Geschick weder etwas schon Geschriebenes noch eine Selbstverständlichkeit ist. Man kann sich diesen Kampf innerhalb einer Kollektivität in Bezug auf die "überkommene[] Ausgelegtheit" vorstellen, welcher sich das "eigentliche existenzielle Verstehen [...] so wenig [entzieht], daß es je aus ihr und *gegen sie* [kursiv von A.T.] und doch wieder für sie die gewählte Möglichkeit im Entschluss ergreift"⁹⁶. In diesen Vollzugsformen wird die "Macht" des Geschicks "erst frei", weil es als Bestimmungselement oder -horizont für die *gehaltlichen* Möglichkeiten des schicksalhaften Daseins gilt, das im Gegensatz zum Man und dessen öffentlicher Ausgelegtheit frei, ausdrücklich und entschlossen (also *modal-eigentlich*) gewählt wird. In dieser Richtung kann auch Heideggers Aussage interpretiert werden, dass das Geschick die einzelnen Schicksale "im Vorhinein leitet". Das Geschick zeichnet so ein Ganzes von Seinsmöglichkeiten vor, über die das Dasein zwar selbst nicht entschieden hat, unter denen es aber dennoch *eine* bestimmte Möglichkeit frei wählen und die anderen als unwesentliche oder zufällige ausschließen kann. Damit verfügt Dasein über die Fähigkeit, seine Ohnmacht in Übermacht zu verwandeln. Das Geschick kann auch in der Wiederholung *ausdrücklich* übernommen werden, wenn man von der Herkunft der da-gewesenen Möglichkeiten weiß. Somit wird in ihr "allerst die Wahl gewählt, die für die kämpfende Nachfolge und Treue zum Wiederholbaren frei macht"⁹⁷.

Im Phänomen der Generation wird der *existenziale* Sinn von *Geworfenheit* und *Geburt* noch deutlicher. Heidegger übernimmt diesen Begriff von Dilthey, bei dem er "einen Zeitraum" bezeichnet, der "von der Geburts- bis zu derjenigen Altersgrenze [reicht], an welcher durchschnittlich ein neuer Jahresring am Baum der Generation sich ansetzt" (etwa 30 Jahre)⁹⁸. Generation ist präziser "ein Verhältnis der Gleichzeitigkeit von Individuen [...], welche gewissermaßen nebeneinander emporwuchsen, d.h. ein gemeinsames Kindesalter hatten, ein gemeinsames Jünglingsalter, deren Zeitraum männlicher Kraft teilweise zusammenfiel [...]". Gleiche Erfahrungen und "die Abhängigkeit von denselben großen Tatsachen und Veränderungen, wie sie in dem Zeitalter ihrer Empfänglichkeit auftraten", machen "diese[n] engere[n] Kreis von Individuen [...] zu einem homogenen Ganzen".

⁹⁵ Vgl. ebd., p. 162.

⁹⁶ Ebd., p. 383. Vgl. auch p. 169.

⁹⁷ Ebd., p. 385.

⁹⁸ W. Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften. V. Band. Die Geistige Welt. Einleitung in die Philosophie des Lebens. Erste Hälfte. Abhandlungen zur Grundlegung der Geisteswissenschaften*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Leipzig-Berlin, 1924, p. 36 ss.

Dieser Begriff ist bei Dilthey “vornehmlich ein methodologisches Instrument zum Studium der Geschichte”, das bei Heidegger eine “*vollzugsgeschichtliche* Wendung” vornimmt⁹⁹. Somit wird sie zunächst zu einer schärferen Bestimmung des Man unter Berücksichtigung der Zeitlichkeitsproblematik: “Jeder ist nicht nur er selbst, sondern seine Generation. Die Generation geht vor dem Einzelnen vorweg, ist vor ihm da und bestimmt sein Dasein. Der Einzelne lebt aus dem, was Vergangenheit war, sich durch die Gegenwart schleppt und schließlich durch eine neue Generation abgelöst wird”¹⁰⁰.

Zunächst und zumeist unterscheidet sich das Dasein nicht von den anderen seiner Generation. Wie Dilthey schon zeigte, ist die Generation durch eine gewisse Homogenität charakterisiert, während die Generationen sich voneinander stark unterscheiden:

Die ‘alte Generation’ kommt zumeist in den einzelnen Weisen des Daseins ‘nicht mehr mit’. Für sie bleibt regelgebend, was zu ‘ihrer Zeit’ Brauch war – zu der Zeit, in der die ‘mittlere’ Generation heranwuchs und schon an der herrschenden Auslegung zu rütteln begann, um sich schließlich als mittlere und führende Generation durchzusetzen.¹⁰¹

Zugleich gibt es auch etwas, das “in den Unterschieden der einzelnen Generationen einer Gegenwart fest durchhält [...]”, und zwar im Modus der Selbstverständlichkeit und Vergessenheit dieser Herkunft – etwas, das “selbst früherer Auseinandersetzung, früherer Auslegung, einem vergangenen Besorgen [entstammte]”¹⁰². Das Dasein neigt also auf Grund des Man dazu, die eigene Vergangenheit zu vergessen, die es trotzdem und gerade in solchem Modus durch die Generationen hindurch überliefert.

Man könnte einwenden, dass in SZ mehrfach belegt ist, dass das Andere eher die Rolle einer Stütze für die Flucht und die Uneigentlichkeit einnimmt¹⁰³. Zur Entschlossenheit gehört ferner ein Bruch mit der Stim-

⁹⁹ C. Ferencz-Flatz, *Zum Phänomen der “Generation”: Intersubjektivität und Geschichte bei Heidegger*, in “Phänomenologische Forschungen”, 2013, pp. 95-112, p. 99 ss. Für eine Analyse der heideggerschen Rezeption von Dilthey, Yorck und Droysen vor SZ verweisen wir auf I. Farin, *Three Levels of Historical Analysis in Early Heidegger*, in “The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy”, Oxon-New York 2014, pp. 1-37; für die Entstehung der Frage nach der Geschichte bei Heidegger vgl. E. Cheong, *op. cit.*, p. 13 ss.

¹⁰⁰ GA 80.1, p. 153.

¹⁰¹ GA 64, p. 87.

¹⁰² Ebd., p. 88.

¹⁰³ P. Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, hat diesem traditionellen Einwand mit Betonung des Mitseins das Wort verliehen, p. 112: “[...] Ce sont principalement les formes déçues de la quotidienneté qui sont accentuées sous la catégorie du ‘on’. Et la conquête du Soi est tou-

me des Man und ein schweigendes, angstbereites Hören auf den Ruf des Gewissens, das heißt des eigenen Selbst. Das sollte noch betonter für die geschichtlich bestimmten Kollektivitäten gelten, in die sich das Individuum leicht auflösen könnte. Dem ist zu erwidern, dass das Selbst zwar sich zunächst und zumeist in den Anderen verliert, d.h. auch in den Gemeinschaftsformen, ein eigentlicher Entwurf auf die eigene Endlichkeit, die auch ganz sein soll, jedoch nicht nur nicht von der eigenen Gewesenheit, sondern ebenso wenig von dem ontologischen Bezug zu den Anderen absehen kann, der das volle Sein des Daseins als Mitsein ausmacht. Die Übernahme der eigenen Endlichkeit und Geworfenheit wäre unvollkommen, gewissermaßen noch *isoliert*, wenn die Anderen, d.h. die geschichtlich bestimmten Gemeinschaftsformen, in die man seit der Geburt geworfen ist, nicht in dem eigentlichen Entwurf ausdrücklich berücksichtigt wären. Die eigentliche Existenz kann wesentlich nicht die Bedeutung einer ontisch-existenziellen Flucht vor den Anderen haben. Die Anderen sind zwar nicht das, wovon sich das Dasein die eigenen Existenzmöglichkeiten vorgeben lässt, jedoch sind sie das, *wofür* es sich als radikal nicht isoliertes Seiendes verendlicht¹⁰⁴. Deshalb gehört es zum wählenden Finden, dass das eigentliche Dasein seinen Platz und seine Rolle bei den Anderen bzw. in der Gemeinschaft (z.B. bei der Familie, in der Arbeit usw.) findet. Das bedeutet selbstverständlich keine Rehabilitierung des Man, das in SZ die Funktion hat, das Dasein vom Lastcharakter der Wahl der eigenen Existenz zu befreien. Hier handelt es sich vielmehr um das Gegenteil: das Wählen, das Wie.

2.4. Die ausdrückliche Überlieferung und die gradualistische Interpretation

Das Dasein ist ekstatisch offen für die Existenzmöglichkeiten des dagesewenen Daseins *überhaupt*, d.h. sowohl seiner selbst als auch – als interexistenzial-geschichtlich bestimmtes Seiendes – *anderer Generationen*. Diesbezüglich fügt Heidegger den in der Zeitlichkeitsanalyse schon aufgewiesenen *ausdrücklichen* Modus des Sichüberlieferns hinzu: die „Wiederholung“. Durch das Wissen um die Herkunft der überlieferten und übernommenen Existenzmöglichkeiten wird das unausdrückliche

jours opérée sur fond de ‘on’, sans égard pour les formes authentiques de communion ou d’entraide.” Für eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit dieser zwar vorherrschenden, aber einseitigen Interpretation des Mitseins und Miteinanderseins, die häufig auf die Uneigentlichkeit reduziert wird und Alltäglichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit ohnehin gleichsetzt, verweisen wir auf C. Ivanoff-Sabogal, *Mitdasein und Seinsfrage. Systematische Untersuchung der Interexistenzialität in Heideggers Fundamentalontologie*, Duncker&Humblot, Berlin, 2021, p. 38 und 115 ss.

¹⁰⁴ Vgl. SZ, p. 383.

Sichüberliefern zur ausdrücklichen “*Wiederholung* einer überkommenen Existenzmöglichkeit, das heißt der Rückgang in Möglichkeiten des da-gewesenen Daseins”¹⁰⁵. Damit ist jedoch kein theoretisch-wissenschaftliches Verhalten gemeint, da die Analyse sich noch im Bereich des alltäglich-vortheoretischen Existenzvollzugs bewegt¹⁰⁶.

Die Wiederholung “*erwidert* [...] die Möglichkeit der dagewesenen Existenz”¹⁰⁷. Es ist also “keine möglichst detailgetreue Reproduktion gewesener Möglichkeiten”¹⁰⁸, d.h. weder die Verwirklichung einer Tatsache noch so etwas wie das möglichst genaue Wiedererleben eines Erlebnisses oder des Lebens eines Anderen. Das jeweils existierende Dasein erschließt und erwidert nur den *Möglichkeitscharakter* einer da-gewesenen Existenz-*möglichkeit*, und zwar im Hinblick auf *seine* Zukunft und mit ausdrücklicher Übernahme *seiner vollen* Geworfenheit. Das kann zunächst als ein ganz normales, allen bekanntes menschliches Verhalten betrachtet werden. Das Dasein kann nämlich *Existenzmöglichkeiten* des da-gewesenen Daseins *ausdrücklich* erwidern, z.B. von berühmten Menschen, von Heiligen sowie von ganz normalen Menschen wie seinen Eltern, Großeltern, Lehrern usw., sodass Heidegger metaphorisch, aber missverständlich sagt, dass “das Dasein sich seinen Helden wählt”¹⁰⁹. Hier liegt der Akzent nicht so sehr auf dieser oder jener Existenzmöglichkeit da-gewesenen Daseins, sondern auf *jener singulären Existenzmöglichkeit* eines da-gewesenen Daseins, das im Sinne eines wiederholenden Schicksals gewählt bzw. übernommen werden kann. Wir alle lassen uns von den Handlungen, Werken und Entscheidungen vergangener Menschen inspirieren und schließen uns an deren Arbeit an, die wir möglicherweise vorantreiben und neu beleben. Das ist z.B. auch in der Philosophie der Fall, in der wir jedoch nicht das Leben Platons “wiederholen” oder seine Philosophie sklavisch reproduzieren, sondern den von Platon erschlossenen Möglichkeitscharakter echter philosophischer Forschung *aus unserem heutigen Dasein* erwidern. Bei der ausdrücklichen Wahl einer Existenzmöglichkeit des da-gewesenen Daseins handelt es sich somit um ein *Sich*-Wählen des Daseins. Daher entfällt Figals Einwand, dass mit der Wahl des Helden “der Wunsch verbunden [wäre], [...] wie ein Anderer zu sein”, wodurch Dasein “in der der Struktur des ‘Man’ gerade befangen” wäre¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁵ Ebd., p. 385.

¹⁰⁶ Vgl. F.-W. v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Eine Erläuterung von “Sein und Zeit”, Band 1, “Einleitung: Die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein”, op. cit.*, p. 204, 210.

¹⁰⁷ SZ, p. 386.

¹⁰⁸ I. Römer, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

¹⁰⁹ SZ, p. 385.

¹¹⁰ G. Figal, *op. cit.*, p. 322.

Allerdings ist es nur schwer nachvollziehbar, warum die Wiederholung als Ausdrücklichkeitsmodus des Sichüberliefers, der sich nach Heidegger durch das *Wissen um die Herkunft* auszeichnet, auch die eigentliche Form des Sichüberliefers sein sollte. Denn im Wissen um ihre Herkunft lassen sich Existenzmöglichkeiten des da-gewesenen Daseins *ausdrücklich* übernehmen, ohne dass hierbei eine verendliche Selbstwahl erfolgt wäre. So ahmt Dasein z.B. das Leben einer historischen Persönlichkeit oder auch eine philosophische oder künstlerische Strömung nach und übernimmt somit Existenzmöglichkeiten eines da-gewesenen Daseins, nur weil diese in einer bestimmten Zeit von der Öffentlichkeit (also der Ausgelegtheit des Mans) verherrlicht werden. Ist aber nicht gerade dies ein Verfallen an das Man und an die Tradition? Andererseits könnte ein unausdrückliches Sichüberliefern, indem man kaum eine Ahnung von der Herkunft der übernommenen Existenzmöglichkeiten hat, dennoch eigentlich sein, wenn die Existenzmöglichkeit vom Dasein selbst gewählt wird.

Eine dennoch partielle Lösungsmöglichkeit könnte in dem liegen, was wir den Gradualismus des Phänomens der Eigentlichkeit nennen. Denn Heidegger versteht an vielen Stellen die Eigentlichkeit und Uneigentlichkeit als etwas *Graduelles*¹¹¹. So ist der auf die Situation beschränkte "Entschluss" (§ 60) zwar eigentlich, weil hierbei die Existenzmöglichkeit gewählt wird. Aber er ist nicht im vollen Sinne eigentlich, wie es die Existenz als Ganzes (statt diese oder jene Angelegenheit) angehende, vorlaufende Entschlossenheit ist (§ 62). Die ausdrückliche Übernahme von Existenzmöglichkeiten des da-gewesenen Daseins scheint diesem textuell belegten Gradualismus eine weitere Nuance hinzuzufügen, dessen systematische Rechtfertigung jedoch einer weiteren Untersuchung bedarf. Diesbezüglich behauptet Heidegger zwar, dass die Wiederholung der "Modus der sich überliefernden Entschlossenheit" sei, "durch den das Dasein ausdrücklich als Schicksal existiert"¹¹². Zugleich soll es "nicht notwendig"¹¹³ sein, dass "die Entschlossenheit *ausdrücklich* um die Herkunft der Möglichkeiten weiß", sich also als Wiederholung qualifiziert, um Schicksal zu sein. Dieser Gradualismus könnte somit auch das "Geschick des Daseins in und mit seiner 'Generation'" betreffen¹¹⁴.

¹¹¹ Das scheint auch F.-W. v. Herrmann zu vertreten, vgl. Id., *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie der Zeitlichkeit des Daseins. Zwei Freiburger Seminare zu Martin Heideggers "Sein und Zeit"*, p. 136, 142.

¹¹² SZ, p. 386.

¹¹³ Ebd., p. 385.

¹¹⁴ Ebd., p. 384 s.

2.5. Interexistenzialität und Geschichtlichkeit als Bestimmungsmomente der Auslegung

Wie genau bestimmt die Geworfenheit in eine Generation unser In-der-Welt-Sein? Man könnte darauf hinweisen, dass wir in einen bestimmten Moment der Geschichte und damit in eine geschichtlich bestimmte Kollektivität hineingeboren werden, wodurch uns bestimmte Möglichkeiten offen und andere verschlossen sind¹¹⁵. Dadurch verbleiben wir jedoch zunächst auf der vorphänomenologischen Ebene einer bloß ontischen Konstatierung von Tatsachen. Die Generation soll hingegen als Existenzial ein *Apriori* der Daseinsauslegung sichtbar machen: Dem Dasein „geht die eigene Vergangenheit“ im Sinne der Generation „je schon vorweg“¹¹⁶. Das „vorweg“ deutet auf das Existenziale des Verstehens, des Sich-Entwerfens und des Sich-vorweg-Seins hin, das immer schon von der Geworfenheit mitbestimmt ist, zunächst und zumeist im Sinne des unausdrücklichen Sichüberlieferns. Geschichtlichkeit und Interexistenzialität sind somit gleichursprüngliche Bestimmungsmomente der Auslegungsstruktur als Ausbildung eines verstandenen Möglichseins:

Das Dasein ist in seiner jeweiligen Weise zu sein und somit auch mit dem ihm zugehörigen Seinsverständnis in eine überkommene Daseinsauslegung hineingeboren und in ihr aufgewachsen. Aus dieser heraus versteht es sich zunächst und in gewissem Umkreis ständig. Dieses Verständnis erschließt die Möglichkeiten seines Seins und regelt sie.¹¹⁷

Dies gilt unabhängig davon, ob wir historische Forschung betreiben oder überhaupt von der Möglichkeit historischer Forschung wissen, da wir als Menschen ständig geschichtlich existieren. Wir wissen auch ohne theoretische Reflexion von unserer Vergangenheit, da zur Existenz ein unausdrückliches Sich-Überliefern konstitutiv gehört, das jedoch ausdrücklich gemacht werden kann¹¹⁸.

¹¹⁵ Z.B. gemäß der Erläuterung von S. Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time*, Routledge/ New York, 1996, p. 169: „As thrown, Dasein is delivered over to a particular society and culture at a particular stage in its development, in which certain existential possibilities are open to it and certain others not: becoming a Samurai warrior, a witch or a Stoic are not available options for late twentieth-century Westerners, whereas becoming a police officer, a social worker or a priest are. Dasein is also thrown into its own life at a particular stage in its development, which further constrains the range of available choices. One's particular upbringing, previous decisions and present circumstances may make becoming a social worker impossible or becoming a priest almost unavoidable“.

¹¹⁶ SZ, p. 20; vgl. GA 80.1, p. 153, GA 64, p. 88.

¹¹⁷ Ebd.; vgl. ebd., p. 169.

¹¹⁸ H.-G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Gesammelte Werke, Band I, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 1990, hat diese interexisten-

Mitsein und Geschichtlichkeit bestimmen die Daseinsauslegung bereits durch die Sprache: "Innerhalb einer herrschenden Sprache, in der das Dasein selbst mit seiner Geschichte ist, hat jede Zeit und jede Generation ihre eigene Sprache und ihre spezifische Möglichkeit des Verstehens. Das zeigt sich deutlich an der Herrschaft bestimmter Worte und Formeln"¹¹⁹. Durch die Sprache hindurch betrifft die geschichtlich-interexistenziale Bestimmung die Daseinsauslegung bzw. die Vorstruktur (also Gewesenheit) des Verständnisses, insbesondere den Vorbegriff, aber auch die Vorhabe und Vorsicht, denn "die überlieferte Auslegung hat schon jeweils darüber entschieden, was in den einzelnen Besorgungsmöglichkeiten vor allem gepflegt und behandelt wird: die Stoffe der Dichtung, die Vorwürfe der bildenden Kunst, die Arbeitsgebiete der wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen"¹²⁰. Auch hier zeigt sich, dass das Dasein vieles so macht, denkt, sagt usw., wie man es gewissermaßen "immer" gemacht, gedacht, gesagt hat. Die überlieferte Daseinsauslegung und die Generation, zu der wir gehören, regeln und bestimmen auch unseren Umgang mit dem zuhandenen Zeug in der nächsten Um- und Mitwelt:

Das auslegende Ansprechen von etwas als etwas spricht das Begegnende aus einer mehr oder minder ausdrücklichen Bekanntheit her an: als Werkzeug, als geeignet zu und dergleichen. Diese 'als was', von denen her die Umwelt und das in ihr aufgehende Besorgen ausgelegt werden, sind zumeist vom jeweiligen Dasein nicht erst neu entdeckt.¹²¹

Darin zeigt sich der positive Beitrag von Überlieferung, Geschichtlichkeit und Interexistenzialität: Ohne sie müssten wir die "Welt" immer von neuem entdecken¹²², als ob wir überhaupt keine Kultur hätten. Was hier

zial-geschichtliche Bestimmung des Daseins noch radikaler als Heidegger im Sinne der Endlichkeit aufgefasst, p. 281: "In Wahrheit gehört die Geschichte nicht uns, sondern wir gehören ihr. Lange bevor wir uns in der Rückbesinnung selber verstehen, verstehen wir uns auf selbstverständliche Weise in Familie, Gesellschaft und Staat, in denen wir leben. Der Fokus der Subjektivität ist ein Zerrspiegel. Die Selbstbesinnung des Individuums ist nur ein Flackern im geschlossenen Stromkreis des geschichtlichen Lebens". Da die Geschichtlichkeit unser Dasein und Verstehen verendlicht, "[versteh]t man immer anders [...], wenn man überhaupt versteht" (ebd., p. 302). Für eine systematische Diskussion der Geschichtlichkeit bei Gadamer, Heidegger und Dilthey im Ausgang von Hegel verweisen wir auf R. Dottori, *Die Reflexion des Wirklichen. Zwischen Hegels absoluter Dialektik und der Philosophie der Endlichkeit von M. Heidegger und H.-G. Gadamer*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2006.

¹¹⁹ GA 20, p. 374 s.

¹²⁰ GA 64, p. 88.

¹²¹ Ebd., p. 87.

¹²² Vgl. SZ, p. 169.

über die Vor-struktur der Auslegung und die Sprache gesagt wird, betrifft nicht nur das nächst Zuhandene, sondern das Seiende bzw. das Sein überhaupt, das heißt auch die Weise, wie wir uns zu uns selbst (Selbst- und Daseinsausgelegtheit), zur Natur, zum Leben, zum Mitdaseienden usw. verhalten.

2.6. Ausdrückliches und unausdrückliches Verhalten zur Vergangenheit: Tradition, Historie, Seinsfrage

In der Wiederholung ist das ausdrückliche Verhalten zur eigenen, vom Mitsein mitbestimmten Vergangenheit fundiert, d.i. die "Tradition": "Dasein kann Tradition entdecken, bewahren und ihr ausdrücklich nachgehen"¹²³. Das zeigt sich etwa im Fall des Handwerkers, der bewusst eine familiäre oder lokale Tradition fortführt, des Künstlers, der sich von den Werken dagewesener Künstler inspirieren lässt, des Philosophen, der sich einer philosophischen Strömung anschließt usw.

Tradition ist ein explizites Wiederholen und Pflegen der Vergangenheit, jedoch noch kein historisches Verhalten. Dieses entsteht erst, wenn das Entdecken der Tradition "zu einer eigenständigen Aufgabe ausgebildet [wird]"¹²⁴, nämlich durch die Übernahme der theoretischen Existenzweise und Thematisierung sowohl der Weltgeschichtlichen als auch des Überlieferten im Lichte der Historizität: "Das vergangene Dasein wird dafür auf seine Welt hin befragt, auf das, was man damals betrieb und was sich in der Umwelt des vergangenen Lebens ereignete"¹²⁵. Der Gegenstand der Historie wird im Sinne der Vorhandenheit und im zeitlichen Horizont der Innerzeitigkeit angesehen: "Die Vergangenheit wird als Weltgeschichte Thema der Auslegung"¹²⁶. So wird auch das existierende Dasein als Objekt der historischen Reflexion zu einem vergangenen, nicht mehr vorhandenen Seienden – und so behält die vulgäre Geschichtsauslegung ihr Recht¹²⁷. In allen Fällen hört der Historiker nicht auf, als jeweiliges, geschichtlich bestimmtes Dasein zu existieren, das seine Aufgabe als Historiker aus einer Zukunft her entwirft und vollzieht, weshalb "die

¹²³ Ebd., p. 20; vgl. GA 64, p. 90.

¹²⁴ Ebd.; vgl. F.-W. v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Eine Erläuterung von "Sein und Zeit"*. Band 1. "Einleitung: Die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein", op. cit., p. 211.

¹²⁵ GA 64, p. 90.

¹²⁶ Ebd., p. 91.

¹²⁷ Denn das Dasein "[kann] mit einem gewissen Recht in gewissen Grenzen als nur Vorhandenes aufgefasst werden" (SZ, p. 55), z.B. wenn es zum Objekt von Biologie, Anatomie, Soziologie und *Historie* wird.

Vergangenheit [...] aus der Ausgelegtheit und der durchschnittlichen Verständlichkeit der jeweiligen Gegenwart des Historikers gedeutet [wird]”¹²⁸. Die Historie gründet als Existenzmöglichkeit des Daseins bzw. als theoretisches und ausdrückliches Verhalten zur Vergangenheit also in der aus der Zukunft her sich zeitigenden Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins. Darin liegt die existenzial-ontologische Genesis der Historie aus dem Dasein.

Wie die Historie die Weltgeschichte, so kann auch die Philosophie ihre eigene Vergangenheit explizit thematisieren, anstatt sie und sich in der bloßen Gegenwart zu vergessen. Dies ist der Fall bei der hermeneutischen Phänomenologie des Daseins, die zur Beantwortung der Seinsfrage am Leitfaden der Temporalitätsproblematik die Geschichte des Fragens nach dem Sein als “Geschichte des Seinsverständnisses” *historisch* hinterfragt¹²⁹. Diese Historizität der hermeneutischen Phänomenologie ist jedoch nicht die Historizität im Sinne des Weltgeschichtlichen, sondern die Wiederholung bzw. Erwidern des Möglichkeitscharakters des philosophischen Fragens nach dem Sein aus der Tradition, gegen sie und doch *für* sie¹³⁰ – und zwar im Lichte der Seinsfrage und mit Blick auf die Temporalitätsproblematik.

In diesem Zusammenhang soll der genaue Zusammenhang zwischen der Geschichtlichkeit des Daseins und dem Denken der Philosophen geklärt werden, den Heidegger unbestimmt lässt. Der Schwerpunkt liegt auf der Existenz, die sich durch Interexistenzialität und Geschichtlichkeit auszeichnet. Wie der Historiker existiert auch der Philosoph als Dasein, weshalb er ebenfalls geschichtlich von der Überlieferung bestimmt ist, zunächst und zumeist im Modus der Unausdrücklichkeit und des “Verfallens an die Tradition”.

Hier tritt die eher *negative* Bedeutung der Tradition bei Heidegger auf: Sie nimmt dem philosophischen Fragen tendenziell “die eigene Führung, das Fragen und Wählen ab”¹³¹. Die philosophische Tradition kann sich in dieser Hinsicht verhärten und das Überlieferte so “wenig zugänglich” machen, “dass sie es vielmehr verdeckt”, nämlich im Sinne

¹²⁸ GA 64, p. 93. Dieser existenzial-zeitliche Fundierungszusammenhang wurde von H.-G. Gadamer, *op. cit.*, weiter untersucht. So schließt er aus diesem Zusammenhang, dass eine perfekte Rekonstruktion der Vergangenheit unmöglich ist. Diese sei auch nicht wünschenswert, da das Positive an der Überlieferung darin bestünde, dass das Überlieferte von den verschiedenen, vom Zeitabstand geprägten Interpretationen einen “Zuwachs am Sein” erfährt und positiv für die Fragen des Heute “angewandt” werden kann (vgl. ebd., p. 312 ss.).

¹²⁹ GA 26, p. 197.

¹³⁰ Vgl. SZ, p. 169, 383.

¹³¹ Ebd., p. 21; vgl. GA 80.1, p. 138.

der “Selbstverständlichkeit”¹³², die niemand in Frage stellt¹³³. Tradition ist jedoch nicht nur negativ, da das Verhalten zu ihr auch modal bestimmt ist. Die *positive* Seite der philosophischen Tradition ist mindestens zweifach. *Erstens* insofern, als in ihr das, was ursprünglich erfahren bzw. gesehen wurde, *überhaupt überliefert* wird. Das ursprünglich Erfahrene ist als Überliefertes im Modus der Verstellung dennoch präsent, was ferner impliziert, dass es ständig auch *eigentlich* wiederholt werden kann. *Zweitens* haben die mittelalterliche und moderne Philosophie – die laut Heidegger die antike Ontologie nicht hinterfragt, sondern als etwas Selbstverständliches übernahmen (Verhärtung des Überlieferten) – wesentliche Sachverhalte ergiebig erarbeitet. Im Mittelalter wurde der bei den Griechen undifferenzierte Begriff der οὐσία¹³⁴ in essentia und existentia (Was- und Wie-Sein) differenziert¹³⁵, was die echte ontologische Forschung vorantreibt. Die moderne Philosophie hat mit dem Versuch positiv beigetragen, “den ontologischen Grundunterschied” zwischen dem Seienden, das wir sind, und demjenigen, das nicht wie wir ist (“Welt”, Natur usw.) als ontologischen zu thematisieren¹³⁶, auch wenn sie aufgrund der naiven Substantialitätsontologie daran gescheitert ist¹³⁷.

Daher muss die hermeneutische Phänomenologie das für das Dasein konstitutive Überlieferungsgeschehen thematisieren, damit der hermeneutische Phänomenologe, der als Dasein existiert, sich nicht naiv von der verhärteten Tradition den eigenen Fragehorizont und die eigene Begrifflichkeit vorgeben lässt, *wie dies sonst ständig der Fall ist*. Das Überlieferte muss vielmehr durch die Methode der “Destruktion” an die ursprünglichen existenzialen Erfahrungen und Quellen zurückgeführt werden, aus denen es geschöpft wurde¹³⁸.

Die philosophische Tradition hat seit den Griechen zwar nach dem Sein gefragt, jedoch ohne die Seinsfrage im Sinne der ontologischen

¹³² Vgl. auch ebd., p. 389.

¹³³ Während die Selbstverständlichkeit “die größte Widersacherin für die Philosophie” (GA 23, p. 208) darstellt, ist “das Selbstverständliche” hingegen “das wahre und einzige Thema der Philosophie” (GA 24, p. 80). Das Selbstverständliche *schlechthin* ist das vom Seienden differenzierte *Sein überhaupt*.

¹³⁴ GA 26, p. 183.

¹³⁵ GA 24, p. 32, 108 ss.; vgl. GA 27, p. 184.

¹³⁶ Vgl. ebd., p. 32, 172 ss., 231 ss.

¹³⁷ Vgl. SZ, p. 47, 203. Daher kann man trotz den zahlreichen textuellen Belegen nicht pauschal behaupten, dass Tradition bei Heidegger nur negativ konnotiert sei und Heidegger diese ausschließlich als verfallende “Verdeckungsgeschichte” (wie T.A. Winter, *Traditionstheorie: Eine philosophische Grundlegung*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2017, p. 49, 79, 88) verstünde. Vgl. auch, was Heidegger über Aristoteles in SZ, p. 26, Kant in SZ, p. 23 und Husserl in GA 20, p. 97 s. sagt.

¹³⁸ SZ, p. 21 ss., GA 24, p. 31 ss.

Differenz und der hermeneutisch-phänomenologischen Methode im Ausgang einer Daseinsanalytik zu stellen. Sie hat vielmehr "seit Parmenides explizit" die Form einer Ontologie der "Welt" (φύσις) anstatt des Daseins am Leitfaden einer Verabsolutierung des theoretischen Verhaltens genommen¹³⁹. Daher fällt das Verfallen an die Tradition mit dem Verfallen an die "Welt" zusammen¹⁴⁰. Im Kreise dieser Tradition hatte sich ein "Dogma" herausgebildet, das das Fragen nach dem Sein für unmöglich erklärte und es aufgrund seiner Selbstverständlichkeit als unnötig ansah¹⁴¹.

Der bereits in der antiken Philosophie vorherrschende Vorrang des Theoretischen hat sich in der modernen Philosophie radikalisiert, die Heidegger als *Daseinsphänomen* als eine "Sorge um erkannte Erkenntnis" interpretiert¹⁴². Von Descartes bis Husserl wurde die Philosophie mit wenigen Ausnahmen als das Projekt einer absoluten Fundierung der Wissenschaft durch die Wissenschaft selbst aufgefasst. Weil sich die Geschichte nicht als ein solches Seiendes interpretieren lässt, das man mit derjenigen Gewissheit erkennen kann, die der des mathematischen Seienden entspricht, wurde sie aus dem Bereich der philosophischen Forschung verbannt. Nach Heidegger ist dies etwa bei Descartes und Husserl der Fall¹⁴³. So verschloss sich das an seine Tradition verfallene philosophische Dasein dem Weg, das eigene Verfallen an die (schon) verhärtete Tradition zu überwinden. Es wird übersehen, dass *auch der Philosoph bzw. dessen philosophisches Fragen selbst* ständig und a priori von seiner eigenen Geschichte im Modus der Unausdrücklichkeit bestimmt ist, weil er kein von der "Welt", den Anderen und der Geschichte isoliertes Subjekt, sondern ein geschichtlich-interexistenzial bestimmtes Dasein *ist*.

¹³⁹ Vgl. ebd., p. 100. Vgl. auch F.-W.v. Herrmann, *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Ein Kommentar zu "Sein und Zeit". Band 2. "Erster Abschnitt: die vorbereitende Fundamentalanalyse des Daseins"* § 9 – § 27, op. cit., p. 225 s.

¹⁴⁰ Vgl. ebd., p. 21.

¹⁴¹ GA 24, p. 18; vgl. auch SZ, p. 2.

¹⁴² M. Heidegger, *Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1994, Gesamtausgabe Band 17 [= GA 17], vgl. besonders p. 60 ss., 93 ss., 100 ss.

¹⁴³ Descartes entwarf am Modell mathematischer Objekte die Wahrheit als Gewissheit und das Sein als Bestand, weshalb hier die Geschichte nicht als wissenschaftliches Thema angesehen wird (vgl. ebd., p. 213 ss.). Auch Husserl gehört dieser Tradition an, die unter anderem wie selbstverständlich davon ausgeht, dass das Bewusstsein das einzige Thema der Philosophie ist (vgl. ebd., p. 92 ss.). Deshalb wirft Heidegger der vorherrschenden Phänomenologie das "Versäumnis" des Geschichtlichen und das Verfallen an die Tradition vor (vgl. GA 80.1, p. 155).

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- Id., *Vorträge. Teil 1: 1915-1932*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2006, Gesamtausgabe Band 80.1 [= GA 80.1].
- Id., *Sein und Zeit*, Max Niemeyer, Tübingen 2006 [= SZ].
- Id., *Geschichte der Philosophie von Thomas von Aquin bis Kant*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2006, Gesamtausgabe Band 23 [= GA 23].
- Id., *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik im Ausgang von Leibniz*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2007, Gesamtausgabe Band 26 [= GA 26].
- Herrmann F-W.v., *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Eine Erläuterung von "Sein und Zeit". Band 1. "Einleitung: Die Exposition der Frage nach dem Sinn von Sein"*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 1987.

- Id., *Subjekt und Dasein. Grundbegriffe von "Sein und Zeit"*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 2004.
- Id., *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Ein Kommentar zu "Sein und Zeit". Band 2. "Erster Abschnitt: die vorbereitende Fundamentalanalyse des Daseins" § 9 – § 27*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, 2005.
- Id., *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie des Daseins. Ein Kommentar zu "Sein und Zeit". Band 3. "Erster Abschnitt: Die vorbereitende Fundamentalanalyse des Daseins" § 28 – § 44*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2008.
- Id., *Hermeneutische Phänomenologie der Zeitlichkeit des Daseins. Zwei Freiburger Seminare zu Martin Heideggers "Sein und Zeit"*, Königshausen & Neumann, Würzburg 2023.
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Riccardo Valenti

"The Historicity of Life"*

On Diachronic and Sociogenetic Account of Meaning Institution and Preservation in Merleau-Ponty's Theory of Expression

Introduction. What Expression?

This paper explores some intriguing yet somewhat underexamined aspects of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's theory of expression and rationality and their historical progression. Expression is crucial in Merleau-Ponty's account because it allows truth contents to be *instituted* and subsequently reinterpreted by an unlimited number of interpreters. Expression's meaning and value especially live on through this *diachronic* and *sociogenetic* reworking, which this paper aims to shed new light on. Here, I will illustrate how this occurs in Merleau-Ponty's texts. By expression, I initially refer to a broad range of meanings and applications evident in Merleau-Ponty's works. I will briefly outline these aspects before reviewing the research questions and central theoretical framework of this paper. For Merleau-Ponty, expression primarily signifies the i) speaker's ability to create meaningful utterances, words or even complex sentences or speeches. This faculty eventually emerges during the ordinary course of infant development, as Merleau-Ponty discusses in his lectures on Piaget, Vygotsky, Skinner and other developmental psychologists whose texts were frequently read at his time¹.

Again, as it manifestly appears in the academic course *The Sensible World and the World of Expression*, expression generally concerns ii) "space and movement"², i.e., the natural body expressivity and ability to convey significance to actions it is primarily capable of.

* M. Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, tr. R.C. McCleary, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1964, p. 63.

¹ Merleau-Ponty deals with this subject especially in Id., *Child Psychology and Pedagogy. The Sorbonne Lectures 1949-1952*, tr. T. Welsh, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2010.

² B. Smith, *Translator's Introduction*, in M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Sensible World and the World of Expression. Course Notes from the Collège de France, 1953*, tr. B. Smith, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2020, p. xvii.

Moreover, expression, in its higher and more sophisticated forms, equally encompasses iii) “visual art”, such as painting and cinema, and, most importantly, “language”, such as simple conversations, literature and poetry, or even the progressive formation of “history, rationality and truth”³ taking body in it.

Indeed, these latter represent the most ambitious object of the academic courses Merleau-Ponty taught during the Fifties at the Collège de France, i.e., *Research on the Literary Use of Language*⁴, *The Problem of the Word*⁵ – unfortunately, the two are not translated into English yet – *Institution in Personal and Public History* and *The Problem of Passivity: Sleep, the Unconscious, Memory*⁶, before considering the broad study of *Nature*⁷ and ultimately, in the final period of his career and before his sudden death, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*⁸ and *The Possibility of Philosophy*⁹. Indeed, most scholars believe that during these years, Merleau-Ponty gradually reached that stage of scientific maturity that would enable him to transition from the phenomenology of perception to the ontology of flesh¹⁰. This opening was implemented, in his words, in

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Recherches sur l'usage littéraire du langage. Cours au Collège de France. Notes 1953*, a cura di E. de Saint-Aubert, B. Zaccarello, MetisPresses, Genève 2013.

⁵ Id., *Le problème de la parole. Cours au Collège de France. Notes 1953-1954*, a cura di F. Robert, L. Andén, E. de Saint-Aubert, MetisPresses, Genève 2020. When I quote passages from these or other French-language texts, I will be concerned with providing an English translation that respects the original meaning as much as possible. Similarly, should I find the consistent English translation of Merleau-Ponty's work inadequate, I will also quote references to the most recent French edition.

⁶ Id., *Institution and Passivity. Course Notes from Collège de France (1954-1955)*, tr. L. Lawlor, H. Massey, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2010.

⁷ Id., *Nature. Course Notes from the Collège de France*, tr. R. Vallier, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2003. This volume contains the notes' transcriptions of the courses Merleau-Ponty gave on this complex theme, i.e., *The Concept of Nature, 1956-1957; The Concept of Nature, 1957-1958: Animality, the Human Body, and the Passage to Culture*; and *The Concept of Nature, 1959-1960: Nature and Logos: The Human Body*.

⁸ Id., *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology. Including Texts by Edmund Husserl*, tr. L. Lawlor, B. Bergo, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2001.

⁹ Id., *The Possibility of Philosophy. Course Notes from the Collège de France, 1959-1961*, tr. K. Whitmoyer, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2022. This volume collects the transcripts of the last courses taught by Merleau-Ponty at the College de France, i.e., *The Possibility of Philosophy Today* (1959); *Cartesian Ontology and Ontology Today* (1960); *Philosophy and Nonphilosophy since Hegel* (1961).

¹⁰ I here explicitly mean two of the most significant books of Merleau-Ponty, i.e. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, tr. C. Smith, London-New York, Routledge 2002, and Id., *The Visible and the Invisible. Followed by Working Notes*, tr. A. Lingis, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1968. To glimpse who these scholars are and their different interpretations, please see S. De Carlo, *L'inflessione dello sguardo. L'ontologia di Maurice Merleau-Ponty attraverso l'interrogazione sulla natura*, Il Melangolo, Genova 2012, p. 53.

the repudiation of any residue of idealism from his philosophical vocabulary, which he believed was still present in the *Phenomenology of Perception*, as well as in the accentuation of the aspect of temporal and historical evolution that affects the very nature of experience in its genetic account¹¹. Thus, in these courses, Merleau-Ponty is believed to distance himself from a sheer and too limiting 'philosophy of the subject' toward an appreciation of the conditions that he deems indeed structuring and, therefore, transcendental, concerning the latter's aesthetical appraisal. I will try to elaborate more on this in the following.

1. The Institutionalisation of Knowledge. Toward the *Rationality of Investigation*

Accordingly, this study highlights how a different view of rationality, i.e., the ultimate foundation of knowledge and scientific comprehension, according to the third sense of Merleau-Ponty's theory of expression, gradually makes its way into these abovementioned works. In particular, I will try to clarify how such rationality evolves and constantly modifies itself, thus recognising a positive and foundational value to time in the wake of Bergson and reversing an ancient Platonic and Aristotelian stylistic motive about the undisputed superiority of eternity over time flowing¹². I will prove that, in these texts, this is the result of the continual elaboration and reworking of multiple subjects or interpreters throughout the *institution* of this kind of rationality, whose interaction, for Merleau-Ponty, is also ensured by the tools they operate with, such as painting for artists and literature and, more in general, written texts for writers or *geometricians* of all ages¹³. I, therefore, argue for the diachronic

¹¹ See Id., *The Sensible World and the World of Expression*, cit., pp. 137, 147. I will explain more about this in the following paragraphs.

¹² On the contrary, as pointedly noted, Merleau-Ponty defends a "thought of the inseparable" (F. Colonna, *Merleau-Ponty et la simultanéité*, in "Chiasmi International. Trilingual Studies Concerning the Thought of Merleau-Ponty", n. 4, 2002, p. 211.

¹³ This reference to geometricians will become more apparent after reading some passages from Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry* (E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, tr. D. Carr, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1970, pp. 353-378) which Merleau-Ponty comments on in the course *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology*. I will tell more about this in the sixth paragraph of this essay. *The Origin of Geometry* is the third appendix of the ninth paragraph of the *Crisis* (Hua VI, 365-386). It was initially written in 1936. Here, Husserl actively engages in the problem of transcendental and scientific historicity. This appendix serves as a compendium for a dense paragraph in which Husserl criticises the idea of the mathematisation of nature as he thinks Galileo has perpetrated it from modernity onwards. Endorsing a 'bottom-up' strategy, Husserl tries to get to the origins of sense-making by showing how the process of

and sociogenetic nature of this kind of knowledge Merleau-Ponty supports in his courses and most significant works. To do this, I will mainly focus on two of the texts I mentioned above – i.e., *Institution in Personal and Public History* and *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology* – and additional two, which are instead situated in the current edition of *Signs*, i.e., *Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence*¹⁴ and *The Prose of the World*, i.e., *The Indirect Language*¹⁵.

As I said, in this paper, I will focus primarily on the third meaning of expression I mentioned above, which, for Merleau-Ponty, mainly pertains to artistic and cultural production. This particular yet crucial application domain is appropriate to what I will primarily explore in this paragraph, i.e., the notable and programmatic concept of the “rationality of investigation”¹⁶, which becomes specifically relevant in analysing the latter part of Merleau-Ponty’s scientific work. However, why this idea is so vital for Merleau-Ponty? What does it represent, and what is this opposed to? What theoretical targets does Merleau-Ponty have in mind when he defines it, and which authors does he aim to approximate? And finally, what perhaps remains latent, or better to say *unexpressed*, in this definition? To preliminarily answer these questions and then introduce the theses I seek to argue in this paper, I must briefly introduce the notion of institution. Indeed, in the course on the *Institution*, Merleau-Ponty claims that truth contents, i.e., what we believe in, what we think is right and representing the reality of things themselves, are not eternal but evolve historically through the continuous interaction and eventual “substitution”¹⁷ of what he explicitly calls *institutions*. In this context, the term *institution* is critical to accepting the significant paradigm shift that Merleau-Ponty seeks to bring about in his conception of rationality and the suitable realisation of truth itself or epistemology he has in mind. This becomes immediately apparent when reading the course notes on *Institution*.

idealisation originally roots itself in *Lebenwelt*’s coordinates. *The Origin of Geometry* precisely discusses how geometry may be an excellent example to prove his point. This text has aroused lively interest since the very beginning. In 1939, Eugen Fink first edited *Die Frage nach dem Ursprung der Geometrie als Intentional-Historisches Problem*. Thanks to Derrida’s text translation, the *Origin* later became well-known in France. However, Merleau-Ponty commented on this text between 1959 and 1960, when he taught at Collège de France, a few years before Derrida’s version was published.

¹⁴ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, cit., pp. 39-83.

¹⁵ Id., *The Prose of the World*, tr. J. O’Neill, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1973, pp. 47-113.

¹⁶ Id., *Institution and Passivity*, cit., p. 48.

¹⁷ Id., *Signs*, cit., pp. 188-189. I will retrieve this quotation in the fourth paragraph of this essay.

In the following paragraph, I will outline why this change in the notional register is so noteworthy and what it aims polemically to replace. To do so, I will offer textual references to frame the issue in more detail. Accordingly, for Merleau-Ponty, an institution represents a mode of practical and intellectual making which has "time"¹⁸ as its fundamental model and that opposes what he groups as the *constituent* theoretical framework which he recognises as proper to the subjectivity of Cartesian "intelligible and identifiable structure"¹⁹, Kantian and Neo-Kantian interpretation of transcendental idealism and early Husserl's definition of *Sinngebung*²⁰. Let me explain how these claims are textually confirmed and justified before offering some definitions of institution in his works.

2. Institution Against Constitution. Reviewing Descartes, Kant and Husserl

In this paragraph, I will clarify how Merleau-Ponty envisions this scientific revolution he endorses from the *Phenomenology of Perception* onwards. To begin with, Cartesian *cogito* is supposed to "draw me out of the event", from my practical situation, i.e., from my being as incarnate subject, because it establishes me in

eternity, and it frees me simultaneously from all the limiting attributes and, in fact, from that fundamental event, which is my private existence. Hence, for the same reasoning which necessarily leads from the event to the act, from thoughts to the I, equally necessarily leads from the multiplicity of *I*'s to one sole constituting consciousness and prevents me from entertaining any vain hope of salvaging the finiteness of the subject by defining it as a 'monad'.²¹

For Merleau-Ponty, these results can only be detrimental to the genuine comprehension of the natural unfolding of our aesthetic experience, i.e., its human finitude and natural denseness, which is indeed the core of the institutional outline he defends. Instead, to understand the latter, it becomes necessary for him to "find a middle course between eternity and the atomistic time of empiricism" and "to resume the interpretation of the *cogito*", the good one he holds, though, "and of time"²² as an equally foundational and essential character. Again, Merleau-Ponty

¹⁸ Id., *Institution and Passivity*, cit., p. 7.

¹⁹ Id., *Phenomenology of Perception*, cit., pp. 434-435.

²⁰ Ivi, pp. xii-xiii.

²¹ Ivi, pp. 434-435.

²² Ivi, p. 435.

is hostile towards neo-Kantism and its more expressly idealist version circulating at that time in French universities. In particular, he criticises the works of Léon Brunschvicg, a highly influential author, Pierre Lachière-Rey and Ferdinand Alquié, as he mainly does in the course notes on *Institution*²³. Finally, Merleau-Ponty rejects Husserl's former definition of consciousness, too²⁴. In his reading, this would be characterised by the fundamental activity of centrifugal *Sinngebung*, i.e., the "active meaning-giving operation" actually ridding "the world of its opacity and transcendence"²⁵. Such an understanding is said to resolve in principle all problems, such as that of the other, that is, of intersubjective evidence, language, or the world itself, because "it insists that with the first glimmer of consciousness, there appears in me theoretically the power of reaching some universal truth", which is also the actual mirroring of Merleau-Ponty's former lecture of Descartes I just quoted²⁶. Husserl's transcendental idealism thus would tend to the world "as the mere correlative of our knowledge, with the result that it becomes immanent in consciousness and the aseity of things is thereby done away with"²⁷. To summarise here, since the early days of his career, Merleau-Ponty imputes idealism, intellectualism or "rationalism"²⁸ here broadly

²³ See *ivi*, pp. 283, 431-435, 450; *Id.*, *Institution and Passivity*, cit., pp. 117, 122-126. See also on this R. Bernet, *La conscience sans la perspective d'un transcendantalisme structuraliste*, in "Alter. Revue de phénoménologie", n. 16, 2008, p. 45; T. Garaets, *Vers une nouvelle philosophie transcendante. La genèse de la philosophie de Maurice Merleau-Ponty jusqu'à la Phénoménologie de la Perception*, Martinus Nihoff, La Haye 1971, pp. 87-92; J. Pechar, *La phénoménologie de Merleau-Ponty*, in K. Novotny, A. Schnell (a cura di), *La phénoménologie comme philosophie première*, Association pour la Promotion de la Phénoménologie, Amiens 2016, pp. 90-91; A. Scotti, *Il mondo del silenzio. Natura e vita in Maurice Merleau-Ponty*, Edizioni ETS, Pisa 2016, pp. 28-29; P. Vibert, *Merleau-Ponty*, Ellipses, Paris 2018, p. 27.

²⁴ As I will argue in the following, this interpretation is only partial since Merleau-Ponty also praises Husserl's version of *fungierende Intentionalität*, for instance, which he states as an excellent attempt to overcome what he fundamentally blames, i.e., the intentionality of the act (see *ivi*, cit., p. 486) or the theory of *Stiftung* or Husserlean latest account of historical *a priori*, as it becomes apparent in *The Origin of Geometry*, which I will comment on later.

²⁵ *Ivi*, pp. xii-xiii.

²⁶ *Ivi*, p. xiii. From this point of view, it is impossible to ignore the critique of *Kosmotheoros'* great argument, which can be found in several of Merleau-Ponty's texts (see, for instance, M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, cit., pp. 113, 227). About this, Merleau-Ponty writes in *The Problems of the Philosophy of History* that "one should not imagine a world spirit that places in the form of ends those who will come after. There is no spirit of the world hoped for and overcoming time" (*Id.*, *Conférences en Amérique, notes de cours et autres textes. Inédites II (1947-1949)*, a cura di M. Dalissier, Mimésis, Paris 2023, p. 185, translation of the author).

²⁷ *Ivi*, p. xvii.

²⁸ *Id.*, *The Prose of the World*, cit., p. 49.

defined, for accepting "as completely valid the idea of truth", i.e., the fact that this idea was given once for all, "and the idea of being in which the formative work of consciousness culminates and is embodied, and its alleged reflection consists in positing as powers of the subject all that is required to arrive at these ideas"²⁹.

Instead, Merleau-Ponty embraces a deponent and defective version of transcendental subjectivity and consciousness, which retains the character of fundamental "opening"³⁰ and embraces experiential evenementiality and the concurrence of relevant historical modifications. Indeed, it is not up to transcendental subjectivity or consciousness, in its singularity or isolation, to attribute a unitive meaning to other subjects, objects, or to the world in general, in which it is instead already forever immersed and practically implicated, as the theme of body schema mainly proves in the *Phenomenology of Perception* and *The Sensible World and the World of Expression*. For this reason, the perception that subjectivity uses to recognise this sort of primal unity with the surrounding world does not coincide with an operation of *Sinngebung*. Moreover, as I will try to clarify later, the subject does not primarily have the tools to construct or reconstruct knowledge and the underlying idea of rationality on its own, as Descartes and early Husserl believed it could, according to Merleau-Ponty's possibly ungenerous rebuilding of their claims. Finally, as the lecture on the *Institution* makes clear, as well as those on the *Research* and *The Problem of the Word*, truth is composed in the path that leads progressively to its attainment and that contemplates the becoming of time as its ineliminable mean, as well as the help of other subjects in unwavering support of this collective yet generationally discontinuous enterprise suggesting the curious "genealogy of the sentiment of eternity"³¹, as Fabrice Colonna stated. Let us now see how this aspect is treated in the course on the *Institution* before considering other readings in this regard.

3. Institution(s). On Making Sense Without Me

Indeed, as stated, Merleau-Ponty contests the institution model of subjectivity to the paradigm of constituent consciousness, the Husserlean later definition of *Stiftung*³² to the inadequate doctrine of *Sinngebung*.

²⁹ Id., *Phenomenology of Perception*, cit., p. 45.

³⁰ Id., *The Sensible World and the World of Expression*, cit., pp. 21, 28.

³¹ F. Colonna, *L'éternité selon Merleau-Ponty*, in "Alter. Revue de Phénoménologie", n. 16, 2008, p. 142.

³² This term can be precisely translated as *institution* – although McCleary seems to think otherwise – and is a key to understanding the axiological reversal that Merleau-Ponty

While the former is said to genuinely belong to “history”, the latter appears to be fundamentally “outside of time”³³. For Merleau-Ponty, this explanation causes negative consequences from a theoretical viewpoint, for it constitutes the world and its objects as “a series of ‘instantaneous moments’”³⁴ without any inner connection nor possible holding of autonomous meaning. Indeed, the latter are brought together solely by the intellectual acts of this supposed universal consciousness, as is apparent in the Cartesian and *Sinngebung* accounts. However, what does Merleau-Ponty precisely mean by institution? Why and how did an institution become a thing in the phenomenological debate? To how many domains or shades of meaning can it be applied? I can count at least three definitions of this important term in the course notes on *Institution*. Let me briefly outline them.

As Merleau-Ponty holds in the *Introduction* of this course, institution primarily means the “establishment in an experience [...] of dimensions [...] in relation to which a whole series of other experiences will make sense and make a *sequel*, a history”³⁵ even without the former consciousness sempiternal and intellectual, active confirmation³⁶. An institution is the always deferred initiation and continuation of a complex unity of experiences that refer to each other and are common to multiple subjects. In this precise feature, I think the historical reference is made explicit. Again, the institution is what “makes possible [a] series of events, [a] historicity: in principle event-ness”³⁷. Finally, the

intends to propose in his work. As he writes in *Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence*, *Stiftung*, as “foundation or establishment”, designates “first of all the unlimited fecundity of each present which, precisely because it is singular and passes, can never stop having been and thus being universally” but above all denotes “that fecundity of the products of a culture which continue to have value after their appearance and which open a field of investigation in which they perpetually come to life again” (M. Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, cit., p. 59; see also M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, cit., p. 68). I will tell more about this in the following paragraph.

³³ J. Slatman, *L'expression au-delà de la représentation. Sur l'aïsthésis et l'esthétique chez Merleau-Ponty*, Vrin, Paris 2001, p. 141.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Institution and Passivity*, cit., pp. 7-8.

³⁶ According to Dufourcq, an institution, in Merleau-Ponty's sense, may be defined as an “impersonal and intersubjective [...] structure”, which is “the fruit of a historically situated act” and which “endures with its own inertia as a tradition that transcends and conditions each individual” (A. Dufourcq, “*Sous les masques il n'y a pas de visages*”: l'éthique merleau-pontyenne entre problème de l'altérité radicale, foi et institution, in “Chiasmi International. Trilingual Studies Concerning the Thought of Merleau-Ponty”, n. 17, 2015, p. 356).

³⁷ Ivi, p. 13. The french text reads “*événementialité de principe*” (M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'institution dans l'histoire personnelle et publique. Le problème de la passivité. Le sommeil, l'inconscient, la mémoire. Notes de cours au Collège de France (1954-1955)*, a cura

institution is defined as an "elaboration of an 'inherent' possibility"³⁸, "a transformation which preserves"³⁹ what is transformed, "a truth that becomes" truth, in a certain sense, one that "condenses and opens up a future"⁴⁰ without uprooting from the lessons of the past. Indeed, the institution represents the volume of a historical and constantly changing context in which the subject makes her debut and enters, so to speak, in *medias res*.

For Merleau-Ponty, the institutional model equally pertains to every juncture of our lives as incarnated subjects. As he states in the following, institution uniformly applies to the formation of feelings, as well as to human phylogenetical development or different animal species, or – here analysing the aspects that interest me most in this essay – to the possible relations with other subjects, to the production of works of art, the domain of any possible knowledge, culture and all eras historical facts. From this point of view, the whole world, in its course, is made up of instituting events that overcome, deny or confirm others made the same way and whose overcoming does not mark the sharp caesura with a past which would be lost forever⁴¹. In a certain sense, instituting and instituted are the lowest denominators of every human action, the one realising that "lateral penetration"⁴² of every conceivable deed and corroborating

di D. Darmaillaq, C. Lefort, S. Ménasé, Éditions Belin, Paris 2003, p. 44). I believe this conception is somehow retrieved from Charles Péguy and his main yet unfinished work, *Clio*, as also stated by Anne Gléonec (*Institution et passivité. Lectures de Merleau-Ponty*, Millon, Grenoble 2017, pp. 167, 440) and Fabrice Colonna. In this text, Péguy focuses on the notion of "work" as praxis and of the latter's connection with that of "event", as the minimal dimension and unity of the happening of things in time. Human work, as an event, is described here in the terms of irremediable "incompleteness" (F. Colonna, *Merleau-Ponty et le renouvellement de la métaphysique*, Hermann, Paris 2013, p. 417) and impermanence. This condition of impossible ultimacy causes the meaning of this enterprise "to be the object of incessant resumption, which also exposes it to the risk of abandonment" (*ibid.*), as Husserl also makes clear in *The Origin of Geometry*. According to Colonna, for Péguy – and for Merleau-Ponty too, I can here assume – "the very condition of meaning lies in this promise of fruitfulness that is, inseparably, risk of degradation. There is no sense given, and there is only a sense taken up, the result of the cooperation we bring, a sense therefore fragile and demanding a responsibility to it" (*ibid.*; see also S. Prinzi, *Scrivere le cose stesse. Merleau-Ponty. Il letterario, il politico*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2017, p. 267).

³⁸ Ivi, p. 22.

³⁹ Ivi, p. 23.

⁴⁰ Ivi, p. 24.

⁴¹ Institution is also depicted as the "reactivation and transformation of a preceding institution," as it happens to be in the case of human puberty when a human being dramatically changes without losing the previous functional configurations (ivi, p. 9). See F. Robert, *Phénoménologie et ontologie. Merleau-Ponty lecteur de Husserl et Heidegger*, L'Harmattan, Paris 2005, p. 331 on this.

⁴² Ivi, p. 78; see M. Merleau-Ponty, *Recherches sur l'usage littéraire du langage*, cit., p. 75.

any eventual intersubjective immediate or subsequent validation. The institution is what unites, both in its naturalness and historicity, every event with which we can come into contact as subjects endowed with a body and a history, as the example of the *perspective* pictorial and representational model introduction and actual choice during the Renaissance precisely proves⁴³. Moreover, contrary to the constituent model, quickly referred to above, the institution does not require the confirmation of absolute subjectivity or consciousness to have or maintain its historical value for a given community of practice, i.e., for those who still believe in its truth. Indeed, quoting Merleau-Ponty, “the instituted”, i.e., what is left for good and what is there for others to come, “makes sense without me”; it persists in doing so, while “the constituted”, i.e., the result of the intellectual act of the traditional consciousness, “makes sense only for me and for the ‘me’ of this instant”⁴⁴, thus *de jure* disqualifying any possible temporal contamination(s) and eventual intersubjective and transgenerational encroachment⁴⁵.

On the contrary, the openness of a given register and the continued enlargement of its practice or frequentation, as in the case of pictorial art, as I will discuss in more detail in the following paragraph, ratifies the primordial communion and communication with otherness, i.e., with other subjects, the latter equally endowed with a body and placed within the everlasting history of the living culture. In this sense, their acts make sense without me, as mine will do for them, even when I am or will be gone, as replicas or answers to my previous questions, i.e., to my former attempts to reach the truth in the history of science (here broadly and epistemologically conceived). Indeed, these individual yet communal efforts do not relate to eternal “essences” but “praxis”⁴⁶, i.e., concrete actions that concur in establishing or instituting what materially counts in world history. Furthermore, as a creative disequilibrium, every institution contains the germ of its overcoming within itself. An institution is always beyond itself in the congeneticity that will sanction its expiration as a fundamental yet partial moment of “Permanent Revolution”⁴⁷ continually going on. Let us now consider some relevant cases in which those features are apparent.

⁴³ Ivi, pp. 45-49.

⁴⁴ Ivi, p. 8. As Merleau-Ponty states in the following, “[C]onstitution [means] continuous institution, i.e., never done. The instituted straddles its future, has its future, its temporality, the constituted depends entirely on the ‘me’ who constitutes” (*ibid.*).

⁴⁵ According to this interpretation, nothing makes sense if the subject does not immediately grasp its action and its possible consequences.

⁴⁶ Ivi, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Ivi, p. 7.

4. The Cruel Law ... The Case of Painting

In light of these considerations, I believe it is easy to see why Merleau-Ponty intends painting as a "single"⁴⁸ and intrinsically unitary "task", yet, something deeply felt as naturally "infinite"⁴⁹ and, most importantly, "inherited" and collected from the always incomplete appreciation of a "collective institution"⁵⁰ that is eventually and individually subsumed when the auspicious moment comes. Indeed, in this example, the painter here at stake does not create her own art by herself *ex nihilo*, nor does she master the criteria for its success from thin air. Instead, she learns her art, according to Merleau-Ponty, actually "by visiting the predecessors" and their related "Universe" of the "Field of painting"⁵¹ itself, making out her *praxis* of their theory. Indeed, she or her successors cannot overcome this field of practice altogether since the works that make up this field constitute the field itself, nor its attendance to the retroactive effect that new things have on all past productions. Indeed, here, instituted or to-be-instituted sense is said to be somehow convicted to "perpetual rereading" in the course of which truth and its historical "sublimation"⁵² would be nothing without the path that led to their formation.

I think this probing yet implicit idea of conviction is also present in *Bergson in the Making*, i.e., the tribute speech given by Merleau-Ponty on the centenary of Bergson's birth, where he ratifies the existence of a "public duration"⁵³ linking numerous suppliers in memory and culture. Accordingly, for him and here reading Charles Péguy, those "who write" and "*live publicly*" are condemned to a "cruel law", which is "to expect from others or successors a different fulfilment than the one they are achieving" now, because "others or successors are also men" and "by this substitution, they make themselves fellow men of the initiator"⁵⁴. However, I believe the most stimulating texts that prove this point are *The Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence (Signs)* and *The Indirect Language (The Prose of the World)*. Here, Merleau-Ponty also confronts with

⁴⁸ (*ibid.*; see M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, cit., p. 70). I will tell more about this in this paragraph.

⁴⁹ Ivi, p. 57.

⁵⁰ Ivi, p. 41.

⁵¹ Ivi, p. 47.

⁵² Ivi, p. 51.

⁵³ Id., *Signs*, cit., pp. 188-189

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* This feature is connected to the writing craft and the institution of a content of knowledge that is durable through time and perpetual confirmation by other subjects. As a matter of different but complementary *durations*, providers in the field of culture thus defined intertwine and reflect in each other's initiative via a cumulative process of never-ending *substitutions*.

André Malraux's works to prove his points⁵⁵. In *The Indirect Language and the Voices of Silence*, Merleau-Ponty claims that "the writer's act of expression is not very different from the painter's"⁵⁶, for they both are to be considered *modern*. Accordingly, those are said to be *modern* because both refuse the idea of a *toute faite* and detached idea of truth, which would only unravel in time but whose contents would already be established by eternity⁵⁷. Instead, the concurrence of multiple authors, according to Merleau-Ponty, and their historical confirmation or conceivable disavowal specifies the track that marks the establishment of truth and its progressive, albeit fragile, achievements⁵⁸. Indeed, truth involves the attainment of instituted stations, primarily identifiable in *styles*⁵⁹, especially in the case of figurative or pictorial art, but not of the ideal conclusion of its course. Indeed, there is no perfect content to achieve, attempt to coincide with, or imitate⁶⁰. This is one of the most significant successes of modernity, according to Merleau-Ponty, which is finally proven to understand the historical and transient significance or depth of artistic message and thus to see in the admittable incompleteness of work the prefiguration – or the retroaction – of its possible references rather than the sign of its constitutive deficiency⁶¹. Instead, the incompleteness of the works

⁵⁵ For a review of Merleau-Ponty's interpretation of Malraux and his works, see E. Bimbenet, *Nature et Humanité. Le problème anthropologique dans l'œuvre de Merleau-Ponty*, Vrin, Paris 2004, pp. 210-222; Id., *Après Merleau-Ponty. Études sur la fécondité d'une pensée*, Vrin, Paris 2011, p. 101; A.C. Dalmasso, *L'œil et l'histoire. Merleau-Ponty et l'historicité de la perception*, Edition Mimésis, Milan 2019, pp. 25, 123; E. de Saint Aubert, *Du lien des êtres aux éléments de l'être. Merleau-Ponty au tournant des années*, Vrin, Paris 2004, p. 213; R. Kaushik, *Art and Institution. Aesthetics in the Late works of Merleau-Ponty*, Continuum International Publishing Group, New York 2011, pp. 30-31, 40-43.

⁵⁶ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, cit., p. 45; see R. Couderc, *Au travers de la phénoménologie: l'expression et les traces du sens chez Merleau-Ponty*, in "Philosophie", a. 157, n. 2, 2023, pp. 56-58. Indeed, their comparison is possible "only because of an idea of creative expression which is modern" (M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, cit., p. 89).

⁵⁷ See F. Robert, *L'Écriture sensible. Proust et Merleau-Ponty*, Classiques Garnier, Paris 2021, p. 13.

⁵⁸ I will tell more about this fragility in the conclusion of this paper.

⁵⁹ A. Delcò, *Phénoménologie et peinture. Merleau-Ponty à l'école de Klee*, in "Archives de Philosophie", a. 65, n. 4, 2002, p. 614.

⁶⁰ See I. Matos Dias, *Merleau-Ponty. Une poétique du sensible*, Presses Universitaires de Mirail, Toulouse-Le Mirail 2001, pp. 130-141; F. Robert, *Merleau-Ponty, L'origine de la géométrie et la littérature*, in "Chiasmi International. Trilingual Studies Concerning the Thought of Merleau-Ponty", n. 21, 2020, p. 151.

⁶¹ M. Dalissier, *La métaphysique chez Merleau-Ponty. Phénoménologie et Métaphysique*, Peeters, Louvain-La-Neuve 2017, pp. 729-734. As Merleau-Ponty argues, the "tolerance for the incomplete shown by those moderns who present sketches as paintings, and whose every canvas, as the signature of a moment of life, demands to be seen on 'show' in a series of successive canvases" (M. Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, cit., p. 51; see Id., *The Prose of the World*, cit., p. 55).

of art refers to each other in the unity of a great representative enterprise that, at the same time, coincides with the actual germination of brand-new meaning⁶². In these purely historical yet transcendental dimensions, pictorial or linguistic action is always a reaction or an "answer"⁶³ or "response"⁶⁴ to a previously posed question, even implicitly. For Merleau-Ponty, indeed, the provisionally "accomplished work is thus not the work which exists in itself like a thing, but the work which reaches its viewer and invites him to take up the gesture which created it and, skipping the intermediaries, to rejoin [...] the silent world of the painter"⁶⁵, in this context. For this very reason, it is "in others that expression takes on its relief and becomes signification", thus concretely realising an "institution whose efficacy" others "will never stop experiencing"⁶⁶ in the substitution of its endless *metamorphoses*⁶⁷.

⁶² It is in this sense, I believe, that Merleau-Ponty speaks of "coherent deformation" (Id., *Signs*, cit., p. 54; see also E. Alloa, *La résistance du sensible. Merleau-Ponty critique de la transparence*, Éditions Kimé, Paris 2014, p. 70; B. Andrieu, *Le langage entre chair [leib] et corps [korper]*, in F. Heidsieck (a cura di), *Merleau-Ponty. Le philosophe et son langage*, Université PMF, Grenoble 1993, pp. 43-44; G.A. Johnson, *On the Poetic and the True*, in G.A. Johnson, M. Carbone, E. de Saint Aubert (a cura di), *Merleau-Ponty's Poetic of the World. Philosophy and Literature*, Fordham University, New York 2020, p. 171. Moreover, as Toadvine states, "it is through expression that a relation of distance can paradoxically be a proximity" (T. Toadvine, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Nature*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 2009, p. 126).

⁶³ S. Ménasé, *Passivité et création. Merleau-Ponty et l'art moderne*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 2003, p. 76.

⁶⁴ In these terms, Merleau-Ponty even speaks of a sense of "brotherhood" expected of all contributors, painters in this case, who are united in the perception of a "provisory eternity" (M. Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, cit., p. 59) but no less significant for that. I will explain this later.

⁶⁵ Ivi, p. 51.

⁶⁶ Ivi, p. 52-53.

⁶⁷ The term metamorphosis is crucial because it helps us understand how this intergenerational joint venture may happen. As I will say in the following, the tools change. Still, the feeling of fraternity or sisterhood that unites the contributors in building this complex artistic or knowledge edifice does not, as we will also clarify in the next section. As Merleau-Ponty clarifies, "productions of the past, [...] once went beyond anterior productions towards a future which we are, and in this sense called for (among others) the metamorphosis which we impose upon them" (ivi, p. 59). Moreover, in the history of pictorial representation, "the first sketches on the walls of caves set forth the world as 'to be painted' [...] and called forth an indefinite future of painting, so that they speak to us and we answer them by metamorphoses in which they collaborate with us" (ivi, 60). Merleau-Ponty also finds this ideal collaboration in Proust's *Research*, as he proves in *The Problem of the World*. Here, he writes "the participation of a past and a present will be a special case of the multiple's participation in my life" (Id., *Le problème de la parole*, cit., p. 152). See also F. Robert, *Merleau-Ponty, L'origine de la géométrie et la littérature*, cit., p. 155, on how writing is implied in this process of perpetual transformation.

5. And the *Cruel History* ... Embracing the *Historicity of Life*

This said, the artistic institution's effectiveness or continuation is primarily collected by its interpreters rather than by the artists themselves, who often fail to be aware of their work's concrete offspring or potential fallout⁶⁸. However, from this viewpoint, Merleau-Ponty warns about the meaning we should give to pictorial history and its cumulative and comprehensive gathering, the latter occurring in cultural institutions actually in charge, such as museums, galleries or pinacothecas. Indeed, although the "styles which escape the view of the creator and become visible only when the Museum gathers [them] together"⁶⁹, as it does at a certain point in human history, we must carefully introduce a further distinction here. According to Merleau-Ponty, as he claims, we must acknowledge "two historicities", i.e., one of "death" and one of "life"⁷⁰. Indeed, the first, the assemblage of the "cruel history"⁷¹, as Malraux defines it, theoretically struggles to understand the real meaning, affinity and deep harmony of the historical evolution that the institution model envisions because it conceives works of art only once they are made without indulging the very process by which they were created⁷². Conversely, the other history, without which the first would be impossible, is constituted and reconstituted step by step by the *interest* which bears us toward that which is not us and by that life which the past, in a continuous exchange, brings to us and finds in us, and which continues to lead in each painter who revives, and renews the entire undertaking of painting in each new work⁷³.

Indeed, for Merleau-Ponty, the institutional "unity of painting does not exist in the Museum alone" but primarily "exists in that single task which all painters are confronted with and which makes the situation such that one day they *will be* comparable in the Museum, and such that these fires answer one another in the night"⁷⁴. The possibility of this profound and diachronic – i.e., not synchronic nor simultaneous – intersubjective collaboration is granted by the feeling of a sort of "fraternity" between "painters", i.e., a fundamental sentiment which is not

⁶⁸ See M. Merleau-Ponty, *Recherches sur l'usage littéraire du langage*, cit., pp. 77, 82.

⁶⁹ Ivi, p. 59.

⁷⁰ Ivi, p. 63.

⁷¹ Ivi, p. 60.

⁷² In this context, as Ramírez Cobián observed, there is no longer "any opposition between beginning and development, between tradition and actuality, between time and truth" (M.T. Ramírez Cobián, *Le concept de tradition chez Merleau-Ponty. A partir des Notes de cours sur L'origine de la géométrie de Husserl*, in "Chiasmi International. Trilingual Studies Concerning the Thought of Merleau-Ponty", n. 3, 2001, pp. 345-354.

⁷³ *Ibid.*; see Id., *The Prose of the World*, cit., p. 72.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; see Ivi, pp. 67-70.

purely nor mainly intellectual or purposeful, but that "makes a history of painting possible"⁷⁵ as the intimate coherence of all their imaginable experiences and multiple pictorial devices or questionable artistic choices. Another passage in this text also hints at the everlasting span of this ideal or spiritual unity and the singularity of this assignment, which I believe is essential to argue for the subsistence of this deep, historical and intergenerational expressive willingness Merleau-Ponty supports⁷⁶. Indeed, as Merleau-Ponty points out, every work of art generally pertains to the universe of conceived painting as a single task stretching from the first sketches on the walls of caves up to our 'conscious' paintings. No doubt one reason why our painting finds something to recapture in art which are linked to an experience very different from our own is that it transfigures them. But it also does so because they transfigure it, because they at least have something to say to it, and because their artists, believing that they were continuing primitive terrors or those in Asia and Egypt, secretly inaugurated another history which is still ours and which makes them present to us"⁷⁷.

In the transfiguration process that Merleau-Ponty mentions, I reckon we can appreciate the retroactive and projective action and passion of every artistic production, which, united by the same feeling and expressive desire since the dawn of time, has unceasingly answered the same questions while also providing very different answers, in the unity of a story that is not the one told by museum exhibitions or *vernissages*, but by the subterranean impetus that resurrects to the heart of the artist of all times. In the next section, I will clarify how this diachronic and sociogenetic collaboration also applies, according to Merleau-Ponty, to literature and how, despite this, for him, the tools remain the empirical yet inevitable realisation of something more foundational and essential, as I will claim in the conclusion of this essay.

6. Other's Institutional Co-implication. Merleau-Ponty on Literature and *The Origin of Geometry*

Indeed, Merleau-Ponty also dealt with this issue regarding literature broadly, considering the actual possibility of generating meaning from

⁷⁵ Ivi, p. 62.

⁷⁶ I will tell more about this spiritual feature in the conclusion, also considering the works of Dufourcq, Ramírez Cobián, and Robert.

⁷⁷ Ivi, p. 60.

written expression, i.e., its possible sedimentation and eventual retrieving, thus also not neglecting the means, including physical or external ones, by which such production and conservation are made possible in writing⁷⁸. In the course notes on *The Problem of the World* – which precedes by one year that on *Institution* – Merleau-Ponty directly associates language with an “institution”⁷⁹, also on the footsteps of the works of Ferdinand de Saussure, emphasising its character of constant modification and permanently provisional order⁸⁰. In this sense, language [*langue*] provided for development through the indefatigable exercise of speech [*parole*] by numerous speakers and thought or ideality which is vehiculated by the latter is here nothing but a “promise”⁸¹, i.e., a wish, which unravels as a “*Gestalt*” which is constitutively “time-determined”⁸². Moreover, in *Research on the Literary Use of Language*, i.e., the course which was taught at the Collège de France in 1953, Merleau-Ponty underlies, as this was evident in the case of painting, that words or *paroles* have no meaning in themselves, but sprout negatively and solely in dialogue, even deferred one, with other subjects, as “germs” or “promises”⁸³ of additional and more promising communication.

However, there is another text that I intend to focus on here, namely the collection of Merleau-Ponty’s lecture notes on Husserl’s text, *The Origin of Geometry*. Here, as Robert pointed out, Merleau-Ponty precisely envisions Husserl as a “writer”⁸⁴, thus sublimating literature beyond the traditional artistic dimension to the heights of the constitution or phenomenologically transcendental institution of ideality, as is the case for Husserlian geometry. In this text, language is supposed to have a “foundational role in the transition” of evidence or intuitions to “essences”⁸⁵, which occurs practically when we consider the establishment of a geo-

⁷⁸ As Robert has pointed out, for Merleau-Ponty, the written word is the medium in which an ideal, timeless [*intemporel*] meaning is made available to all” (F. Robert, *L'Écriture sensible. Proust et Merleau-Ponty*, cit., p. 428). In this sense, writing is not an “accidental” feature; on the contrary, writing is “essential to ideal objectivity” (Id., *Merleau-Ponty, L'origine de la géométrie et la littérature*, cit., p. 149), as we shall see in the case of Husserl’s *The Origin of Geometry*.

⁷⁹ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Le problème de la parole*, cit., p. 40.

⁸⁰ Again, in *Research on the Literary Use of Language*, Merleau-Ponty admits that literature does not have a “preliminary truth”, as he claims from reading Stendhal (ivi, p. 193) and commenting on its *conquérant* function.

⁸¹ Ivi, pp. 49-50. In the exact text, Merleau-Ponty argues that “ideality is presumptive, on the horizon” (ivi, p. 82; and that the institutional being of a language consists precisely in this constant “call to the word” (ivi, p. 202) that edifies and reinforces its meaning.

⁸² Ivi, p. 57.

⁸³ Id., *Research on the Literary Use of Language*, cit., pp. 229-230.

⁸⁴ F. Robert, *L'Écriture sensible. Proust et Merleau-Ponty*, cit., p. 425.

⁸⁵ A. Dufourcq, *Merleau-Ponty: une ontologie de la chair*, Springer, Dordrecht 2012, p. 48.

metric theorem, given by common observation and the historical expression of its truths. Indeed, geometry, like any scientific discipline understood as a transfinite perpetuation of an instituting practice, as seen in the case of painting, needs its results to be communicated or expressed in writing, in this case, to become evident and be entirely historical, in a sense, i.e., handed down to a "tradition"⁸⁶ that enables its intergenerational and integrative validation and coherent development⁸⁷. In *The Origin of Geometry*, again, Husserl is believed to have opened himself "to the themes of historicity, language, human community and, ultimately, the sensible world"⁸⁸, thus bringing to full fruition the genetic turning point of his doctrine. I think this is why Merleau-Ponty finds this little paper so attractive, so much so that he even partly dedicates a course to it. In his commentary, Merleau-Ponty aligns with Husserl's definition of tradition or historicity as the fundamental opening of an institutional register that may not be closed. Indeed, traditional consequentiality grants the collection of "materials" that corroborate the assembly of an "open chain of researchers"⁸⁹, the latter of which is attentive to its conceptual recovery and enrichment.

In this context, language is crucial because it is a cultural production passivised that becomes mediately usable by a diachronic and endless community of interpreters. For Merleau-Ponty, the latter can recognise themselves as such, in their brotherhood, as in the case of painters, under the "relationship"⁹⁰ of all their activities that are kept in the geometry history record. Writing also contributes to this mutual encroachment, as a possible presentation or re-presentation of what is intuitively no longer offered, in the past of retention, as the possibility of the "permanence of the ideal" content "outside of all conversation" and even most importantly, "when the interlocutors are dead"⁹¹. Here, "the texts", i.e., written

⁸⁶ Indeed, following Ramírez Cobián, for Merleau-Ponty, "ideality" (M.T. Ramírez Cobián, *Le concept de tradition chez Merleau-Ponty. A partir des Notes de cours sur L'origine de la géométrie de Husserl*, cit., p. 347) would be the latter's outcome.

⁸⁷ Once again, it is imperative to remember what an institution is, for Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, and by what it is maintained, i.e., the "uninterrupted communication and knowledge [reconnaissance] of others", in their equally genetic and generative role (A. Dufourcq, "*Sous les masques il n'y a pas de visages*": l'éthique merleau-pontyenne entre problème de l'altérité radicale, foi et institution, cit., p. 359).

⁸⁸ M.T. Ramírez Cobián, *Le concept de tradition chez Merleau-Ponty. A partir des Notes de cours sur L'origine de la géométrie de Husserl*, cit., p. 346.

⁸⁹ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology. Including Texts by Edmund Husserl*, cit., p. 21.

⁹⁰ Ivi, p. 23. The French text says "parenté" (Id., *Notes de cours sur L'origine de la géométrie de Husserl. Suivi de Recherches sur la phénoménologie de Merleau-Ponty*, a cura di R. Barbaras, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1998, p. 26).

⁹¹ Ivi, p. 24.

expressions, “convey their sense as an activity which has fallen into obscurity but which is reawoken and which can again be transformed into activity”⁹² by fellow geometricians, and that is never completely lost. Geometry, as history this made, thus corresponds, in Merleau-Ponty’s terms, to a fundamental “presence that is richer than what is visible of it”, as the fires of painters’ suggestive image also proved, in my account, because this transgenerational unity calls forth an ideal continuation granted by a “subterranean communication across time”⁹³. In this sense, current geometrical research “supports itself on the landmark of inherited geometry and its oldest forms”, profiting from a “sense” which is spiritually “undivided between us and the past”⁹⁴. Here, the objectivity of geometry is both the result of the empirical grouping of “the integral series of cumulative advances” of its discoveries and the intrinsic, *lively* “mobility of the geometrical horizon”⁹⁵, i.e., its eventual advancement made available to future geometricians by geometricians of the past.

Indeed, as the most outstanding result of “transcendental intersubjectivity”⁹⁶ Husserl mainly speaks of in the *Cartesian Meditations*, the exercise of the word, its consistent metamorphosis or transformation, here borrowing once again *Signs*’ lexicon, enables the realisation of an “intemporal being of second order”⁹⁷, as well as, in practice, that of an “ideality that no one has ever thought”⁹⁸ in her intimate or immediate loneliness. In conclusion, I will highlight what I think this ultimate possibility of sense generation is founded on.

Conclusion. Introducing the “Museum of the future”⁹⁹. What is Tradition Truly Made of?

As previously stated, for Merleau-Ponty, written expression is the genuine “transporter of meaning”¹⁰⁰, i.e., the one granting its broadcast

⁹² Ivi, p. 25.

⁹³ Ivi, p. 27.

⁹⁴ Ivi, p. 28.

⁹⁵ Ivi, p. 30.

⁹⁶ Ivi, p. 47.

⁹⁷ Ivi, p. 55.

⁹⁸ Ivi, p. 57. I wish to draw attention here to a recent study of mine that has been published, which addresses these specific questions in greater detail: R. Valenti, The Truth “No One Has Ever Thought”: Merleau-Ponty Reader And Inheritor Of Husserl’s Origin Of Geometry, “Geltung. Revista de Estudos das Origens da Filosofia Contemporânea”, 3, n. 2, 2024, pp. 1-35.

⁹⁹ Id., *Signs*, cit., p. 61.

¹⁰⁰ Id., *Husserl at the Limits of Phenomenology. Including Texts by Edmund Husserl*, cit., p. 64.

and eventual subsequent retrieval. However, as seen in the case of museums and their possibilities, I think it is important to emphasise here the truly *vital* conditions that enable such perspectives to be distinguished rather than the inauthentic, *deadly*, or second-order ones (if possible). In other words, an attempt must be made to determine whether it is the techniques that foster this diachronic and sociogenetic development of the becoming of expression, i.e., painting and writing, in these cases, or whether it is instead the primitive and transcendental community formation that makes use of these channels to make its way through history and find its echo within. In this respect, I do not feel the critics agree entirely when commenting on Merleau-Ponty's quotations on Husserl and his opinion on sense institution. Let me briefly consider their conclusions before offering a possible solution to the theoretical ambiguity I just exposed. Indeed, Dufourcq claims that "institution enables the establishment of community and communication beneath a fundamental discontinuity"¹⁰¹, i.e., that of the multiplicity of durations and interpreters lifespans implicitly considered here. It seems to me that Ramírez Cobián's interpretation aligns with hers when he says that thanks to the institution and the spiritual world to which it trans-temporally comes together, "an objectivity, a culture and a community become possible"¹⁰². This said, Robert's position seems more controversial and challenging to me. If, indeed, in *Merleau-Ponty, L'origine de la géométrie et la littérature*, he argues that, in Merleau-Ponty's commentary of *The Origin of Geometry*, language produces "objectivity" and that, once established, the expression acquires an "intersubjective dimension" it is equally valid that to be right about this fact "a community of language" must also "be assumed"¹⁰³, i.e., a distributed yet epistemologically coherent universe of readers and speakers who recognise a given truth content as trustworthy.

Again, in *Phenomenology and Ontology*, a text from 2005, Robert says that "others are virtually present in every *Stiftung*", i.e., institution, and, most notably for my claim, that "the unity of meaning of geometry, as of all spiritual meaning, rests first of all on the discovery of a common field between thoughts, on a community [*communauté*] of meaning"¹⁰⁴. This

¹⁰¹ A. Dufourcq, "Sous les masques il n'y a pas de visages": l'éthique merleau-pontyenne entre problème de l'altérité radicale, foi et institution, cit., p. 358.

¹⁰² M.T. Ramírez Cobián, *Le concept de tradition chez Merleau-Ponty. A partir des Notes de cours sur L'origine de la géométrie de Husserl*, cit., p. 350. Indeed, Ramírez Cobián's paper precedes by a few years the publication of Dufourcq's, which was reported first only for reasons of exposition.

¹⁰³ F. Robert, *Merleau-Ponty, L'origine de la géométrie et la littérature*, cit., p. 154.

¹⁰⁴ Id., *Phénoménologie et ontologie. Merleau-Ponty lecteur de Husserl et Heidegger*, cit., p. 301.

claim also introduces one last yet fundamental aspect of this theory in my reading. As Ramírez Cobiàn also pointed out, Merleau-Ponty here argues for the distinction between an “empirical” and a “spiritual tradition”¹⁰⁵, which is not subject to the laws of the former, however much in the former it shows itself in its historical becoming. Where the first temporality of tradition flows linearly, according to the succession and diversity of its instituted instants or moments, the second proper to “productive acts” is fundamentally “intensive” and “simultaneous”¹⁰⁶ to the different and maybe temporally distant acts themselves. For Merleau-Ponty, according to Ramírez Cobiàn, the time of true and vital tradition is an “enveloping” and “involving”¹⁰⁷ time, i.e., the one of *chiasm*. Again, as Robert clarifies this time, the ideality that is the always provisional outcome of this spiritual tradition is the “hinge”¹⁰⁸ offered between the sensible and the intelligible, the fragile but unequivocal union between all human productions. Finally, Dufourcq also contemplated text this inner fragility of sense, suggesting, however, that this feature has to be intended as nothing more than the “counterpart of its intersubjective reality and its ability to endure as a tradition”¹⁰⁹ and thus, in its undeniable power and full brightness, just like that of the fires that answer one another in the mists of time.

For this reason, in my opinion, *spirituality* here at stake represents the innermost core of this diachronic and sociogenetic account of meaning of institution and preservation in Merleau-Ponty’s theory of expression. Nevertheless, much remains to be said on this point, and this paper is only the beginning of further research on this issue.

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¹⁰⁵ M.T. Ramírez Cobiàn, *Le concept de tradition chez Merleau-Ponty. A partir des Notes de cours sur L’origine de la géométrie de Husserl*, cit., p. 348.

¹⁰⁶ Ivi, p. 348.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* What Ramírez Cobiàn says in the following is also noteworthy. However, I do not wholly agree with him because I consider this idea of spirituality the most fundamental one when he argues that “it is thanks to tradition that there is a temporality: that is our interpretation” (ivi, p. 34) suggesting institutional continuity, which I, however, rests on other foundations.

¹⁰⁸ F. Robert, *Merleau-Ponty, L’origine de la géométrie et la littérature*, cit., p. 152.

¹⁰⁹ A. Dufourcq, *Merleau-Ponty: une ontologie de la chair*, cit., p. 277.

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Marco Barbieri

Relevance and Originality of the Theology of History. Wolfhart Pannenberg's Case

1. A speculative idea of history and Karl Löwith's challenge. An old problem

History has always been a subject of utmost importance in the philosophical tradition. One of its many declinations, that of the *philosophy of history*, currently (and for quite some time) lies in much worse shape. It is often regarded¹ as a past and overpassed way to find a sense in history, one that is not philosophically – nor in a broader sense theoretically – defensible. It would be nothing but an aprioristic construction that forces the factual events into a general and teleological movement that claims to connect the past with the future. There might be good reasons for such an attempt (mostly practical and political²); yet, we do not find ourselves in any Archimedean point where the totality of history can be observed and judged. We are very much in the middle of it, and no clear view is ever available; any assessment that thinks the opposite is delusional.

Karl Löwith offers a particularly famous example of this critical position in many of his writings, especially in *Meaning in History* (1949). As it is a very renowned thesis, it suffices here to recall its main points. According to Löwith, the ancient Greeks had a circular vision of history that foreshadowed an eternal recurrence of all things; on its own, history was not an independent sector. This approach ended with the arrival of Christianity, where a linear and progressive perspective – directed at the establishment of God's kingdom – was imposed. A second reversal takes place later (and gradually) with the affirmation of the modern philosophy of history over the original Christian theology of history. More than a

¹ Think of the eloquent critique of K. Popper, *The Poverty of Historicism*, Routledge, London 2002.

² See A.U. Sommer, *Sinnstiftung durch Geschichte? Zur Entstehung spekulativ-universalistischer Geschichtsphilosophie zwischen Bayle und Kant*, Schwabe, Basel-Berlin 2006; D. Carr, *Experience and History. Phenomenological Perspectives on the Historical World*, Oxford University Press, London 2014, especially pp. 78-80.

substitution, what happens here is a falsification: for as independent and self-affirming as it pretends to be, Western philosophy of history is nothing but a secularised version of the Christian view. The element of faith is still very much present and influential; it is merely expressed in different ways. In other words, God is no longer leading history to its fulfillment, but only because it is believed that history itself – that is, history led by men – is well capable of doing that alone. This belief is nothing but an illusion: in the author's drastic words, "historical processes as such do not bear the least evidence of a comprehensive and ultimate meaning"³. The outcome is, therefore, a nihilistic one: unsupported by any form of *Grund*, the philosophy of history dissolves into pure historicism, incapable of providing any sense to actions and decisions. This contributes to very factual catastrophes, as testified in Löwith's time by two world wars and the Holocaust.

We do not intend here to assess whether this account is historically and theoretically reliable; the debate already has a long and prestigious tradition⁴. It might be of no minor interest to reflect, based on Löwith's framework, on the fundamental essence of the philosophy of history. His genealogy can be summarized as follows in terms of historical progression: first (with Christianity) we encounter a theology of history; then a succession of philosophies of history; and finally, historicism. And yet the situation is more complex than it appears. Just to mention one tension, according to Löwith a Christian theology of history is contradictory because Christianity itself is defined by its eschatological nature. Explicitly referencing Oscar Cullman's *Christ and Time* (1948), but mostly drawing from Franz Overbeck's account⁵, Löwith insists that "Christians are not a historical people"⁶: they are solely focused on the moment when the divine Kingdom is established, which occurs with the disruption of history. History is nothing but a time of wait and hope; it has no value in itself. A genuine Christian perspective does not give rise to any theology of history⁷.

³ K. Löwith, *Meaning in History. The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History*, Chicago University Press, Chicago 1949, p. 191.

⁴ See the famous critique by H. Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, MIT Press, Cambridge 1985. Among the recent contributions, S. Griffioen, *Contesting Modernity in the German Secularization Debate. Karl Löwith, Hans Blumenberg and Carl Schmitt in Polemical Context*, Brill, Leiden 2022 is especially insightful.

⁵ See especially F. Overbeck, *Über die Christlichkeit unserer heutigen Theologie*, now in Id., *Werke und Nachlaß: Band 1. Schriften bis 1873*, a cura di M. Stauffacher-Schaub, R. Brande, H. Cancik-Lindemaier, Metzler, Stuttgart 1994, pp. 155-256.

⁶ K. Löwith, *Meaning in History*, cit., p. 195.

⁷ On the other side, it is also true that Löwith finds the theology of history more honest than the philosophy of history, as at least it explicitly acknowledges its reliance on faith.

Without even considering this aporia, what counts here is that the theology of history should precede – both logically and chronologically – the development of a philosophy of history. This is because any philosophy of history is intrinsically (and perhaps unconsciously) more *theological* than philosophical. It is unlikely to envision the opposite scenario, where a theology of history emerges from a philosophical explanation, as the latter lacks self-sufficiency and would still require an external foundation. Nonetheless, after Löwith's apparently definitive critique, there have been several attempts to provide a theological framework to history, both from the Protestant and the Catholic perspective. Wolfhart Pannenberg's proposal stands out as one of the most insightful. It can be read as a response to the challenge formulated by Löwith, who was not by chance one of his teachers during his formative year. We, therefore, need to explore the implications of Pannenberg's take on the relationship between the philosophy and theology of history. More broadly, we ask: How can theology retain a philosophical relevance? What unique insights does it offer that cannot be articulated with equal or greater clarity by any philosophy of history? Can a dialogue between these disciplines continue as fruitfully as it has been for many centuries, or should we accept the fact that in a secular (or post-secular⁸) age this is no longer possible?

In light of these questions, we will proceed as follows. First, keeping Löwith's framework in mind, we will present and discuss Pannenberg's concept of revelation. We will highlight the essential role that history plays in this concept and argue that history is indeed the sole means through which revelation manifests itself. Consequently, God's revelation possesses a specific historical structure that can be expanded to encompass our understanding of history as a whole. Second, we will examine how this understanding impacts the study of history, both philosophically and historiographically, drawing from Pannenberg's direct contribution to this topic. We will demonstrate that the theology of history can effectively interact with the philosophy of history and a historicist perspective, addressing issues that might otherwise remain unresolved. Finally, we will argue that the philosophy of history and the theology of history are not inherently incompatible. Instead, they can work together to provide a more comprehensive understanding of our historical experience in the world. We aim to clarify a longstanding debate that, while perhaps not currently *à la mode*, has a rich tradition; by doing that, our goal is also to encourage a revaluation of the ongoing need to create representations of the history we live in.

⁸ See M. Rectenwald, R. Almeida, G. Levine (a cura di), *Global Secularisms in a Post-Secular Age*, De Gruyter, Boston-Berlin 2015; P. Costa, *The Post-Secular City. The New Secularization Debate*, Brill, Paderborn 2022.

2. Pannenberg's idea of revelation. Just another theological view on history?

The problem of history is often described as the focal point of Pannenberg's work. Despite his countless theological interests and extensive writings on many topics, his starting point was a theological reflection on *Geschichte*; this issue is carried forward, rather than forgotten, in his later works. While we will also refer to them, the focus is here on his early contributions, particularly on the well-known *Offenbarung als Geschichte* (*Revelation as History*), first published in 1961. In this way, we will get a sense of how the revelation works according to Pannenberg, and why this has crucial implications beyond a purely theological understanding of history.

Offenbarung als Geschichte is a collective work, composed within the so-called *Heidelberg-Kreis*, which included theologians with different backgrounds and areas of specialization⁹. However, Pannenberg clearly plays the central role, as he not only authored the most important chapter, structured in eight dogmatic theses, but also provided the *Introduction*, outlining the aim of the entire project. In brief, the book argues that Christian revelation is not restricted to a single historical event that orients all of history thereafter (even though the case of Christ is admittedly decisive), but rather continuously unfolds as historical and within history itself. Revelation occurs *as* history; man experiences it as such. An original ontological view is therefore at stake.

This is evident since Pannenberg's first thesis, which reads: "the self-revelation of God in the biblical witnesses is not of a direct type in the sense of a theophany, but is indirect and brought about by means of the historical acts of God"¹⁰. The experience of God's revelation is marked by original characters, in comparison with more traditional accounts. Drawing on the exegetical findings of his colleagues, Pannenberg emphasizes that no word in the Bible explicitly articulates a self-revelation of God. God "reveals 'something' or someone", never precisely himself", and this is why it is more accurate to write about *manifestations*¹¹. Sticking to the history of Israel, the focus is neither on a singular deed nor a series of

⁹ The names of the other authors and chapters are Rolf Rendtorf (*The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel*); Ulrich Wilkens (*The Understanding of Revelation Within the History of Primitive Christianity*); and Trutz Rendtorff (*The Problem of Revelation in the Concept of the Church*). For an extended discussion on many of the themes of the book, see G. Wenz (a cura di), *Offenbarung als Geschichte: Implikationen und Konsequenzen eines theologischen Programms*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2018.

¹⁰ W. Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, MacMillan, New York 1968, p. 125.

¹¹ Ivi, pp. 9-15.

separate acts. Rather, Pannenberg points to a different structure, one characterized by *indirectness*. From the experience of the Israelites, we learn that revelation not only happens in history but essentially *as* history. We could perhaps state that it *unfolds*, as it equates with the experience of history to unfold itself. Does that mean that every historical act bears witness to God? Or does God engage in specific historical acts, which indirectly and collectively form his self-revelation? These questions are pertinent, yet they do not fully grasp the central aspect of revelation. Since it is indirect, revelation appears only *within and as* a structure of totality in which all elements are interconnected; it cannot be individuated. Every individual element somehow points to this totality but cannot fully encapsulate it on its own. Expanding on Pannenberg's argument, we might say that history as a concluded totality would constitute the direct revelation of God; however, since we experience it in glimpses and fragments, we only get an oblique sense of it.

These crucial points can be fully understood only in conjunction with the affirmation of the second thesis: "Revelation is not comprehended completely in the beginning but at the end of the revealing history"¹². Beginning and end are the terms that denote the character of indirectness. They both are decisive but only when linked together. If revelation were to occur directly at the beginning of any event, no definitive end would be needed; conversely, if only the end could reveal the presence of God, then every historical happening would be nothing but a meaningless wait. The inadequacy of each event, when isolated from the whole, lies therefore in a specific reason: something is indeed revealed at an initial point, but its full understanding only comes at the end. Vice versa, what happens at the end sheds light on something that already happened – or, better, unfolded – before; the ending does not introduce something entirely new but recapitulates past events, displaying their sense. And yet it is no less radical feature: the sense that it unveils is not something that was already there, *a priori*, only waiting to be discovered. *The sense is generated by the final fulfillment*. As noted¹³ what here occurs is a form of retroactivity that avoids any risk of determinism: *God creates from the future*. What we see here is a proleptic formation, one that will prove to be central in Pannenberg's overall theoretical proposal.

¹² Ivi, p. 131.

¹³ C. Moostert, *God and the Future: Wolfhart Pannenberg's Eschatological Doctrine of God*, T&T Clark, London 2002; see also T.S. Labute, *The Ontological Motif of Anticipation in the Theology of Wolfhart Pannenberg*, in "Journal of the Evangelical Society", n. 37 (2), 1994 pp. 275-282.

Let us delve into this structure in more detail. The idea that the definitive revelation happens at the end “means that the biblical God has, so to speak, his own history”¹⁴. However, how can something be already revealed at the beginning – and where exactly does this beginning lie? We believe that here two senses of this expression can be found, or at least argued expanding from Pannenberg’s thesis. On the first level, the beginning is not so much a specific point in the timeline of history but rather a fundamental feature of history itself: history is an ongoing beginning of new deeds and events (as Hannah Arendt, for instance, has eloquently shown with her notion of *acting*¹⁵).

Nevertheless, there is much more to be noted: Pannenberg’s framework is undeniably theological, and it is essential to incorporate the arrival of Christ within it. The fourth thesis underlines that “in fate of Jesus, the end of history is experienced in advance as an anticipation”¹⁶. The event of Christ marks a new beginning for history – a beginning that looks for its end¹⁷. It is no coincidence that several sections of Pannenberg’s important Christology (*Gründzüge der Christologie*) are also devoted to this aspect. Published in 1964, the work can be read as an eloquent case – this most important case – of the proleptic structure in history. Jesus preached from an apocalyptic perspective, which intensified the tension between the future and the present moment. However, due to the limitations of human experience, his actions could attest to his vocation only in a partial way, and they “remained aimed at the future verification of his claim to authority”¹⁸. A *chronological difference* is here at play, and it is a decisive one: the issue remains unresolved because of the temporal gap between the earthly inception of God’s kingdom and its ultimate realization. Even in the case of the Son of God, no purely historical deed can present a fully accomplished structure.

In Pannenberg’s view, the structure of history is, therefore, composed of multiple elements. Beginning, end, unfolding in between: these main points make for an architecture that has a form, but one that is uncertain and subjected to changes before the final revelation. The dynamics that

¹⁴ W. Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, cit., p. 133.

¹⁵ H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1998, pp. 175-247.

¹⁶ W. Pannenberg, *Revelation as History*, cit., p. 134.

¹⁷ Perhaps it could be argued, stretching Pannenberg’s position, that *it constitutes a chance for history to experience the experience of the beginning*.

¹⁸ W. Pannenberg, *Jesus – God and Man*, SCM Press, London 2002, pp. 53-54. Unlike theologians such as Bultmann, who insisted on the importance of Jesus in the present (as he manifests himself in each one’s personal faith and Christian life), Pannenberg believes that any Christology that does not pay enough attention to the historical Jesus and his motivations is incomplete. In other words, we need to start from a historically determinate situation, that of Jesus as a Jewish Man, if we want to examine his divinity.

coordinate them (and that can be easily traced to other Pannenberg's books¹⁹) is one of anticipation and eschatology: an "already there" that is always lied to a "not yet"²⁰. But it is still not clear how and if this can be also theoretically argued, and in what terms and limits. Or is it just a matter of faith, as *Glauben* and *Wissen* are completely separate even in the domain of history, as Löwith would argue²¹, and faith finds a foundation only within itself? Pannenberg does not follow this route and argues for a strong link between theological and, specifically, historiographical matters. For that reason, the structure of the revelation reveals much about the historical world we live in – even from a non-religious standpoint.

3. Theological insights for the study of history

We now have a more solid foundation for a full understanding of what is at stake in the early essays that focus on the problem of history and may not necessarily evoke the problem of revelation. Their decisive output is that theology and the theory of history are inherently linked and can only be separated at the expense of an inadequate understanding of both. One of the most crucial texts, *Redemptive Event and History* (*Heilsgeschehen und Geschichte*), from 1959, begins by stating that "history is the most

¹⁹ The proleptic structure extends beyond exclusively fideistic use and is directly integrated into philosophical and anthropological domains. In his later *Anthropology in Theological Perspective* T&T Clark, London 1985 (originally published in 1983) Pannenberg describes man's constitution as proleptic, in multiple senses. First, there exists a tension between the singular moments of one's life and the concept of the Self as a whole. The latter is manifested in the formers, which are still partial but already points to a definitive totality; an element of indeterminacy awaits future determination. The overall trajectory is thus shrouded in mystery, leaving the individual life open. Secondly, Pannenberg evokes a thesis from Herder to argue that there is an anticipation of universality in every single perception, and this is what enables the sensing of actual objects. This suggests that every human relation with finite elements entails an intrinsic connection to the infinite, intertwining the seemingly anthropological question of what constitutes man with the question of God. Finally, the same dynamic applies to the structure of language. Every dialogue unfolds within a totality as horizon; with each expression, the listener anticipates the entire proposition and its link with the rest of the discourse (and so does the speaker). The communion established between the partners thus hinges on a continuous dynamic of anticipation that refers to a totality.

²⁰ A very similar structure was already individuated by Oscar Cullmann (see his *Christ and Time: the primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia 1950 and *Salvation in History*, SCM Press, London 1970) and in the same years by J. Moltmann (*Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, SCM, London 1967) – but not, in our opinion, at the same intensity of theoretical rigour.

²¹ See the essays collected in K. Löwith, *Wissen, Glaube und Skepsis. Sämtliche Schriften*, Band 3, Metzler, Stuttgart 1985.

comprehensive horizon of Christian theology”²². Another, *The Crisis of the Scripture Principle* (*Die Krise des Schriftprinzips*, 1962) affirms that “the understanding of the world as history is that conception of reality which the biblical understanding of God has disclosed to mankind”²³.

Pannenberg was very aware of the longstanding debate within theological circles on these themes. Here he explicitly names Rudolf Bultmann and Friedrich Gogarten on one side, and Karl Barth and Martin Kähler on the other, as polemical points of reference. In his view, the former group placed excessive emphasis on the historicity of existence, while the latter group overstated a supposed supra-historical kernel of faith²⁴. In both cases, history as such is dissolved. Conversely, rigorous studies of the Old Testament reveal something different: that with the Israelite people, “history arises”²⁵. This has significant implications to unpack, as what is proposed can ultimately lead to an “interpretation of the world as history”. Israel not only conceived history as a specific dimension of reality but also encompassed the entire creation within history, *as* history²⁶. What we have here, according to Pannenberg, is the origin of what would eventually evolve into historical consciousness and modern historical thought.

If one takes these premises seriously, it becomes immediately relevant to consider how a theology of history can contribute to any kind of historiographical study. This also entails clarifying what a theology of history is no longer intended to be or accomplish. Its purpose is no longer to *identify* each specific divine action within the historical (and mundane) unfolding of reality because the historicity of the world as such already attests (indirectly) to the manifestation of God. Instead, it is by way of assuming a religious and Christian perspective that the world is discovered (and therefore investigated) as historical, on a fundamental level. Moreover, here Pannenberg explicitly diverges from Heidegger, or at least of the Heidegger of *Sein und Zeit* who affirms – in Chapter Five from the second section, called *Temporality and Historicity* – that *Dasein* has a history (*Geschichte*) because it is intrinsically historical (*geschichtlich*)²⁷. In contrast, the young theologian asks himself rhetorically “whether histo-

²² W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology. Collected Essay*, vol. I, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1970, p. 15.

²³ Ivi, p. 14.

²⁴ Ivi, pp. 15-16.

²⁵ Here Pannenberg first names Mircea Eliade (*The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Pantheon Books, New York 1954), and many other scholars, but is especially influenced by Gerhard von Rad (see his *Old Testament Theology*, Harper & Row, New York 1962).

²⁶ Ivi, p. 21.

²⁷ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, SUNY, Albany 1996, p. 345.

ricity rather is not grounded in the experience of reality as history, just as it is made accessible in the history of the promise of God with Israel”²⁸.

The brief assessment may or may not fully capture Heidegger’s point, but it mostly suggests a possibly nihilistic result. In this sense, Pannenberg’s take seems both similar and distinct from Löwith’s interpretation. Interestingly, the Heideggerian (and dominant) viewpoint does not contribute to preserving any true sense of historicity; it rather falls prey to a misunderstanding. Conversely, the profound historicity rooted in Jewish and Christian traditions becomes increasingly threatened in today’s world due to the modern view of historicism, because the continuity of history and the historicity of man are seen as conflicting forces. This trajectory ultimately “leads to the loss of the experience of history as well as that of historicity”²⁹: as any possible image of world history fades, so does the historicity of human existence. Contrary to the claims of historicism, our individual biography is intertwined with, rather than reversed by, history as a whole.

The underlined points are of paramount importance. Firstly, history fundamentally grounds our existential historicity, rather than the converse. We are historical beings precisely because we are situated – or *geworfen*, in Heideggerian terms – within the expansive context of world history. The evolution of world history shapes our historicity and defines our existence; it is not an outdated or obsolete concept, as suggested by Löwith’s critique, but rather an essential element of our identity. While it may appear to be an external structure, it fundamentally aligns with our anthropological character and plays a critical role in shaping it. Consequently, the issue lies not in the concept of world history itself, but in how it is represented. An account of human historicity that neglects this aspect is as deficient as one that inadequately characterizes world history, as was the case with the traditional philosophies of history (at least if we operate within Löwith’s framework).

There is more to say, as soon as a couple of additional terms are added to the discussion. The problematic relationship between necessity and contingency is another delicate challenge for the philosophy of history. It could be argued that it is its fundamental problem; it is, after all, another way to phrase the same issue of individual historicity and world history. If Pannenberg could envision a solution to that problem, a similar clarification may be expected here. The author *does* highlight the inherent risk in global perspectives of history, where individual historical events may lose their contingent nature in favor of a predetermined and inevitable

²⁸ W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, cit., p. 35.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

significance. Kierkegaard's protest *contra* Hegel serves as a relevant example in this context. Yet, Pannenberg does not fully align with the former, although he admits that a very important demand is expressed. He also underscores that the Christian faith inherently values the contingent nature of all worldly phenomena but sticks to the idea that a hint of totality is needed³⁰. This prompts the question of how it is possible to maintain a global perspective of history without imposing a predetermined direction and meaning on its constituent elements. There is a seemingly unsolvable contradiction here.

The fascinating aspect is that the theology of history, or at least Pannenberg's version of it, might offer a more compelling approach than any traditional philosophy of history. While both provide an overarching viewpoint, theology allows for continual modification and remains open *by its very nature*. Here we must expand on the quality of "futureness" that underlies the entirety of Pannenberg's theology. The author does not provide any specific example, but he assumes that it influences the unfolding of any historical event. Where classical philosophy of history presupposes fulfillment and an a priori direction to be merely implemented, theology recognizes that in history nothing is settled and that every development remains subject to change, as God's action stems from the future. Pannenberg criticizes here Bultmann and Ernst Käsemann for their belief that Christ's arrival signifies the resolution of all historical issues. On the contrary, the presence of a hint of the end allows for a vision of the whole that must remain partial and incomplete, prompting further reflection and action³¹. In different terms, something is opened and acquires visibility, but in a specifically limited way – that of anticipation.

The question of meaning can further elucidate this point. We must recall Löwith's opinion, according to which "historical processes as such do not bear the least evidence of a comprehensive and ultimate meaning." However, Löwith also recognizes that a complete absence of meaning leads only to despair and nihilism – unless we can shift our mindset and undergo a transformation of our historical consciousness³². Thus, the goal is not to eliminate all meaning in history but to identify a suitable version of it. Pannenberg's work accomplishes just that: he argues that there is meaning in history, derived from its future (the advent of God's kingdom after the eschatological wait, in theological terms). This mean-

³⁰ Ivi, p. 73.

³¹ Ivi, pp. 35-36.

³² Löwith's final proposal advocates for reconnecting humanity with the natural world (presented in a cosmic and poetic manner), which is the only world and encompasses the much more restricted historical and social reality. See K. Löwith, *Mensch und Menschenwelt. Sämtliche Schriften*, Band 1, Metzler, Stuttgart 1981, especially pp. 259-341.

ing, which emerges from what has yet to come, remains fundamentally unknowable in the present and significantly impacts all current meanings. While they are not rendered entirely obsolete, we must remain cognizant of their inherent incompleteness. This approach helps to avoid two extremes: the nihilistic full rejection of meaning and the oppressive imposition of a singular, predetermined meaning. In essence, the dynamic is circular: the openness of the future reinvigorates our experience of the present, revealing its rich and virtual possibilities; conversely, the openness of the present provides us with an opportunity to reevaluate future outcomes and possibilities. Radicalizing Pannenberg's position, the openness operated by theology is more adequate to the matter in question; *the very structure that pertains to theology is more suitable than philosophy to achieve a theoretical understanding of history.*

This has very practical applications. Pannenberg displays a profound interest in historiography and historical knowledge, offering broad reflections on their potential and limitations. An important issue he addresses is anthropocentrism. While he acknowledges the inevitability and essential nature of a form of it (referred to as "methodological anthropocentrism") in historical research, he also warns against a less desirable outcome. It is for instance possible, but not advisable, to elucidate a series of historical events as direct progress, as "development in the strict sense, namely as the unfolding of germ-like tendency, an entelechy". Such unnecessary anthropocentrism reflects "an immanentist world view which will not do justice to the openness to the future on the part of everything real"³³.

Let us delve into Pannenberg's observation. Again, the structure of reality exhibits an inherent "openness to future"; the argument is familiar but approached from a different angle. Any historical perspective that fails to acknowledge this fundamental aspect is inherently flawed and cannot be endorsed, particularly if it presents itself as a philosophical standpoint. The conventional philosophy of history is lacking in this specific regard. Löwith's critique, in a sense, is not invalidated but rather reinforced: Pannenberg *specifies* the reasons why Western philosophies of history are no longer tenable. *Futurity* characterizes historical events and their interconnectedness: every situation is by definition open to multi-

³³ Ivi, p. 42. Here comes to mind the distinction between *Entwicklung* and *Fortschritt*, where the former has a much more modest claim compared to the latter. It is a differentiation that for instance Ernst Troeltsch, certainly a reference to Pannenberg and who is also cited here at p. 40 and 57, makes in *Der Historismus und seine Probleme*, WBG, Darmstadt 2016, pp. 57-59. Here Troeltsch distinguishes between the indefensible idea of *Fortschritt* (typical of the traditional philosophies of history), aligning very much with Löwith, and that of *Entwicklung*, which is intrinsic to historical process and does not provide any predeterminate and precise teleology, making it tenable.

ple outcomes and developments. Stretching, again, Pannenberg's position, every event unfolds potential futures precisely *because it is shaped by the future itself* (which is God's way of shaping history). An excessive immanentism fails to grasp this facet and consequently cannot ensure the appropriate degree of freedom inherent in any historical event. The intuition is based on a specific ontological perspective, which holds that reality is not limited to what currently exists, but also encompasses the possible that might occur in the future. In seemingly paradoxical terms, *the future does not exist but is undeniably real*, and therefore warrants serious consideration, just as much as any present reality³⁴.

The same observation can be transposed to hermeneutical and methodological concerns, suggesting that the full meaning of any event can only be understood within the context of an ever-open world history. That is why historical thought is unlikely to abandon the idea of a unified history³⁵. Much more challenging is to determine how is it still possible to use God as the basis for this unity, provided that it is impossible to recognize an actual *telos* in human actions. On one hand, a conventional concept of divine Providence appears necessary, but on the other hand, it seems unacceptable.

Pannenberg's take is quite thought-provoking. He doesn't sever the connection between God and historical research, but instead reestablishes it unexpectedly. He writes that if we consider God as operating in the contingency of the events while also being the source of continuity within them, this does not contradict the historian's point of view as long as it is intended "only [as] a problem for the historian as he sets about his work"³⁶. Instead, such a theological perspective presents a positive challenge to historiographical research, inspiring and motivating it to delve deeper into what theology can only hint at³⁷. It is to be concluded that "such a theology of history distinguishes itself from the usual sort of redemptive-historical thinking by the fact that it wants to be in principle historically verifiable"³⁸. Since the eschatological element of this account operates as an internal force within the process of history, it does not oppose the involvement of a historiographical inquiry. The affirmation

³⁴ An obvious reference is here Ernst Bloch and his meditation on the ontological consistency of the future, to which Pannenberg dedicated the article *The God of hope* (in W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology. Collected Essay*, vol. II, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1972, pp. 234-249).

³⁵ W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, cit., pp. 68-70; Pannenberg explicitly refers to George R. Collingwood (see his *The Idea of History*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1994).

³⁶ Ivi, p. 76.

³⁷ *Ibidem*.

³⁸ Ivi, p. 78.

of the “world as history” as a new perspective serves as a prime example of this: it can be interpreted as a fideistic claim – essentially, seeing it as a fundamental and first outcome of God’s revelation – but this reading is by no means obligatory. The conceptualization of the world as history might simply represent a historical event among others. What emerges is a common foundational ground from which both historians and theologians can engage in further exploration.

But we might venture further than that, and perhaps beyond Pannenberg. It might be argued that, within this perspective, God reveals not only and not firstly the sense of history, or even its secret teleology. On the contrary, God manifests the *problematicity* of history. His intervention elevates the full contingency of events as individual occurrences, allowing them to be free and thus open to any outcome – often leading, in what is called a heterogony of ends, to despair and violent results. Only after recognizing this, it is possible to attribute to God a more traditional role of establishing a foundation. Problematicity here does not equate to a lack of sense, but rather to an intrinsically problematic sense: a sense that is manifested *within* the character of problematicity, and therefore appears only intermittently, between equally present (if not longer) moments of darkness that often obscures any glimpse of perspicuity. The problematicity of history is very much this *jeux de lumière* between understanding and incomprehension, clarity and darkness of thought; and a theology of history adeptly captures it. Consequently, the theology of history possesses a distinctive hermeneutical quality, as long as it retains the character of finitude inherent in human experience and its connection to his openness to the future and the value of the individual³⁹. Based on this, perhaps it makes no sense to decide whether it is “better” than a philosophy of history. It seems that the two complement each other well – because together they address the same problem, that of universal history.

4. Philosophy and theology of history, together: *a new hope?*

What is the lesson to be learned from Pannenberg? How can we justify the relevance of the theology of history when we move to philosophical considerations? The intriguing paradox lies in Pannenberg’s explicit pursuit of a theology of history (orthodoxically centered around

³⁹ W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, cit., pp. 135-136. The text now considered is *Hermeneutic and Universal History*, originally published as *Hermeneutik und Universalgeschichte* in 1963.

the event of Jesus⁴⁰), while at the same time, the entire architecture betrays a speculative flavor. The proleptical framework bears witness to a deep engagement with Hegel, as already pointed out by scholars⁴¹, reflected in the abundant use of terms such as totality, infinity, and process. There are many ways to interpret and make use of this affinity. We are prompted to revisit the old question of the relationship between theology and philosophy.

One instinctive reaction would be to consider integrating elements of Pannenberg's theology of history into a comprehensive philosophical framework to enhance the coherence of the latter. In this conception, a theology of history could retain its sense only in a subordinate position. A less common, and perhaps nowadays unlikely, procedure would be utilizing philosophical tools to develop a theology of history further. However, both positions would essentially reiterate old approaches that now seem outdated and naïve. They only partially tackle the highly complex issue of what is more foundational between Western speculative thinking and Western theology and do not consider the even more challenging question of which intellectual background we are currently operating within, that of metaphysics or a post-metaphysical one⁴². Any adequate analysis should first address these discussions.

For the scope of this contribution, the realm of history is broad enough. To better evaluate Pannenberg's contribution, it is helpful to reference once more Löwith's perspective. Although Pannenberg's approach has very different aims from his mentor's critique, both address the same fundamental issues and sometimes reach similar insights. We can learn from the differences as much as from the similarities. They both agree that history does not sustain itself and requires some validation. But Pannenberg's account also offers an immediate form of resolution, as it allows validation (one that comes from God). This validation is not entirely external but originates from history it-

⁴⁰ Although it is to be noted that the very notion of centre is modified by the accent on eschatology: it is the future of God that gives the Christological event the character of the centre – we could say that it is the future that *centres* history, providing an axis to it (see W. Pannenberg, *Jesus*, cit., pp. 447-450).

⁴¹ G. Pasquale, *La ragione della storia. Per una filosofia della storia come scienza*, Bolati Boringhieri, Torino 2011; T.J. Whapham, *Pannenberg the Idealist?*, in J. Farris, B. P. Göcke (a cura di), *The Routledge Handbook of Idealism and Immaterialism*, Routledge, London 2021, pp. 355-366.

⁴² Pannenberg is not an advocate of the end of metaphysics and firmly admits the metaphysical roots of his thought – he explicitly states to act within the realm of it (see W. Pannenberg, *Metaphysics and the Idea of God*, W. B. Eerdmans, Michigan 1988, and then G. Wenz (a cura di), *Vom wahrhaft Unendlichen: Metaphysik und Theologie bei Wolfhart Pannenberg*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2016).

self and unfolds within it – that is why it is permitted. This ambivalence encapsulates the interest of Pannenberg's idea. His theology of history underscores both *the insufficiency of history and its simultaneous striving for sufficiency*. History lacks an inner *Grund* and remains incomplete but possesses an inner impetus towards its redemption. This interplay between anticipation and a “not yet” maintains history's openness and acknowledges the role of contingency, but on the other side does not equate to arbitrariness and nihilism. Each term limits the other's excessive claim.

Without setting this as a goal, Pannenberg is therefore reversing Löwith's structure: his theology of history not only comes after the *naive* philosophies of history from the Western tradition but also surpasses them – it avoids their mistakes and their contradictions. It does not claim to manifest a linear direction in history, but rather *conceptually emphasizes the problematicity of history itself*. That is a crucial point. For this reason, it is a theology that addresses the challenges posed by both the philosophy of history and historicism. Pannenberg's account still looks to provide a glimpse of an *image of history*, akin to any classical philosophy of history, but it does so with an awareness of its inherent limitations. This *Vorstellung* cannot be clear and definite, as it must maintain the space of human decision and action – something that is very much the preoccupation of any historicism⁴³. Its axis⁴⁴ is a form of “openness” or a testimony to the fundamental openness of *Geschichte*: rather than offering a normative model to be implemented or imitated, it underscores the potential for history and human historicity to take multiple possible routes, along with the associated risks of loss and inauthenticity.

An original idea results from this scenario and modifies Löwith's genealogy. The philosophy of history – and historicism – could be seen as *tests* – and very effective – for any theoretical understanding of history, including a theological one. For a theology of history to

⁴³ Think of B. Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty*, Liberty Fund, Carmel 2000; for a less “optimistic” account see the already mentioned E. Troeltsch, *Der Historismus und seine Probleme* cit., or F. Meinecke, *Historism. The Rise of a New Historical Outlook*, Herder & Herder, New York 1972 (the distinction between an absolute historicism and a critical-problematic one is drawn from Fulvio Tessoro – among his many works, see *Interpretazione dello storicismo*, Edizioni della Normale, Pisa 2006).

⁴⁴ Pannenberg makes an explicit reference to Karl Jaspers' theory of *Achsenzeit* (K. Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History*, Taylor and Francis, London 2014), but in a critical way. According to the theologian (W. Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, cit., pp. 73-74), while the idea of an axis is justified, the actual one provided by Jaspers is insufficient to give an indirect sense to history because it misses two essential elements: the interior unity of one single element (the person of Jesus) and the eschatological attribute.

be revitalized, *it must undergo this experience and critique*. Only then does it become as, or even more, suitable than any philosophy of history or historicism in grasping the profound nature of historical existence. It becomes so because it captures both the element of presence, the “already” experienced in the present, and the sense of absence and incompleteness, the “not yet” awaiting a final fulfillment – both elements that, in their connection, characterize human anthropology. The philosophy of history risks neglecting the “not yet” that requires the image of history to be, in a sense, blurred; on the other hand, historicism might fail to recognize history’s intrinsic tendency to coalesce into an image, without which it collapses into an unstructured flux of events devoid of meaning and partial teleology. From this standpoint, a theology of history would emerge as a synthesis of these two outputs and prove to be unexpectedly timely. It is clear that this assertion does not need to be overly ambitious, nor is it our intention here to establish a theological “superiority”.

More modestly, Pannenberg’s example shows that the affirmation of a revitalized form of theology could provide the ongoing dialogue between vastly different speculations with promising foundations. On a final note, the question of meaning arises once more and may offer valuable insight. We might pose a very simple question: who ascribes meaning to history – man or God? This inquiry highlights the essential distinction between the perspectives of theology and the philosophy of history. By setting aside the historical relationship between these two domains and examining their ideal-typed versions, we can assert that, according to a purely philosophical perspective, humanity forges its own path to self-fulfillment. In contrast, a theological view posits that history unfolds under divine guidance. We suggest that it is more productive to consider philosophy and theology of history simultaneously, rather than through a chronological lens, which might suggest that one is an illegitimate derivative of the other, leading to an obscure amalgamation. Instead, we maintain the crucial distinction between the two and observe that from their confrontation emerges a double agency, or perhaps more accurately, a dual layer of agency. Even if we follow Pannenberg in suggesting that meaning originates from God’s future (first agency), it remains humanity’s responsibility (second agency) to actively shape and implement that meaning. In hermeneutical terms, we receive God’s message but ultimately must decide whether to heed and interpret it, granting us a significant degree of freedom. Thus, however apparently *démodé*, this dialogue remains of uttermost importance, and we can only conclude by wishing for its continuation and development in our turbulent times.

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Letizia Cipriani, Roberta Lanfredini

Temporal Traces of Experience: The Ontology of Orma. A Phenomenological Approach to Experiential Traces in Natural Language and Pain Narratives

1. Phenomenological perspectives on the trace: from trauma to linguistic signs

The relationship between the past and narrative in phenomenology is explored through the notion of the *trace*. In phenomenological terms, the trace represents the lingering presence of the past within the present, a concept that is pivotal in understanding how history and memory shape human existence. Paul Ricoeur, a prominent figure in this field, delves into the concept of *narrative identity*, emphasizing how the self is constructed through the interplay of memory and narrative. Ricoeur's work underscores the significance of the trace in the formation of *narrative identity*, illustrating how individuals and communities continuously reinterpret their histories to construct meaningful narratives that guide their present and future actions¹. According to Ricoeur, the trace is not merely a passive remnant of the past but an active element that informs and transforms the present². One of the most compelling examples of the trace in phenomenology is *trauma*³. Traumatic experiences⁴ leave indelible marks on individuals, influencing their current behaviors, emotions, and narratives⁵. Building on this, Bergson's concept of the past further elucidates the ontological determination of experiential temporality. The

¹ P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1984.

² Id., *The human experience of time and narrative*, in "Research in phenomenology", IX, 1979, pp. 17-34.

³ S. Mezzalana, G. Santoro, V. Bochicchio, A. Schimmenti, *Trauma and the disruption of temporal experience: a psychoanalytical and phenomenological perspective*. in "The American Journal of Psychoanalysis", LXXXIII, 1, 2023, pp. 36-55; and also F. Brencio, K.D. Novak, *The continuum of trauma*, in *Topography of trauma: Fissures, disruptions and transfigurations*, Brill, Leida (Netherlands) 2019, pp. 11-24.

⁴ For instance, the trauma of war can profoundly shape a veteran's identity and worldview, affecting how they interpret and engage with their present reality.

⁵ B. Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, Viking Press, New York 2014.

French philosopher posits that the past exerts a retention of itself in the present, creating a continuity where past, present, and future are not merely linguistic labels but moments of the same continuum of becoming⁶.

According to Bergson, the past is not static or fixed; instead, it dynamically retains itself in the present. This means that every moment of the present contains within it the entirety of the past, albeit in a contracted, condensed form. This retention process is not a passive occurrence. Rather, the past actively survives in the present, continuously influencing and reshaping it.

The past, therefore, is not merely a collection of bygone events; it is a living, breathing entity that remains embedded within the fabric of the present. This survival of the past occurs through a process of contraction and dilation, where the past is condensed into a more manageable form in the present.

Moreover, Bergson asserts that this dynamic interaction between past and present allows the past to be constantly reinterpreted and redefined. As the past extends into the present, it creates a fluid temporal reality where all moments are interconnected.

This interconnectedness blurs the distinctions between past, present, and future, highlighting the continuous and ever-evolving nature of time.

This phenomenon is also evident in language and narrative.

The past experiences of a living being leave their trace in linguistic signs, where each sign is a trace of something other than itself, carrying the memory of its experiential and narrative use in a given context⁷. Indeed, the trace of the past in narrative is a fundamental index also for understanding the *differential nature of meaning*, including linguistic meaning, a meaning that is always in *différance* because it depends on the relationship between *presence* and *absence*⁸. The sign is, therefore, inherently a trace of the past because it is a differential process rather than an episodic snapshot. The linguistic sign is a trace of something else, always encompassing the past of the experiencing subject.

Additionally, the photographic trace offers another dimension to this discussion⁹. While a *photograph* has a more extended temporal resistance compared to an *echo* or an *imprint*, as it can be revisited and relived, it

⁶ H. Bergson, *Histoire de l'idée de temps. Cours au collège de France 1902-1903*, PUF, Paris 2016; and also S. Guerlac, *Bergson, the Time of Life, and the Memory of the Universe. Interpreting Bergson: Critical Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2020, pp. 104-120.

⁷ F. de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, McGraw-Hill, New York 1916.

⁸ J. Derrida, *Of grammatology*, Jhu Press, Baltimore 2016.

⁹ M. Pettersoon, *Depictive traces: On the phenomenology of photography*, in "The Journal of Aesthetics and art criticism", II, 69, pp. 185-196.

also highlights another temporal characteristic of the trace phenomenon. Some traces capture an instantaneous snapshot of the past, a fixed landscape, while others, like *linguistic signs*, especially those related to figurative rhetoric, extend processes. For example, metaphors such as *storm* or *wave* do not refer to a snapshot but to a lived experiential process. This understanding is crucial for comprehending the diverse manifestations of the trace, which vary in their temporal and experiential determinations. Episodic and momentary traces like an *imprint* or an *echo* have a more emergent and less dilated temporal tension compared to more enduring manifestations like trauma or linguistic signs¹⁰.

2. The role of past traces in pain narratives: clinical and therapeutic perspectives

One of the phenomena where the past and its trace in the narrative of experience are fundamental, even from a clinical and therapeutic perspective, is the experience of pain. Pain, by its nature, presents enormous challenges due to its private epistemic access¹¹. Beyond the chemical, physical, and electrical information provided by machines to clinicians, narrative emerges as a crucial element in the care and therapy of the suffering individual. Phenomenological investigation reveals pain as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon¹², emotionally rooted, essentially corporeal, with a value structure, endowed with motivational force and strong pervasiveness. This theoretical basis highlights the limitations of traditional clinical descriptions, such as those provided by the McGill Pain Questionnaire (MPQ), and suggests the need for an alternative categorization that can offer a more adequate assessment and measurement of the real experience of the suffering subject through language analysis¹³.

In the multidimensionality of the phenomenon of pain, a fundamental role is played by the narrative linguistic dimension, which has already been extensively highlighted by phenomenological hermeneutics¹⁴. The narration

¹⁰ The etymology of these words also reflects their nature, with *sign* deriving from *cut* and *imprint* from *pressure*.

¹¹ A. Serrano de Haro, *Is pain an intentional experience?* *Phenomenology*, 3, 2011, pp. 386-395; and also F. Svenaeus, *The phenomenology of chronic pain: embodiment and alienation*, in "Continental philosophy review", 48, 2015, pp. 107-122.

¹² S. Geniusas, *The phenomenology of pain*, Ohio University Press, Athens 2022.

¹³ R. Lanfredini, L. Cipriani, *Esperienza e espressione del dolore. Un'indagine preliminare tra fenomenologia ed ermeneutica*, Discipline filosofiche, Quodlibet, Macerata 2022, pp. 47-66.

¹⁴ H.G. Gadamer, *The Experience of Pain and Language*, in *The Phenomenology of Language*, DC: Gallaudet University Press, Washington 2008, pp. 53-59.

of pain allows patients to articulate their experiences, providing a means to externalize and make sense of their suffering. This process is not only therapeutic but also essential for clinicians to understand the subjective dimension of pain, which cannot be fully captured by objective measurements¹⁵. Narration and memory can provide a cathartic release for the traumatized, allowing them to revisit and reconfigure their past experiences in a way that promotes healing¹⁶. This cathartic function of narration is particularly relevant in the context of chronic pain, where past experiences of pain continue to influence the present and future well-being of the individual.

However, despite the contemporary medical paradigm recognizing the importance of past traces in managing suffering at all levels (physical, mental, moral, etc.)¹⁷, this initial intention is not fully realized in practice. Pain assessment and measurement tools, including lexical and narrative tools like the McGill Pain Questionnaire¹⁸, as well as other numerical and verbal scales and indices for measuring pain intensity, all present theoretical and ontological shortcomings. These tools often have an episodic and snapshot-like standard, neglecting the continuous interpenetration of the subject's present with their past (habits, memories, familiarity, traumas) and future (projections, expectations, desires)¹⁹. The MPQ lacks a processual temporality in its ontology and structure, failing to account for the continuous and thus transformative nature of the pain phenomenon²⁰. The episodic and extemporaneous character is even more

¹⁵ S. Bullo, "I feel like I'm being stabbed by a thousand tiny men": The challenges of communicating endometriosis pain, in "Health", XXIV, 5, 2020, pp. 476-492; and also M. Schulte, *Narrative and the study of suffering: narrative medicine and the experience of chronic pain*. Qual Health Res, XXV, 2, 2015, pp. 205-213.

¹⁶ R. Kearney, *Narrating pain: The power of catharsis*, in "Paragraph", XXX, 1, 2007, pp. 51-66.

¹⁷ The multidimensional and complex nature of pain (with a processual temporal nature not confined to the present) aligns with the scientific definition provided by the International Association for the Study of Pain, an international scientific organization dedicated to pain research and management. According to the IASP, pain is an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage.

International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP). IASP Terminology-Pain. Retrieved February 22, 2023, from <https://www.iasp-pain.org/terminology/#pain>.

¹⁸ R. Melzack, *The McGill Pain Questionnaire from Description to Measurement*, in "Anesthesiology", CIII, 1, 2005, pp. 199-220.

¹⁹ L.J. Kirmayer, *Landscapes of memory: Trauma, narrative, and dissociation*, in P. Antze, M. Lambek (a cura di), *Tense past. Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, Routledge, London 2016, pp. 173-198.

²⁰ R. Lanfredini, L. Cipriani, *The experience of pain and its ontological modelling from a philosophical point of view: Phenomenological description and ontological revision of the McGill Pain Questionnaire*. in "Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice", XXIX, 7, 2023, pp. 1211-1221.

pronounced in pain intensity measurement tools²¹ like the VRS (verbal rating scale) and the VDS (verbal description scale) (used alongside the MPQ), where the intensity of pain is reduced to a numerical scale or index described at most with linguistic labels and/or gestalt figures that evoke somatic emotional expressions, as in the case of scales dedicated to pediatric, geriatric, or verbally limited patients like the Wong-Baker Scale²². In this case, too, the numerical symbol that should correspond to the intensity of a multidimensional processual phenomenon is clearly inadequate to account for the experience of the suffering living being. These limitations underscore the need for a more dynamic approach that considers the temporal traces of pain in the patient's narrative.

To concretely analyze the present and anticipate the future, it is imperative to consider experiential becoming, that is, its fundamental temporal nature even in the peculiar experience of pain. This study aims to explore these dynamics, offering a new perspective on the evaluation and understanding of pain in narrative-temporal terms. By recognizing the role of narration in the therapeutic process, clinicians can better address the complex and multifaceted nature of pain, ultimately improving care and outcomes for patients.

To further analyze the narrative from the perspective of the trace of the past within it, it is first necessary to undertake²³ a movement from the superficial phenomenon of the trace to its ontological structure. This involves tracing the origin of the phenomenon of the inscription of the past, which, in our study, is precisely the notion of the footprint. The next section will delve into a descriptive ontology of the concept of the *orma*²⁴ (trace), linked to the Husserlian notion of *motivation*.

²¹ R. Atisook, P. Euasobhon, A. Saengsanon, M.P. Jensen, *Validity and utility of four pain intensity measures for use in international research*, in "Journal of pain research", 14, 2021, pp. 1129-1139; and also K.D. Keele, *The pain chart*, in "The Lancet", CCLII, 6514, 1948, pp. 6-8.

²² D.L. Wong, C.M. Baker, *Pain in children: comparison of assessment scales*, in "Pediatric Nursing", XIV, 1, 1988, pp. 9-17.

²³ This backward movement from the manifest phenomenon to the originating source of the phenomenon is a typically Bergsonian movement. The French philosopher also introduces it in his few but precious reflections on natural language, that is, in his philosophy of the sign in Bergson, *Histoire de l'idée de temps*; and also K. Bankov, *Intellectual effort and linguistic work: Semiotic and hermeneutic aspects of the philosophy of Bergson*, in "Acta Semiotica Fennica", IX, Helsinki 2000; and also L. Cipriani, *Inverted Time: Unraveling Bergson's Philosophy of Language and Certainty*, in "Rivista Italiana di Filosofia del Linguaggio", XVIII, 2, 2025.

²⁴ The term *orma* (trace) is also used by Eco in his semiotic theory, where it is considered a type of indicative sign. Eco discusses how traces can represent the presence or passage of something, but their interpretation depends on cultural context and social conventions. U. Eco, *A theory of semiotics*, Indiana University, Bloomington 1976.

3. The origin of “orma” (trace): etymothery and ancient traces

Before delving into the analysis of a possible descriptive ontology of the *orma* (trace) phenomenon, it is necessary to further justify the choice of this specific lemma. This choice is not stylistic but is essentially linked to the invaluable results of linguistic work that can be inscribed within the terms of an experience of the *orma* (trace) of the past in narration: the comparative reconstructive etymothetical analysis with an Indo-European background. This technique is a true “*leap backward from the known to the unknown*”²⁵ and is a method that analyzes historical languages to trace back in time, based on the level of the signifier through phonetic laws and on the level of the signified through general principles of semantics. This approach primarily allows for the reconstruction of entire words (protoforms) and, occasionally, even poetic formulas within a history of the interpreted word, addressing it in terms of continuity processes.

Following the etymothetical analysis of the word *orma* (trace) valuable elements emerge that harmoniously connect with a phenomenological description of the *orma* phenomenon of the past (also in natural language and thus in narration). In particular, the decomposition of the word into its radical part and primary suffix allows for the identification of so-called primary derivatives, which are true “*relics*”²⁶ that have remained almost unchanged over millennia of linguistic processes, starting from historically unattested phases to the languages spoken in the present. These are true original traces of the linguistic expression of a precise phenomenon.

In the case of the primary derivative of the word *orma* (trace) this backward path allows us to reach an original trivalence of the meaning and use of the word in different Indo-European contexts.

For this work, we are particularly interested in the radical part “*uer*” and specifically three of the thirteen lemmas derived from “*uer*” all three being determinations of the etymon *orma*²⁷. Below, we present the valuable etymothetical work just introduced.

In particular, the Indo-European root *uer* has three significant derivations:

a) To *connect, to align, to hang* (reconstructed from Greek). It has given rise to a large family of words in various languages. For example, in Albanian (*chain*), in Lithuanian (*bundle*) and (*long line*), in Russian (*line*),

²⁵ R. Ronzitti, *Sulle tracce dell’“Orma”: prassi etimologiche alternative e loro implicazioni di metodo nell’analisi del lessico italiano*, in “Romance Philology”, LXII, 1, 2008, p. 20.

²⁶ Ivi, p. 22.

²⁷ Ivi, p. 23.

in Old Indian (*pile, multitude, troop*), in Old Irish (*faction, group, troop*), and in Anglo-Saxon (*troop, multitude*).

b) To *find, to take*: this root is present in several languages, such as Armenian (*I take, I capture*), Ancient Greek and Lithuanian (*I find*), Old Irish and Old Church Slavonic (*I found*).

c) To *split, to carve*: this root appears almost exclusively with extensions. For example, in Albanian and Old Church Slavonic (*wound*), in Russian (*hole for oars on the back of the ship*), in Polish and Czech (*opening*).

4. The ontology of the 'orma'.

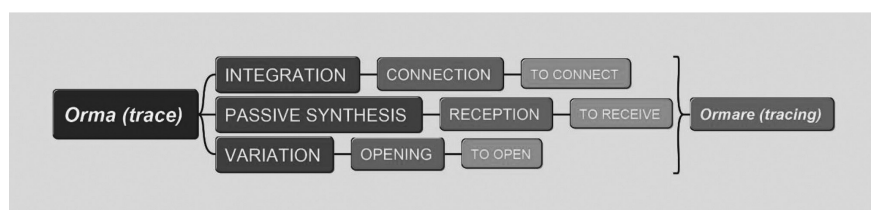


Fig.1

Building upon the etymotheoretical findings, we can now delineate the descriptive ontological structure of the *orma* (trace). By synthesizing the three etymological manifestations discussed, we arrive at three ontological modes: *connection, reception and opening*. These modes provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the phenomenon of the *orma* in its various determinations.

This descriptive ontology aims to explicate the ontological categories that underpin the three modal determinations of the *orma* phenomenon, as derived from the etymotheoretical analysis. In this ontological analysis, we specify that the three modes – connection, reception, and opening – are modalities of three distinct ontological categories: *integration, passive synthesis, and variation*.

This *orma* is not merely a static trace but an active process of *ormare*²⁸ (tracing): to connect, to receive, and to open, marking the continuum of past experiences. Figure 1 illustrates the extended descriptive ontological schema of the *ormare* phenomenon, which we will analyze. The figure

²⁸ From now on, to remain faithful to the processual nature of the *orma* (trace) phenomenon, we will use the term *ormare* (tracing) as a synonym, as this is the sense in which *orma* is interpreted.

translates the three etymological senses of *orma* into three significant ontological categories. Connection is a modal determination of the category integration, reception of the category passive synthesis, and opening of the category variation.

The phenomenon of *ormare* (tracing) that conveys the trace of the past (even in narrative experience) unfolds in three specific determinations:

a) Connection of past elements and phenomena as motivational integration

A useful and coherent concept for the description and understanding of the first etymological determination of the word *orma* –connection– and the ontological translation we have chosen, as shown in Figure 1, that is, the modal determination –*integration*– can be found in Husserl's phenomenological concept of *motivation*. This concept explains what kind of connection of past traces retention, or *ormare*, involves, and the type of relationship that exists between the elements of the past that become traces for the present and future. While the static version of synthesis refers to the notion of a pole where the object's appearances vary while remaining identical, the genetic version of synthesis is based on motivation. According to this concept, the object's identity is given by the specific motivational link originated by an initial manifestation. What is currently given motivates further appearances, from the sensible to the more abstract and conceptual. Experience is not based on necessary motivational links but on certain motivational links essential for the progressive cohesion and integration of experience itself.

The notion of motivation, like that of sedimentation, refers to the dynamic, passive, processual dimension of experience, connected to phenomenological notions such as passivity, unactual background, and boundary phenomena.

Boundary phenomena can be spatial or temporal. Spatial phenomena refer to the horizon or background – the boundary that surrounds any experiential givenness like a halo. One can indeed be conscious in the sense of being attentive to something, as in the case of wakeful consciousness, but also in the sense of a blurred or background consciousness. Husserl's distinction between actuality and inactuality manifests this difference. To be conscious is indeed to be present in an attentive way, but it is also to be conscious in a diffused, indistinct, and blurred way. Consciousness, then, means both attention to something and the perception of the background against which that something appears. For Husserl, an essential law is the continuous and incessant shift from the actual to the non-objective dimension. The priority of presence is

given by the possibility of “reactivating” the “non-objective” dimension (implicit, tacit, passive) and making it objective (explicit, manifest, active) through a change of attitude that ensures the continuous transition between the two dimensions. In the case of the distinction between actual object and in-actual background, there is the possibility of the complete reversibility of one dimension into the other – of shifting from one to the other. This possibility can be considered an essential feature of experience.

This thesis, which suggests the unquestionable priority of the theoretical attitude, is tempered by the acknowledgement of the fact that the *bound* can have not only an extensive but also an intensive or temporal sense. In this case, it is emphasized that the objectifying attitude rests on a ground of passivity, pre-categorization, and pre-dating, a ground that Husserl does not hesitate to call “confused”²⁹.

For Husserl, all consciousness is temporal, in the sense that consciousness always has a tensional structure, with retentions, original impressions, and protensions. Time introduces a dimension that is not “present” to consciousness and therefore escapes it. The dimension that eludes the “irradiation” of consciousness is that of affect. This, combined with the element of retention, refers to «the entire realm of association and habits»³⁰, which includes «sensibility, what imposes itself, the pre-given, the driven in the sphere of passivity. What is specific therein is motivated in the obscure background»³¹. What Husserl calls «the case of the zero degree of affection» is formed by associations and habits that are proper to sensibility and impulse and hence fall beyond the rational grasp of explicit consciousness.

The reactivation of the retentive processes brings the “past” object back into the actuality of consciousness, restoring it to its “meaning”: an object qua object is given only by an active consciousness, and passive contents must avoid sinking into absolute unconsciousness to maintain the unity of consciousness. Thus, through the phenomenon of reawakening, the unconscious becomes my experience in every sense. Not only

²⁹ «Every spontaneous act, after being performed, necessarily passes over into a confused state; the spontaneity, or if you will, the activity, to speak of it more properly, passes into a passivity, although of such a kind that [...] it refers back to the originally spontaneous and articulated performance. This reference back is characterized as such by the I-can or the faculty, which evidently belongs to it, to “reactivate” this state»: E. Husserl (1912-1929), *Ideas Pertaining a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*, in “Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution”, Kluwer, Dordrecht 1989, pp. 13-14.

³⁰ Ivi, p. 233.

³¹ Ivi, p. 234.

is the activity of consciousness rooted in passivity, but passivity itself is predisposed to activity. Everything in this scheme aims at the emergence of datitude and the transparency of consciousness to itself. The unconscious, however ingrained, is a “thing” of consciousness.

The case is different with the *Grenzprobleme*: although they constitute a necessary horizon of our experience, they are not susceptible to any conscious “grasping.” We are talking about latent phenomena such as birth and death, which, by their nature, preclude the possibility of direct experiential grasping because they are located at the inaccessible edges of our existence. In this context, reflecting on limit phenomena “requires that we describe the particular modes of givenness of the phenomena along with the phenomenological methods in which those phenomena become an issue”³².

The meaning of these phenomena is acquired when we adopt the standpoint of genetic phenomenology. Moving from the dimension of the constituted to the constituting, i.e., from passive syntheses, Husserl incorporates a regressive, archaeological movement from active cognition to passive kinaesthetic dimension. Here, Husserl examines how sense appears as a pre-constituted or pre-given affective dimension: the process of endurance itself cannot cease; endurance is immortal³³.

Strictly speaking, the phenomena of death, birth, and the deep unconscious are paradoxical. Through such phenomena, phenomenology would cross the gap from that which is given to phenomenological reduction to that which offers itself to consciousness as what cannot possibly give itself. The content to be thematized here eludes any direct, first-person thematization. Indeed, it is only possible to experience birth and death in the third person through the natural attitude, observing others being born and dying. But a direct, first-person understanding of our birth and death is not granted to us. This paradox also concerns the giving of the inaccessible, whether mundane (birth and death) or metaphysical (God).

So is it possible to think of a beginning and an end? Or should we think of the flow of consciousness without beginning or end?

Questions such as these presuppose a concept of limit understood as genesis, as the transformation of the obscure latency of consciousness (in a Leibnizian sense) in the direction of either the original emergence of consciousness (birth) or its final and definitive disappearance (death). The only way to address these borderline cases is to extend the

³² A. Steinbock, *Limit-phenomena and phenomenology in Husserl*, Rowmann & Littlefield, London 2017, p. 5.

³³ Ivi, p. 23.

scenario of phenomenological description to include a memory that is not only consciousness but also bodily memory, impersonal and not directly accessible³⁴.

Taking this step, however, means definitively leaving the transcendental approach and embracing an immanent monism in which the very concept of phenomenological limit undergoes a radical transformation.

b) Reception as passive synthesis of present learning

The second modal determination of *ormare*, that is, reception, can be effectively addressed through another phenomenological concept rooted in Husserl's philosophy: passive synthesis, which is intrinsically connected to the concept of integrative motivation. Infact, the concept of motivation and the integration *passive* among elements play a crucial role in the passive synthesis of present learning. According to Husserl, passivity refers to the dimensions of experience that do not arise from an active engagement of consciousness but from the pre-given, automatic processes that guide perception and understanding.

This involves the passive reception of sensory input and experiences that form the basis for more complex conscious activities.

The reception of the *orma* (trace) in this context signifies the passive and effortless assimilation of past experiences into the present consciousness without active intervention. Motivation functions here as a guiding principle that ensures the cohesion and continuity of experience. When an initial manifestation occurs, it naturally motivates subsequent appearances and interpretations, integrating them seamlessly into the fabric of lived experience.

This processual integration highlights how past experiences, sedimented in memory, provide a foundational background that passively informs present understanding. Therefore, the reception of the *orma* is not an arbitrary or selective process but a necessary function of consciousness that maintains the unity and coherence of experiential reality. Husserl's analysis of passive synthesis elaborates on this by explaining how these pre-given structures guide and shape perception and cognition. For Husserl, passive synthesis is a fundamental process that operates below the level of active consciousness, enabling the continuity and cohesion of experience.

³⁴ M. Merleau-Ponty (1945), *Phenomenology of Perception*, Routledge, London 1962; and also M. Merleau-Ponty (1964), *The Visible and the Invisible*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1968.

In *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*³⁵ Husserl describes how passive syntheses, such as association, affection, and sedimentation, contribute to the formation of intentional acts without deliberate effort. This integration “passive” among elements reflects how previous experiences are inherently retained and contribute to the structure of current perception and cognition. Just as sedimentation accumulates layers over time, so too does the mind naturally assimilate traces of past experiences, forming a coherent and continuous narrative. The passive synthesis facilitated by motivational links ensures that these traces are not merely static memories but dynamic contributors to the ongoing construction of meaning and understanding. Husserl’s notion of retention further explicates this process, wherein the past is retained in the present, forming a continuum of experience. The retention of past experiences allows for a seam less flow of consciousness, wherein each moment is informed by the previous ones.

This dynamic interplay between retention and passive synthesis underscores the importance of pre-given structures in shaping conscious experience.

It is important to note that while the reception of the *orma* is primarily a passive process, it is not exclusively so. Intentional and volitional actions play a role in how we choose to engage with certain traces based on our goals and evaluations. However, the act of *ormare* itself is not chosen; it is received. This balance between passive reception and active engagement highlights the complex interplay of factors that contribute to the continuity and coherence of experiential reality. Despite being a passive reception, this process does not initially have a specific objective or purpose; it is a *taking without wanting to take*. Nevertheless, it leaves residues or remnants of the *orma* within the experiencer, which are experiential variations. These remnants influence and shape the individual’s ongoing experience, modifying the subject as they “find without seeking” and ultimately obtaining some value through this transformation.

Thus, the passive synthesis of *ormare* ensures that the subject undergoes changes, highlighting the continuous and dynamic chain of past traces that modifies the experiencer. This passive integration plays a crucial role in the individual’s experience, as it is a fundamental aspect of the reception process that maintains the unity and coherence of experiential reality.

Therefore, the reception of the *orma*, as a process of passive synthesis, ensures the continuity and coherence of experiential reality. It highlights the essential role of pre-given structures and motivations in the formation

³⁵ E. Husserl (1920-1926), *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, Kluwer, Dordrecht 2001.

of intentional acts and the seamless integration of past experiences into present consciousness.

c) Variation as a true opening that the trace makes and is in relation to the present experience

The third modal determination of *ormare*, that is, opening, can be effectively addressed through Husserl's concept of generativity *from within*³⁶. This concept explains how the *orma* (trace) not only retains and connects past experiences but also actively shapes the present and generates new possibilities for the future. *Generativity* refers to the internal process through which experiences and temporal structures continuously create new meanings and variations.

In this context, the *orma* is seen as an active force that influences the present and opens up future potentialities. This process highlights the dynamic and transformative nature of *ormare*, emphasizing its role in the ongoing construction of experiential reality. The *orma*, therefore, is not just a passive remnant of the past but a generative and varying force that impacts the present and future.

The third etymological sense of the term *orma* highlights its nature as a scratch or incision, thus opening *ormare* by leaving a trace through the connection of past traces. It does not merely retain and expand the past (retention). In doing so, it leaves a mark and produces a residual impact on the present experience, which is precisely the incision or scratch it makes – an opening through which future protention unfolds. The process of *ormare*, in its retention and expansion, does not remain identical to itself. Although the reception by the present consciousness is a passive synthetic type, the experiencer, or consciousness, is not entirely neutral or passive.

In agreement with Bergson's conception of *durée*³⁷, the continuous contraction and expansion of the past itself represents a constant change in the process like *ormare*. This happens continuously, for instance, in the ongoing linguistic practice of human beings. The very act of linguistic *ormare* and the continuous modification of the use of *past linguistic traces* clearly express this scratching of the present, modifying it and opening up future possibilities.

³⁶ V. Hadji-Pulja, *Collective Memory in Husserl a Reading Based on Generativity "From Within"*, in "Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology", 2024, pp. 1-18.

³⁷ H. Bergson (1896) *Matière et mémoire: essai sur la relation du corps à l'esprit*; eng. trans. *Matter and memory*, Courier Corporation, Massachusetts 2012; and also H. Bergson (1907) *Creative evolution*, Routledge, London 2022.

Ormare is, in itself, a variation that produces further variations, even while carrying traces of repetitions and habits, which are nothing but the marks left by the ongoing process of the past- defined here as *ormare*. In other words, the presence that *ormare* (the continuous tracing of the past) creates is a form of continuous *recontextualisation*, initially of different corporealities, and eventually extending to various social and cultural superstructures.

This determination of *ormare* allows us to clarify how the phenomenon of future protention is absolutely dependent on retention. Indeed, as Bergson and Husserl suggest, retention and protention are different moments of the same processual movement of a consciousness's real experience. It is the *ormare* of the past that guarantees an experience's ability to open up to the future in a diversified way, ensuring that consciousness never relives the exact same state, even when dealing with traces of the past. Thus, *ormare* guarantees *variation*.

5. Words-Orma of Pain: linguistic traces of the past in the narrative of the pain experience

In conclusion, we illustrate how certain words in the spoken narratives of our specific case study on pain highlight the way the past functions as a process of *orma* even in verbal language. To this end, we present a word cloud characterizing a dataset on the linguistic expression of pain, developed over the past two years. This dataset, consisting of over 800 texts in Italian³⁸, underscores how past experiences leave an imprint on present and future expressions, evidencing the continuity and variation inherent in the language of pain.

The following word cloud visualizes the most significant and relevant words from this dataset, highlighting their temporal characteristics and their role as descriptors of the pain experience.

³⁸ These words characterize the dataset on the language of pain constructed over the past two years, composed of over 800 texts in Italian. The texts were collected through the website www.ilinguaggiodeldolore.it. This study is part of a project within the context of The National Recovery and Resilience Plan, Investment 1.5 Ecosystems of Innovation, Project Tuscany Health Ecosystem (THE), CUP: B83C22003920001. In addition, we would like to mention that we are conducting other parallel ontological studies on a smaller dataset, consisting of more than two hundred texts and focusing on a specific case study – chronic musculoskeletal pain – thanks to our partner Promise@lab. You can read the initial results of this other dataset in M. De Marco, *et al.*, *Development and Validation of a New Qualitative Pain Assessment Model: Preliminary Results of the WORDSforPAIN Project*, in “ForItAAL”, 13, 2024, pp. 189-205.



Fig.2

We have selected the most significant and relevant words from this dataset, which is still under quantitative and qualitative analysis, because they represent a useful sample to indicate how the weight of the past is significant (just as much as the firsthand experience of pain) in its linguistic narration. These words themselves synthesise the internal movements of *ormare* (tracing).

They all point to an act of confrontation between past and present, as the past is retained as a collection of traces (and therefore also of certain contracted habits) where pain, as the examined phenomenon and protagonist of this specific narrative, acts as a disruptive agent (*'never'*), often persistently.

This persistence, characterized by the word *'always'*, produces an experiential *'before'* of pain (including all aspects connected to it, such as therapies, etc.), a decidedly debilitating present, and an irrevocably compromised future, in essence, a variation guaranteed by *ormare* and the experiential *orma* of the past. The words selected, which include *always*, *never*, *debilitating*, *before*, *limit* and *persistent*, are powerful temporal descriptors. They highlight the temporal character of pain narratives and how the past continuously interacts with and shapes the present and future experiences.

Conclusion

In this exploration, we have delved into the complex relationship between the past and narrative, specifically through the phenomenon of *ormare* (tracing). By examining its etymological roots, ontological impli-

cations, and practical manifestations in language, we have highlighted how *ormare* functions as a dynamic process of connection, reception, and variation. The dataset on pain narratives further underscores the temporal and experiential dimensions of *orma*, illustrating the profound impact of past experiences on present and future expressions. This study not only enhances our understanding of the linguistic expression of pain but also highlights the significance of *orma* in shaping human experience and consciousness.

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Daniele Nuccilli

To Participate in History(ies). Lifeworld, Embodiment and Entanglement

Introduction¹

This paper examines a particular interpretation of human historicity, focusing on Wilhelm Schapp's so-called "philosophy of hi/stories". I will highlight the complex interplay between a historical-hermeneutic dimension and a narrative dimension in his theory of human's entanglement in hi/stories.

The theory of human entanglement in hi/stories is based on a lexical-conceptual ambiguity that conceals a theoretical stance. With *Geschichten* (hi/stories), Schapp refers both to the historical and objective concatenation of past events and to the way in which these events are passed down and understood by humans through storytelling or other forms of the emergence of the past. Behind this indistinction lies an ontological interpretation of hi/stories² that aims to trace every narrative process back to the historical and hermeneutic rooting of the subject. Schapp's *Geschichten* have a dual structure: on the one hand, they represent the background of human life-experience that makes any understanding possible, and on the other hand, they form the internal struc-

¹ This work was supported by the European Regional Development Fund project "MSCA Fellowships CZ – UK2" (reg. no.: CZ.02.01.01/00/22_010/0008115).

² Eichler refers to "narrative ontology" (see K.-D. Eichler, *Wilhelm Schapps Narrative Ontologie. Eine Problematisierung seiner Geschichtenphilosophie* in K. Joisten (a cura di), *Das Denken Wilhelm Schapps*, Karl Alber, Freiburg/München 2010, pp. 102-125) while Pohlmeier speaks of "ontosemantics" (see M. Pohlmeier, *Geschichten-Hermeneutik. Philosophische, literarische und theologische Provokationen im Denken von Wilhelm Schapp*, Lit, Berlin, 2014, 199. For a more in-depth discussion of the ontological nature of hi/stories and entanglement see D. Nuccilli, *History and Stories: Schapp's Ontological Conception of the Entanglement*, in "Kritika & Kontext", 53-54, 2018, pp. 27-43 e Id., *Wilhelm Schapp. Von der Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung zur Philosophie der Geschichten*, in F. Bruckmann, M. Pohlmeier (a cura di), *Geschichtenphilosophie von Wilhelm Schapp und ihre Rezeption*. Aisthesis, Bielefeld 2025, pp. 49-80

ture of meaning and the rationality of any verbal narration³. The history itself, understood as the reworking of past events involving peoples and nations, emerges, according to Schapp, only through the hi/stories, whether written, narrated, or emerging through commemorative monuments and other forms of recalling the past. Secondary literature has already addressed this complex connection between life experience, narrative, and the understanding of historical and individual pasts. Carr, for instance, highlighted the origin of this ambiguity in the concept of the transcendental ego in Husserl, according to which it “constitutes itself for itself, so to speak, in the unity of a *Geschichte*,” where *Geschichte* can be translated as either history or story⁴. Marquard, on the other hand, emphasized the importance of the pluralistic conception of hi/stories as a form of liberation for the subject from a progressive and monopolistic view of history that engulfs the individual and their actions.⁵ Ricoeur, for his part, underscored the foundational importance of Schapp’s concept of entanglement in relation to narrative. According to him, hi/stories represent the hermeneutic background upon which every form of narration is built. Entanglement, in fact, is, in his view, a “prehistory of the told hi/story,” and hi/story is something that “happens to” someone before anyone tells it⁶. Fellmann has also highlighted this rooting of narrative in the individual’s past experience, interpreting Schapp’s hi/stories as “prejudices from which human beings cannot escape”⁷. In a more technical manner, Scholz expressed a negative opinion regarding the possible contribution of Schapp’s philosophy of hi/stories to historical science, while nonetheless acknowledging that both historical science and Schapp’s philosophy of hi/stories are phi-

³ See for this D. Nuccilli, *Wilhelm Schapp on the narrative structure of intersubjectivity*, in A. Božič (a cura di), *Thinking Togetherness. Phenomenology and Sociality*, Institute Nova Revija for the Humanities, Ljubljana 2023, pp. 143-155, ivi, pp. 144-146.

⁴ D. Carr, *Time, Narrative, and History*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1986, p. 73

⁵ Cfr. O. Marquard, *In Praise of Polytheism (On Monomythical and Polymythical Thinking)* in *Farewell to Matters of Principle*, tr. R. M. Wallace, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1989, pp. 87-105, ivi. 102. See Nuccilli, D., *Stories as a Critical Means of Access to the Life-world. Language, Reality, History* in “New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy”, 22, 2024, pp. 35-55, ivi. 49-51.

⁶ P. Ricoeur, *Temps et Récit. L’Intrigue et le Récit historique*, Seuil, Paris 1983, cit., pp. 114-115

⁷ This binding element of hi/stories has also been recognized by Habermas, who states that “being entangled in their (hi)stories,” the members of a society “control neither the possibilities for mutual understanding and conflict, nor the consequences and side effects of their actions.” (J. Habermas, *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns. Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft*, Bd. II, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main 1981, p. 224).

losophies of experience⁸. In fact, the discussion on the contribution of Schapp's philosophy of hi/stories in relation to history and the historicity of human beings becomes more fruitful when considering the way in which the life-world and historicity intertwine within individual experience. As Jean Greisch rightly pointed out, the tripartition of the concept of entanglement provided in *In Geschichten verstrickt*, namely self-entanglement, other-entanglement and common-entanglement offers a way out of Heideggers fundamental existential concept of "care", allowing to understand the historicity of human beings a new through the *pluralia-tantum* of hi/stories⁹.

The analyses of the aforementioned authors have successfully highlighted fundamental aspects of Schapp's philosophy of hi/stories. This is particularly evident in the way his thought conceptualizes the connection between individual experience and the unfolding of the past in its various forms. However, one crucial aspect has been entirely overlooked by the secondary literature: Schapp's philosophy of hi/stories stems from his project to philosophically ground historical science a priori. We find a sketch of this project in his phenomenology of law and the historicist approach present in his theory of values¹⁰. It is only by considering this aspect that one can understand the historicist impulse of his philosophy of hi/stories, even in its more hermeneutic and narratological consequences¹¹. What is outlined within the theory of values, in fact, as I will attempt to show in this article, represents the fundamental structure of his philosophy of hi/stories. The historicity implicit in the theory of human entanglement in hi/stories can be articulated through three steps or moments: (a) the description of the relationship between I and the work in his historicist conception of values; (b) the concept of entanglement based on the relationship between body and narration as he outlines it in *In Geschichten verstrickt*; (c) the concept of the positive world and universal history in his philosophy of hi/stories. I will address point (a) in the

⁸ See G. Scholtz, *Das Verhältnis der Geschichten zur Geschichte. Kritische Fragen an Wilhelm Schapp* in K.-H. Lembeck (a cura di), *Geschichte und Geschichten. Studien zur Geschichtenphänomenologie Wilhelm Schapps*, Königshausen und Neumann, Würzburg 2004, pp. 57-71.

⁹ See J. Greisch, *Phänomenologie als Philosophie der Geschichten: eine vierte, stille Revolution der philosophischen Denkungsart?* in K. Joisten (a cura di), *Das Denken Wilhelm Schapps*. Karl Alber Freiburg/München 2010, pp. 190-214, ivi. 194.

¹⁰ See D. Nuccilli, *Wilhelm Schapp*, pp. 73 ff.

¹¹ For a reference to the influence of Dilthey and Rickert, his mentors in his youth, on his hermeneutic approach, see D. De Santis, D. Nuccilli, *On the Many Philosophies of Wilhelm Schapp. Editors' Introduction*, in D. De Santis, D. Nuccilli (a cura di), *The Philosophy of Wilhelm Schapp: From Phenomenology to Jurisprudence and the Hermeneutics of Stories*. Bloomsbury Academic, London 2025, pp. 1-19, ivi. 1 ff.

first section, “Historical A Priori and Theory of Values: I–Work Relationship” (1), and point (b) in the second section, “Entanglement and Narrative: Things-for, Embodiment, and History” (2). Before moving to the conclusions, I will finally discuss point (c) in the third section, “History and the Entanglement of Humans in Hi/stories: Positive World, We-Hi/stories, and Universal Histories” (3).

1. Historical A Priori and Theory of Values: I-Work Relationship

In the first section of the second volume of *Die neue Wissenschaft vom Recht*, Schapp develops a theory of values based on two principles: (1) every world of values is constructed upon a subjectivity that, from its historical-cultural position, draws upon that world of values¹²; (2) The very construction of this world of values is based on the production of works and the I-work relationship. Let us try to investigate these two points.

According to Schapp, the dimension of value is primarily linked to an “attitude of the soul” [*Haltung der Seele*] that unfolds in contact with the thing and allows it to be encountered. The thing’s value reveals itself in “enjoying, tasting, sipping, feeling” [*Geniessen, Kosten, Schlurfen, Fühlen*]¹³. Through this contact between the thing and the soul, a dynamic circle is inaugurated that elevates the thing above its mere materiality¹⁴ and includes it within what he defines as a “world of values” [*Wertwelt*]. This world of values is, according to Schapp, different depending on cultural heritage and individual experience¹⁵. Although some things may be objective and universally recognized as valuable, each person engages with them and perceives their value differently. As Schapp points out, for example, if you are attending a parade where beautiful and powerful horses are marching by, you might take pleasure in watching them – but only someone who is truly passionate about horses will be able to fully enjoy the experience. Moreover, only those who also have the skill and opportunity to ride such a horse will be able to fully appreciate it and place it at the center of their value system.

¹² Cfr. W. Schapp, *Die neue Wissenschaft vom Recht II*, p. 70

¹³ Ivi, p. 4

¹⁴ See Ivi, pp. 4-5.

¹⁵ See Ivi, pp. 70 ff. In the first volume of *Die neue Wissenschaft vom Recht*, Schapp describes the ordering of individual universes of value in reference to the empirical world as a “*Verschmelzung von Wertwelten*” [fusion of worlds of value]. Cfr. W. Schapp, W., *Die neue Wissenschaft vom Recht. Eine phänomenologische Untersuchung. 1. Bd. Der Vertrag als Vorgegebenheit*, Rotschild, Berlin-Grunewald 1930, pp. 22 f.

For someone like him, who is not a true horse enthusiast, the value of a powerful horse remains excluded from, or at the margins of, their value system¹⁶. As this example shows, things do not present themselves to us with labels indicating their value. Even if certain things are conventionally considered valuable, this value is not necessarily recognized by everyone. In some cases, what holds great value for one person may not hold the same value for another – or at least, it may be expressed differently. While an objective dimension of value is conceivable, access to it depends on the subject's historical position and on the situational context of both the valuing subject and the valued objects. Schapp emphasizes this point with the example of the apple:

In terms of value, there is a difference if I pick the last apple from a tree or if I choose an apple from a tree laden with apples, even if the two apples I eventually eat are equally good. There is again a difference if the tree is part of a large garden or if it is a solitary tree, and there is yet another difference if this garden is part of my homeland or a country indifferent to me, and if this homeland is part of a strong and flourishing nation or if it is like suspended in the air and in the hands of enemies.¹⁷

Thanks to this quoted passage, we can see how the issue of values has implications that are not only horizontal – meaning how values are positioned in the world – but also historical and temporal. This historical-temporal dimension emerges from the interaction between the valued object and the soul, encompassing both the subject's historical position and the temporal reality of the object within the series of concatenations that characterize the “world of value,” at the heart of which resides the subject.

By integrating the aforementioned aspects, we can highlight three points regarding Schapp's formulation of the concept of value:

1) The value is beyond the perceptual reality of the thing: even if the taste of the apples is the same, the value and the way how it is savored vary depending on the circumstances and thus on the world of value in which the apple is embedded.

2) With respect to this world of values, the self has a peculiar position, constituting its unequivocal center. Although there are subjects who share the same world of values, within this world, there are things that have different values depending on the individual's position and experience of the lifeworld.

¹⁶ Cfr. Schapp, *Die neue Wissenschaft vom Recht II*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁷ Ivi, p. 19.

3) From the contact between the valued object and the soul, a historical-temporal dimension radiates, involving both the subject's position in history and the historical-temporal reality of the object within the series of concatenations that characterize the so-called world of value.

These three points regarding value theory constitute the central elements upon which Schapp builds his theory of the I-work relationship. However, with the introduction of the concept of work and its relation to production and the I, the discussion deepens and incorporates additional elements that lead to a historicist foundation of the concept of value.

Schapp introduces the notion of work within his investigation of the constitution of property, understood as a pre-giveness of positive law. He aims to highlight how property is rooted in a pre-legal dimension that precedes the formal institution of law and finds its origin in the act of production itself.¹⁸ Using a rudimentary example, Schapp argues that the core of this pre-legal dimension of property lies in the production of an object. He states, "In the situation in which someone produces a stone axe or carves a bow and arrows, the property already finds its place."¹⁹ From the perspective of the foundation of property, it makes no difference whether it is a simple axe being refined or a more complex object, like a car. What truly matters is the moment of production itself, which cannot be investigated in a static manner, as one might do with objects when they are considered in terms of their perceptual qualities. In fact, he highlights just how difficult it is to apply the phenomenological method to such an investigation, stating:

If the reader now sets the book aside and tries to ascertain for himself something essential about this simple process, he will understand the difficulty of the investigation that follows and the ambiguities necessarily connected with it [...]. If we now approach this process from the outside and try to imagine Stone Age man removing sliver by sliver and shaping the rough stone, this image still tells us nothing about the inner connections of the creation of the stone axe.²⁰

According to the author, focusing solely on external actions or perceptual qualities does not capture the more profound, dynamic connections in the production process, whether for simple or complex objects. To understand this phenomenon, one must transpose oneself into the meaning-context in which the object is produced. The individuals involved in

¹⁸ Cfr. W. Schapp, *Die neue Wissenschaft vom Recht II*, pp. 79-95

¹⁹ *Ivi*, p. 34

²⁰ *Ibidem*

the production may be enslaved or free may create the object for a religious rite or for more profane purposes and may do so for themselves or others. These conditions are not secondary to understanding the object. On the contrary, Schapp argues that it is these very conditions that define the value of the object. The situated relationship with the producer and their position in the lifeworld makes the work different from other non-human-produced objects. One object is only conceivable as a work when there is a creator [*Schöpfer*], someone in “flesh and blood”²¹ who releases it from the stone and, in so doing, excludes it from the world of natural objects, inserting it instead into the world of human-made objects and then of objects with a specific value. Therefore, any cognitive evaluation of the thing and its composition must be immediately referred to the productive context and the human being who produced it²². This approach shifts the focus of the investigation from the work itself to the physical relationship the work establishes with its producer. This is what Schapp calls the *Ich-Werk-Beziehung* [I-work relationship]. Drawing on a theme already present in Lipps’ aesthetic theory, Schapp asserts that in every work, one can perceive its “creator’s will” [*Willen zum Werke*], especially the means and techniques used to shape that specific material.²³ This is where the phenomenology of creation must begin: from the ordering of the material work within a bodily activity and the cycle that is established in it. It must shift his analysis from the tool to the hand and to the traces that this hand and tool have left on the work. However, according to Schapp, this is only the first step. To truly understand the “work character” [*Werkcharakter*], one must immerse oneself in the creator’s intentions in bringing it into being. One must place the action, the plan of the producer, and the work itself in a context of reasonable meaning. To explain this, he takes the example of a pincer-shaped object on a smoking table. If we observe the pincer-shaped object on a smoking table, we immediately recognize that it is in some way a work and probably a tool. However, we only understand the work in its fullest sense when the smoker uses it to bring the cigarette to his mouth, thus avoiding soiling his fingers with nicotine”²⁴. To understand each work, we must place it in a similar context, and this often goes beyond the simple context of use, as is the case with the clips and the cigarette, but also opens

²¹ See Ivi, p. 37.

²² Cfr. Ivi, p. 36.

²³ In his *Ästhetik*, Lipps defines the individual’s projecting of the will into the working of a thing and the subsequent recognition of aspects of the subject in the thing as the “character of the thing” itself (cfr. Th. Lipps, *Ästhetik: Psychologie des Schönen und der Kunst. Grundlegung der Ästhetik*, Verlag von Leopold Voss, Leipzig 1903, p. 201).

²⁴ Schapp, *Die neue Wissenschaft vom Recht II*, p. 38.

up a whole series of references that situate the work within a broader circle of ends and values. For example, coming back to the example of the stone axe, Schapp states: "If we want to understand the stone axe as a work we have to think about the fact that it serves to cut wood and that a house can be built with wood and that the house serves to shelter from the wind and rain and the heat of the sun during the day"²⁵. Beginning with the axe, then, a series of references radiate out, opening for us a window to the world that also involves a semiotic of some of its aspects, from stone to the sun. On this last horizontal dimension of the unfolding of meanings and the utility value of the work, Schapp incorporates a vertical dimension that leads not only to the individual who produced that object in the past but also to its development and the historical conditions surrounding that development. This historical dimension is described in a paragraph where Schapp attempts to define the essence of the work. Once again, he employs a practical example and analyzes in detail the work of a shoe:

If we consider the shoe from the outside, we immediately recognize the single parts: the sole, the toe box, the upper, and the heel. In this subdivision, each part takes on its own meaning. The division between the sole and heel allows for greater support of the metatarsal; the division between the sole and upper facilitates repair. Each part of the shoe refers us back to someone who first discovered its meaning. It dissolves before our eyes into multiple paths, each of which can be traced back to a discovery. These discoveries have their temporal locus, that is, a place in historical time.²⁶

Each component of the shoe, according to Schapp points back to the individual human who conceived it. Embedded in any assessment of the essence of the work is a projection back into the past, even hundreds of years, in search of the value – and meaning-context in which the idea or plan led that individual to perfect an object already in use or to create a new one. In relation to this search, what is important is to immerse oneself in the "idea" – in the spiritual attitude in which the different humans who contributed to the improvements of the thing "shoe" were situated. In this way, the person who observes the shoe and its components is somehow immersed in the same value context as those different humans and can thereby get in touch with a fragment of their spiritual history. In assessing the essential predicates of the shoe as a work, one can thus no longer be satisfied with isolating the characteristic aspects

²⁵ Ivi, p. 40.

²⁶ Ivi, p. 47.

that make it the thing we know as a shoe; instead, one must place it in an evolutionary dynamic of productions and discoveries that characterizes the micro-history of shoe production within the macro-history of humankind's evolution. For this reason, in some very dense lines, Schapp writes:

The history of humankind is the history of its works. The relations we have identified between self, work, value, and production are fundamental relations for history; they represent the a priori of historical science. In this sense, a bottle of Moselle wine, a shoe, a car, a horse, the color and smell of a rose all have their histories.²⁷

Asserting that every work has its history, Schapp primarily means, that each work is connected to a multitude of humans, both past and present, who contributed to its production and evolution. For Schapp, the value of works lies precisely in this connection: they engage in a creative – and therefore spiritual – relationship with humans. However, it is not always feasible to trace the history of each work's genesis and development in detail. Take, for example, a bottle of Moselle wine; it is not straightforward to reconstruct the history of its origins or how it differentiated itself from other wines over time, ultimately achieving its unique character. Nevertheless, it is certainly possible to outline the broader history of viticulture, with its key milestones, and place Moselle wine within a more extensive historical framework. Such broader histories create stable meanings within the larger history of humankind, and these meanings correspond to values. Indeed, Schapp suggests that values are what allow works to be ordered within human history, and through this ordering, history is permeated with reason [*Vernunft*]²⁸.

This reason that permeates history through works does not, however, constitute the foundation of the human universe of values. There are older values like generosity, kindness, courage, loyalty, and love that do not have a historical evolution but appear to be essential to humanity and its ethos and are “as ancient as humanity itself”²⁹. For this reason, they constitute the foundation and generative space of a world of values, regardless of their kind. Anticipating what will become one of the fundamental themes of his philosophy of hi/stories, Schapp refers to the tale of Ulysses encountering the dog Argos after many years upon his return to Ithaca, moved to compassion, as well as the tale of Blundketil from Norse tradition, a peasant who, despite his humble circumstances, is known even

²⁷ Ivi, p. 67.

²⁸ See *Ibidem*

²⁹ Ivi, p. 71.

among the noblest for his generosity and kindness of heart. According to Schapp, these tales reflect values that we can attribute to people we know or that we still find in contemporary narratives. Thus, these stories embody an ideal of humanity and value that remains constant throughout the ages, suggesting that despite historical and cultural changes, certain human qualities remain ever-present. The Protagorean motto that “man is the measure of all things” should be reinterpreted, according to Schapp, through a new value-oriented perspective, which would state that “the inner qualities of humans are the measure of all things”³⁰. The value of works and inventions, viewed from this perspective, thus roots and grounds itself in an internal world of values. In Schapp’s view, the invention of the radio or cinema does not inaugurate a new world of values; rather, it merely facilitates access to existing values. Each new material or spiritual invention brings value, but only if there is a point of connection and linkage with the ancient values inherent in the human soul, allowing it to be ordered into a history with them³¹.

2. Entanglement and Narrative: Things-for, Embodiment, and History

The conception of human works as a historical *a priori* already encompasses a peculiar vision of the relationship between the hi/stories of individuals and collectives, past and present, and the objects we encounter in everyday life, as well as, more generally, with reality as understood through the production of these objects. Through works, one can come into contact with a fragment of the world of an individual subjectivity, its historical context, and the society in which it lived. The history of a thing becomes interwoven with the individual history of its maker and, tracing back into the past, with that of its creator and the various individuals who have developed it, transmitted its uses and purposes, and adapted them to their own goals and present circumstances. In the final phase of Schapp’s thought, the intertwining between the histories of objects and the world context they carry with them, and the histories of human beings, constitutes one of the fundamental themes underlying the concept of the entanglement of humans in hi/stories. The first section of *In Geschichten verstrickt*, begins precisely with the question of how the hi/stories of objects and the hi/stories of humans relate to each other. It is within this reflection that Schapp transposes the historical dimension onto the hermeneutic-narratological framework. According to Schapp,

³⁰ Ivi, p. 72.

³¹ See *Ibidem*

everyday things, which he, starting from *In Geschichten verstrickt*, defines as *Wozudinge* [things-for], represent a sort of subtle pathway between the external world and the entangled subject³². This can be said for two main reasons: (a) through the experience of the production of things-for and the body in action, the world can emerge with all its material characteristics; (b) the development and production of things-for refer us back in time to the conception and development of that thing-for and thus to the realm of the creator and the historical and contextual framework in which it was developed and continues to evolve. These two coordinates enable, on the one hand, the entangled subject to have a pre-understanding of the world that is receptive to the historical-hermeneutic context, and, on the other hand, for history itself to emerge from this pre-reflective experience of the world through the rooting of the thing-for in history. How this plays out on a narrative level is something I will address shortly. For now, however, it is worth exploring points (a) and (b) in greater depth, particularly in relation to the problem of understanding history and, more broadly, the past.

Regarding point (a), the concept of the original body [*ursprünglicher Leib*] becomes particularly relevant. In the first section of *In Geschichten verstrickt*, Schapp seeks to circumscribe the hermeneutic horizon of the entangled subject's understanding of the world, and this horizon is identified in the bodily experience of production. According to Schapp, we have an understanding of the material characteristics of things and their meaning within the context of the lifeworld, starting from the experience of being in action when the subject uses or works on the things-for. In this regard, he writes:

We must focus on this intimate aspect of the industrious becoming [*tätig Werden*] of work, directing our gaze to the internal unfolding of hammering, sawing, and splitting. Through the tool, we first become aware of our hand and fist, then of our arm, and ultimately of our entire lived body [*Leib*]. Yet, we would be moving on the wrong plane if, in speaking of the hand, arm, or lived body [*Leib*], we were to conceive of them or attribute to them a visible body [*sichtbarer Leib*]. This visible body [*sichtbarer Leib*] is only distantly related to the lived body [*Leib*], which reveals itself through activity. We gain access to it only by fully immersing ourselves in the very acts of sawing, drilling, hammering, and splitting. We thus sense how the lived body [*Leib*] extends and tenses, how it bends and rises again, how it is, so to speak, drawn into a relational field of effects [*Wirkungszusammenhang*]. Every movement is expressed by the entire lived body [*Leib*]. This lived body [*Leib*], perceived, as

³² See W. Schapp, *In Geschichten verstrickt. Zum Sein von Mensch und Ding* [1953], Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2012, p. 3.

it were, from within, forms in work a dynamic unity with the tools – hammer, axe – and, further, with the ground on which it stands and the material upon which it works. This lived body [*Leib*], of which we speak, is the primordial body [*ursprünglicher Leib*], the foundational mode of bodily being upon which any other conception of the body is built.³³

This embodied dimension of production allows the world to emerge with all its characteristics. It is only by beginning with the circle of relations that is generated around the one working on the thing-for that qualities such as rigidity, heaviness, and other properties of matter come to primary manifestation³⁴. Not only does the primordial body form the horizon for a participatory dimension of the hi/story of things and the world, but things are also rooted in the world through their material, or what Schapp defines as “from-what,” [*auswas*] which gives the matter its specific place in the “overall image of the world” [*ganze Weltbild*]³⁵. These things carry the traces of events that tell their destiny, offering a glimpse into the hi/story of the people who used them and the hi/story of things within the lives of those people. Through the things-for and the signs of wear they carry with them, we gain a glimpse into the hi/story of the people who used them and the hi/story of things embedded in the lives of those people. According to Schapp, the things-for are characterized as a “formation of hi/stories”³⁶ that refer to one or more entangled beings. This is not only because they are embedded in a context of use, but also because, as in *Die neue Wissenschaft vom Recht II*, the things-for direct us toward the creator’s design and plan, along with its evolutions, thereby offering us a piece of the history of human culture and the peoples who conceived and developed that thing. How is the connection established between the experience of the primordial body and the hi/story that an object encountered in the lifeworld tells us? If the production or experience of everyday objects reveals their hi/stories and embeds them in the hi/stories of other individuals, both present and past, with whom we identify, then the primordial body, as the radiating center of this hi/story that allows different aspects of reality to emerge along with its action, becomes the occasion for those hi/stories to emerge and, in turn, perpetuates them into the future. In this way, the entangled being also becomes the subject of a new hi/story that can, in turn, be told.

The dimension of historical becoming through productive experience, as just outlined, is closely intertwined in Schapp with the way the past

³³ W. Schapp, *In Geschichten verstrickt*, pp. 21-22.

³⁴ Cfr. Ivi, pp. 22f

³⁵ Ivi, p. 11.

³⁶ Ivi, p. 13.

emerges through historical narratives or the testimonies left by great civilizations. The things-for and the works produced by human beings indeed constitute the precondition for understanding every hi/story told about the historical past. This occurs according to a hermeneutic principle that Schapp defines as “co-entanglement”. By co-entanglement, he means the participation in the hi/story of a past individual that emerges through an oral account, a commemorative monument, a narrative in a book, or any trace left by that person in this world.³⁷ There are great works produced by humans in the past that evoke entire historical periods, such as the Colosseum, the Pyramids, and the Parthenon³⁸. They reveal aspects of the human condition that we can connect to our own life experiences and to feelings we are familiar with. In the Colosseum, we see Vespasian’s dreams of grandeur, and further back, Nero’s sense of omnipotence reflected in the colossal statue that once stood where the Flavian amphitheater was later built – the very statue from which the Colosseum takes its name. We identify with the courage of the gladiators through the various filmic and literary narratives, and we sense the cruelty toward animals shown by a people who had not yet developed the sensitivity to this issue that we possess today. We are able to be co-entangled in these hi/stories because they merge with our personal understanding of that era and its values in relation to the values of our present.

There are at least two evaluations to be made regarding co-entanglement, which constitutes the fundamental way in which humans participate in the hi/stories of the past. The first reflection concerns the underlying structure of the hermeneutic condition of being entangled. The second evaluation concerns the relationship between the theory of entanglement and the theory of values proposed by Schapp in his phenomenology of law. These two elements could help clarify how the entangled individual participates not only in hi/stories but in history through them. Let’s start with what constitutes the essential condition of entanglement. As we have seen, the things-for and the external world always and only appear within hi/stories centered around someone entangled in hi/stories. They can be understood only because every human being is originally at the center of a “network of hi/stories”³⁹. But how is this being entangled in hi/stories constituted? Already in the opening lines of the introduction to *In Geschichten verstrickt*, Schapp presents the foundational premise of the concept of entanglement: “We humans are always entangled [*verstrickt*] in hi/stories [*Geschichten*]. To every hi/story there

³⁷ See W. Schapp, *In Geschichten verstrickt*, pp. 126-138

³⁸ See Ivi, pp. 3-4.

³⁹ See D. Nuccilli, *History and stories*, pp. 35-36.

belongs someone who is entangled [*Verstrickter*]. Hi/story and being-entangled-in-hi/stories [*In-Geschichten-verstrickt-sein*] belong together so closely that they cannot be separated from each other, probably even in thought⁴⁰. In these lines, we find the hermeneutical and epistemological cornerstone of the philosophy of hi/stories: it is impossible to distinguish between the hi/story and the humans participating in the hi/story.⁴¹ Although this assumption is given as a premise from the outset, it becomes clearer throughout *In Geschichten verstrickt* in contrast to the phenomenological theory of the intuition of essences. According to Schapp, the phenomenological method of intuition of essences presupposes two elements: (1) the identification of an identity-component of the object investigated; and (2) the perspective of a neutral observer⁴². Thanks to the theoretical attitude, which involves a form of abstraction from daily habits, perception allows the thing to manifest itself in its characteristics and essence through the presentation of the idea⁴³. Yet, since it is impossible to distinguish between the hi/story and the humans participating in the hi/story, it also becomes impossible, according to Schapp, to have a neutral perspective on the hi/story. Even when the hi/story is theoretically investigated as an object or nexus of meaning, it already presupposes the hermeneutical background of the entangled. The hi/story can never formally constitute itself as an object, because with it we are already in an original relationship, a relationship that is given to us by being-entangled-in-hi/stories [*In-Geschichten-verstrickt-sein*]⁴⁴. This entanglement already involves a background of hi/stories that prevent us from isolating a hi/story that presents itself to us as something objective and detached from our lived experience⁴⁵. Knowledge of the

⁴⁰ Ivi, p. 1.

⁴¹ Cfr. Ivi, p. 85.

⁴² See D. Nuccilli, *The Character of Things: Ding, Werk and Wozuding. A Path in Wilhelm Schapp's Thought*, in D. De Santis, D. Nuccilli (a cura di), *The Philosophy of Wilhelm Schapp: From Phenomenology to Jurisprudence and the Hermeneutics of Stories*, Bloomsbury Academic, London 2025, pp. 105-129, ivi, p. 106.

⁴³ See W. Schapp, *Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung* [1910], Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2013, pp. 130ff. and D. Nuccilli, *Species, Ideas and Stories. Schapp between Phenomenological Platonism and Anti-Platonism* in "Azimuth", nr. 15, VIII, 2020, pp. 61-76, ivi, pp. 70ff.

⁴⁴ This formulation with hyphens evokes Heidegger's concept of being-in-the-world, and thus reveals a certain influence of Heidegger. For an in-depth analysis of the relationship between humans' being-entangled-in-hi/stories and Heidegger's being-in-the-world, see Nuccilli, *History and Stories*, pp. 36-37; J. Greisch, *Empêchement et intrigue. Une phénoménologie pure de la narrativité est-elle concevable?* in "Études Phénoménologiques" 11, 1990, pp. 41-83, ivi, 48.

⁴⁵ Fellmann refers to the impossibility, according to the model proposed by Schapp, of reaching the phenomenological position of the *uninteressierter Zuschauer* [disinterested spectator]. See

hi/story itself thus coincides with entanglement in the hi/story, that is, our being prepared [*Vorbereitetsein*] for the hi/story⁴⁶. Consequently, the historicist-hermeneutic one, any understanding of history is conditioned by the cultural context and the world in which every human is embedded. The latter being builded upon the foundational hi/stories of our cultural identity and our personal life experience.

What has just been said brings us to another point to consider, which can help us reconstruct how Schapp's historicist approach to the theory of values connects with the historical-hermeneutic approach of his philosophy of hi/stories. When outlining the concept of a work, Schapp explains that abstract works or the entire activity of a significant political and historical figure can also be considered works. Often, these works are not simply created but maintain a close connection with the person who created them and with their life. In a certain sense, they constitute legacies that each individual carries with them in their life before leaving them to humanity. According to Schapp, if the work holds significant importance for the creator and is incomplete yet still capable of being finished, it exerts a force that compels the creator toward its completion. Otherwise, all their efforts would be in vain. As Schapp writes, "The work is not merely a mirror of the I in the sense that the I reflects within it; rather, it is also a piece of the I"⁴⁷. The soul itself suffers a kind of wound when the work is left unfinished: "The fracture running through the work reflects itself, in some sense, within the soul. It is not so much where our treasure lies that our heart is found, but rather where our work lies"⁴⁸. Thus, if a work is damaged or destroyed, the creator's soul suffers as well. It is precisely in that moment that the creator becomes fully aware of the bond they may have previously taken for granted. Only in the destruction of the work does it become evident how the fate and history of the work are entwined with the history of the human who created it. In this way, Schapp introduces what will become a defining feature of his "philosophy of hi/stories", using a historical example to emphasize the inseparable bond between work and I. To express how a human's work can identify with their hi/story, he refers to the example of the Napoleonic trajectory, considering his entire political and military campaign as his work. According to Schapp Napoleon on Elba is simply the other side of Napoleon at Austerlitz, except that in exile, all of Napoleon's spiritual energies, which were once directed toward his great imperialistic work and personal affirmation, now go

F. Fellmann, *Das Ende des laplaceschen Dämons*, in R. Koselleck, W.-D. Stempel (a cura di), *Geschichte. Ereignis und Erzählung*, Wilhelm Fink, München 1983, pp. 115-138, ivi, 137-138.

⁴⁶ See W. Schapp, *In Geschichten verstrickt*, p. 92.

⁴⁷ W. Schapp, *Die neue Wissenschaft vom Recht II*, p. 75.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*

to waste and no longer have any grounding in a world of values⁴⁹. However, work does not “entangle” humans only when they are broken or incomplete, but also when they are finished. It needs to be maintained and occupies the soul of the human in the same way throughout his life. In fact, in this sense, it also assumes a collective resonance, both social and historical. Even when the creator is long dead, a work – whether material, like a great cathedral, or intellectual, like a philosophy – is continued and preserved by successors. In this regard, using the example of Napoleon, it could be said that he somehow collected and perpetuated the work of Alexander the Great, along with all the people he surrounded himself with, and for a period, the entire French people. In this way, the history of the human being and the history of the work insert themselves into a new collective history of a people or an era and anchor themselves in a value order that constitutes an aspect of reason that penetrates history.

History thus emerges through the deeds and works of people from the past, in which we become entangled as they manifest themselves in the narratives that hand them down to us. According to Schapp, these hi/stories represent the human being more accurately in their essence. For this reason, in the most famous passage of *In Geschichten verstrickt*, he declares that “history stands for the human being”⁵⁰. With this statement, the philosopher claims that there can be no understanding of humans without trying to understand their hi/stories. The same applies to historical figures. For instance, according to Schapp, the episode of the Alexander’s helmet, narrated by Plutarch in *Life of Alexander*, reveals more about the figure of the king, in command of an army struggling with thirst in the middle of the Balochistan desert, than any military victory or conquest mentioned in history books. As a matter of fact, Plutarch relates how Alexander refused to take advantage of his status to the detriment of his soldiers by emptying a helmet filled with water previously brought by a slave. This episode, according to Schapp, reveals an aspect of Alexander’s personality that explains his political and military success in a far more effective way than in-depth analyses of his political choices and military decisions.

3. History and the Entanglement of Human in Hi/stories: Positive World, We-Hi/stories and Universal History

What has been said in relation to the possibility of acquainting themselves with history through relevant historical figures’ individual hi/

⁴⁹ Cfr. *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ W. Schapp, *In Geschichten verstrickt*, cit., p. 103.

stories, or the monumental works that constantly provide us with entire historical periods, is set, according to Schapp, within a continuist conception of human history. However, such a continuity is not justified by an intimate harmony that characterises the events along the timeline of the historical progress, but rather is based on the entanglement-in-hi/stories' hermeneutical-ontological structure and the co-entanglement's gnosiological mechanism⁵¹. Schapp's intention is to phenomenologically explore the horizon of the understanding of the past from the single individual perspective. He writes in his *Philosophie der Geschichten*: "The single entangled is always at the center of our investigation. Starting from him or his hi/stories, we advance in all directions as far as we can. That being so, no obstacles stand in the way. We are not only entangled in our hi/stories, but also in all the hi/stories up to the world's creation and, consequently, up to the furthest human back in time."⁵² From a gnosiological point of view, the entanglement of which Schapp speaks – and thanks to which we can come to the dawn of world history – finds nourishment in what the author calls "positive world"⁵³. By the expression "positive world", he refers to the world to which the entangled-in-hi/stories belongs, built on a universal hi/story that involves an indefinite number of human beings, along a timeline that projects itself up to the ancient times⁵⁴. The western positive world is based, for instance, on the universal history of the world's creation, from Hesiod to Dante⁵⁵. The only access to this world is our hi/stories that lead us, then, into the horizon of the positive world to which we belong, to other entangled-in-hi/stories individuals' hi/stories, with which we come into contact and within which we can, in turn, be co-entangled. The entangled one finds himself/herself co-entangled within a universal history, which serves as a horizon for the single individual hi/stories⁵⁶. It is precisely that horizon, then, that is located at the center of an endless number of horizons, likewise determined by other universal histories that build the horizon of further positive worlds, within which other individual hi/stories take place. We can access those individual hi/stories through the identification of an anchor, set between the horizon of hi/stories that constitutes their world and the horizon that configures ours. Being human involves being entangled-in-hi/stories, but it also means being or living in a posi-

⁵¹ See G. Scholtz, op. cit., p. 59.

⁵² W. Schapp, *Philosophie der Geschichten*, a cura di K. Joisten-J. Schapp, Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main 2015, p. 46.

⁵³ See *ivi*, pp. 54-103.

⁵⁴ See J. Greisch, *Phänomenologie als Philosophie der Geschichten*, pp. 195-197.

⁵⁵ W. Schapp, *Philosophie der Geschichten*, p. 51.

⁵⁶ See J. Greisch, *Empêtrément et intrigue*, p. 266.

tive world, in a certain period of time. Living in a positive world means living in a world of values that lies at the center of a myriad of other value-worlds – worlds that orbit this positive world, which is grounded in foundational values transmitted through universal hi/stories. This positive world, in turn, stands at the center of other positive worlds, which one can access through the foundational hi/stories of those worlds – hi/stories that, in one way or another, intersect with our own. According to Schapp then every human being finds themselves within a single positive horizon, and from there, they can perceive other worlds – whether indefinite or specific⁵⁷. The most obvious example of such a plurality of worlds is the history of the great monotheistic religions, which share a common horizon with regard to the Old Testament God⁵⁸. The different individual hi/stories, spread throughout the positive world upon a common diachronic horizon, occur to determine what Schapp calls the “We-entangled”. The extension of this ‘We’ depends on the extension of the co-entangled individuals within the single hi/story or in the single hi/stories taken into consideration by turns. The concept of We-hi/story has a crucial relevance in Schapp, as it represents the linking element between single hi/stories and universal history:

The transition from the individual hi/story to the universal hi/story takes place either through the co-entanglement or the We, where even the tiniest individual hi/story already contains a We. We must admit that this We shows up in hi/stories in an infinite number of nuances, such as the We uttered among two given siblings or the We that identifies families, the clans, a village, states, a barracks, or a workplace. Each individual hi/story suddenly becomes a We-hi/story.⁵⁹

By identifying the intrinsic and plural collective structure of the entanglement-in-hi/stories, Schapp aims to build the hermeneutical horizon within which it is possible to quickly understand the hi/stories concerning the vicissitudes and the vision of world of humans very far from us in space and time. Such an understanding takes place by following the threads that stitch together each single hi/story and the hi/stories involving the We, from time to time offered to us by the horizon of history⁶⁰. Such We lies at the foundation of collectivities that fit into each other,

⁵⁷ Schapp, *Philosophie der Geschichten*, p. 44.

⁵⁸ Cfr. W. Schapp, *Philosophie der Geschichten*, pp. 42-44; see M. Pohlmeier, *Die Allgeschichte des Christentum* in K. Joisten (a cura di), *Das Denken Wilhelm Schapps*, Karl Alber Verlag, Freiburg 2010, pp. 126-141, ivi, pp. 131-133.

⁵⁹ W. Schapp, *Philosophie der Geschichten*, p. 201.

⁶⁰ See G. Scholtz, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

ranging from the family unit to all of humankind, which entangle the single individual in hi/stories with an ever-widening horizon. It is by acting in this way, and by letting our gaze go up from the single hi/story to the collective horizon in which it is situated, that we can bring out entire cross-sections of societies and civilizations belonging to other historical periods. To use the same Schapp example, starting with the hi/story of Alexander we can pass, by following the horizon of hi/stories in which he is entangled, to the events of the epigones that experienced that event and, from their hi/story, to the hi/story of the division of the huge territories Alexander conquered and to the consequences arising from this action that brought about the rise of the kingdoms, cultures, and religions that later developed. It is evident how, for each change in gaze along the horizon of this positive world, a new collectivity presents itself to us, a collectivity that is involved with one or more hi/stories come down to us and behind which Hellenic culture stands out, that is, the philosophy of Aristotle, the tutor of Alexander, and the Greek mythology rooted in Homer's and Hesiod's epics. Even more clear is the fact that each form of our understanding of this hi/story will be affected by the way we access it, and will take place in the hi/stories that have characterised our knowledge of Aristotle, Homer, Alexander and his epigones. In some way, we are within the same universe of hi/stories, as we are immersed in the positive world of Western culture – entangled in a web of hi/stories and potential narratives shaped by our own individual hi/story, itself interwoven with the grand hi/stories of our literary, cultural, and political past. Thus, history never appears as singular, inevitable, or linear, as it was conceived by German Idealism; rather, it fragments into the branching paths of hi/stories that unfold from our embodied self in this time and historical place, reaching all the way to the narratives that come to us from the very beginnings of writing and history. According to Schapp every universal hi/story, able to bring together the whole history of humankind, will remain nothing but a *desideratum*, even to the most ambitious historiography. It is not by choice that in the opening lines of the inaugural work of the philosophy of hi/stories, he writes:

We might perhaps seek to start out from the stories of peoples, nations or states, as well as we receive them: Hesiod, Thucydides, Livy, Ranke or Mommsen; the so-called scientific hi/stories written with the greatest claim to objectivity. However, within these hi/stories we do not meet the 'We' we have been seeking; the enveloping 'We'.⁶¹

⁶¹ W. Schapp, *In Geschichten verstrickt*, p. 1

According to Schapp, systematic conceptions of history like Hegel's are nothing other than attempts at creating some snapshots of the universal history, both as it structures itself at a time when the historian gets entangled and from the restricted perspective of the horizon to which the individual might access. Every methodological attempt at realising an objective history, passing through the search for a meaning intrinsic to it, or aiming to the mere reporting of facts, cannot go beyond such a structural perspectivism, being bound to the different position each individual holds in history. This awareness, though, has no relativistic implications. Each historical explanation, even the most mystifying, as well as any ambiguous narration or conflicting testimony, marks a decisive new stage,

a new trail within the intricate cartography of hi/stories, leading us in fact, thanks to the co-entanglement's gnosiological device, both to the single individuals and to the repercussion history has in the horizon of hi/stories that entangles them and, by radiating out, provides us with the starting point for any historiographic investigation on the whole historical and cultural world in which he/she lived.

Conclusions

This article aimed to highlight how the relationship between human beings and history unfolds – history here understood as both the systematic and personal elaboration of past events concerning humankind. The central point of reference was Schapp's philosophy of hi/stories. As we have seen, Schapp's philosophy of hi/stories is grounded in the semantic stratification of the term *Geschichte*, which ranges from the micro-history of human-made works – understood as an a priori of historical science – to hi/story as individual lived experience, which connects humans to the lifeworld. This complexity runs throughout Schapp's work and forms the backbone of a historicist approach to human existence and its world of values, as well as of a hermeneutic-historicist grounding of narrativity as its mode of expression. The ambiguity in the title of this contribution is meant to reflect precisely this complexity. It lies not only in the plural form set in parentheses, but also in the way “participating” in hi/story or hi/stories is understood. On one hand, it refers to actively participating in the making of hi/story – through the human works that shape the universe of values we grow within and that provide the a priori for all historical understanding. On the other hand, it points to our being already embedded in history: being situated within a context of meaning that conditions how we understand ourselves, our past, and the world. This embeddedness is experienced both in the lifeworld and the lived body, and through our be-

longing to a historical horizon shaped by works and foundational hi/stories. From this horizon, we engage with other historical and hermeneutic perspectives – those of other individuals and civilizations – which we encounter through what Schapp calls the “positive world”. To participate in hi/story thus means, first, to be co-constructors of a world of values shaped by our experience of the lifeworld; second, to be embodied in everyday life within the hi/stories that surround us; and third, to become entangled through these experiences in a positive world. This positive world is a hermeneutic-historical horizon where we engage with the foundational hi/stories of our cultural and religious past, allowing us to understand and interact with the narrative horizons of other positive worlds we encounter and which emerge from the past. The hi/stories of the past return to us the values in which we recognize ourselves and through which we bring to life the hi/stories of other human beings and, with them, their positive world and the historical context in which they lived.

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Gigliola Bejaj

History and Sense-Making in Present-Day Albania

Introduction

History is not given; it is not just an accumulation of events but rather an interpretive framework constructed upon habits, shaping and producing identities, agency, and the structures of collective memory. In this regard, Albanian customary law, specifically the *Kanun*, provides a case study of how historical narratives persist, adapt, change, and exert significant influence on contemporary sociocultural and political landscapes.

The historical role of the *Kanun*, in its construction, has been to define Albanian identities, its use by different groups in different periods has varied to achieve distinct aims within a wide range of social and cultural contexts, as we will see. Thus, the *Kanun* is not simply a legal code; it is a cognitive and semiotic system that has shaped Albanian common sense, emotions, and meaning-making. For centuries, it has mediated Albanian life and historical consciousness.

This article argues that the endurance of the *Kanun* is not – by any means – solely a relic of the past; rather, it must be understood as a living modality through which Albanians continue to make sense of their lives, their collective identity, and a framework they use to bring order to their world. This cognitive dimension is particularly evident in the way the *Kanun* structures social interactions, regulates behavior, and influences collective memory.

The core question this paper seeks to answer is: how has the *Kanun* functioned as a system of historical consciousness in Albania, and what does its persistence reveal about the interplay between tradition, modernity, and historical identity? By addressing this question, the article brings the thesis that the *Kanun* functions as a traditional form of historical consciousness and customary norms persist as epistemic structures even when state ideologies attempt to erase them. The analysis will employ a multidisciplinary approach. First, it will engage with historical sources and legal anthropology to illustrate how the *Kanun* has persisted

as a normative framework and one among the foundations of Albanian origins consciousness despite various attempts at its eradication. Later, a semiotic approach will show how the *Kanun* operates as a sense-making system that structures collective memory and creates meaning. By tracing the dialectical tension between the *Kanun* and state-imposed legal censorship, this study will highlight how customary law, rather than disappearing, continues to mediate Albanian historical consciousness, reinforcing its relevance in cultural identity formation today. The thesis of this paper, as said, thus asserts that such persistence is not just historical but also sociocultural, as the *Kanun* continues to provide a referential framework for Albanians navigating both tradition and modernity. The persistent influence of the *Kanun*, despite significant ideological transformations, suggests that, in the long run, it operates as a deep structure and mechanism of meaning, an enunciative framework that shapes historical consciousness in Albania. This becomes particularly evident when exploring the ideological clash between the *Kanun*'s traditional order and Enver Hoxha's Marxist-inspired socialist reforms, a struggle that reveals the profound embeddedness of historical structures of *Kanun* in social life and collective memory.

What is the *Kanun*

The *Kanun* is an ancient, traditional form of customary law specific to the Albanian people. This code, orally transmitted from generation to generation, governed every aspect of life for those residing in the regions of ancient Illyria, individuals who identified as a unified people, now recognized as the Albanians. The Albanian Customary Law, or *Jus Albaniense*, constitutes a sophisticated framework of normative principles governing the entire spectrum of social and economic interactions within Albanian society, from the prenatal stage to the end of life. These precepts, unlike statutory laws derived from state authority, emerge from the collective customs and traditions inherent to a specific sociocultural milieu.

Even though the *Kanun* is attributed to various historical figures, such as Prince Dukagjini or Skanderbeg, there is consensus that the customary norms it transmits emerged in different periods¹ and reflect diverse

¹ For instance, these concerns “especially that part of it that spells out the rules regulating vengeance, changed when the Ottomans introduced firearms as weapons. Because firearms made killing easier than before, new rules had to be adopted to prevent the great loss of life inflicted by their use” (F. Tarifa, *Of Time, Honor, and Memory: Oral Law in Albania*, in “Oral Tradition”, 23, 1, 2008, p. 6).

moral sensibilities – distinct morphologies of meaning regarding ethics and what is commonly referred to as “common sense” – without identifiable, conscious legislators². Albanian customary norms have become both the foundation and the origin of collective historical consciousness, shaping social behavior much like garments that have not resulted from deliberate orchestration. The existence and effectiveness of these norms, now firmly established as ingrained customs, can be understood as the outcome of habits, recurring meanings and, pragmatically, actions that appeared necessary in circumstances deemed similar by individuals and by those responsible for interpreting them. This evokes the *Kanun*’s crucial role in shaping the historical and identity consciousness of the Albanians: it functions as a background for reality, allowing, prescribing and determining interpretations, endowing the Albanian world with meaning and structure, influencing individual perceptions, and ultimately reducing the complexity of existence to guide human action.

This intricate legal corpus evolved organically and incrementally over centuries, rooted in the collective ethos of the people, and it encapsulates a jurisprudence where the source of law is embedded not in formal institutions but within the tacitly agreed-upon norms of the community, persisting since antiquity³. In this regard, the customary norms under discussion serve as a regulatory system for behaviors, reshaping – partly through historiography, a word whose etymology is worth noting – the past and the present identity of the Albanians.

This customary law has been adopted alongside the legal systems imposed by successive foreign powers since the fall of Illyria under Roman rule in 168 B.C. Its presence continued through the feudal period under Byzantine domination, later withstanding under the authorities of Serbian, Bulgarian, Ottoman, and Yugoslav governance, with applications even into contemporary times⁴. The idea that Albanian Customary Law (ACL) originates from the ancient Illyrian-Pelasgian period⁵, rooted in the era of pagan beliefs, is linked to the *Illyrian-Albanian continuity* thesis and has gained increasing scholarly support and dignity⁶, especially

² See G. Castelletti, *Consuetudini e vita sociale nelle montagne albanesi secondo il Kanun di Lek Dukagjinit*, in “Studi Albanesi: III-IV”, Istituto per l’Europa Orientale – Sezione Albanese, Roma 1933-1934, pp. 65-69; P. S. Leicht, *Note alle consuetudini giuridiche albanesi*, in “Lares”, XIV, 3, 1943, p. 129.

³ See I. Qerimi, A. Maloku, E. Maloku, *Customary Law and Regulation: Authenticity and Influence*, in “Journal of Governance and Regulation”, 11, 4, 2022, p. 291.

⁴ See *ibid.*

⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 290; F. Tarifa, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁶ The thesis of Illyrian-Albanian continuity was formulated and became the official version of the Albanians’ origin with the First Congress of Illyrian Studies in 1972. See G. De Rapper, *L’albanais, langue de Pélasges, Slovo*, in “Langues En Mouvement:

among Albanian and Balkan researchers due to its unique-perceived nationalistic character⁷. History exists only where there is also a knowledge of history, where testimony, documentation, awareness of origins, and contemporary events exist⁸, and it's not merely a sequence of past events but the fraction of the past that is made intelligible and meaningful through human perception. Jaspers further defines history as the fraction of the past that, at a given moment, is clearly visible to humans; it is the domain of appropriating what has passed, the consciousness of origins.

Origins play a pivotal role in our reflection on Albanian *Kanun* and align closely with Jörn Rüsen's theoretical framework on tradition and historical sense-making⁹. Rüsen argues that historical consciousness is not a mere accumulation of facts but a process of meaning-making that structures past events in a coherent narrative. It is through this process that history becomes functional, providing orientation for human actions in the present. The *Kanun*, as a customary legal system, exemplifies this mechanism: it not only preserves past norms but actively interprets them, integrating them into a framework of collective identity and moral orientation. As said before, by reducing the complexity of reality and offering interpretive patterns for social behavior, the *Kanun* operates as a historical traditional narrative that solidifies the Albanians' historical consciousness and identity. Its endurance over centuries demonstrates the function of tradition in historical sense-making as theorized by Rüsen: a dynamic process through which societies construct and maintain a coherent link between past, present, and future.

Historical context

After being orally transmitted for centuries, the *Kanun* was then codified in the 1930s; the written form of the *Kanun*, result of the work of Gjeçovi, comprises twelve books; each book contains a varying number of articles, further divided into clauses. These clauses embody the norms and prescriptions orally transmitted which then have been formalized. The *Kanun* addresses and regulates dimensions such as family, labor, pastoral activities, transgressions, hospitality, and more, conceived as a text

changements linguistiques dans l'espace postcommuniste au tournant du XXI^e siècle", 52, 2022, pp. 203-220.

⁷ See O.J. Schmitt, *Gli albanesi*, tr. it. di E. Morandi, il Mulino, Bologna 2020.

⁸ See K. Jaspers, *Origine e senso della storia*, tr. it. di A. Guadagnin, Edizioni di Comunità, Milano 1972.

⁹ See J. Rüsen, *Tradition: A Principle of Historical Sense-Generation and its Logic and Effect in Historical Culture*, in "History and Theory", 51, 4, 2012, pp. 45-59.

that comprehensively covers all aspects of communal life, adaptable to specific community needs. Historical sources trace the official and widespread adoption of the *Kanun* to between the 14th and 15th centuries, specifically to 1444, within the broader feudal period, although it is acknowledged to be of significantly older origin¹⁰.

Among Albanians, the *Kanun* of Lek Dukagjini is the most well-known, though many others exist¹¹. Therefore, it is more accurate to refer to the *Kanuns*¹², as each semiotic community maintained its variant, which could differ slightly from that of others. This paper examines the version associated with Lek Dukagjini, primarily due to its accessibility. It remains one of the few *Kanuns* available in Italian translation and is the most prominent within and beyond Albania. Skenderbeu (as he is called by the Albanians), the Albanian national hero, did not agree with the transmission of certain norms established by Dukagjini and, thus, he collected his own norms in the *Kanun of Skenderbeu*. One of the normative points on which Skenderbeg diverged from Dukagjini concerned, for instance, the rightful target of blood taking¹³. Skanderbeg maintained that blood taking should be exacted solely upon the perpetrator of the murder, whereas, in lands under Dukagjini's jurisdiction, *gjakmarrja* was extended to all male members of the family. Thus, in Albania and among communities that have adopted – and continue to observe – the *Kanun* in matters of honor, blood taking remains practiced upon all male members of the family, even upon children. Although the *Kanun*'s application spanned the territory of present-day Albania, common Albanian perception often restricts its adoption to the north and common sense leads individuals within the Albanian semiosphere to believe that the *Kanun* encounters increasing resistance as one approaches Greece¹⁴, in geographical and cultural terms. Yet, multiple *Kanun* codes exist throughout Albania, sometimes referred to as *zakonore*, the Albanian term equivalent to “customary” in English¹⁵.

As noted above, the *Kanun* is associated with Lek Dukagjini, a prince who fought for emancipation from Turkish authority, allying himself with Albania's national hero, the legendary Skanderbeg. Dukagjini sought to

¹⁰ See N. Malcolm, *KOSOVO: A Short History*, Pan Macmillan, London 1998.

¹¹ The oldest known, according to historiography and Albanological studies, was called *Kanun i Papa Zhulit*. See P. Resta, *Pensare il sangue. La vendetta nella cultura albanese*, Meltemi editore, Roma 2002.

¹² See D. Martucci, *I Kanun delle montagne albanesi. Fonti, fondamenti e mutazioni del diritto tradizionale albanese*, Pagina soc. coop., Bari 2010.

¹³ See P. Resta, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ See N. Malcolm, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ See P. Resta, *op. cit.*; D. Martucci, *op. cit.*

consolidate the norms underpinning the unique social system of the *fis*, the clans that governed the lives of northern mountain communities, treating these norms as binding laws¹⁶.

Examining the etymology of *canon* here proves enlightening. The Albanian term *kanun* appears to trace its origins to the Akkadian word *qanu*, and the Hebrew *qane*¹⁷, both of which originally meant “to draw a straight line”.

This term was subsequently borrowed into Ancient Greek as *kanón*¹⁸, where it took on the meanings of “rule” or “regulation” and later into Latin as *canon*, referring to a generally accepted rule, standard, or principle for judgment. In this sense, the shift from the meaning of “straight line” to that of “rule” is at the core of the semantic transformation and the origin of the metaphorical concept of “rule”. So, during the Byzantine era, *kanun* came to mean “straight” not just in a literal sense but also structuring the “straight line”¹⁹ as a metaphor for order, rule, and standard. This linguistic change contributed to the metaphorical concepts of structure, order and rule, reinforcing the idea of *Kanun* as a guiding principle. This evolution shows that the term *Kanun* originates from Byzantine Greek, where it referred to principles or laws that provided structure and guidance and, in fact, the Albanian term *kanun* derives from the Greek *kanon*.

Over time, this meaning influenced various legal and administrative traditions, solidifying *Kanun* as a system of rules and regulations. Additionally, *kanun* was widely used in Arabic as *qanun*, indicating laws and rules. By the Middle Ages, under the Ottoman Empire, the terms *kanun* and *kânûn-nâme* were introduced²⁰, designating secular laws decreed by sultans in alignment with Islamic Sharia law²¹. So, the Albanian term *Kanun* appears to originate from a linguistic borrowing from Semitic languages, and it was introduced into Greek culture as *kanón* before being absorbed into Albanian. *Kanón* is derived from *kanna*, meaning “reed,” which traces back to Hebrew *qanéḥ*, Aramaic *qanja*, Assyro-Babylonian *qanu*, and ultimately Sumerian *gin*, a reference to

¹⁶ See N. Malcolm, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ See M. Sellers, T. Tomaszewski, *The Rule of Law in Comparative Perspective*, in *Ius Gentium: Comparative perspectives on law and justice*, Vol. 3., Springer Dordrecht, Berlin 2010, p. 202.

¹⁸ See V. Anić, *Veliki rječnik hrvatskog jezika*, Novi Liber, Zagreb 2003.

¹⁹ See S. Frashëri, *Shqipëria ç'ka qenë, ç'është dhe ç'do të bëhet?*, Dija, Pristina 2007.

²⁰ See S.K. Gjeçov, *Das albanische Gewohnheitsrecht nach dem sogenannten Kanun des Lekë Dukagjini kodifiziert von Shtjefën Gjeçovi*, hrsg. R. Elsie, Dukagjini Publishing House, Peja 2003.

²¹ See I. Qerimi, A. Maloku, E. Maloku, *op. cit.*

the *Arundo donax* reed (analogous to bamboo), suitable for crafting straight rods and sticks. This forms the first attested meaning of *kanón*. In architectural contexts, *kanón* serves as a “straight rod, rule, or measuring stick”²². Through this “rod” and this “reed” the *rules*, or *orally transmitted laws*, were applied across generations before being documented in written form. Among all the term’s various meanings, we focus on its significance as a “rule” or “norm”²³.

Customary law and historical consciousness

We have chosen to examine the origin, etymology, and semantic evolution of the term *canon* due to its earliest meanings, which originally denoted a straight line. Over time, this notion underwent a conceptual shift, giving rise to the metaphorical interpretations that persist in contemporary usage. These evolved meanings now signify a codified orthodoxy in behavior, principles, and values – an epistemic and normative framework that serves as a universal measure of order and legitimacy.

In fact, the *Kanun* was not an externally imposed law but rather a customary right adhered to with minimal resistance. Non-adherence entailed no formal punishment; however, rejection resulted in immediate loss of honor, which, in contemporary terms, signified a loss of rights and social status for the individual, typically male, and his family. Such non-compliance deprived one of fundamental values like virility and honor, underpinning coexistence, reciprocity, and order within communities lacking a centralized state system. This reality granted the *Kanun* normative authority.

Due to its performative nature, the *Kanun* was censored – without ever falling into cultural oblivion – during the almost fifty years of Hoxha’s dictatorship; a tension resulting in a friction between this traditional form of historical consciousness and socialist aspirations and, following the death of Hoxha, a revival of customary practices, particularly *giak-marrja* (also known as blood feud), was observed. With the dissolution of communism in the 1990s, the resurgence of *Kanun* norms re-emerged alongside statutory law, particularly in matters concerning feuds and blood feuds. This revival was largely attributed to ineffective state justice mechanisms and the persistence of unresolved disputes dating back to the 1950s, which had been left unaddressed during the years of commu-

²² J. Assmann, *La memoria culturale. Scrittura, ricordo e identità politica nelle grandi civiltà antiche*, tr. it. di f. de Angelis, Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino 1997, p. 77.

²³ *Ibid.*

nist governance²⁴. *Gjakmarrja*, which literally means “taking of blood”²⁵ is an act of retribution intended to “cleanse the dishonor of blood” from one’s reputation. This practice involves a man, chosen by the family head, targeting another man from a different family who has inflicted a personal or social affront. The *Kanun* produces the instances in which an offense and subsequent injury to a man’s honor may occur.

Nowadays, according to the self-perception of individuals within the Albanian cultural semiosphere, it is widely assumed that *Kanun* norms and laws are no longer in effect, as Hoxha’s regime, over forty years, sought to eradicate customary practices through repression and punishment²⁶, but this is not true. Although no longer in formal use, the *Kanun* continues to influence Albanian behavior and cultural norms, acting as a structure of feeling and unquestioned presupposition. Hoxha’s socio-cultural reform project, aimed at transforming the Albanian people, as we shall see, ultimately failed. From this perspective, Albanian history, as shaped within the traditional narrative, matters precisely because of the resistance of *Kanun*-based normative, semantic, and cultural traits, despite all attempts to eradicate them and despite centuries of foreign presence and domination in Albanian territory. Albanians proudly regard themselves as Europe’s oldest and most traditional people, a perception reinforced by the enduring presence of the *Kanun* and its contemporary legacy. However, some *Kanun*-derived norms are now perceived as more violent and negative than in the past. This variation in the perception of certain *Kanun* norms is linked to transformations in the way Albanian culture self-represents, reflecting broader shifts in societal values, ethical standards, and the past. The values within the code and many associated

²⁴ See I. Qerimi, A. Maloku, E. Maloku, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

²⁵ I will use the expression *blood taking*, translating the Albanian term *gjakmarrja* literally, as an alternative to the more common rendering *vendetta* or *blood revenge* found in literature. This translation choice aims to emphasize the retributive nature of justice as established by the KCL (*Kanun* customary law). The term *vendetta* fails to convey the full meaning of the Albanian institution known as *gjakmarrja*. Translating *gjakmarrja* as *vendetta* results in the loss of the term’s connotation of retributive action, intended to restore honor, while also neutralizing the semantic category itself; the expression in Albanian does not map isomorphically onto the Italian word *vendetta* or in the English one *revenge*. I want to avoid the retributive aspect of *Kanun* justice, which is not grounded in feelings of anger, resentment, or in the desire to merely react to something offending, to be overlooked. Semantically, *blood taking* carries the nuance of a formalized, honor-restorative action rather than a personal *vendetta* driven by anger or desire for vengeance. Here, retributive action aligns with principles of KCL – primarily honor and justice – while *vendetta* is a category produced as emotionally charged and less precise in capturing the *Kanun*’s institutional intent.

²⁶ See D. Martucci, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

practices appear preserved in cultural memory and, at most, there has been a renegotiation of the meanings underlying the code.

The *Kanuns* are proposed as safeguards of Albania's cultural and regional identity, with adherence to norms embedded in the way these laws were envisioned and transmitted over centuries. The idea underlying this paper is, as indicated before, that the *Kanuns* have shaped Albanian historical consciousness and identity, forming the semiotic sphere of Albanian culture and society. As noted, customary norms cover all aspects of daily life, and *Kanun* practices are still evident in various cultural activities such as marriage and funeral rites, which adhere to strict and crystallized rituals grounded in the principles of *besa* (trust, a man's word of honor), lineage, and honor (*nderr*). The *Kanun's* value system represents, following its etymology, a form of universal justice perceived and thought as divine, embodying a set of enduring practices that remain alive within the Albanian cultural memory.

Given the present paper semiotic theoretical framework and conceptualization of culture as the Lotmanian mechanism of collective consciousness²⁷ and as a non-hereditary collective memory expressed through a system of prohibitions and prescriptions²⁸, it is appropriate to describe how the transmission of the *Kanun* has shaped Albanian identity, forming the backbone of Albanian culture through concepts such as a man's honor.

The "law of the mountain", before becoming foundational to Albanian culture and traditions, long existed as a "peripheral formation"²⁹ within the socio-cultural landscape of Balkan peninsula and present-day Albania. Within this geographic delineation, a distinct cultural split existed in Albania: the southern culture, Orthodox and influenced by Hellenic and Byzantine traditions, and the northern culture, organized along tribal lines and shaped by Slavic cultural influences and the Catholic faith. Albania, even by the 15th century, had been under the domination of various powers for nearly a millennium. From this initially peripheral northern culture, a dynamic exchange of information began, ultimately enriching the southern cultural sphere. Notably, the Albanian *Kanun* culture remains one of primary orality³⁰, with its tenets orally transmitted over centuries until the written codification in the 1930s. Yet, this cultural fabric remains deeply oral in form; thus, the *Kanun* – though written – remains

²⁷ J. Lotman, *La semiosfera. L'asimmetria e il dialogo nelle strutture pensanti*, Marsilio Editori, Venezia 1985, p. 51.

²⁸ See J. Lotman, B.A. Uspenskij, *op. cit.*

²⁹ J. Lotman, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

³⁰ See W.J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word*, Melthuen, London and New York 1982.

highly interpretable through its interpreters, designated men tasked with traveling across Albania to enforce and elucidate the law in complex or ambiguous cases. The *Kanun* endured thanks to adaptations within successive “present” moments, which, though they seem past to us, reference models from tradition that have woven connective structures within cultural memory. According to Giuseppe Schirò, most norms are expressed in formulaic maxims and proverbs, with “conceptually and syntactically evolved definitions”³¹ appearing as later additions. This oral nature enabled the renegotiation of meanings after the dictatorship’s censorship, producing new interpretations within diverse interpretive communities.

One significant feature in this case study is the nature of customs, which arises in fact and is not compromised by documentation, as oral culture crystallizes meanings, maintaining their permanence³². The transition of norms from oral to written form – executed by Gjeçovi and others after his death – participates in the mythologization process within Albanian culture: the *Kanun* of Lek Dukagjini, known in Albanian as *Kanuni i Lekë Dukagjinit* (or *Kanuni i Lekut*), where Lek’s identity is solely defined by the *Kanun* in its entirety. This is a process Lotman and Uspenskij aptly describe as a *semiosis of nomination*³³.

Enver Hoxha’s Socialist Attempt to Erase Cultural Memory

Albania is a country of recent formation and demarcation, whose past appears to encompass a dual dimension: a mythic past, one that extends into storytelling, alongside a historical dimension, embodied in the dictatorship and studied as a text-document. Albania seems to be the last nation in Europe to conclude the 20th century under a distinctly “tribal” framework³⁴. These premises make the study of the Albanian *Kanun* cultural space particularly complex, as Albania has historically positioned itself between East and West.

From the outset, Hoxha’s ambition was focused on the creation of the utopia of the “new man”³⁵, of the “perfect man and woman”, free from what he regarded as savage and primitive traditions, although his structures of feeling and cultural lens were not foreign to the ways in which

³¹ G. Schirò, *P. Gjeçovi e la prosa del Kanun di Lek Dukagjini*, in *Le terre albanesi redente. Kosovo*, Reale Accademia d’Italia, Roma 1942, p. 185.

³² *Passim*. R. Sacco, *Antropologia giuridica. Contributo ad una macrostoria del diritto*, il Mulino, Bologna 2007.

³³ See J. Lotman, B.A. Uspenskij, *Tipologia della cultura*, Bompiani, Milano 1975.

³⁴ P. Resta, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

the historical, social, and cultural experience of other Albanians was organized: Hoxha's approach to leading the country – positioning himself as the head of all Albanian lineages – can be traced back to the familial structure and segmentation as textualized in the *Kanun*.

In a period of intense social upheaval, Enver Hoxha launched a socialist ideological campaign against KCL, labeling it as archaic. Lotman and Uspenskij examination of social change periods³⁶ demonstrates how Hoxha sought to reshape the country, eradicating from collective memory – and thus from Albanian practices – the norms previously transmitted. This approach essentially amounted to an attempt to erase and annihilate a specific cultural identity and belonging with the purpose of substituting it, and in this period, Albania experienced significant internal resistance to Enver Hoxha's efforts to suppress the *Kanun*. Thus Hoxha, aiming to establish a centralized communist regime, viewed the *Kanun* as a threat to his authority and sought to eliminate its influence. Following this trace, we can say that Enver Hoxha's program made possible the emergence of a tension between innovation and tradition and this very tension is still interesting today: was Hoxha the subverter of the *Kanun*, or perhaps its final – or penultimate – incarnation? Viewing Albania as a conglomerate of small pyramids and regional communities that never coalesced into a unified, hierarchical society endowed with a comprehensive singularity, the answer is no. Enver was the leader of an Albania that, rooted in the *Kanun*, had never truly known a supreme ruler throughout its history. However, if one considers that Hoxha co-opted his men from the clans of southern Albania, to which he was intimately and familiarly tied, and that he upheld the accountability of each clan member whenever one of their own committed an act against the law, it could be argued that non-negligible remnants of clan-based structures – typically *kanunarian* – persisted within an Albania that aspired to be Marxist-Leninist and Stalinist³⁷ and which described (and still describes) itself as the most ancient European culture because of the *Illyrian-Albanian continuity* thesis³⁸ already mentioned in this paper.

The dictator waged war on names associated with Albanian tradition and those with religious origins. This aligns with Lotman's theory that periods of upheaval bring about an increase in the semioticity of behavior³⁹. Custom was “identified with ignorance, backwardness, ‘ossification’”, whereas the “rational and progressive” were conceived solely as “regu-

³⁶ See J. Lotman, B.A. Uspenskij, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.

³⁷ See E. Marino, *op. cit.*

³⁸ See O.J. Schmitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.

³⁹ See J. Lotman, B.A. Uspenskij, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

lar.” The state’s activity was seen as the introduction of “regulations,” resulting in the reorganization of life according to the model they provided. This suppression led to the formation of various local resistance groups, including the “National League of the Mountains”, “Liberty”, “Skanderbeg”, “Call”, and “National Unity”. These groups emerged in response to Hoxha’s policies, striving to preserve regional autonomy and cultural traditions rooted in the *Kanun*⁴⁰. This response did not shift Albania’s political trajectory, as the government condemned, censored and banned every form of adherence to *Kanun* norms as an act of betrayal. Furthermore, in pursuit of his socialist cultural agenda, Hoxha enacted a sweeping ban on all religions in 1967, establishing Albania as the world’s first officially atheistic state. Hoxha’s objective was to cultivate a form of patriotism and historical consciousness distinct from the traditional loyalties forged in the independence struggles of the late 19th century, one that would break with the past and align with his vision of a unified socialist identity. Hoxha sought to reshape Albanian nationalism into a secular, socialist framework. Unlike the patriotic fervor inspired by anti-Ottoman independence movements, Hoxha’s envisioned patriotism was meant to be rooted in loyalty to the state and to his socialist ideology rather than to ethnic, regional, or religious ties. Yet in practice, he made no effort to create the “perfect men and women” he touted in his propaganda; the common sense and the cultural lens of the population remained deeply anchored to the *Kanunarian* system and structured upon the KCL. During the dictatorship, however, censorship did not completely halt research on the text of *Kanun*⁴¹ and, immediately after the regime’s fall, a resurgence in interest emerged around *Kanun* traditions, perceived as a “relic of the past”⁴² to recover, preserve, and conserve. Concurrently, the final dissolution of the Iron Curtain compelled Albania to face the new demands of globalized markets and Western-driven democratization.

The country’s geographic location and historical context contributed to a dual identity. Albania, characterized by its pluralism and peaceful coexistence of Islam, Catholic, and Orthodox Christianity, lacks well-defined geographic borders. Territorial conflicts between “the land of the eagles” and neighboring countries are well-documented⁴³, as are ethnic conflicts occurring in border regions to the north and south. This instability in physical-geographic boundaries contrasts sharply with the *apparent* solidity of the country’s ethno-cultural boundaries.

⁴⁰ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v04p2>.

⁴¹ D. Martucci, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-51.

⁴² P. Resta, *op. cit.*

⁴³ O.J. Schmitt, *op. cit.*; N. Malcolm, *op. cit.*

***Kanun* as a strategy for the formation and delimitation of Albanian historical consciousness and culture**

As previously noted, Hoxha's censorship aimed to alter Albanian common sense, identity, cultural memory and belonging, and an enunciative praxis embedded in the *Kanun*'s norms and the behaviors they prescribe. Over time, through oral transmission, these norms acquired an anonymous yet universal dimension rooted in myth, forming the encyclopedia and general archive⁴⁴ accessible to all community members who shared and claimed the same culture, even with the heterogeneous needs and instances that composed it. Defined by Eco as a semiotic postulate⁴⁵, the encyclopedia functions as an episemiotic regulation, that is, as a model whose regulatory capacity operates on a global level without deriving from a subjective intentionality capable of determining effects and consequences. Rather, it remains a diffused and plural instance⁴⁶, an ever-evolving network of knowledge in which signification emerges not from a univocal center but from the dynamic interplay of interpretative processes. According to Anna Maria Lorusso, a text functions as a model of culture and, in a sense, encapsulates the culture to which it belongs in miniature, thereby shaping cultural life and even influencing behaviors. At times, it takes on a normative function, which is among the essential roles of memory⁴⁷. The cultural homogeneity observed in Albania is a semiotic effect produced by the strong normative character of the *Kanun*, which, although interpreted in ways that accounted for group-specific traits (subsistence economies, geological features, climate, etc.), did not diverge in fundamental principles and values. The coexistence of diverse regional customary codes did not, therefore, create sharp divisions in practices, values, and beliefs, according to scholars.

With the regime's collapse and the end of political repression, *gjakmarrja* re-emerged across the territory. Hoxha's attempt to eliminate the *Kanunarian* praxis, and *gjakmarrja* in particular, failed because he overlooked that cultural memory had imbued behaviors and rituals with meanings that had crystallized⁴⁸. These meanings had lost their event-based or sub-

⁴⁴ See A.M. Lorusso, *L'utilità del senso comune*, il Mulino, Bologna 2022, p. 111.

⁴⁵ See U. Eco, *Semiotica e filosofia del linguaggio*, Einaudi, Torino 1984, p. 109.

⁴⁶ For a profound semiotic reflection on the theory of personal enunciation, on the mechanisms and semiotic structures underlying subjectivity, and on a theoretical inquiry who encompasses the effects of semiotic homogeneity in cultures, see C. Paolucci, *Persona. Soggettività nel linguaggio e semiotica dell'enunciazione*, Bompiani, Firenze/Milano 2020.

⁴⁷ See A.M. Lorusso, *Semiotica della cultura*, Laterza, Roma-Bari 2010, p. 72.

⁴⁸ See J. Assmann, *op. cit.*

jective character, becoming invisible through their persistence⁴⁹. Thus, *gjakmarrja* is built as a semantic code arising from an internalized model of tradition and stands as an institution that *Kanun* knowledge considers unquestionable. The *Kanun* served as the foundation of a cultural identity through a body of texts that circulated within a dynamic cultural environment, never static. This movement facilitated the elaboration of new information exchanged between the semiotic sphere of the initially peripheral northern culture and that of the southern culture⁵⁰. Albanian culture emerged from the transmission and accumulation of information inherent in norms that governed the social and individual practices of those who identified with a shared cultural unit, transcending ethnic and religious divisions. The historical definition of *Kanun* helped delineate a cultural space opposed to the “non-culture” of Turkish rule and its texts. The boundaries of the Albanian semiotic sphere evolved over a lengthy period through a dynamic process of negotiation among diverse instances, which collectively pursued the same vision and agenda for building a shared historical and social identity.

The knowledge, beliefs, and norms articulated within the *Kanun* are assumed by individuals as habitualized constructs, emerging from premises beyond rational control, changing very slowly, and whose acceptance depends on the encyclopedia and the cultural universe of reference⁵¹. Although their origins are attributed to Lek Dukagjini and the enunciating instance ascribed to Father Gjeçovi, as discussed earlier, the set of norms within the *Kanun* – actualized, enacted in practice, and orally transmitted over centuries – constitutes an ensemble of habits, an impersonal enunciation, understood as an assemblage and *agencement*⁵².

Personal honor and identity in shaping historical consciousness

Here, we will delve into a semantic category that articulates the fundamental values of the *Kanun*-based Albanian patriarchal society, male honor. Honor (*nderr*, in Albanian) is a semantic category that varies across cultures, with internal nuances influenced by various factors. In the *Kanun* and Albanian culture, honor is textually divided into personal and collective facets. This dual nature of honor as articulated in the *Kanun* is not exclusive to this code but is characteristic of many cultures,

⁴⁹ See A.M. Lorusso, *L'utilità del senso comune*, op. cit.

⁵⁰ See *ivi*, p. 131.

⁵¹ See *ibid.*

⁵² C. Paolucci, op. cit.

where personal honor is perceived as the sense of one's social worth, while social and collective honor refers to the evaluation others make of an individual's moral and social standing⁵³. Honor's normative character in the *Kanun* legitimizes retributive vengeance through blood-taking, or *gjakmarrja*, as a response to affronts. This textualises that honor necessitates murder in cases where it is removed, as if it is a good, through actions outlined in the *Kanun*'s eighth book.

Personal honor emerges as a normative semantic construction that, on one hand, seems to be a birthright for men (and not for women) but, on the other, can be stripped away. The *Kanun* posits that no distinctions should exist among males, as they are born equal, regardless of wealth or physical health. This implies that personal honor is a natural attribute within *Kanun* culture. However, Article 601 addresses the ways in which a man can be dishonored, thus presenting honor as a "possession" that can be lost – a concept that contradicts the notion of it being intrinsic and natural. Men are born equal, but throughout life, they can lose their honor in the eyes of others, or it may be forcibly stripped from them.

The *Kanun* comprises various articles that draw a distinction between personal honor and honor within society, between the sentiment of self-worth, translated into terms of honor, and the perception and opinion others hold toward a specific person. The points selected from the corpus clarify and construct personal honor, the reasons a man might lose it, and the imperative to avenge such an offense, under penalty of shame and social exclusion. According to the normative custom of Albanian traditional consciousness, each man has the right to seek vengeance through bloodshed, and what in Western societies is considered and valued as violence is, in the ACL context, seen as legitimate and is not perceived as violence. The *Kanun* assigns a prescriptive nature to "bloodshed" (*gjakmarrja*) and the restitution of honor, for "in the eyes of the law, a dishonored man is as good as dead," with the loss of honor (*nderr*) viewed as the worst possible state for the individual and his family. In the *Kanun*'s cultural universe, a man's loss of honor corresponds to a series of regulated practices and behaviors to which others in the community must adhere to mark the dishonor⁵⁴.

⁵³ See F. Antolisei, *Manuale di diritto Penale. Parte speciale vol.2*, Giuffrè, Milano 2016; V. Manzini, *Trattato di diritto penale italiano*, vol. VIII, Utet, Torino 1986.

⁵⁴ Article 645 of KLD states that "[t]o anyone who has had their guest offended, until the disgrace suffered has been avenged, everything must be handed to them with the left hand and passed under the knee through the leg". The following article further elucidates this symbolic gesture, adding that "[t]he left hand is considered by law as humiliating [...] [all translations from the *Kanun* are mine]". This codified ritual language emphasizes the centrality of honor and retribution in traditional Albanian legal and ethical culture, where

As remarked earlier, in a nation that has long lacked a central state authority and has continuously fought for its cultural and political autonomy, the *Kanun* has served as both legislation and a social contract, binding individuals and communities. The norms governing hospitality and honor function as guarantees of security and reciprocity within an oral culture, where a man's word, his commitment, and his promise hold paramount significance. Within the *Kanun*'s semiotic sphere, a man's social honor is intrinsically linked to his capacity to protect and honor any person who enters his home seeking aid and hospitality. The head of the household, as the family patriarch, is bound to protect his guest – even if that guest is the murderer of a family member – and to assume responsibility for any implications to his honor. Indeed, in the event of *gjakmarrja*, or blood feud, liability falls upon the host.

The failure to uphold these duties, as prescribed by the *Kanun*, is explicitly categorized in the text as an act of betrayal, warranting the ultimate punishment of execution by firing squad – an exception in severity compared to other transgressions within the code. The punishment for betrayal is not textually codified as a death requiring blood repayment, for the most grievous act a man can commit within the semiotic world of the *Kanun* is the betrayal of a guest. This form of punishment stands apart from typical instances of *gjakmarrja*, or blood repayment, underscoring the absolute sanctity of the host-guest relationship within the cultural logic of the *Kanun*. In this context, betrayal represents a moral violation so severe that it transcends the usual mechanisms of retributive justice, positioning the act as an irredeemable breach of trust and honor. Such differentiation reflects the profound ethical weight assigned to hospitality in Albanian customary law, where the guest-host bond is treated as a foundational social pillar. This moral hierarchy within the *Kanun* reveals that betrayal – particularly of one under one's protection – is seen not merely as a transgression against an individual but as a violation of the entire community's ethical fabric. Consequently, the punishment for betrayal is framed not as a matter of blood debt, which might imply an equalizing response, but as a categorical repudiation of the offender's social and moral standing. This perspective sheds light on the *Kanun*'s prioritization of relational *besa*, a specific cultural dimension of Albanian loyalty, and the extent to which individual actions resonate across the collective, thereby reinforcing a model of justice rooted in the inviolability of *besa*, trust, within communal life. This codification not only reinforces the imperative of honor in the Albanian cultural context but also high-

gestures and modes of interaction carry a precise normative and prescriptive significance.

lights the depth of social responsibility and moral weight placed on the individual's role within a larger, communal framework. In this way, the *Kanun* emerges again as more than a set of rules: it is an enunciation, an articulation of collective and anonymous ethics, where personal integrity and the safeguarding of social bonds are woven into the very fabric of legal and moral consciousness.

Such principles reveal a profound respect for reciprocal trust and an intricate system of accountability, underscoring the *Kanun*'s role as a dynamic cultural institution that was capable of sustaining social order in the absence of a centralized legal authority. This emphasis on reciprocal duties and the sanctity of one's word as the guarantor of communal harmony invites reflection on how the *Kanun* formerly shaped the Albanian category who encompasses the moral landscape, embedding within it a model of justice deeply attuned to the values of male honor and mutual protection.

Gjakmarrja

As said, an offense within the *Kanun*'s normative framework demands an act of restitution, typically achieved through the shedding of blood or, alternatively, through forgiveness – though this latter form of reconciliation requires an individual of extraordinary honor and remains exceedingly rare. Similar to the “*vendetta*” in Sardinian *barbaricino* culture, yet meticulously procedural in its design, the *gjakmarrja* functions as an institution aimed at containing conflict and rectifying breaches of social norms⁵⁵. Before the advent of democratic governance, *gjakmarrja* was neither perceived nor experienced by the community as an act of violence. This perception is due to the pervasive influence of cultural frameworks, which shape cognitive structures and filter the moral imperatives of societies. Indeed, within the collective understanding of the *Kanun*, *gjakmarrja* was viewed as a moral obligation – a practice signifying adherence to the social pact⁵⁶.

At the same time, *gjakmarrja* often took on a tragic, yet unavoidable dimension for the families involved, given that every killing required a monetary offering to the nearest clan and resulted in a steady diminution of male family members due to retaliatory killings, the origins of which were sometimes long forgotten⁵⁷. This relentless cycle of familial

⁵⁵ P. Resta, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

⁵⁶ Ivi, p. 101.

⁵⁷ In Ismail Kadare novel *Broken April*, for instance, the cycle of killings that one of the

loss and reciprocal killings to reclaim honor did not foster forgiveness, ritual brotherhood, or a cessation of blood-driven vendettas. When faced with the choice between sacrificing family members to “cleanse” honor or facing social obliteration, families typically opted for the former.

To this day, in cities like Tirana, Shkodër, and other areas across Albania, *kulla* – stone structures traditionally used as safe houses where men would isolate themselves – can still be found. In modern Albania, however, any building can be re-semanticized to serve the purpose of a *kulla*⁵⁸. Many men continue to live in seclusion, though accurate estimates of such cases are unavailable. In these instances, it is women and girls who venture outside to perform errands, shopping, and work⁵⁹, as Article 124, clause 897, states that women and priests are not subject to blood revenge⁶⁰.

This enduring structure of *gjakmarrja* underscores a cultural commitment to honor, albeit one that binds its participants in a web of tragic reciprocity. It highlights a distinct social ethos where honor is paramount, and the individual's role is deeply embedded within a larger communal structure. The persistent presence of *kulla* in Albanian space reflects the continued resonance of *Kanun*-based principles in contemporary Albanian society, despite modernizing influences. The ongoing phenomenon of voluntary seclusion raises compelling questions about cultural identity, social cohesion, and the enduring power of customary law to govern even

protagonists must partake in originates from the murder of a guest of his ancestors. This guest, after being escorted to the place he had requested, is killed immediately afterward. Kadare writes that the face of the corpse, as verified by the village community, is turned in the direction of the host's home. Because of this, the blood of the slain guest – although he was no longer within the household – still falls upon the host. This episode underscores the profound weight that the *Kanun* places on the bond between host and guest (where the second occupies the role of God), where obligations of protection extend beyond physical separation. The communal interpretation of the guest's body orientation highlights the symbolic continuity of responsibility that binds the host inescapably to the guest's fate, reflecting a legal and moral system in which the honor textualized in the norm is prescribed not only in reference to a place, but to a large, enduring commitment. Kadare's narrative thus captures the tragic inevitability and the rigid moral codes that define the world of the *Kanun*, where obligations to adhere to norms persist, often regardless of practical limitations.

⁵⁸ In Albania, certain buildings could not be demolished to make way for new construction projects, as they shelter men involved in blood vengeance (*ne gjak*), entangled in the chain of killings within the blood feud cycle.

⁵⁹ Several national Albanian news broadcasts, for instance, have featured reports documenting the testimonies of men marked for blood vengeance or families entangled in *gjakmarrja*, some of whom have lost young male children, even those of school age. See <https://youtu.be/I24toaD-02I>, <https://youtu.be/-z4XvKtN-sA>, <https://youtu.be/ig-3GvLDM5M>.

⁶⁰ See Art. 28.

in the shadow of state authority. In contemporary democratic Albania, as said, collective judgment toward *gjakmarrja* has evolved, though not uniformly across the country, and it is now commonly perceived as an inhumane and unjust practice, even if still practiced⁶¹. However, contemporary changes in perceptions of *gjakmarrja* appear to be public manifestations that lay on a superficial level and have not altered fundamental adherence to tradition or Albanian common sense, nor compromised Albanian ethnic and cultural identity.

Tradition and sense-making

The formation of Albanian historical consciousness has relied upon a supposed archaic foundation tracing back to the era of the Illyrians. The Illyrians are thus considered the forebears of modern Albanians, and their existence has been established as the seminal point from which the entire trajectory of Albanian history unfolds. In this way, the Albanian historical narrative and sense of origins⁶² rests upon the notion of an Illyrian-Albanian continuity – a thesis that, though frequently referenced, remains debatable and lacks precision from various perspectives. Beyond outlining the current state of debate regarding the Illyrian-Albanian continuity thesis, it is particularly intriguing to examine how the people who have internalized *Kanun* as a cultural lens constructed their own historical narrative. This narrative drew upon a sense of origins that allowed them to explain, give meaning to, and ensure continuity⁶³ even in more modern events. The Albanian appropriation of the historical narrative surrounding the Illyrians facilitates the development of the historical consciousness, a consciousness that contributes to the formation of their identity.

Up until now, the term “tradition” has been employed here without scrutinizing the conceptual complexities it entails. According to Rusen⁶⁴, tradition serves as the most fundamental principle in the construction of historical meaning, functioning as the primary framework upon which other ways of interpreting and making sense of the past are grounded. In this capacity, tradition provides continuity amid temporal shifts, allowing societies to maintain a coherent worldview despite the inevitable move-

⁶¹ See S. Voell, *Kanun in the City: Albanian Customary Law as a Habitus and Its Persistence in the Suburb of Tirana, Bathore*, in “Anthropos”, 98, 2003, pp. 85-101.

⁶² See K. Jaspers, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-79.

⁶³ *Passim*. *ivi*.

⁶⁴ See J. Rüsen, *op. cit.*

ments, passages and changes that occur over time. Rüsen's view⁶⁵ underscores that tradition is not merely about preserving the past; it is a dynamic, interpretative tool that enables societies to perceive and manage change without experiencing disintegration or a loss of identity. Albanian *Kanun*, as a tradition, allows a form of historical interpretation where change and stability coexist. By shaping how people perceive and react to changes in the human world, tradition and *Kanun* helps Albanian society and communities to anchor themselves in a familiar order, ensuring that cultural, social, and ethical norms persist through historical transformations.

This function of tradition as a sense-making principle implies that it operates selectively, emphasizing certain aspects of the past while marginalizing others. It often transforms historical facts into narratives that resonate with collective identity and values. In this sense, tradition does not merely reflect the past as it was; it literally interprets it – in the peircian semiotic sense of the term – in a way that reinforces a community's continuity and resilience, offering a lens through which past, present, and future are interwoven. This concept positions tradition as both a preservative force and a creative act, a crucial aspect of historical consciousness that allows communities to navigate the tensions between change, transmission and permanence⁶⁶. This is interesting for understanding how the *Kanun* has been transmitted and endured from ancient times to the present day, despite not being codified in writing for centuries. Human societies consciously gather and interpret the past, imbuing it with meaning in the present and creating new significance for events that, in their original form, may have lacked such meaning⁶⁷. This process of historical interpretation underpins tradition in its broadest sense, as has occurred among the people inhabiting the lands now called Albania, a designation that itself is relatively recent. This idea also raises questions about the limitations of tradition: what is lost or altered in the effort to maintain an “unchanging order” amidst change? What aspects of history are selectively emphasized or suppressed, and how does this selective memory affect a society's openness to reinterpret the past in light of new experiences? Tradition, as Rüsen proposes, is conceived thus as a complex mechanism that simultaneously conserves and shapes historical understanding in cultural systems, balancing continuity with the demands of the changes of the world.

So, tradition emerges as the principle in generating historical meaning – a foundational mode of sense-making upon which all other inter-

⁶⁵ See *ibid.*

⁶⁶ See *ibid.*

⁶⁷ See K. Jaspers, *op. cit.*

puted structures of the past are built; it also acts, as stated before, as a stabilizing force, allowing identities, subjectivities and societies to interpret temporal changes without losing coherence in their worldview, thereby preserving an “order of the world” despite inevitable transformations. Within Albanian historical consciousness, this principle is manifest through the enduring relevance of the *Kanun*, this complex normative system imbued with reciprocal duties, moral imperatives, and deeply embedded codes of honor and hospitality, thus sustaining a coherent cultural ethos even in the absence of centralized state governance. This attachment to an ancient normative structure, and the myth of the Illyrian origins, illustrates how the Albanian sense of identity and historical consciousness is grounded in a mythic continuity – a constructed narrative that transcends temporal ruptures. By rooting themselves in an imagined Illyrian heritage, Albanian culture can sustain its own metarepresentation aligning ancient, medieval, and modern experiences into a unified and coherent description. Rüsen’s conception and interpretation of tradition as a principle of “sense-generation” highlights that this continuity is not passively inherited but actively necessary and made. The *Kanun* codifies values that regulate not only interpersonal conduct but also collective memory, emphasizing the host-guest relationship, the duty of blood feuds (*gjakmarrja*); such tradition transforms historical events into semiotic structures, where values and principles are continuously reinterpreted within a cultural logic that favors resilience over rupture. Thus, tradition in the Albanian context functions as both preservation and creative reconstitution, enabling individuals to navigate the tensions between enduring social obligations and the fluid demands of contemporary life. In this way, the *Kanun* – and, by extension, the broader Albanian historical consciousness – is coherent with Rüsen’s view of tradition as a mode of historical continuity that both reflects and reinforces a communal identity capable of withstanding the passage of time.

The Albanian historical past, thus, assumes an idealized, mythical attribution – a model from which the societies and culture of Albanian semiosphere continually draw to reinforce a cultural and social sense of temporal continuity. This framework allows Albanian communities to root their present identity in a coherent narrative, shaped by the semiotic codes of the *Kanun*, where principles such as *nderr*, *hospitality* and *besa*, have not only been preserved but actively reinterpreted across generations, and will be interpreted in the future. Tradition here functions as a dynamic process, where the mythic past becomes both a cultural anchor and a living organism and source of meaning, one that persists in constructing and sustaining a shared sense of identity and purpose

amidst the flux of historical change. No value judgment is intended here, neither positively nor negatively axiologizing the practices and customs prescribed and transmitted through the *Kanun*, such as *gjakmarrja*. This study is an attempt to further illuminate the historical consciousness of a semiotic community – diverse and heterogeneous – where the invention and construction of concepts like justice, morality and violence, and consequently their perception by individuals who adhere to and consent to such constructions, can be considered as given facts, without necessarily judging them. It would be particularly intriguing to explore the extent to which *Kanun*-based violence is perceived as such, considering how it appears as violence to a more Western sensibility than the Albanian one. Here, “Western” should not be understood in any essentialist sense but rather as part of the East/West opposition, functioning as a shared reference category within the encyclopedia of both the writer and the reader.

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