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PHD THESIS

CULTURE AND DIALECTICS. HEGEL'S INFLUENCE ON CONSTITUTION OF THE SCIENCES OF SPIRIT (*GEISTESWISSENSCHAFTEN*)

SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

The term *Geisteswissenschaften* has a long tradition in German culture. In its generic meaning, it refers to the most varied sciences such as ethics, economics, law, etc. The very meaning of Hegelian concept of *Geist*, covers both these types of subjects belonging to the objective spirit, and those subsumed subjective spirit (such as psychology or anthropology). In a remarkable article, Otto Pöggeler points out the difficulties of translating the concept, because we are not dealing with just a set of technicist humanities. The spirit science researcher (*der Geisteswissenschaftler*), Pöggeler explains, ,,does not just want to know how poetry looks like in East Africa, the Mediterranean or the various eras and European countries, he also ask himself what structure had the poetry (laws or religion). He is not concerned, then, only with structural theories, but also with philosophical interrogations such as: why man felt the need to be surrounded by works of art? "[1].

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[1] Otto Pöggeler, "Is there research policy making vis-à-vis the Geisteswissenschaften?", în *Zeitschrift für allgemeine Wissenschaftstheorie*, Vol. 11, Nr. 1, 1980, p. 171.

The first thing we have in mind when we speak of sciences of spirit is the differentiation from *Naturwissenschaften* – natural sciences. The extensive process of formation and sedimentation arises from here. This dichotomy implies however a crucial problem: given the different domain of objects that belong to these two types of sciences, it is necessary that they should also be separated in relation to the method of approach.

The nature of the *object* in question, the report with the knowing subject, these are problems throughout the history of metaphysics. Renunciation of the object subordination to technical schemes or in other words, to its objectivation-use, requires substantial clarification. It is clear that the attempt to comprehend the world of culture differs from the theory of knowledge applied to objects that belong to the field of activity of *Naturwissenschaften*. The philosophy of culture approach faces such radically different entities. Comprehension of the historical phenomenon, for example, cannot be done by appealing to the technical or physical-mathematical model.

Through this paper we intend to follow the influence of G.W.F. Hegel's work in this long and controversial process of transformation and consolidation of *Geisteswissenschaften*.

However, it is a complex task and therefore, we will have to establish, from the outset, a suitable and relevant method which can guide our research. The easiest way would be the historical approach. This requires following, during the history of philosophy of culture, those elements present in the writings of Hegelian thinkers that were concerned about the issue in question. It is, however, insufficient and this for at least two reasons. First, Hegelian philosophy, due to its scale, diversity of areas included into the system and, without a doubt, the difficult language through which it expresses itself, has had a series of inappropriate interpretations: some cropped, some erroneous, accusing the author of *Phenomenology of Spirit* precisely those matters he had tried to combat. Secondly, most of the authors who have resorted to speculative idealism, have borrowed concepts or arguments drawn out from the Hegelian system, which could be used to develop their own theme. These borrowings vary from theory of knowledge to elements of logic, ethics, theology or history.

Such a method cannot approach, efficiently, such problems. The ones listed so far seem to suggest rather a systematic approach. It would require the selection of a small set of concepts which could include the following: those

logical or gnoseological; those ontological of the subject and the mundane as well as their derivates which explain problems such as: the possibility of free action, the organic structure of the course of world history, the role of culture and formation (*Bildung*) within civilization, and so on. Then, taking as point of reference their true Hegelian meaning, we should pursue the development and transformation operated by those authors whose contributions are valued in the foundation of *Geisteswissenschaften*.

But also this strategy faces a major challenge. Any philosopher, in order to take over or reject a borrowed notion, operates an interpretation of the original source. This, Gadamer teaches us, is led in a lesser or greater extent, by the concerns or interrogations to which the author seeks to find an answer, as well as his own prejudices (more or less active and visible). In the case of Hegel's writings, the interpretations are among the most varied. Let us think of the concept of *spirit*, understood in its theological substrate by the thinkers of the right wing Hegelian and, as a purely human phenomenon, by a left wing Hegelian as Ludwig Feuerbach at the mid-nineteenth century or, over a hundred years, like Alexandre Kojève. Let us think also at the relationship between individual and universal,

or divine, whose wrong treating was imputed to Hegel by Schleiermacher (the latter considers a viable and inevitable solution the appeal to sentiment). We can wonder, however, if not the principled preconception against the speculative and, why not, the pride conflicts within the University of Berlin, are the ones who have caused the renowned initiator of hermeneutics to look at the works of his colleague through a distorted prism.

Finally, we cannot sidestep the fact that a systematic approach would lose sight of the very interesting route, which Hegel thoughts have followed, facing the historicism initiated by Ranke, with the development of philosophical hermeneutics by Schleiermacher or Dilthey and the empiricist and rational-critical temptation of the School of Baden or with the dialectical materialism, viewed as his reversal. Each of these authors has maintained a critical debate with Hegel, have taken over basic concepts or their consequences (sometimes separating them from their original foundation), have adapted and tried to solve what they considered to be wrong in the system of absolute idealism.

From those shown so far, we can draw two conclusions. First, we do not deal with, as we might expect, with a linear

Hegelian influence, strongly felt in early stage (during the German philosopher's life and in the immediate following period), then decreasing, gradually, gradually, in intensity, over time. We cannot identify a set of harnessed ideas and principles in the first half of the nineteenth century and transmitted, in a processed form and readjusted to the next generations. On the contrary, Hegel's work reception follows a route that would not be wrong if we call it dialectical. We encounter and explosion of Hegelianism in the years in which the author of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* was teaching at the University of Berlin and at most two decades after his death. The efforts of establishing the sciences of spirit were channeled, however, soon after 1850, against absolute idealism. The parting from Hegel, initiated by authors like Friedrich Schleiermacher, Leopold von Ranke or Hermann Lotze, was deepened within the Neo-Kantian School of Baden. Her representatives, concerned with strengthen her principles, considered the speculative approach ineffective. The logical rigidity, the univocity of spiritual perspective upon reality, removed the possibility, according to Wilhelm Windelband interpretation or, the more radical one of Heinrich Rickert, to capture the concrete individual. Moreover, since the concept of *spirit* came to be

regarded as abstract and surreal, the term *Geisteswissenschaften* has been replaced by *Kulturwissenschaft*. But we cannot overlook the impact, even negative, which the Hegelian doctrine had. For the new proposed solutions were not built independently, but through confrontation and a constant struggle to overcome it. The failure of solving apories such as the subject involved in the research of past phenomena or scientific objectivity have led however, in the period to follow, to the reevaluation of Hegel's philosophy. In light of twentieth century questions, a number of important thinkers (of which we could mention Karl Marx, H.-G. Gadamer, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee) have brought back to the forefront of European culture the Hegelian philosophical system, substantially improving the comprehension of which it had until then part.

This aspect is targeted by our second conclusion, namely: the interpretations on which the system was rejected were often flawed - the concepts were taken out of context, being regarded as definitive and not as moments whose meaning was to be reviewed along with the final stage of knowledge to which consciousness arises; the complex series of interconnections has been minimized; the author's realism has been overlooked, by amplifying the panlogism preconception.

All of this caused the loss of the speculative core which could have guided, in that period, the sedimentation of new social sciences. Its potential is demonstrated by the new approaches which, in our opinion, can still be fructified. That being said, it remains open the question regarding the way in which must be undertaken the research we announced in the title. The solution to which we headed is suggested by the author of *Truth and Method*. He makes us aware of two things. The first, already mentioned: the understanding is initiated through the interpreter's questions, generated by the present time within which he establishes the project. They will be confronted, along the way, with those which the author has tried, in its time, to answer them, improving in this way, gradually, his own comprehension. Analysis of Hegel's influence is guided by contemporary interrogations and requires a response to them. Second, Gadamer demonstrates that, before the labor of understanding and re-understanding, we are already in possession of a pre-interpretation. If we address the proposed topic historically, we will be blocked when we should look critically at the way in which these authors adopt or denounce the Hegelian concepts. Because we should already have at our disposal an introductory device depicting, completely, Hegelian

doctrine regarding the problems of sciences of the spirit. In reality however, we are not in possession of a template that we can apply, for example, to Rickert criticism and through which we can conclude the error, because our understanding of Hegel's corpus is a current one, one which has developed precisely through the confrontation with the issues raised by these thinkers. The present of Hegel's understanding presupposes, in other words, the answer to their criticism or yielding to the proposed ideas. From this vicious circle we can find a way out through dialectic hermeneutic. Finally, the goal we have set in the title of this paper cannot be achieved without being supplemented by a hermeneutic reconstruction of the Hegelian model, still actual and liable of new revaluations.

Based on the already mentioned, we decided to structure the present research in the following four sections:

(I) The philosophy of history. Genesis of spirit sciences. The path to their foundation was opened by the precursors of philosophy of history. Efforts to understand the past, coming from authors such as Giambattista Vico or Herder, have highlighted, on the one hand, a number of central problems which must be dealt with, otherwise, the research of social field would remain incomplete and chaotic. On the other hand, their

intellectual concerns are the basis from which it will spread the branches of human sciences. How would it be possible, for example, a speech based on the topic of political action without the author's possession of a clear and consistent understanding of the particularity and individuality of European cultures, of the relationship between nature and human development or historic character of the individual? Circumscribing the direction of thinking of Hegelian philosophy's precursors (focused on those specific elements which will be resumed under *Geisteswissenschaften*) was the subject of the first chapter of our paper. It helped us to see, afterwards, the originality and depth of answers given by Hegel. The organic structure of universal history for instance, described by Vico and Herder, was embedded in the speculative system and explained on the strong basis of historical philosophy's principles (themselves caught in the logic of self-determination, and not deducted from artificial metaphysical elements or constructed through induction on contingent empirical data). We tried to discern, at the same time, the way in which interrogations such as the one regarding the relationship between universal and particular or between freedom and necessity, have been discussed by them. Immanuel Kant, for example, was concerned with clarifying the concept of

freedom, the teleology of history or the very possibility to write a universal history. All through the results of his critical philosophy; hence the important relationship between transcendental idealism and philosophy of spirit. Because, for Hegel, exceeding the gnoseologic limits of intellect and reason, imposed by Kant, was a heavy touchstone. Likewise, the confrontation with the new current of historicism emerged from Schelling's system. But he did not face only these two directions. His thinking has developed in reaction, on one side, against *Aufklärung*'s rationalism and on the other side, against romantic sentimentality. Overcoming the separation between intellect and sentiment (considered to be, by the latter, the only way to capture the Absolute), was a concern that brought him closer to Goethe. Yet their methods differ radically, and therefore, we cannot talk about a consistent influence exerted on each other. Instead, something else requires our attention, namely, what we have called, in the second chapter, the Napoleon case. The contradiction we had to deal with can be described in the following terms: on the one hand, for Goethe, the demonic Napoleon embodies the agent which, acting freely, has the ability to change the course of history. On the other hand, Napoleon, in the view of the great Russian writer Lev

Tolstoi, he cannot change it through its own volition. On the contrary, he is subject to *fate*. The solution to this difference in perspective, we have noticed, is given by Hegel (which, at first glance, would seem to support the thesis of Goethe through his famous phrase, Napoleon *the soul of the world on horseback*). From this we derived two important conclusions. 1. The possibility of free agent to act (the complete explanation emerges once with the reconstruction undertaken in the last section). 2. The comprehensive side of Hegelian concept of freedom. They have led us to look with caution on those authors who maintain that speculative implies the individual determinism. I entitled, metaphorically, the second section of the paper (II) *Parting from Hegel* keeping in mind the direction toward which the efforts were channeled to establish the sciences of spirit. We already stated: the parting started during the German philosopher's life, being generated, sometimes, and of personal vanities. This is the case of the conflict with his colleague from University of Berlin - Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Historicism and hermeneutics without speculative is the title of the third chapter in which I followed the confrontations led against Hegelian idealism by Schleiermacher, Leopold von Ranke and Wilhelm Dilthey. They

were followed by the famous clash of methods (*Methodenstreit*). Neo-Kantian School of Baden had a substantial role in the development of sciences of spirit, giving them a critical orientation centered on the possibility of objectivity. The alternative through which it was intended the overcoming of dialectics was the axiological type of the knowledge theory. The idea of a comprehension of world with the help of values was already stated by Hermann Lotze. The latter, vehemently rejecting the possibility of idealist system and considering speculative reason an artificial construct, had tried founding axiology on the basis of esthetic judgments and pragmatic value of beautiful. The impact was however narrower than he would hoped to be and the next generation had taken over the generic concept of value, the particular way in which we encounter it in culture, but completely abandoning the aesthetic component.

We discussed in the fourth chapter (Objectivity in sciences of spirit) the developments of Wilhelm Windelbands, Henrick Rickert and Max Weber to this intellectual direction. However, we cannot overlook the fact that the interpretation operated by this authors upon Hegel's writings was, not infrequently, brief and truncated. The author of *Phenomenology*

of Spirit does not eliminate individual freedom, subscribing the action of free agent in the abstract logic of spirit as they claimed; he did deducted, outside of concrete reality, the individual from universal, but on the contrary, he sought his self-appearance on the basis on constant reporting of concept to mundane, of consciousness to historical world. Final reconstruction of Hegelian model will demonstrate all of these more clearly. We will use, then, important clues brought to light within the revaluation of speculative idealism which took place in the dawn of contemporary age. We will see then how Hegel's answer to Kantian critic idealism fits also to the direction of thinking of the authors mentioned. Namely: in will not end up in relativism and subjectivism because their theory is wrong or restricted (by virtue of human potential of critical knowledge), but because it uses limited knowledge faculties and therefore, inferior. Let us remember that, regarding to Kant's philosophy, Hegel said that the intellect cannot capture the absolute, not because it is human intellect, but because it is intellect in general, therefore, a limited faculty of knowledge which is located on a lower position to speculative reason. Therefore, it is denied the possibility to capture that superior unity. We have reviewed in the last part of this section, the particular way in

which Émile Durkheim and Ernst Cassirer approached the dialectical philosophy of Hegel. The first caught our attention because of substantial merits within the consolidation of modern sociology. The latter, as representative of the Marburg School (much closer to positivism than that of Baden), distances himself from the general direction of this School when envisages the theory of symbolic forms and, hence, the sciences of culture (like the neo-Kantians of Baden, he decides to use the term *Kulturwissenschaft* in place of *Geisteswissenschaften*, although his philosophical conception does not inspire from there). It is remarkable the manner in which he conceives the stages of symbolic forms and also their relationship in dialectical form and also, the expressed desire for a phenomenology in the Hegelian's sense of the notion, and not the one used by Edmund Husserl.

The return to Hegel, already announced, can be easily noticed in the works of Karl Marx. This is why I dedicated the first chapter of the third section (III. *Back to Hegel*) to the report between speculative idealism and dialectical materialism. Unlike the Baden neo-Kantians who refused, in principle, absolute idealism, Marx opposes the dialectical economic theory. Authors like Windelband and Rickert attempted to solve

the cultural problems sprung from the soil of German classical philosophy, constructing a new method designed to overcome what they considered to be the formalism of speculative idealism. Dialectical materialism takes and capitalizes, on the contrary, Hegelian methodological and ontological structures, continuing in this way the thinking of young left Hegelians and bringing back to the fore Hegel's philosophical system. Karl Marx, although he gives up from the outset at the idea of system, is not content to adopt just a few isolated results but bases its critical apparatus including substantial speculative methodological elements. We aimed to determine, at the same time, whether the report between the two thinkers is one of opposition, complementarity or inclusion. The option for which I argued was the latter. Therefore, we talked about Hegelian idealism as general dialectics, whose possible branch (presumed by the movement of spirit) aims at the modern capitalism and its economic forms and we have named Marx's undertaken from *Capital*, „regional dialectic". Like a particular science, it develops (critic and real) a *particular* moment. Along with the actual work of Marx, the current initiated by it in France, led to the discovery, for instance, through the works of Jean Hyppolite and Jean Wahl, in the 30's, of a still present Hegel. His early

writings were revalued by the latter, being described not as a rigid and abstract system constructor, meant to subject the reality to logic figments, but as an author with great power of sensing vitality. Critical works of young Marx dedicated to Hegel's philosophy and Lenin's notebooks on dialectics, contributed also to the shaping of a more favorable image than that through which speculative idealism was interpreted as panlogism and accused of missing the problem of concrete individuality. Alexandre Kojève, following this direction, made a major contribution to this movement. Unlike Hyppolite's explanations, his undertaking was an act of interpretation under the direction of left wing, but one which reveals much more, than other studies, of the true Hegel.

Next chapter follows the great work of Nicolai Hartmann - *Das problem des geistigen Seins*. The appeal to Hegel is here defining and his criticism is more founded than those of his precursors. That is why I resumed and used, as a model within reconstruction, the twelve principles of Hegel's philosophy of history, identified at the beginning of the work mentioned.

In the last chapter of this section we investigated Hegel's influence upon H.-G. Gadamer's hermeneutics. The connection

the latter makes between Martin Heidegger's phenomenology and speculative dialectic is essential to the development of sciences of culture. We also obtain on its bases, the most important elements of reconstruction. Once with Gadamer, we discover how the depth structures of absolute idealism come to offer real solutions for the deadlock in which the *Geisteswissenschaften* were. Philosophical hermeneutics has as its subject comprehension. Gadamer explains, however, from the beginning, that it cannot be obtained as a result of a mechanical process, borrowed from outside. The conjunction from *Truth and Method*, if through method we designate the process of technical and scientific objectivation, refers rather to *Truth* without *method*. Removed from epistemic influence, the sense of truth is also altered. *Truth* without *method* no longer signify, therefore, *Truth* (correspondances/*adequatio rei et intellectus*) without *method*, but something else. The road followed by the subject (and we shall see to what extent we can talk about the subject) in order to reach it is the one of experience. Gadamer's appeal to the Hegelian concept is justified by the need to find an intrinsic way of discovery the aimed phenomenon. Ontological-speculative structure of experience excludes the arbitrariness of interpretation. Let us

consider the „circle of understanding" and the double question that orients it (the question posed by the subject, whose answer must be given by the aimed object [the motivation of understanding] and the question due to which the object was brought to being). We used the notion of „hermeneutic balance" to highlight the orientation, depending on the present, of comprehension but, in the same time, to draw the limits of this starting point as well as to clarify the possible interpretative errors that can be generated. Pursuing the gadamerian development, I argued the importance of taking over Hegelian dialectic into the domain of comprehension and hence, the way in which it develops the determinants of understanding. I then passed from the domain hermeneutics action to that of the subject. I demonstrated that, although the subjectivity of the subject has deep roots in Martin Heidegger's phenomenology of being, it cannot perform its task without ontological substrate taken from Hegel. The double concept of truth that we have reached in the final part of this chapter, clarifies the possibility of revealing the complex hermeneutic phenomenon and answers, in the same time, to possible objections regarding the rigor and verification criteria of understanding. I named, making use of the phrase *experience of truth*, the way through which the

text (the bearer of a truth), but also of the historical event or aesthetic object, is brought into the present and un-veiled. *The truth of experience* indicates the final event of understanding. We can illustrate the difference by appealing to the concept of *applicability*. In the first case it has the role of distinguish (and capitalize) prejudices, respectively the expectations (involuntary or voluntary) of the subject. In the second case, the meaning is of participation. *Applicability* involves generating the future time horizon (openness towards a broader experience, on a higher level - thus avoiding *false infinity*). Both concepts have indeed proved to be possible due to: 1. Ontological foundation of language. Based on the speculative type of mundane relationship, hermeneutics justifies its universal coverage. 2. The subjectivity of the hermeneutic subject, by which we have considered: 2.1. temporality (due to which it can be achieved the merging of horizons); 2.2. intersubjectivity/ spirituality of subject (comprehension's ground of tradition through which the object is transmitted and leaves its mark, from the outset, upon interpretation); 2.3. mutual affecting with the object holder of truth (in the Hegelian sense).

The last section, (IV) *The Hegelian model of sciences of spirit*, aims at the reconstruction of speculative theory of cultural

sciences. It was possible based on the results obtained from the confrontations and revaluations at which Hegelian idealism was subjected. Thus, we were able to resume and better explain the solutions for previously encountered problems. As central landmark, we took into account the last sequence of Hegel's system: the possibility of absolute knowledge, understood, by many authors, as something unreal and exaggerated. In the first part we intended to circumscribe the development given by Hegel, in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, to the concept of culture (*Bildung*), as *self-alienated spirit*. We pursued also the consequences, very current, involved by his approach (cultural maladies like the appearances of adulatory language [which has strengthened many disastrous political systems] or irrational use of the concept of *utility* or *freedom*).

I placed at the foundation of speculative theory of cultural sciences (chapter X), the interconnection of philosophy of history's principles scheme, borrowed from Nicolai Hartmann, reorganized and completed according to our aimed goal. Using it as a comprehensive instrument, ne tried to expose the Hegelian theory of concept. In this undertaking we followed: 1. the movement of the concept towards absolute knowledge, 2. the process of derivation of the connection between subject and

object, 3. the possibility of absolute knowledge. This last issue has emerged from two considerations. First, born during the discussion regarding Hegel's influence upon Gadamer's hermeneutics: consciousness understood as *Bewußt-sein*, as fact-of-being-conscious (whose role I highlighted when I explained the concept of culture/formation [*Bildung*]). The second aspect concerns the comprehensive side of the concept of freedom. Consciousness is free on the last level of her paideic development: when it is aware of her own spirituality, when she had internalized the exceeded stages, but which are also preserved (*Aufhebung*), when she knows those are, in reality, outsourcing of absolute Idea, when she finally holds the whole system of interconnections and understands (*Verstehen*) the reality through their collaboration. From this position, her action coincides with the logic-real path of spirit of the world. I have entitled this chapter *From the concept of internalization (Erinnerung) to arch-inclusion*. Through the last notion (to which we reached, likewise, following Hegelian's ground of Gadamer's hermeneutics) we intended to clarify the meaning in which Hegel speaks of absolute knowledge. To show, in other words, that is not something like a transcendent all-knowing, but a superior form, but accessible, of understanding the complexity

of becoming. In the next three chapters we followed: derivation of the state and universal history on the basis of the logic of concept; the report between universal and particular and the way in which Hegel maintains the unique and real character of the individual; philosophy of freedom. We have demonstrated, contrary to previous criticism, that in Hegel's philosophy: the spirit would not exist without concrete and free actants; the spirit of the world (*Weltgeist*) is not a deterministic artificial construct; we do not have to deal, in his case, with logical abstractions, but with a real development. The reflexive often used by Hegel, (consciousness [or knowledge] *it self-develops*, spirit *it self-determines*, etc) suggests, in a metaphorical manner, the necessity of becoming according to the concept (himself gradually revealed, not established, from the beginning, as *positum* arbitrary). In the case of history, for instance, becoming and objectification of the Idea of freedom *must* happen. It is rational for this to happen in reality. But if the opposite occurs, society stagnates, it is taken out of history; as indeed it happens, as Hegel observes, in the case of many cultures. Without the „engine" of the free individual agent, although they grasp the contradiction, they remain frozen.

The least fructified, in philosophy's history, was just this last part of the system: absolute knowledge or, as we preferred to name it, *arch-inclusion*. Moreover, neither Gadamer exploited it, considering it impossible to reach. Naturally, he was looking through the hermeneutic process undertaken upon the complex object transmitted by tradition, to which we cannot claim a complete and final comprehension, but rather, a circular one. The arch-inclusion knowledge presupposes more than that. It must be put in the center of speculative model of sciences of spirit for the following meanings involved: that inclusiveness that knows the interconnections and takes them into account; which acknowledges and, being aware, has in her possession the science of concept, the way in which he develops through a double movement: logical-speculative and real-dialectic (through experience). Knows, for instance, the real meaning of spirit's reflexivity and understands the importance of action, without which it will be a mere actor, not its actant. Through the arch-knowledge he holds an understanding of the historical nature of the present and it can project, on her basis, the future. He also understands all of these not as mere theoretical statements, but through the various forms and examples that she takes in the real world.