THE LOGOS BETWEEN CRITIQUE AND GENETICS

The Greek word *logos* has found its way into the technico-scientific culture of our day via the derived term *logic* that Nietzsche, linking it with the will for truth, defined as the attempt to determine the world in accordance with a pattern of Being and rendering it calculable.¹

Nietzsche also wrote that logic is derived from “a dominant impulse to treat similar things as alike”.² Face to face with things that are numerous and differentiated, the dominant impulse is to stop their procession and reduce them to satisfy a need for reassurance. Indeed, identifying things is to fix their likenesses in such a way that all difference is compressed into a few and constant “identities” and to establish units of measure by means of the logico-mathematical method, applying them to the largest possible number of cases: in either way, things are thus reduced to variants of the ever repeated identical.

But the term *logos* involves also the person who produces ordered knowledge, rather, it unites him with these “products” of his in such a way that – seeing that logic holds supreme sway – he himself is *logos*. Personified in this manner, the *logos* tends to take the place of the man, hides him from sight, makes him incapable of recognizing himself in the “things” he has brought into being, rendering the world equal to himself. Man no longer feels the need for questioning himself about his life and his disturbing progress towards the death he calls time.

In fact, time itself has been determined and rendered calculable in the objective views of scientized history (among which one must include also the evolutionist view) and seems foreseeable in accordance with the laws of historicist reason, so much so as to have become functional for the sciences that concern themselves “impersonally” with man and yet elude the ultimate questions. Logos-man, producer of objective knowledge, wants to dominate time to take his distance from the fecund flow of life, so that he may observe it and explain (or “unfold”) it, i.e., make it flow in an orderly manner, starting from the “folds” he has impressed on it by superimposing his own hypostasis. Nevertheless, since he himself – as a living being – finds himself immersed in this flow, he can neither transcend time nor really determine it. A living being,
in fact, experiences not only immanent time, but also the time constituted among the living (who are like him), and so-called objective determination is but a part, and not even the greater part, of this intersubjective constitution.

Husserlian phenomenology has clarified this temporal being of ours, has taken away from the sciences and restored to philosophy the questions connected with it: here, therefore, philosophy has to bring its critical force into play to unmask the dominion of logic and to pose once again the decisive questions about life and death. Before phenomenological ontology there has thus opened the great field of the senses of being, the field of the new logos of life that is the consciousness of internal time.

Husserl set himself the difficult first task of analyzing this consciousness, but was well aware that from this there would inevitably derive another closely connected task: to inquire into the genesis of the psychophysical “I”. Indeed, it is precisely this empirical “I”, coincident with every subject in the world, with every living “I”, that experiences time as an immanent flow of memorizations, presentifications and expectations, and therefore as a total unity of his lived experience. And it is for this living “I” that the idea of a subjectively constituted sense of time is valid as his personal consciousness of time flows within his experience.

As a result of his genetic analyses, nevertheless, Husserl came to see in this further task of phenomenology a “superior dimension” of problems concerning coming-into-the world and generative connections: “Does one not have to see in all this the more serious and essential problems of a phenomenology constitutive as transcendental philosophy?” But, as he did not fail to add, these problems were very premature at the initial stage in which phenomenological research found itself at the time.3

And yet, as one can note in this selfsame quotation, this brief indication already contained a philosophical question regarding everything that in principle precedes and renders possible – through the “generative connections” – the constitutive consciousness of the empirical “I”, with the perspective sensitivity that is inherent in it and the corporeal complex to which it is bound in the form of physical dependence, and also with one’s own “empathy” that links it to the extraneous “I” in the world.