

IGNACIO ELLACURÍA'S *PHILOSOPHY OF
HISTORICAL REALITY*:
BEYOND THE HEGELIAN-MARXIAN
DIALECTIC AND THE ZUBIRIAN
RADICALIZATION OF SCHOLASTIC REALISM

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Abstract

The fundamental task of *Filosofía de la realidad histórica* (*Philosophy of Historical Reality*) is to put forth historical reality as the ultimate manifestation of reality, as the proper object of philosophy. Ellacuría develops the concept of historical reality as the synthesis of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic and Xavier Zubiri's radicalization of Scholastic realism. Historical reality is physical, not conceptual; material, not ideal; concrete, not abstract. Historical reality encompasses the material, biological, individual, and social moments of reality. And when it is considered in its totality, as a dynamic and differentiated structure of its moments, functions, and relations, historical reality forms a transcendental system—intramundane metaphysics.

Have we today forgotten the assassination of Ignacio Ellacuría? Does the primacy of global liberal-democratic capitalism not suggest that the answer is “yes”? Have we today forgotten the radical nature of the fundamental task of Ellacuría's *magnum opus*? Does the dissimulation of liberation theology as most recently expressed through the postmodern turn to the plurality of particulars not suggest that, once again, the answer is “yes” (Mejido 2005)? The back-and-forth between global liberal-democratic capitalism and postmodern thought, this is the current situation (Žižek); and this is what has led to the eclipse of the fundamental task of *Philosophy of Historical Reality*.

In what follows, despite the current situation, indeed, against it, we will attempt to bring forth this fundamental task. But what exactly is this task? And what elements are at play? Two excerpts taken from the Conclusion of *Philosophy of Historical Reality* can perhaps begin to answer these questions and thus orient our investigations:

Historical reality, when dynamically and concretely considered, contains an element of praxis that, together with other criteria, leads to the truth of reality as well as to the truth of the interpretation of reality. This is not so much Vico's equivalence between the *verum* and the *factum*, but rather an equivalence between the *verum* and the *faciendum*. The truth of reality is not what is already made; this is only a part of reality. If we do not consider what is being made and what still needs to be made, the truth of reality will escape us. The truth needs to be made, and this does not simply mean to execute, to realize what is already known, but rather to make that reality which, through the interaction of praxis and theory, manifests itself as the truth. That reality and the truth need to be made and discovered, and that they need to be made and discovered in the collective and successive ensemble of history, of humanity is to suggest that historical reality can be made the object of philosophy. (Ellacuría, 1990a, 599)

It is clear that Ellacuría situates the problem of knowledge in the horizon of history: It is by going through "historical reality," and, in particular, its element of "praxis," that we arrive at the questions of "reality," "truth," and "interpretation." We should note right away that it is not a question of the reality of truth, but rather of the truth of reality. What is primordial for Ellacuría is reality, and truth is but a moment. And it is not a question of the interpretation of reality as truth, as if the intellectual task of interpreting is given pride-of-place over reality, as if the subsumption of reality under this or that interpretation is what generates truth. No. It is rather a question of the truth of interpreted reality, a question of the truth of the interpretation of reality. But, this having been said, how are we to understand the distinction Ellacuría draws between the "truth of reality" and the "truth of the interpretation of reality"?

This distinction is an attempt to get at the problem of the historical hermeneutic reduction of reality to interpretation. Ellacuría's point is that the truth of reality cannot be reduced to the truth of the

interpretation of reality, that the truth of the interpretation of reality is but one aspect of the truth of reality, indeed that the interpretation of reality should have reality as its basis. This is precisely why he objects to Giambattista Vico's hermeneutical principle, the equivalence between the *verum* and the *factum*.¹ For Ellacuría does agree with Vico to the extent that for him too knowing the truth about something is always knowing it in and through what is made by us—history, culture, the social. That is, Ellacuría agrees with that historical-hermeneutic tradition that began with Vico and can be traced through, for example, Friedrich Schleiermacher's "empathetic" recreation,² Wilhelm Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften*,³ and Martin Heidegger's analytics of *Dasein*,⁴ in the sense that for him, too, the knowledge of things we make are the basis of all knowledge, the basis, for example, of the knowledge of created things, in the sense that for him too, for example, nature is always known in and through history—indeed, that nomological explanations are ultimately always grounded in hermeneutical interpretations.

Yet Ellacuría breaks with this historical-hermeneutical tradition to the extent that he does not limit the question of the truth of reality to "what is already made"—for "this is only part of reality." He tells us that we also need to consider "what is being made and what still needs to be made": We need to replace the *factum* with the *faciendum*; the equivalence is rather between the "*verum* and the *faciendum*." But Ellacuría's point is not simply that we need to interpret what is being "made" in its making, for this would be to reduce "making" to interpreting, this would be to reduce "the truth of reality" to "the truth of the interpretation of reality." The point is much more fundamental: Ellacuría does not understand "making" through the restricted historical-hermeneutical category of interaction. He understands it rather from the perspective of the Hegelian-Marxian *dialectic*, and specifically through the Marxian idea of the *synthetic activity of social labor*. That is, Ellacuría understands "making" as being constituted by the dialectic of interaction and labor, *praxis* and *poiesis* as it takes form through the self-formative process of the human species, as it takes form in and through historical reality.

Thus, when Ellacuría says that "the truth needs to be made" he does not simply mean that an interpretation needs to be "made," as if

historical reality and its truth were reducible to the meaning of what the historical-hermeneutic tradition has termed the “lifeworld” (Habermas 1987). No. Rather, that “the truth needs to be made” means here that a transformation of historical reality in its totality—lifeworld and its material substratum—needs to be “made,” a transformation through both interaction and labor, a transformation in which the intellectual interpretative interaction is but a moment. That this social theoretical reading is correct is substantiated by Ellacuría’s claim that we need to “make that reality which, through the dialectic of praxis and theory, manifests itself as truth”: “Praxis,” here refers not just to interaction but rather to social labor, or to the dialectic of interaction and labor; while “theory” refers to the interpretative task, which is itself a moment, an intellectual moment, of interaction. “Praxis” and “theory” correspond to the “making” and “discovering” of the truth of reality, the truth of historical reality: The interpretative task “discovers” the truth of the interpretation of historical reality by reflectively grasping itself as being constituted by, and mediated through the totality of social labor. And it works toward the praxeological “making” of the truth of historical reality when it dialectically makes its “discovery” in the interest of the transformation of historical reality into the truth it aims to discover. But the appropriation of the Marxian idea of the synthetic activity of social labor is not the only element at play in the fundamental task of *Philosophy of Historical Reality*. Let us consider a second excerpt:

Historical reality is that moment of reality that is open and innovative per excellence. If there exists such a thing as an aperture to transcendence this would be history. Intramundane metaphysics cannot close-in upon itself precisely because history is open, because reality is itself dynamic and open and it has been so up until that moment it became history, and from history it is open to what is not necessarily nor exclusively intramundane. (Ellacuría 1990a, 600)

“Historical reality” is a “moment of reality,” Ellacuría tells us. Just as it was not a question of reality as truth, but the truth of reality, and just as it was not a question of the reality of interpreted truth, but the truth of the interpretation of reality, in the same way, it is not a question of history as reality, but rather of reality as history. Historical reality means here strictly the historical moment of reality: It is

history that emerges from reality and not reality from history. But do we know what Ellacuría means by “reality”? Do we understand the radical implications of his use of this category “reality”? For it is not a question of being as reality (Aquinas; Suárez); nor is it a question of reality for consciousness (Kant), reality for *Dasein* (Heidegger), or the reality of language (Gadamer). No. Reality is primordial, and being, consciousness, *Dasein*, and language are moments—they are grounded in reality.

The reality which Ellacuría is referring to, moreover, is physical not conceptual, material not ideal, concrete not abstract; and when it is considered as a totality, as a dynamic and differentiated structure of moments, functions, and relations it forms a transcendental system, a transcendental system he calls “intramundane metaphysics.” Ellacuría derives his understanding of the category “reality” and the idea of an “intramundane metaphysics” from the horizon opened up by Xavier Zubiri’s radicalization of Scholastic realism: That is, with Zubiri, Ellacuría understands “reality” to be the “*de suyo que consiste en dar de sí*” (“in its own right that consists in giving of itself”), the *primum cognitum*, and “intramundane metaphysics” to be the proper object of philosophy. The difference is that while Zubiri understands the question of reality theoretically such that, for example, the question of historical reality is one aspect of the formal question of reality, Ellacuría grasps the question of reality praxeologically such that, as we saw above, for Ellacuría the question of reality is posed in and through, and is dialectically involved in the “making” of historical reality. Indeed for Ellacuría it is reality qua historical reality that mediates all questions of reality. Here the importance of the Hegelian-Marxian perspective is clear.

Not material reality, not physico-chemical reality, not biological reality, not even individual personal reality, but historical reality is the “moment of reality that is open and innovative per excellence.” All moments of reality, it is true, as Zubiri argued, are open, are transcendental each in their own way, to the extent that, as reality, they consist in a *dar de sí*. That this is the case is clear from, for example, Werner Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle (1999), or Charles Darwin’s idea of Natural Selection (1998). Ellacuría’s claim, however, is that it is the historical moment of reality that manifests the greatest openness, the

greatest transcendentality. The aperture of historical reality is qualitatively greater than the aperture of all the other moments of reality not just because historical reality encompasses all these other moments, but because it encompasses them by transforming them in and through “making.” Indeed, historical reality is that “moment of reality that is open and innovative per excellence” precisely because its openness and innovativeness is “made” in and through the transformation of all the other moments. And here it is important to distinguish Ellacuría’s position from two others: On the one hand, it is clear that, for Ellacuría, historical reality is not open as a process as if, for example, history was simply the continuation of the process of evolution (Malthus; Spencer), or a moment of some greater phenomenological process (Teilhard de Chardin; Whitehead). No. Historical reality is open not as a process but as a making: Historical reality is open because it makes history through the transformation of the process of nature. The problem with evolutionary and phenomenological interpretations of history is that they abstract the making of history from historical reality; they fail to see how they themselves are mediated through this making, how they themselves have a place in this making.

On the other hand, it is also clear that, for Ellacuría, the making of the aperture of history is not determined by certain laws of making.⁵ No: “Intramundane metaphysics cannot close-in upon itself precisely because history is open, because reality is itself dynamic and open and it has been so up until that moment it became history, and from history it is open to what is not necessarily, nor exclusively intramundane.” Historical reality can make its openness only because history itself is open, open to the future. As the realm of freedom history is not bound by nomological principles. But this freedom, which is always a historical freedom, does not just exist—it needs to be made. Historical reality is the freedom to make and the making of freedom: While the freedom to make is what distinguishes historical reality from nature, the making of freedom is what distinguishes some historical realities from others. And here the difference between potential and actual freedom, potential and actual openness becomes germane and separates Ellacuría from all existentialist doctrines (Kierkegaard; Sartre). For, although historical reality is potentially open, this potentiality

must be actualized in and through making. Here once again we see the importance of the Hegelian-Marxian perspective.

It should be clear from our unraveling of the two excerpts that the fundamental task of *Philosophy of Historical Reality* is to elucidate historical reality qua intramundane metaphysics as the ultimate manifestation of reality, as the proper object of philosophy. It should also be clear that Ellacuría aims to achieve this task through a synthesis of, on the one hand, the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic, and specifically Marx's idea of the synthetic activity of social labor, and, on the other, Zubiri's idea of reality as the *de suyo que consiste en dar de sí*, as the *primum cognitum*. But what exactly constitutes the radical nature of this task? The answer to this question is implicit in what we have already developed, it is implicit in Ellacuría's turn to Hegel, Marx and Zubiri, it is implicit in Ellacuría's synthesis: The radicalness of the fundamental task of *Philosophy of Historical Reality* is its attempt to overcome the idealism of Western thought, not as an abstract intellectualized project, but to the extent that this idealism has, on the one hand, impeded the development of the Latin American philosophies and theologies of liberation, and, on the other, to the extent that it has ideologically legitimated the hegemony of liberal-democratic capitalism as the latest moment of the dialectic of the Americas.

Let us now, in broad strokes, elucidate the Hegelian-Marxian and Zubirian horizons and see how each, in its own way, is an attempt to overcome the idealism of Western thought. This will allow us to then see how Ellacuría's synthesis pushes beyond, indeed is a radicalization of the Hegelian-Marxian and Zubirian horizons.

The Hegelian-Marxian Horizon

How did Hegel and Marx understand the idealism of Western thought? Why was this idealism a problem for them? And how did they each attempt to overcome it? These are the questions we must address if we are to understand Ellacuría's appropriation of Hegel and Marx.

Hegel understood the idealism of Western thought as Transcendental Idealism, that doctrine developed by Kant and radicalized by F. W. J. Schelling and J. G. Fichte (Hegel 1977a). Transcendental Idealism was a problem, Hegel argued, because it reduced reason to the abstract universality of self-consciousness, the substantiality of

spirit to the subjectivity of the subject (Hegel 1977b)—a reduction that manifested itself, for example, as the subordination of metaphysics to mathematics (Hegel 1969), and as the subordination of the “ethical life” to individual morality (Hegel 1952). Hegel attempts to overcome Transcendental Idealism by phenomenologically grasping the self-formation of thought as it is mediated by the unfolding of being which thought itself, as a moment of this unfolding, uncovers. This is the Hegelian *dialectic* which is not a method but an ontology: Indeed, the structure of thought for Hegel is dialectical because being itself is dialectical (Kojève).

We could thus say that for Hegel the idealism of Western thought ultimately manifests itself as the illusion of immediate knowledge. The dialectic is what brings to the fore and also overcomes the problem of the mediation of knowledge. Only when knowledge is dialectically grasped as it is mediated by its self-formation will the spurious linearity of scientific advance achieve a genuine circularity: For “then, the beginning loses the one-sidedness which attaches to it as something simply immediate and abstract; it becomes something mediated, and hence the line of the scientific advance becomes a circle” (Hegel 1969, Article 104). The early Jürgen Habermas has shown how the Hegelian dialectic—in the mode of the phenomenology of consciousness—unmasks the presuppositions undergirding the Kantian philosophy, thus opening the door to the radical critique of epistemology.⁶ And, if we had space here we could also show how Hegel’s dialectic is an attempt to bring forth and overcome the problem of finitude, or, more specifically, the problem of the *spurious infinite*.⁷

Marx, on the other hand, understood the idealism of Western thought as the philosophy of identity (which included the Hegelian system). The philosophy of identity was a problem Marx argued because it reduced nature to mind (Marx 1975a)—a reduction that manifested itself, for example, as the subsumption of the “species-being” under the “abstract citizen” (Marx 1975b), and through the fallacious, “Robinson Crusoe assumptions” of the eighteenth-century political economists—e.g., Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and Thomas Malthus (Marx 1986). Marx attempts to overcome the philosophy of identity by turning the Hegelian dialectic “right side up” (Marx 1996: 19): Instead of grasping the self-formation of thought as a moment of

the unfolding of being, Marx grasps the self-formation of the human species as it takes form in and through the *synthetic activity of social labor* (Habermas 1972).

Following Ludwig Feuerbach, Marx outright repudiated the point of departure of the philosophy of identity—namely, the idea that mind is the ground of nature; for Marx, rather, nature was the ground of mind. In other words, Marx substituted the idealistic dialectic of mind and nature with the materialist dialectic of subjective bodily nature and objective nature, the Hegelian phenomenology of consciousness with the natural history of the self-formative process of the human species. On the other hand, however, Marx was not satisfied with the materialism he had inherited as it failed to account for the active side of human activity, that is, labor. In this sense Marx returned to the subjective presuppositions of the philosophy of identity to critique Feuerbachian materialism: The self-formative process of the species, the process by which human beings emancipate themselves from the external compulsion of nature, is possible only through the synthetic activity of social labor understood as the dialectic of *praxis* and *poiesis*, interaction and labor, communicative and instrumental action.⁸

Indeed, Marx understood social labor as providing the transcendental conditions for the natural history of the human species, that is, the conditions of possibility for both the metabolic reproduction of society and the genesis of objects of possible experience. As the transcendental conditions of possible experience social labor, Marx argued, was “world-constituting life activity”; and this is why, in this sense, labor is not only an anthropological category that mediates between society and nature, but also an epistemological category that mediates between subjective and objective knowledge. Indeed, once Marx materialistically destabilized the Hegelian phenomenology of consciousness, intellectual production appears but as one moment in the division of labor. And now, the critically oriented intellectual labor must attempt to understand itself as it is constituted by, and mediated through the totality of social labor. This is why, as Habermas has suggested, the crucial concept for Marx’s theory of knowledge, is this idea of the synthetic activity of social labor. This is the keystone that makes possible the move from transcendental idealism to materialism, the move from absolute spirit to species being, the move from mind

to labor, the move from the critique of metaphysics to the critique of political economy.⁹

The Zubirian Horizon

We turn now to Zubiri, and, as we did with Hegel and Marx, we ask: How did Zubiri understand the idealism of Western thought? Why was this idealism a problem for him? And how did he attempt to overcome it? These are the questions we must seek answers to if we are to begin to understand Ellacuría's appropriation of Zubiri.

Zubiri understood the idealism of Western thought as the eclipse of the primacy of reality. This eclipse manifests itself in modern philosophy as four false substantivizations: Things do not exist in space or in time as Immanuel Kant argued; rather, as the New Physics has confirmed, things are spatial and temporal. Intellection is not an act of consciousness as Edmund Husserl maintained. There is no consciousness; there are only conscious acts. And reality is not a moment of being as Heidegger argued. The real being, the *esse reale* does not exist; what exists is being as a moment of reality, *realitas in essendo* (Zubiri 1994a). The eclipse of the primacy of reality was a problem for Zubiri because it had led to the reduction of things to facts (i.e., *positivism*), the reduction of reality to efficiency (i.e., *pragmatism*), and the reduction of truth to this or that situation (i.e., *historicism*) (Zubiri 1994a). Zubiri attempts to overcome the eclipse of the primacy of reality through a *radicalization of Scholastic realism*, that is through a "return" to a Scholastic realism that does not stop at the critique of that voluntaristic tradition that had reached its apogee with Kant, but continues to push beyond the return "to the things themselves" (Edmund Husserl) and the return to the being of things (Heidegger), in order to achieve the primacy of reality.¹⁰ Philosophy for Zubiri, in other words, does not ultimately concern itself with objectivity or being, but with reality qua reality. Philosophy is not phenomenology or ontology, but rather metaphysics (Zubiri 1994a).

Zubiri develops his radicalization of Scholastic realism as, on the one hand, a critique of the *entification of reality* (*entificación de la realidad*), and, on the other, a critique of the *logification of intelligence* (*logificación de la inteligencia*), both of which pave the way to understanding the human being as the *animal of realities* and history

as the *traditive transmission of a mode of being in reality*. Let us unravel a bit these four moments of Zubiri's corpus.

As the first moment of Zubiri's radicalization of Scholastic realism, the critique of the entification of reality is the attempt to ground philosophy beyond consciousness and being in reality qua reality. Reality for Zubiri is the *de suyo que consiste en dar de sí*, it is what it is actually, but it is also what it is in the process of becoming. Zubiri engages these two characteristics of reality (i.e., the *de suyo* and the *dar de sí*) in *Sobre la esencia* and *Estructura dinámica de la realidad*, respectively.

In *Sobre la esencia* it becomes evident that Zubiri's radicalization of Scholastic realism takes the form of a return to the problem that oriented Aristotle's metaphysics: namely, the problem of the relationship between the radical structure of reality and the nature of essence.¹¹ The idealism of Western philosophy as the desubstantivization of reality manifests itself, according to Zubiri, through the decoupling of substance and essence. Although this decoupling was already lurking behind that distinction between essence and existence introduced by Christian philosophy as a way of coming to terms with the idea of a creation *ex nihilo*, it crystallizes with Descartes's dualism between the *res cogitans* and the *res extensa*. Laboring under this dualism, Descartes laxly relates essence and substance through the *potentia Dei ordinata*, the "rational" power of God. From here emerges the idealism of essence that undergirds the voluntaristic rationalism that reaches its apogee with Kant (Zubiri 1998). *Sobre la esencia* is thus an attempt to overcome this idealism, an idealism that, as we suggested above, Husserl's phenomenology and Heidegger's existential analytics of *Dasein* could not overcome. Indeed, *Sobre la esencia* is an attempt to reintegrate essence and substance by returning to the idea of essence as the structuring physical moment of the substantivity of a real thing. This return, which implies the overcoming the desubstantivization of reality, is achieved through a radicalization of Aristotle's idea of essence.¹²

Essence, Zubiri tells us, moreover, belongs to two different orders of reality: Essence can be understood as what makes a thing "such" a thing, that is, as that group of notes that is necessary and sufficient for making a thing "such" a reality ("*tal*" *realidad*). In this sense es-

sence belongs to the *order of suchness* (*el orden de la talidad*) (Zubiri 1998). But essence is not only that according to which something is “such” a reality; it is also that according to which something is real pure and simple. In this second sense essence belongs to the order of reality qua reality, that is, it belongs to the *transcendental order* (*el orden transcendental*). Transcendentality is the character of reality as such, that is, as *de suyo*; and essence is precisely what constitutes this transcendental function of reality, that is it is what constitutes reality in the order of the *de suyo*.¹³

Sobre la esencia was hailed as watershed, but critiqued for being too “static.” In order to counter these critiques, Zubiri delivered in 1968—six years after the publication of *Sobre la esencia*—a series of eleven lectures entitled *Estructura dinámica de la realidad*. In these lectures (which were posthumously published under the same title) Zubiri focuses not on reality as a *de suyo* but on reality as a *de suyo* that consists in *dar de sí*. “Reality,” Zubiri writes in the Prologue, “is not only what it is actually; it is also, in one way or another, in the process which, in a more or less vague way, we could call becoming. Things become, reality becomes. Here we attempt to enter into this problem” (Zubiri 1989: 7).

Thus the critique of the entification of reality now takes the form of a critique of the ontologization of the problem of becoming. Becoming is not an ontological problem, it is a metaphysical problem, a problem of reality qua reality. Zubiri develops this difference by refuting three misconceptions: First, the idea that becoming most radically consists in the movement from being to non-being or from non-being to being. Second the idea that that which is in becoming is a subject. And third, that becoming ultimately consists in change. Against these three misconceptions—being, subject, and change—Zubiri opposes the three nomenclatures that constitute the title of *Estructura dinámica de la realidad*—namely, reality, structure, dynamism.¹⁴ Indeed, the problem of becoming is not the problem of determining the different ways in which the being of things are subject of or subject to change. It is rather the problem of determining the different ways in which reality as a structure is dynamic, that is the different ways in which the different structures of reality *dan de sí*.¹⁵

As the second moment of Zubiri's radicalization of Scholastic realism, the critique of the logification of intelligence is an attempt to push beyond the modern problem of epistemology, it is an attempt to elucidate the primordial intellectual process prior to the *logos*. Indeed, against the traditional view,¹⁶ Zubiri argues that human sensing and understanding are not at all opposed. On the contrary they constitute a single and unitary act of apprehension, the *sentient intelligence*: Sensing consists formally in "apprehending the real in impression" and understanding "consists formally in apprehending the real as real" (Zubiri 1980: 12). The apprehension of real things as sensed is a sentient apprehension, that is, an apprehension of reality in the order of suchness as "such" a reality, while the apprehension of real things as real is an intellectual apprehension, that is, the apprehension of things in the transcendental order as *de suyo*. Thus the sentient moment of the act of apprehension, according to Zubiri, is impression, and the intellectual moment is apprehension of reality: "Intellection is a mode of sensing; and sensing in the human being is a mode of intellection" (Zubiri 1980: 13).

There are, moreover, three modes of apprehending things in the sentient intelligence, says Zubiri: Through *primordial apprehension* we impressively apprehend that a thing is *real*, that it is its own reality. Through the *logos* we impressively apprehend that a real thing is *in reality*, that it exists among other real things. And through *reason* we impressively apprehend that a thing is real *in reality itself*, that it is a moment of pure and simple reality. Zubiri engages these three modes of apprehending respectively in the three volumes of *Inteligencia sentiente*—*Inteligencia y realidad*, *Inteligencia y logos*, y *Inteligencia y razón*.¹⁷

Reality as a *de suyo que consiste en dar de sí* and intellection as a sentient intelligence, these are the two pillars upon which stand Zubiri's idea of the human being as the animal of realities. An essence can either be transcendently *closed* or *open*, Zubiri tells us. The human reality is the only intramundane reality that is transcendently open; all other realities are transcendently closed. A transcendently closed essence is *de suyo "en sí"* ("in itself" in its own right) and "nothing more." That is, it is *de suyo* only materially; it only *belongs to itself* (*se pertence*); its aperture to reality (if it is a living reality, i.e., a non-human living

organism) is only stimulative. The transcendently open essence that is the human being, by contrast, is “*en sí*” such that his/her *de suyo* is not simply a function of the notes s/he has and “nothing more,” but s/he is, in addition, a function of the proper character of reality. The human being is open to reality qua reality; s/he is *de suyo* “formally and reduplicatively” (“*formal and reduplicativamente*”). S/he has that specific way of belonging to her/himself that consists in *possessing her/himself (poseerse)* in her/his own proper and formal character of reality. From here, the human being is not the “shepherd of being” as Heidegger argued, but the *animal of realities*. Ultimately, the animal of realities, says Zubiri, does not concern her/himself with the meaning of being but with the *taking charge of reality (hacerse cargo de la realidad)*. Indeed, in and through the taking charge of reality things present themselves to the animal of realities not as a *medium*, that is not as a system of stimuli, but as a *world (mundo)*, that is, as the transcendently of reality as *de suyo* (1998; 1989; 1963).

The animal of reality realizes her/himself by living with things, with other animal of realities, and with him/herself. But, s/he is not only “with” (“*con*”) all s/he lives with; s/he is also “in” (“*en*”) reality. The animal of realities, Zubiri argues, realizes her/himself in reality. S/he needs all the things with which s/he lives with because s/he needs reality. Indeed, real things, in addition, to their real properties have what Zubiri calls the *power of reality (el poder de lo real)*. The animal of realities can realize her/himself only in and through this power of reality; and that force by which the power of reality dominates and moves the animal of reality to realize her/himself is *empowerment (apoderamiento)*. This empowerment in and through the power of reality is what Zubiri calls *relegation (religación)*. Indeed, the animal of realities is not “thrown into the world” (Heidegger) but *relegated* to reality. Being relegated to reality, relegation is the condition of possibility of all revelation, of all positive religion (Zubiri 1994a; 1975).

The third and final aspect of Zubiri’s radicalization of Scholastic realism we will address here is the idea of history as the *traditive transmission of a mode of being in reality*. History, Zubiri tells us, is a process of genetic transmission (*proceso de transmisión genética*). That is, the psycho-organic characteristics that constitute the phylum of the animal of realities are genetically transmitted. But this genetic transmission is

not sufficient to install the animal of realities in life to the extent that, as we just saw, by virtue of her/his sentient intelligence, the animal of realities opts (via free actions) for different forms of reality—s/he takes charge of reality. From here Zubiri argues that, in addition to the transmission of psycho-organic characteristics, in addition to heredity, history is also the handing-over (*engtreaga, parádosis, tradition*) of a mode of being in reality. Indeed, history for Zubiri is neither pure transmission nor pure tradition, it is a *traditive transmission* (transmisión tradente) of a possible way of being in reality (Zubiri 1974).

The Ellacurían Synthesis

“Our discussions of Hegel, Marx, and Zubiri,” writes Ellacuría in the Introduction to *Philosophy of Historical Reality*, “have been by no means trivial for they tease out, and, in a certain sense, prepare the ground for what we are arguing here is the object of philosophy” (1990a: 30). Hegel, Marx, and Zubiri prepare the ground for the elucidation of historical reality as the proper object of philosophy to the extent that they understand the object of philosophy to be the real and physical (and not logical and conceptual) unity of all things, that is, in other words, to the extent that each, in his own way, attempts to overcome the idealism of Western thought. As we saw above, Hegel and Marx, against Transcendental Idealism and the philosophy of identity respectively, grasp this real unity through the *dialectic* as what uncovers the illusion of an immediate knowledge that abstracts from the totality of things. While Zubiri, against voluntaristic rationalism, phenomenology, and the existential analytics of *Dasein*, grasps this real unity through a *radicalization of Scholastic realism* that returns to the primacy of reality, and thus uncovering the entification and logification of the totality of things.

But, while the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic and the Zubirian radicalization of Scholastic realism pave the way for the grounding of historical reality, the actual grounding of historical reality as the object of philosophy, the fundamental task of *Philosophy of Historical Reality*, is the synthesis of the Hegelian-Marxian and Zubirian horizons. Indeed, as we have already suggested, the radicalness of the fundamental task of the Ellacurían project stems from its attempt to radicalize the Hegelian-Marxian and Zubirian efforts to push beyond

the idealism of Western thought. In order to better understand the Ellacurian synthesis we ask, first: What is the Zubirian radicalization of Scholastic realism without the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic? And, second: What is the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic without the Zubirian radicalization of Scholastic realism?

What is the Zubirian radicalization of Scholastic realism without the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic, and in particular the Marxian idea of the synthetic activity of social labor? Zubirian realism without the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic is the speculative formulation of historical reality as a moment of the formal question of reality. It is a push toward the primacy of reality as a theoretical task that fails to grasp itself as an intellectual moment of historical reality in-the-making. It is a theoretical task that abstracts from the fact that it itself is an intellectual practice that is involved in the making of historical reality. The Zubirian radicalization of Scholastic realism in the absence of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic is, in other words, the failure to grasp the fact that history as the traditive transmission of a mode of being in reality takes form in and through the synthetic activity of social labor. Indeed, it is the failure to reflectively grasp the fact that all question of reality, as intellectual moments of the synthetic activity of social labor, take form in and through, and contribute to the making of the traditive transmission of a mode of being in reality.

What is the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic without the Zubirian radicalization of Scholastic realism? The Hegelian-Marxian dialectic without Zubirian realism is the obfuscation of the static and dynamic aspects of reality. It is the reduction of the structural dynamism of reality to the logic of contraries as a principle of movement. It is the predominance of mediation and negation of reality over reality as a *de suyo que consiste en dar de sí*. Indeed, Hegel and Marx without Zubiri is the suturing of the aperture of reality by the formal logic of the dialectic.

We could thus say, in other words, that Ellacuría attempts to overcome the Zubirian speculative conception of reality by appropriating from the Hegelian-Marxian horizon the idea of a *critically oriented philosophical science*, and he attempts to overcome the Hegelian-Marxian suturing of the aperture of reality by appropriating from the Zubirian horizon the idea of *historical reality*. From here the Ellacurian synthesis

is the idea of a *critically oriented philosophical science of historical reality*. Indeed, the fundamental task of *Philosophy of Historical Reality* is the grounding of a *critically oriented philosophical science* that has as its object, but is also mediated by *historical reality*.

Ellacuría's appropriation of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic can best be understood as an attempt to develop a *social theoretically oriented theory of knowledge* that pushes beyond Zubiri's "ontological assumption of a structure of the world independent of the knower" by grasping the knower and the structure of the world as mediated by the synthetic activity of social labor (Habermas 1972). That is, in other words, with the insights of the Hegelian-Marxian horizon Ellacuría, on the one hand, uncovers to what extent Zubiri's idea of historical reality remains within the limits of "traditional theory," and, on the other, pushes into the realm of "critical theory" with the idea that the knower is always involved in the making of historical reality.¹⁸ Indeed, Ellacuría's philosophy of historical reality is not driven by the *technical* cognitive interest of the *empirical analytical sciences*;¹⁹ nor is it driven by the *practical* cognitive interest of the *historical-hermeneutic sciences*.²⁰ It is driven rather by the *emancipatory* cognitive interest of the *critically oriented sciences*.²¹ That is, philosophy of historical reality, like psychoanalysis,²² does not seek to *explain* or *interpret* the world, but rather to *transform* it through a *historical praxis* that aims to "*hacerse cargo de la realidad*," "*cargar con la realidad*," and "*encargarse de la realidad*" (Ellacuría 1975).²³

But this critically oriented philosophical science has as its object and is mediated by a historical reality that is "open and innovative per excellence." This critically oriented philosophical science is a science of the *animal of realities* that is made possible only to the extent that the animal of realities is always already *relegated* to the transcendental power of historical reality. Indeed, the Zubirian radicalization of Scholastic realism adds the dimension of *relegation* to the idea of a critically oriented philosophical science. Only because the historical praxis that is generated by the critically oriented philosophical science of historical reality is always already relegated (through the animal of realities) to the transcendental power of historical reality is it possible, on the one hand, to address the question of what "ought" this histori-

cal praxis be, and, on the other, to claim that this historical praxis is related to a reality that is not strictly intramundane.

Historical reality is open, open to the future. This is why there emerges the problem of what ought to be made, the problem of how ought we to make the aperture of historical reality. For it is clear that some historical realities are more open than others. It is clear that, in the realm of potential freedom that is history there always exists the choice of making or not making historical reality open. Indeed, it is clear that the freedom to make can be actualized as making historical reality close in upon itself, that is, it can be actualized as the suturing of historical reality (Ellacuría 1990c). In this horizon of what ought to be made is situated the Ellacurían problem of ethics: namely, the problem of the making of liberation through the making of “better” history, that is the problem of how ought one exactly “*hacerse cargo de la realidad*,” how ought one exactly “*cargar con la realidad*,” and how ought one exactly “*encargarse de la realidad*.”

All moments of reality are transcendental to the extent that they participate in the *dar de sí* of reality. If the transcendental of, for example, natural reality is the process of nature as actualized in and through mutations, the transcendental of history is the freedom to make as actualized in and through the making of what ought to be made. But, because historical reality is the ultimate manifestation of reality, its transcendental is at the same time the transcendental of reality as such, the transcendental of intramundane metaphysics. That is, in other words, the transcendental of historical reality is also the transcendence of reality to “what is not necessarily nor exclusively intramundane,” the transcendence of reality to the extramundane. Going back to that second excerpt we alluded to above: “If there exists such a thing as an aperture to transcendence this would be history.” Indeed, for Ellacuría the aperture to transcendence is the aperture of history, such that the problem of the making of the Kingdom interlocks with the problem of the making of better history, the problem of grace interlocks with the problem of the ought, the problem of soteriology interlocks with the problem of ethics. “*Hacerse cargo de la realidad*,” “*cargar con la realidad*,” and “*encargarse de la realidad*,” have now an eschatological function. This is the point of departure of the critically oriented theological sciences of liberation. Ellacuría

elucidates this point of departure in the Conclusion to *Philosophy of Historical Reality*:

God's immensity, novelty, and mystery are made fully manifest only in the totality of historical experience. There is a personal experience of God, but the fullest reality of God has made itself present, and can make itself present only in historical reality. . . . It should not be forgotten that all major religions have spoken of a God of the people, of a people that moves through history—This, however, as it is known, does not exclude the singularity of the one that reveals God. There can be a God of nature, there can be a God of the individual person, of subjectivity. But, above all, there is a God of history, which, again, does not exclude material nature or personal reality. . . . There are those that say that God is a human invention and there are those that say that religion is a purely historical phenomenon that is either necessary or alienating. These opinions point to a certain truth, for God appears after the person and in the course of history. God is not the object of an intramundane philosophy even though history can discover in the intramundane not only a formal transcendence, but also a transmundane and transhistorical reality, a reality whose real transcendence, however, belongs to the world and to history. (Ellacuría 1990a, 601–2; see also 1990b and 1990d)

Indeed, grounded on the Ellacurían synthesis, that is on the idea of a critically oriented philosophical science of historical reality, the critically oriented theological sciences of liberation generate a theological knowledge that is “interested” in its own liberation—a liberation achieved through the liberation of socio-historical misery, through the making of “better” history. The critically oriented theological sciences of liberation, in other words, generate a theological knowledge that, as a system of thought, theoretically aims to grasp the invariance that exists between present historical conditions and the Kingdom, and, as a social movement, praxeologically aims to overcome this invariance through the transformation of history into the Kingdom (Mejido 2004).

The radicalness of the Ellacurían synthesis of the Hegelian-Marxian dialectic and the Zubirian radicalization of Scholastic realism, that is the radicalness of the idea of a critically oriented philosophical science of historical reality is, as we suggested above, an attempt to overcome

the idealism of Western thought to the extent that this idealism has, on the one hand, impeded the development of the Latin American philosophies and theologies of liberation, and, on the other, to the extent that it has legitimated global liberal-democratic capitalism, the latest moment of the movement of violence and domination that is the dialectic of the Americas (Ellacuría 1988).²⁴ Indeed, for Ellacuría the theoretical problem of grounding the critically oriented philosophical science of historical reality, the system of thought—a problem that is generated by the epistemological rupture with the historical-hermeneutic and empirical sciences—is realized praxeologically by the critically oriented philosophical science of historical reality, the social movement, as making an existential-empirical rupture with the basic coordinates of the latest moment of the dialectic of the Americas.

But, as was suggested at the outset, we today are experiencing the eclipse of the fundamental task of *Philosophy of Historical Reality*. This eclipse is taking form in and through the current situation, namely, the hegemonic fusion of postmodern thought and global liberal democratic capitalism. This fusion has two moments: First, the historical-hermeneutic reduction of both the Marxian idea of the synthetic idea of social labor and the Zubirian real in and through the postmodernist turn to language, the plurality of particulars, and alterity. And, second, the liberalization of the liberationist rupture with US-style liberal-democratic capitalism in and through the naturalization of capitalism, the “the end of history,” the inevitability of the Free trade area of the Americas (by multilateral or bilateral means).

The resurrection of the radicalness of the Ellacurian project, the radicalness of the idea of historical reality as the proper object of philosophy, is a contribution to the struggle against the current situation, and the struggle against the current situation opens up the space for the resurrection of the radicalness of Ellacuría's project, the resurrection of the idea of historical reality as the proper object of philosophy.

Notes

1. Vico's principle was intended to replace the classical equivalence between the *verum* and the *esse*: We know the truth of things we make better than we know the truth of created things (Vico 1993).
2. Drawing on the German Romantic tradition, against Kant's cognitive reductionism, Schleiermacher argues that knowledge is an interpretative task made possible

through “empathetic” recreation, that process by which the interpreter transposes him/herself into the world from which the text derives its meaning. Thus, for Schleiermacher, the universality of concepts is not grounded in transcendental categories, but rather on the transcendental of empathetic recreation (Schleiermacher 1977).

3. Dilthey systematizes Schleiermacher’s critique of the cognitive reductionism of transcendental philosophy in light of the tension between the nomological and hermeneutical sciences (*Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften*). Epistemology, Dilthey argued, should not be grounded in cognition, but rather in the being-there-for-me of the totality of lived experience. In this way he opens up the possibility of understanding the problem of hermeneutics as the most primordial of all problems of knowing. Indeed, for Dilthey, nomological explanations are ultimately always grounded on hermeneutical interpretations (1989).
4. Against the Neo-Kantians, the early Heidegger attempts to radicalize the hermeneutic tradition. He aims to accomplish this project by shifting from the transcendental of consciousness to the transcendental of time. The *locus classicus* of this move is the fifth chapter of the second part of *Being and Time* where Heidegger argues that the purpose of the analysis of the historicity of *Dasein* is not to show that *Dasein* is temporal because s/he exists in history, but rather, inversely, its purpose is to show that *Dasein* exists historically because, from the bottom of his or her being, *Dasein* is temporal (Heidegger 1962: 424–55).
5. This idea that there exist certain socio-historical laws of “making” is usually associated with the doctrine of “historical materialism” as developed by the first systemizers of Scientific-Marxism (Engels; Kautsky).
6. In marshaling his critique, Hegel takes as his point of departure the repudiation of three implicit presuppositions upon which the Kantian system is built. The first presupposition which Hegel takes issue with is Kant’s normative concept of science. It is a well-known fact that Kant begins the *Critique of Pure Reason* by grounding his project on the progress of physics and mathematics, that is, in the progress of the nomological sciences per excellence. This is unacceptable for Hegel, because by granting pseudo-normative weight to the nomological sciences, Kant biases one category of knowledge, a category which happens to work within the frame of reference of what later would become known as instrumental action. That is, in other words, Kant makes paradigmatic knowledge based on the relationship between a knowing subject and an object of analysis. For Hegel, this reification of one type of knowledge achieved through the smuggling in of the normativity of the nomological sciences can only be overcome by taking as point of departure the phenomenology of a pre-scientific, natural consciousness immersed in the everyday life-world (*Lebenswelt*): Scientific (nomological) knowledge is only one type of knowledge that is by no means primordial—indeed, it has its ground in the everyday knowledge of the natural consciousness that is always already there. The second presupposition which Hegel takes issue with is Kant’s normative concept of the ego. This presupposition of an abstract knowing subject is unacceptable for the Hegelian point of view of the phenomenology of a natural consciousness. For at the outset, Hegel argues, consciousness is not transparent to itself; this transpar-

ency is only achieved through a self-formative process, the “phenomenological experience.” And the last presupposition which Hegel takes issue with is Kant’s distinction between theoretical and practical reason. Once again Hegel turns to the point of view of the phenomenological critique to overcome reified consciousness. Indeed, the distinction between ego as the unity of self-consciousness and the ego as reasonable action, which the dichotomy between pure and practical reason presupposes, is not a constant one, but rather it changes throughout the history of the formative process of the natural, pre-scientific consciousness. But, in addition to being a phenomenological critique of the Kantian epistemology, the dialectic can also be understood in terms of the problem of finitude.

7. The Hegelian dialectic can also be understood as a way of coming to terms with the problem of finitude. The problem of finitude is the problem of a finitude that has annihilated the Scholastic analogy of being, a finitude that, no longer situated inside the infinite, must now think the infinite-as-limit. The problem of finitude emerges with the Kantian inversion, with the so-called “Copernican Revolution” in metaphysics. The problem of finitude, in a word, is the problem of transcendence (Foucault). For Reformation theology the infinite-as-limit was absolute crisis: The finite, in its radical finitude, was the *kenosis* of the infinite. For Kant the infinite-as-limit was an asymptotic positivity: The finite, in its radical finitude, was asymptotically correlated to the infinite-as-limit, and, as a positivity, the limits of finite knowledge took the form of the infinite progress toward the infinite-as-limit. For Hegel the infinite-as-limit is the *sublation* (aufgehoben) of becoming: The finite, in its radical finitude, is the coming-to-be of the infinite-as-limit. Through the dialectic, the limits of finite knowledge and the infinite-as-limit mediate one another in the perpetual movement of “coming-to-be” and “ceasing-to-be,” “being” and “nothing,” the two moments of the sublation of becoming: “*Becoming* is the unseparatedness of being and nothing, not the unity which abstracts from being and nothing; but as the unity of *being and nothing* it is this *determinate* unity in which there *is* both being and nothing. But in so far as being and nothing, each unseparated from its other, *is*, each *is not*. They *are* therefore in this unity but only as vanishing, sublated moments. They sink from their initially imagined *self-subsistence* to the status of *moments*, which are still *distinct* but at the same time are sublated” (Hegel 1969, Articles 134–87). The significance of the Hegelian approach to the problem of finitude can be gleaned from his *dialectic of infinitude*, out of which emerges a distinction that is particularly germane for modern theology: namely, the distinction between the *spurious* and *genuine infinite* (Hegel 1969, Articles 269–304). This distinction, which is already implicit in Hegel’s critique of the point of departure of philosophy, encompasses a critique of the Kantian *ought* as well as a critique of the mathematical reduction of thought, both of which are—each in there on way—adumbrations of what later would become the critique of the positivistic attitude. The three moments of the dialectic of infinitude are: The infinite is: “(a) in its *simple determination*, affirmative as negation of the finite; (b) but thus it is in *alternating determination* with the *finite*, and is the abstract, *one-sided* [spurious] infinite; and (c) the self-sublation of this infinite and of the finite, as a *single*

process — this is the *true or genuine infinite*” (Hegel 1969, Articles 270–2). The first movement corresponds to the Reformation’s conception of the infinite: The infinite is posited “as a fresh definition of the absolute,” as “the true being, the elevation above limitation”; but it is this only as a “simple determination,” that is, as the negation of the finite, as the non-being of finitude. Thus, in the end, the finite has vanished “in the infinite and what *is*, is only the *infinite*” (Hegel 1969, Articles 273 and 274). The second movement—the sublation of the first—corresponds to the Kantian conception of the infinite: “[T]he infinite resuscitates the *being* of its negation, of the finite . . . which at first seemed to have vanished in the infinite,” and the finite gains its positivity. Now the infinite is posited over and against the finite and a relation between qualitatively distinct others emerges. This alternating determination between finite and infinite, is what Hegel terms the *spurious infinite*, that is the infinite of the understanding (Hegel 1969, Articles 275–86). The spurious infinite is sublated in the third moment of the dialectic of infinitude which corresponds to Hegel’s own position, his approach to what we have called the problem of finitude: When the finite and the infinite are grasped as mediating each other through a self-contained process, that is, when they are grasped through the *dialectic of the finitised infinite and the infinitised finite*, the *one-sided infinite* of the understanding will give way to the *genuine infinite* of becoming (Hegel 1969, Articles 287–304).

8. Marx thus uncovers the idealistic presuppositions undergirding the ancient Aristotelian distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis*, the distinction between a communicative activity that is an end in itself (*phronesis*) and a productive activity that has an instrumental end (*techne*). This distinction now appears as the result of an intellectual abstraction, an abstraction grounded anthropologically on the normative primacy of *praxis* over *poiesis*, and socio-historically on the distinction between the *bios politikos* and the *oikos nomos*, between the citizen and the slave, man and woman. *Praxis* and *poiesis* interlock and mediate each other: all communicative activity is mediated by productive activity and all productive activity is mediated by communicative activity. The mature Marx, immersed in the battle over political economy, never fully follows through with the implications of the idea of social labor as world-constituting life activity; he losses himself in the paradigm of production, thus short-circuiting the critical impetus of categories, such as, “relations of production” and “revolutionary praxis.” Reducing the movement of the species to the category of production, that is, to instrumental action, Marx is blinded to the phenomenological insight of the young Hegel—communication is sacrificed to production (Habermas 1972: 43–63). But that, it could be argued, in the final analysis Marx reduced social labor to *poiesis* does not justify its reduction to *praxis*. Indeed, a critical epistemology that escapes reification must be understood in terms of the reconstruction of the history of the self-formation of the human species, from the perspective of the synthetic activity of both *poiesis* and *praxis*.
9. Habermas writes: “*Synthesis in the materialist sense* differs from the concept developed in idealist philosophy by Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, primarily in that it does not generate a logical structure. It is not the accomplishment of a transcendental

consciousness, the positing of an absolute ego, or the movement of an absolute mind. Instead it is the *both* empirical and transcendental accomplishment of a species-subject that produces itself in history. Kant, Fichte, and Hegel can recur to the material of spoken sentences, to the logical forms of judgment: the unity of subject and predicate is the paradigmatic result of the synthesis as which the activity of consciousness, ego, or mind is conceived. Thus logic provides the substance in which the achievements of synthesis have been sedimented. Kant takes formal logic in order to derive the categories of the understanding from the table of judgments. Fichte and Hegel take transcendental logic in order to reconstruct respectively the act of the absolute ego from pure apperception and the dialectical movement of the absolute notion (concept, *Begriff*) from the antinomies and paralogisms of pure reason. If, in contrast, synthesis takes place in the medium of labor rather than thought, as Marx assumes, then the substratum in which it leaves its residue is the system of social labor and not a connection of symbols. The point of departure for a reconstruction of synthetic accomplishments is not logic but the economy. Consequently what provides the material that reflection is to deal with in order to make conscious basic synthetic accomplishments is not the correct combination of symbols according rules, but social life processes, the material production and appropriation of products. Synthesis no longer appears as an activity of thought but as one of material production. The model for the spontaneous reproduction process of society is the productions of nature rather than those of mind. That is why for Marx the *critique of political economy* takes the place held by the *critique of formal logic* in idealism" (Habermas 1972: 31).

10. Voluntarism is the annihilation of the Scholastic doctrine of being, the shift from the transcendentality of being to the transcendentality of consciousness. This tradition can be traced through, for example, Avicenna's subordination of being to essence, John Duns Scotus's distinction between the philosophical contemplation of being and the theological pursuit of the *summum bonum*, G. Wilhelm Leibniz's subordination of the real to the logical, René Descartes's egology, his *cogito, ergo sum*, which granted pride of place to the *verum* over the *ens*, which favored the problem of verification over the problem of being. But Kant's "Copernican Revolution" in metaphysics, his subordination of speculative to practical reason and his reduction of being to existence, marks the apogee of the voluntaristic tradition (Zubiri 1994b). Several important Post-Kantian philosophies have attempted to push beyond this voluntaristic tradition (qua philosophy of reflection/transcendental consciousness) by anchoring themselves in a "return" to Scholastic realism, a return to that doctrine of being that can be traced through Francisco Suárez, John Duns Scotus (focusing on his doctrine of the univocity of being), Thomas Aquinas, Averroes, and Aristotle. Consider, for example, Joseph Maréchal Transcendental Thomism and Martin Heidegger's existential analytics of *Dasein*. Maréchal's primary concern was the refutation of Kant's "metaphysical agnosticism," the refutation of a Transcendental Idealism grounded on the exclusion of a metaphysical realism. Rejecting the claim that a metaphysics that has gone through the transcendental critique of knowledge must give up the task of rationally justifying the positivity of the noumenal, Maréchal argues that

a post-critical metaphysical realism grounded on the evidence of a primordial ontological affirmation as a speculative necessity escapes all contradiction. This is the project of a Transcendental Thomism: A Thomism reformulated in terms of the Kantian transcendental philosophy as the solution to a Kantian transcendental philosophy grounded on the voluntaristic annihilation of Thomism (Maréchal). Resuscitating a tradition that had been pushed to the periphery with the rise of voluntaristic rationalism, Heidegger took as his point of departure the way being manifests itself through things and the way the human being is passively always already open to the being of things, to being in generality. Heidegger's existential reformulation of the ancient question of being uncovers time as the transcendental horizon for the interpretation of the meaning of being. For Heidegger the eclipse of the question of being is a symptom of a distortion that received its definitive formulation with the Kantian philosophy of consciousness, or more precisely with the Neo-Kantian interpretation of the Kantian philosophy, and had come to manifest itself through the positivist restriction of the idea of science which Husserl had already linked to the crisis of the European sciences (Husserl 1970). Lurking behind the horizon of consciousness was, on the one hand, the nomological reduction of being to existence, and existence to objective reality (that is, to an object that stands in relation to my concept), and, on the other, the voluntaristic opposition between consciousness and being that can be traced back to Avicenna. Heidegger takes issue with these two presuppositions of the horizon of consciousness. The voluntaristic reification of consciousness and the nomological restriction of being interlock and are perpetuated in and through a dichotomy that has undergirded modern philosophy, a dichotomy that took the form of Descartes's *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, was reformulated by Leibniz as the possible and real, by Kant as the noumenal and phenomenal, and by the Neo-Kantians as the nomological and hermeneutical sciences. The return to the question of being is the Heideggerian attempt to overcome this dichotomy: If, on the one hand, this or that being is always a moment of being in its generality—that is if the ontic has the ontological as its ground—on the other, consciousness is a moment of that being that is open to being in its generality—that is consciousness is grounded on *Dasein*. Zubiri's philosophy, we are arguing, is a radicalization of this "return" to Scholastic realism exemplified by Maréchal and Heidegger (Husserl and Franz Brentano can also be included here) to the extent that, as we have already suggested, Zubiri is not satisfied with the return to things, or the return to being, but rather he wants to go back to primordial reality, to reality qua reality (Zubiri 1994a).

11. Aristotle understood essence to be the "whatness" (*quidditas* in Latin) of a substance (*substantia* in Latin), and a substance in turn to be that "which-lies-beneath" and "supports" the accidents of a real thing.
12. Essence for Zubiri is not the meaning (*Sinn*) of the intention of the consciousness-of the real thing (Husserl). Neither is essence the reality of the concept of the thing, whether concept is understood *formally* as what is conceived, that is, as the movement of interiorization and exteriorization of the pure negativity of the immediacy of the being of the thing (Hegel), or *objectively* as conception itself, as

the act of conceiving, that is, as the representation of a thing (Descartes, Leibniz, and Kant). It is Aristotle's idea of essence as the real correlate of the definition of a thing that is by far the most satisfactory for Zubiri to the extent that this idea moves toward an understanding of essence as a real and physical moment of a thing. And yet, by favoring conceptual unity over physical unity, by favoring the idea of essence as something defined over essence as a physical unity, Aristotle falls short. According to Zubiri, Aristotle gives pride of place to the idea of essence as the subjectivity of a thing (i.e., essence as substantiality) over the idea of essence as the substantivity of a thing, essence as the subject of attribution over essence as that physical structure of a thing that is autonomous vis-à-vis its definition, its subjectivity. Although substantiality and substantivity for Zubiri are two irreducible real moments of a thing, it is the latter that has primacy over the first: "There is no reason to think that every reality as such would have to be necessarily subjectual (*subjetual*) in character. It is true that all the realities that we know through experience are, in one way or another, subjects. However, this does not mean that subjectuality (*subjetualidad*) is their radical structural characteristic. In order to elaborate a theory of reality that does not identify reality and subjectuality I introduce the following terminological distinction: I call the radical structure of all reality, even though it involves a moment of subjectuality, substantivity (*sustantividad*), differentiating it from substantiality (*sustancialidad*), the specific characteristic of reality only to the extent that it is subjectual. Substantivity expresses the plenitude of entitative autonomy (*la plenitud de autonomía entitativa*). The priority in the order of reality as such is found not in substantiality but in substantivity. Substantivity and subjectuality are two irreducible moments of reality, and of these two the moment of substantivity is prior to that of subjectuality. The failure to distinguish between these two moments causes the Aristotelian notion of essentiated being (*ente esencializado*) to lack sufficient precision. . . . As we shall see, essence is a moment proper, not of subjectuality, but of substantivity" (Zubiri 1998: 87–8). Indeed, essence for Zubiri is a physical moment of a real thing. This moment is the primary of its notes. This unity is intrinsic to the thing and is the principal which grounds the other notes that constitute the real thing. Understood in this way, essence is the truth within the thing, the things truth, the truth of reality.

13. But this essence as a reality *de suyo* does not only have transcendental properties; it also has a threefold transcendental structure: Essence is i. *de suyo suya* in its on mode, ii. it is, *de suyo*, an interiority in exteriority, according to different dimensions, and iii. it is *de suyo* closed or open to its very character of reality. The latter, the open essence, is the intellectual essence of the animal of realities (Zubiri 1998: 481–508).
14. First, Zubiri argues that becoming affects primarily and radically reality. Becoming is prior to all manifestation of being and non-being. Becoming affects being only in a secondary and derivative manner, to the extent to which being is the second actuality, the reactualization of a reality in its respectivity. Second, Zubiri argues that what is becoming is not a subject but a structure. This claim follows from his reflections on essence, and specifically his critique of Aristotle.

Reality, for Zubiri, is not primarily a subject, a substantiality, it is a substantivity, a physical structure of notes that form a unity from which emerges the essential characteristic of *de suyo*. Thus what is most radically in movement, says Zubiri, is not reality as subjectuality but reality as substantivity, that is, reality as structure. And third, Zubiri argues that becoming is not radically a change but a dynamism. The idea of change presupposes a dualism between things and their becoming, whether, with Aristotle, we understand things as subjects of the activity that generates change, or whether, with late-nineteenth-century physics (e.g., James Maxwell), we understand things as points of application of, for example, an electromagnetic field and thus subjects to the activity that generates change. What most radically characterizes movement for Zubiri is rather the dynamism of reality as structure where dynamism refers to the *dar de sí* of reality, to the fact that reality is inherently active such that its structures are structures of activity. Reality, Zubiri argues, is dynamic and active in itself; its activity is not the result of some potentialities that emerge within it. *Dar de sí* is what radically constitutes this dynamism and activity of reality. Change is but a moment of this *dar de sí* of reality: "Reality does not become because it changes it changes becomes it is in becoming" (Zubiri 1989: 67).

15. Zubiri distinguishes six dynamic structures of reality: i. causal dynamism, ii. dynamism of variation, iii. dynamism of alteration, iv. dynamism of sameness (*mismidad*), v. dynamism of its-ownness (*suidad*), vi. dynamism of conviviality (Zubiri 1989).
16. Zubiri explicitly repudiates what he argues is the dualism between sensing and understanding that, since the time of Parmenides, has undergirded all reflections on knowledge. The dominant view since Kant has been that the senses provide the intelligence with a manifold of impressions which are then conceptualized by the understanding. Even if we accept this dualism, Zubiri argues that it has never been made adequately clear what sensing and understanding are formally (Zubiri 1980).
17. There is no priority of knowing over reality or reality over knowing, Zubiri tells us. They stem from the same root. And this is not due to the *de facto* conditions of philosophizing, but to the intrinsic conditions of both knowing and reality: Reality is the formal character by which something is apprehended as *de suyo*; and knowing is to apprehend something as *de suyo*. Thus Zubiri rejects the point of departure of the critical philosophy that reached its apogee with Kant. That is he rejects the idea that in order to secure legitimate knowledge of reality one must begin with a critique of the faculty of knowing. While the fact that Zubiri published his trilogy on intelligence after he had already published two major works on the question of reality (namely, *Sobre la esencia* and *Estructura dinámica de la realidad*) is not intended to be an endorsement of the idea that reality has priority over knowing, it is, however, as Zubiri himself notes, intended to be a repudiation of critical philosophy. *Inteligencia sentiente* is not a "science of knowledge," it is not what modern philosophy has referred to as "epistemology"; it is rather a study of the act of knowing itself, a study of intellection, a *noology*. In this sense what we referred to above as Zubiri's radicalization of epistemology is

in fact a critique of the substantivization of knowledge in and through the idea of "consciousness"; it is an attempt to get "underneath" or "behind" epistemology in order to elucidate that act of knowing that grounds knowledge itself. While knowledge is not a physical part of intelligence, the act of knowing itself is; which is precisely why Zubiri's reflections on intellection is a return to that common root from which stem knowledge and reality (Zubiri 1980).

18. We are drawing here, of course, on Max Horkheimer's classic distinction between "traditional" and "critical" theory. For Horkheimer "traditional theory" presupposes the diremption of the scientific enterprise and the social totality, of the "scholar," and the "citizen," a diremption that is socio-historically correlated and reinforced by the differentiation of Western, industrialized societies, and, in particular, the development of a an autonomous sphere of science, research, and the like. "Critical theory," by contrast, overcomes this diremption by reflectively grasping the dialectical relationship between the scientific enterprise and the social totality (Horkheimer 1972).
19. The methodological framework of the *empirical-analytical sciences*, Habermas argues, reduces the meaning of reality to statements established through correlation between observable events and a set of initial conditions of predictability. This is positivism, that is, the objectivist illusion of empiricism which reduces reality to the technical exploitability of nature. "Taken together . . . the logical structure of admissible systems of propositions and the type of conditions for corroboration suggest that theories of the empirical sciences disclose reality subject to the constitutive interest in the possible securing and expansion, through information, of feedback-monitored action. This is the cognitive interest in technical control over objectified processes" (Habermas 1972, 309).
20. The *historic-hermeneutic sciences* are driven by a practical cognitive interest and not a technical one: They take as their frame of reference the practical interest of achieving an inter-subjective, mutual understanding. This mutual understanding of the historical-hermeneutic sciences is achieved, however, through a common tradition, and not a formalized language of the empirical-analytical sciences. But the rules of hermeneutics that regulate these sciences have often been dogmatically posited as universal; this is historicism, the positivism of the hermeneutical sciences: "Historicism has taken the understanding of meaning, in which mental facts are supposed to be given in direct evidence, and grafted onto it the objectivist illusion of pure theory. It appears as though the interpreter transposes himself into the horizon of the world or language from which a text derives its meaning. But here, too, the facts are first constituted in relation to the standards that establish them. Just as positivist self-understanding does not take into account explicitly the connection between measurement operations and feedback control, so it eliminates from consideration the interpreter's pre-understanding" (Habermas 1972, 309).
21. Both the empirical-analytical and historical-hermeneutic sciences must bracket the relationship between knowledge and interest if they are to secure their respective theoretical frameworks and logico-methodological procedures for achieving knowledge. By contrast the *critically oriented sciences*, explicitly aims to establish

the connection between knowledge and interest. These sciences are not satisfied by the theoretically grasping of technically or hermeneutically mediated facts, but rather they aim to “determine when theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when they express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed” (Habermas 1972, 310). The critically oriented sciences have an emancipatory cognitive interest grounded in self-reflection; they aim to bring to consciousness distortions and compulsions which remain repressed.

22. Psychoanalysis is an example of the critically oriented sciences: Sigmund Freud developed a science that was not satisfied with the interpretation of pathological states but rather aimed at overcoming them through the therapeutic (i.e., emancipatory) power of language. Here following Habermas we could contrast Dilthey and Freud, philological criticism and psychoanalysis, the historical-hermeneutic and critically oriented sciences: While Dilthey idealistically assumes “the intentional structure of subjective consciousness as the ultimate experiential basis in the process of appropriating objective mind,” Freud does not interpret “meaning structures in the dimension of what is consciously intended,” but rather aims to rectify psychic distortions and omissions that have been corrupted by internal and/or external conditions. “This distinguishes the peculiar task of a hermeneutics that cannot be confined to the procedures of philology but rather unites linguistic analysis with the psychological investigation of causal connections” (Habermas 1972: 216–7).
23. This often cited tripartite formula is difficult to render into English, for we lose the etymological wordplay “cargo-cargar-encargarse” which alludes to the physical-moral burden of reality. This having been said, I propose the following translation: “Engage reality,” “tarry with reality,” and “take charge of reality.”
24. Elsewhere I have attempted to elucidate the dialectic of the Americas through a phenomenology of *mestizaje*, that is, through a phenomenology of a fragmented life as this fragmentation has taken form through four movements: i. Cortés and La Malinche, ii. *criollo* and *peninsular*, iii. *civilización* and *barbarie*, and iv. Ariel and Calibán (Mejido 2005).

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