

Editor's Introduction

(A patho-sophia?)

Bernhard Waldenfels is certainly one of the leading representatives of the contemporary philosophical tradition with a phenomenological orientation. His scientific education, his intellectual background and his very rich range of publications, many of which have been translated into the major languages, characterise him as a significant heir to the great German philosophical tradition, which he has enlivened in creative contact with contemporary thought, of which he is an acknowledged protagonist.

At the centre of his theoretical work is the proposal of a pathic founded and responsively oriented phenomenology, attentive to the problems of corporeity, artistic expression, interculturality, and ethics, and elaborated in confrontation with the great classics of the philosophical tradition, starting with Plato, to whom he always returns. Extremely original is his rethinking of the phenomenological tradition, through a close examination of the legacy of Edmund Husserl, and of the solicitations of post-World War II French philosophy, which was profoundly influenced precisely by that German thought of the first half of the 20th century that had experienced the lacerations of persecution and diaspora following the disasters of history. Bernhard Waldenfels belongs to that generation of German intellectuals who grew up in the rubble and hopes of reconstruction, but with his studies and research he has always endeavoured to reinvigorate a philosophical tradition of great depth, regenerating it above all in

consideration of the French outcomes of the phenomenological legacy – particularly in dialogue with those outstanding interpreters, heirs and also 'heretics' including Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean-Paul Sartre, Emmanuel Levinas, Michel Foucault, Paul Ricœur, and Jacques Derrida.

Particularly crucial is his elaboration of the experience of the alien (Fremderfahrung), through which he revisits and radicalises the problem of otherness, a fundamental knot in the twentieth century's philosophical reflections. He highlights the traits of surprise, wonder, and pathos, and redesigns the inevitable delay and shifts of a subjectivity to be rethought according to a dative of address to be problematised, as a movement towards the other, rather than with the nominative ego or the complementary object of the self or me. The alien must be understood, according to Waldenfels, starting from the traumatic experience of dispossession and destabilisation, where the accident is an event that overwhelms and unhinges reality (something jumps out at us, imposes itself on us, challenges us, wounds us, annihilates us). This emblematically and paradoxically represents the alternative to the classical model of a phenomenology or hermeneutics conceived on the basis of the intentionality of an acting subject or on the basis of trust in the sense of a shared world.

The special issue of Critical Hermeneutics dedicated to him reprises the week of June 2023 in which Bernhard Waldenfels was a visiting professor at the University of Cagliari, as part of the scientific initiatives financed by the Autonomous Region of Sardinia. These were days of discussion and exchange, starting with the lectures offered for shared reflection and which triggered in-depth studies also in other directions.

We reproduce here first of all the international conference, which was in fact the crowning achievement of that initiative, at once didactic, academic and research-oriented. Devoted to the "Enigmas of

Phenomenology: the Non-evident", the conference was inaugurated by the lectio magistralis that Bernhard Waldenfels gave at the time on The Birth of Ethos out of Pathos: Paths of a Responsive Phenomenology. Starting from his theoretical solicitations, which invite us to otherwise retrace the legacy of classical phenomenology, scholars from various Italian and foreign universities (some of them direct disciples and translators of his work into Italian), have thematised its outcomes: problematising a subjectivity that tells itself in the story of the self (Sanem Yazıcıoğlu), breaking the magic circle of representation and intentionality (Fabio Ciaramelli), thematising the experience of estrangement (Mariannina Failla) and the splitting of the self (Roberta Guccinelli), and raising the urgent question of responsibility towards future generations (Ferdinando Menga).

The seminar represented in the second part of the issue ("Margins and Abysses of Experience") was an arena of often passionate confrontation, involving young scholars of the phenomenological tradition and doctoral students in training. Starting from the initial contribution by Bernhard Waldenfels, which we present here in the German version and in the Italian translation exhibited at the various sessions, the paradoxes and aporias of experience were measured by the yardstick of time (the lecture on Breakpoints of a Diachronic Experience was followed by the interventions of Filippo Nobili and Enrica Spada); the limit cases of the body were scrutinised (the intervention on: The Body as Original Medium and Vehicle of Technique: Phenomenology and Phenomeno-technique is commented on by Marco Deodati and Luca Filaci); and we are finally confronted with the enigma of the unconscious (the lecture on The Unconscious as the Alien: Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis in Dialogue is discussed by Valeria Bizzari and Cristiano Vidali).

This special issue of Critical Hermeneutics comes out to coincide with the awarding of the distinguished researcher Bernhard Walden-

fels with an honorary degree in Philosophy and Theories of Communication by the University of Cagliari. Almost as if to exemplify, in person, those surprising reversals that an experience prodded by the alien always offers, Waldenfels returns to Cagliari once again, this time not simply as the master, but also as the graduating student, in this dual guise embodying once again that ideal of the beginner phenomenologist that the old Husserl had not ceased to cultivate.

Gabriella Baptist