History

1. - Distinguish (1) the history that is written about and (2) the history that is written.

The history that is written about (Geschichte) may be conceived as (1) the totality of human thoughts, words, deeds, omissions or (2) heuristically as the object of inquiry, the to-be-known, of the history that is written.

A general account of the notion of history is an account, a determination, of this heuristic concept. It sets, orders, the questions to be asked and answered in a written history (Historie).

2. - Time.

There is the time of material objects generally: numerus et mensura motus secundum prius et posterius.

Since there are many motions, there is the problem of conceiving a single time: Aquinas, Newton, Einstein.

There is human time, which includes the time of material objects generally, but adds on dimensions of its own.

Time and eternity are contrasted as the nunc entis mobilis and the nunc entis immobilis.

The nunc entis mobilis may be considered secundum esse naturale and secundum esse intentionale.

Secundum esse naturale there is the same substance that remains identical through time and the accidents that change in time.

Secundum esse intentionale there is the same subject that remains identical through time, that changes by the esse naturale of accidental acts, that remembers the past, acts in the present, anticipates and influences the future by the esse intentionale of accidental acts.

Over time the individual is continuous, not only by the identity of the substance and subject and by the supratemporal aspect of intentionality, but also by the nature of development.

Development from the viewpoint of esse naturale is the acquisition of habits, and this occurs by small increments, by adding further and further differentiations of operations, combinations of differentiated operations. The slowness of development makes for continuity, because in general it is easier to repeat what has already been learnt than to learn afresh.

Development from the viewpoint of esse intentionale thematizes spontaneous development: one plans one's future, sets one's ideals, recognizes principles, makes commitments, enters contracts, etc.

Time of the individual, then, is a complex entity involving substance and accident, subject and operation, esse naturale and esse intentionale, natural continuity and development and more or less conscious and deliberate continuity and development.

Such time is not to be represented by a ### mathematical point; it is a volume of interconnections, interrelations, interdependences; it rises from the unconscious to the conscious; it is like the time of the music, the symphony, in its multiplicity, variety, mounting tensions and falling resolutions.

Individuals are not alone. There is a social mediation of the human good. In cooperation, in institutions of every kind, in personal relationships, individual times fit together. One does not just operate but one operates with and on the common understanding that.

There results a social continuity and a social time. Whom one operates with, on what common understanding one operates with, are subject to change but, so to speak, they are not subject to change without notice.

The common understanding that is presupposed by the cooperation is itself something built up over time; it is fixed in habits and customs, institutions and laws; it is no more easily changed than are all the individuals involved. On the contrary, one of the most difficult achievements of a society is a common willingness to change, a notable degree of social flexibility, mobility, adaptation; and that can be achieved only on the basis of a deeper immobility, the immobility # that will maintain the willingness to change.

3. - Existential and Narrative History.

Existential history is the knowledge of the past that makes social continuity possible.

Were a man to suffer complete amnesia, he would not know who he was, whether he was married or single, whether he had any children or property, how he earned his living, where he lived, etc.

Similarly, national amnesia would be national annihilation: personal relationships would be wiped out; the common understanding that underpins cooperation would have to be reconstructed from scratch.

Such existential history exists in every society in so far as it functions as a society, in so far as its members are aware of their membership and of the common understanding under which they work together.

However, the whole of it does not exist in each mind; rather, each knows the part that concerns himself, the part that regards his rights and his duties; what is expected of him and what he may expect of others; each has some generic notions of the rights and duties of others; but it is only in the vaguest fashion that anyone attempts to piece together these many partial apprehensions into a single and fully articulated whole.

✓ in varying measures

Narrative history narrates: it tells who said what and who did what. It adds✓when it was said or done, where it was said or done, for what reasons, with what results, under what circumstances.

Narrative history effects a transition from le vécu to le thématique: it draws attention to the broader aspects of the society as a whole, in its main divisions, in its principal interdependences, in its origins and its development, its setbacks, perils, triumphs.

Narrative history explains: it draws on Aristotle's efficient cause, the beginning of the movement; people have some understanding of why their social set-up is what it is, because they know who started this, who did that, and what happened afterwards.

Narrative history is artistic, ethical, apologetic, prophetic, and existential.

Artistic: it is not an exhaustive catalogue, but a selection; and the selection is in part determined by artistic exigences, by considerations of how much material can be worked into the narration without destroying its unity, rhythm, form, effectivness.

Ethical: it praises the good things and denounces the bad.

Apologetic: it meets objections and criticisms, particularly from foreign viewpoints.

Prophetic: it expresses a viewpoint on what the direction of the future should be; it interprets or reinterprets the past coherently with its ethical and prophetic views.

Existential: a larger social unit could not function without narrated history; it would not know of its own existence.

4. - Critical History.

Critical history revises narrative history to set the problem of a «Kritik der historischen Vernunft.»

It proceeds from «sources», i.e., the totality of surviving monuments and documents. Its basis accordingly is not merely the existing narrative histories but also any other documents or monuments that may prove relevant.

It proceeds from sources critically: it scrutinizes them for authenticity and trustworthiness; it locates their origin in place and time; it analyses out exactly their precise meaning and bearing.

It understands the sources.

There is the detective type of understanding: it puts together the data in an intelligible perspective of interrelationships; as Collingwood illustrated, in The Idea of History, Oxford 1946, such understanding can be reached even when all the witnesses are lying and all the clues are planted.

There is the scientific type of understanding: a historian will draw upon contemporary natural science, psychology, economics, sociology, political theory, anthropology, to reach a better understanding of the past than was possible in the past; Rostovtzeff, The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire.

T There is understanding on the level of philosophy, theology, Weltanschauung: the historian is expected to understand the point of view of an alien civilization, culture, people, age; he is not expected to agree with it.

It communicates its understanding of the sources by telling what really happened, «wie es eigentlich gewesen.»

It sets the problem of a «Kritik der historischen Vernunft.»

This Kritik was the ideal goal of the labors of Wilhelm Dilthey, 1833-191 ; Gesammelte Schriften, 8 vols., Leipzig , Berlin, Teubner, 1921; Stuttgart , Göttingen, 1958. His first effort was Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften, 1883.

His idea, according to Gadamer, W.M 206, was to establish and justify the a priori of historical science, as Kant had established and justified the a priori of natural science. He sought the grounds of a historical a priori in a Lebensphilosophie, but he failed to free himself from scientific and philosophic (Cartesian) ideals not compatible with a Lebensphilosophie. Gadamer 205-229.

The need for the Kritik, according to Gadamer, was that die historische Schule (Ranke, Droysen), while claiming to set forth the facts and repudiating all philosophic inspiration, particularly the a priori historical thought of Hegel which did not fit the facts, none the less unconsciously operated on the basis of a number of ideas inherited from the Enlightenment and Hegelianism. Gadamer, 185-205.

The dilemma of the critical historian is between an illusion that leads to relativism and a disillusionment that leads to blank pages.

More basically, distinguish (1) historical consciousness,(2) historical relativism, and (3) historical method.

What we call historical consciousness is the good sense of Historismus developed in F. Meinecke's Die Entstehung des Historismus, München und Berlin 1936.

Historical Relativism is the meaning of Historismus attacked by Karl Löwith, Die Dynamik der Geschichte und der Historismus, Eranos Jahrbuch 21(1952), 231 ss. Cf. his Weltgeschichte und Heilsgeschehen, Stuttgart 1953.

Historical method is the problem in many recent studies of Heussi hermeneutics, e.g., H G Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode, Tübingen 1960.

Historical consciousness is concerned with man, not as nature and substance, but as subject, knower, chooser, agent,

so that the formal constituent of man, of his actions and his institutions, his art, languages, literature, religion, history,

science, philosophy, theology, is in the intentional order: it is meaning, significance, intention, purpose; hence man is a symbolic animal (Cassirer), and man is a symbol (Morel).

essence as subsequent
of existence intentional essence

The intentional order develops; the developùent of meanings is the developùent of man, of institutions, of actions, of all fields of knowledge, of all cultural achievement, of all civilization, of all religion.

This developùent occurs in and through human meanings, purposes, actions, but its product depends as much on what man overlooks as on what he intends; the historical process includes an anagkhe and a tukhe, a «fata volentem ducunt, nolentem trahunt,» a divine providence, a List der Vernunft, an unseen hand of laws of supply and demand, a dialectic proceeding from the forces and conditions of production, etc.

There is a systematic disregard of man as he really is that results from classicist preoccupation with prout sempiternis rationibus esse debeat, from its prescinding from temporal contingencies, from its ready-made universals, ideals, laws, precepts, rules, models, exemplars.

w/ Romaticist attention to the singular, the concrete, the odd, the bizarre, the passionate, the irrational, mediates the emergence u/ of historical consciosness from classicism.

Historical relativism arises from the failure of classical a/ philosophy to effect a parallel developùent.

Classical philosophy conceived in terms of abstract universals and necessary principles is irrelevant to the needs of historical consciousness. Concepts and principles that prescind from time and developùent can only be applied to abstract and necessary aspects of the historical process; and the abstract and necessary aspects are but an inconspicuous fragment in that process.

intentional essence
examiniing intentional essences

The successor to classical philosophy has to be conceived as its prolongation in invariants that englobe the whole process, that are differentiated within the process, that are immanent, operative, and normative in the process.

Without such a successor the relativism K. Löwith ascribes to Dilthey is a necessary, though self-contradictory, consequence. Metaphysics yields place to a history of metaphysical systems: there is no human nature, but the type, man, becomes a Proteus. Whatever happens to be thought or done is equally true, equally correct, equally right. Philosophy can make no claims to absolute truth; it is limited to Besinnung, Verstehen, Deuten; and these change with every phase of the historical process.

The inner contradiction is the fact that Historismus itself is the opinion of an age, and so it too has no more than a relative validity.

6. A Methodical Classification of Historical Studies.

The classification is of fields, levels, components in historical studies; and its basis is the type of operation that succeeds, that settles issues as decisively as they can be settled, in that field, on that level, with regard to that component.

Without such distinctions one is apt to think of history as if it were some single, uniform entity with a single standardized method. Instead of attempting to deal with a living and complex manifold of different types of problems, one would set oneself the insoluble problem of finding a single definition for history and a single method for studying history.

a) Common Historical Research.

Common historical research has at its disposal (1) contemporary instances of common sense, (2) an ordinary potential to develop a participation in the common sense of other times and places, and (3) a set of generally accepted methods and techniques for the discovery, collection, classification, dating, editing, analysing, evaluating, criticism of sources and for the determination of elementary matters of fact (Did Brutus kill Caesar?), the determination of elementary interdependences, and the determination of elementary developùents of interdepdences.

«Elementary» = what may unhesitatingly be left to commonsense understanding and its participation in the common sense of the past; what does not fall under the more stringent requirements set forth in subsequent sections.

The field of common historical research is the field in which universal agreement is easily reached and doubt about that agreement is extremely difficult.

The extent of this field is a matter of debate: but it consists approximately in the area of agreement that would be found among historians of different countries, different continents, different philosophies, different religions, different periods.

Exact definition is irrelevant: common hist. is a component in history; but an incomplete component: just when it is incomplete, potential, in need of acomplement is

C.H.R.

b) Historical Essays.

The historical essay differs from common historical research by introducing a specially qualified common sense.

Such special qualifications arise by mediation: the common sense of a man that knows a science differs from the common sense of a man that knows a science differs from the common of a man who does not know the science; in the former case, common sense has been mediated by scientific knowledge, it is still common sense but it has undergone a sea-change.

Common sense, then, may be mediated by knowledge of the natural or the human sciences, by knowledge of philosophy or of theology, by exceptional development and refinement in such fields as art, literature, languages, technics, personal relations, politics, arduous achievements, religion.

The historical essay confronts issues that cannot be left unhesitatingly to ordinary commonsense understanding; it reaches an understanding of the past that will not be convincing to anybody and everybody.

The function of historical essays, of flocks of them, is to raise deeper issues, to promote the education of historians, to effect in time a rising of the level of common historical research, and to effect in the short run by their questioning the confinement of common historical research to the type of issues with which it is competent to deal.

c) History and Science, Philosophy.

a' There are the specialized histories: history of particular sciences, history of scientific method, history of philosophy, history of theology. not from ordinary of exceptional common-sense knowledge but

Such histories proceed ~~ordinary or exceptional~~ from scientific knowledge in its present state: one cannot write a history of mathematics if one does not know contemporary mathematics; conversely, if one knows contemporary mathematics, then the history of the subject easily becomes the understanding of the development of mathematics.

In general, understanding the history of the development of a scientific philosophie, theological doctrine terminates at understanding the doctrine; and inversely, understanding the doctrine grounds understanding the history of the development of the doctrine.

b' There is the application of contemporary natural and human science to the understanding of historical events and processes.

In the light of the contemporary science of economics, it is possible to write an economic history of the Roman Empire that would far surpass any Roman's understanding of the Empire's economic history. Etc. Rostoftoff.

c' Conversely, there is the development of the human sciences based upon historical knowledge.

The human sciences are empirical; they arise from and are judged by human matters of fact; but a vast ~~pro~~ portion of human matters of fact are found in the past.

Note that this use of historical knowledge derives its questions, its terms, its criteria of verification, from the science. It is not seeking to understand the past as the past understood itself; it is not seeking an integral apprehension of the past; it is putting a precise question and the historical data have to be capable of merely confirming or not confirming.

The function, then, of historical knowledge in the development of the human sciences is the function of the needle pointing to a number in a scientific experiment.

The historical knowledge in question may be either of the type of common historical research or of the type of the historical essay. But the historian, unless he understands the science, is not competent to judge whether or not the appeal to history is valid.

On the other hand, there is a real dependence of the science on historical knowledge. Just as the natural scientist has to know his apparatus, else he will read a pressure gauge as though it were a voltmeter, so also the human scientist must be initiated in the basic complexities of historical inquiry.

Methodological

d' A critical philosophy provides the foundations for historical method and fully conscious historical operations.

It is the basis of the methodological distinctions between ordinary and exceptional developments of common sense, between common sense and science, between both of them and philosophy, philosophy and faith, faith and theology.

Grounding these distinctions as ultimate, it also determines the peculiar competence and limitations of each, the modes of their mutual complementation, etc.

e' As it grounds and directs historical method and operations, so also a critical philosophy provides an ultimate basis for a critique of the resultas of historical work.

Because it explores the resources of human cognitional activity, the critical philosophy can discern exactly what the historian was doing and, no less, what he was overlooking. Because it can do so in each case, it can do so in all, and so go beyond the multiplicity of histories on the subject to their mutual complementarity.

Because it is aware of the roots of systematic oversights, it can reduce the oversights to their causes, theoretical and existential. So critical philosophy introduces the normative element, immanent not only in the philosopher but also in the historian and in those that read philosophy or history. By that normative element it is able to pronounce judgement.

Such critical operations may be perfomed either by the historian with a grasp of critical philosophy or by a critical philosopher with a grasp of history. It cannot be performed either by a mere philosopher or by a mere historian.

f' What a critical philosophy can do with regard to historical methods, operations, results, it also can do with respect to each of the human sciences.

What it can do with each, it can do with all; and doing so with all, it will produce not only criticized results in each but also the principles on which the mutual complementary of the lot are based. A critical philosophy is a principle not only of foundations and of criticism in each human science but also a principle for the integration of all.

Finally, what it does for the human sciences, it does for them in their interactions with historical study, in the light they throw upon history (b') and in the development they achieve through knowledge of history (c').

g' As a critical philosophy stands to historical studies and to the human sciences, so also it stands to human life and living.

It is in possession of the key positions not only with respect to the subjects, historians and human scientists, but also with respect to the objects, whose history is written and whose nature is investigated.

It is in possession of the essential elements in the objects, of their modes of development and aberration, and so of the basic categories which the human sciences differentiate and the historian particularizes.

h' As the human sciences may be applied to yield a fuller understanding of historical processes, so also may the genetic and dialectical principles of a critical philosophy. Insight VII, XVIII, XX.

As the human sciences may develop by appealing to historical fact, so also may philosophy.

However, the parallel is analogous. The philosophy has an independence of historical fact that the human sciences, as empirical, do not possess. The dependence of philosophy on particular historical facts is dependence on a suggestion, offered by the facts as a problem on the philosophic level. Conversely, the alternatives set by philosophy for the interpretation of historical processes are implications of a transcendental method: their existence and their nature are established in the philosophic citadel; they function a priori.

i' Let us now attempt to put pieces together.

The historian is concerned to formulate a totality of true judgements about the human past.

The ultimate object of these judgements is what was going forward in particular places at particular times.

What was going forward means: the actual course of the battle as distinct from the intentions plans experiences of the combatants from the generals down to the troops; i.e., what results not only from human intentions and actions but also from their conflict and from the oversights implicit in the intentions and from the inadequacy of the actions; i.e., history ultimately is concerned with what contemporaries do not know; it stands to what contemporaries know as self-knowledge stands to consciousness; i.e., in theist terms history is concerned ultimately with what God disposes through man's proposing; i.e., in literary terms, history is concerned with the drama, with what results through the characters, their decisions, and their actions but not only because of them but also because of their oversights, shortcomings, inadequacies.

What was going forward does not mean: the instance of a general law, thesis, principle but, on the contrary, each singular and concrete instance of going forward in its singularity and concreteness.

What was going forward does not mean what was improving, becoming better; it may equally be decline; it may equally be mere sound and fury, revealing incapacity, blindness, inadequacy.

What was going forward is the concrete, complex form immanent in the events (transmitted by contemporaries), understood in those events, and functioning as the principle of selection, of ordering, of interrelating in the historian's presentation of the events.

What was going forward, because singular and concrete, is the immediate object of a commonsense type of understanding.

But the commonsense of common historical research is commonly equal to ascertaining no more than the bare bones of the matter.

What is needed is a commonsense mediated by philosophy, by the human sciences, and by various exceptional developments of common sense.

In other words, the full object of history is as much a remote ideal goal as is the full object of natural or human science.

That full object is approached methodically by the scissors action of an upper blade (developing philosophy, developing human sciences) and a lower blade of common and uncommon historical research.

d) History and Tradition.

Earlier we distinguished existential and narrative history, ahd said that existential stands to narrative history as le vécu to le thématique. Because narrative mediates existential history, its setting forth of the past is not only informative but also explanatory, artistic, ethical, apologetic, prophetic, and existential.

Critical history bradens the basis of history writing by its systematic study of all possible sources; but by the illusions of omnicompetent common sense and mistaken cognitional theory it heads for the impasse of Historismus.

Moreover, critical history as a determinate 19th century phenomenon was engaged in a specific operation on existential history, on tradition; to a notable extent it was a component part in a movement that was liquidating Christianity and creating the modern secularist world; its specific function was to make the past intelligible, to present it in terms that made sense, to the liberal protestant and to the secularist.

A. Klampt Die Säkularisierung der universalhistorischen Auffassung ( ) Göttingen 1960.

This point has been scored by H. G. Gadamer:

Erst solche Anerkennung des wesenhaften Vorurteilshaftigkeit alles Verstehens schärft das hermeneutische Problem zu seiner wirklichen Spitze zu. An dieser Einsicht gemessen zeigt es sich, dass der Historismus, aller Kritik am Rationalismus und am Naturrechtsdenken zum Trotz, selber auf dem Boden der modernen Aufklärung steht und ihre Vorurteile undurchschaut teilt. Es gibt nämlich sehr wohl auch ein Vorurteil der Aufklärung, das ihr Wesen trägt und bestimmt: Dies grundlegende Vorurteil der Aufklärung ist Entmachtung der Überlieferung. W u. M, p.255.

Das Verstehen ist selber nicht so sehr als eine Handlung der Subjektivität zu denken, sondern als Einrücken in ein Überlieferungsgeschehen, in dem sich Vergangeheit und Gegenwart beständig vermitteln. Das ist es, was in der hermeneutischen Theorie zur Geltung kommen muss, die viel zu sehr von der Idee eines Verfahrens, einer Methode, beherrscht ist. W u. M p.274 s.

In history the historian is coming to know explicitly the existential history, the tradition, which produced him.

What was going forward, was what terminated with me and my contemporaries, our opportunities, our difficulties, our situation.

In teaching and writing history, the historian is mediating that tradition; he is laboring to carry it forward, to conserve it in the active sense of conserving (= creating) by being a living embodiment of it, not only a living but also an articulate, informed, intelligent, wise, devoted embodiment; or he is laboring to destroy it either by a passive conservatism, or by liquidating it, or by endeavouring to put a new tradition in its place.

This aspect of historical thought and activity is clear in such manifest efforts at transforming tradition as the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, Marxism and the Russian revolution. But it is no less a reality, when things are done more quietly and more unobtrusively.

Can the historian as a historian escape from his personal existential decisions?

That he can is the assumption of Historismus. The historian by his reliance on an extrinsecist technique and method consigns to oblivion his own Geschichtlichkeit. Gadamer, p.283. Notes p.31.

That he cannot is the doctrine of E. Rothacker's relativism; all synthesis is guided by choice.

We have to distinguish carefully.

The historian endeavours to understand what was going forward in a particular place at a particular time. That understanding is of the commonsense type; it includes the intelligibility that vanishes when one enunciates universal laws, that has to be recovered when one understands situations as coming under laws.

Moreover, the historian's effort at understanding is an effort at making the past intelligible to himself; but the intelligibility of the past may be beyond his initial horizon, and he has the alternative either of broadening his horizon, or of attempting to fit within that horizon what cannot have a place there.

Richard R. Niebuhr, Resurrection and Historical Reason, A Study in Theological Method, New York, Scribners, 1957.

There exist historical issues that cannot become intelligible to the historian without an existential decision on the historian's part. In the measure that such issues become relevant to writing history, the escape of Historismus leads to a falsification.

On the other hand, while choice is an essential part in an existential decision, still it is not necessarily a blind leap; it can be following intelligence and yielding to reasonableness as well as going against it. My views would not be what they are, were it not for decisions I have made; but it does not follow that my decisions were not based on intelligent and rational views, that intellect does not lead.

Where Rothacker's relativism goes wrong is the oversight of this point; it is a systematic oversight in the Aristotelian and the Hegelian traditions, which conceive judgement not as absolute positing but as synthesis;

The historian, then, who is not simply engaged in knowing the past but also in teaching and writing about history, cannot escape the functions easily described in what we termed narrative hostiry.

The fact that critical history broadens the basis from which information is derived and uses a variety of techniques and types of knowledge to arrive at the intelligibility of the information effects, indeed, a very notable difference in history. Still this very notable difference is on the material side. In so far as the historian teaches or writes history, he is operating on a tradition:

he may reduce it to triviality if he limits his history to the products of common historical research [cf Husserl, Krisis]

he may by his mediocrity bring the tradition to an inauthentic simulacrum of itself

he may bring the tradition to a full consciousness of itself, its achievements, its potentialities, its glaring failures

he may make himself the instrument of a movement that is destroying a tradition and endeavouring to create a new one

The foregoing alternatives are ineluctable, not indeed in the sense that individuals cannot find safe havens in which they can do honest pedestrian work without accepting any serious responsibility, but that that will be filled with a historical myth [Germans and Nazi myth]

e) History and Religion

The first six volumes of Arnold Toynbee's Study of History operate on the premiss that the unit object of history is the civilization, i.e., the relatively closed field of interdependent centuries events. One can write a history of Europe because it is self-contained; references to China, etc., need only be incidental; one cannot write such a history of Checkoslovakia.

In the later volumes the unit shifts from the civilization to the world religion.

Cf. E. Voegelin, in Gargan, The Intent of Toynbee's History, Loyola Univ. Press, Chicago, 1961.

Does this arise from the nature of the thing? Is the experiment, Toynbee, an accidental consequence, or does it arise from the nature of the case?

History, we just concluded, is the mediation of a tradition.

But tradition is what enriches the social mediation of the individual. By this I mean that the individual can develop into something only slightly better than what his tradition offers him: born in an untouched primitive tribe, in Mayfair, in Boston.

Tradition then and so explicit conscious tradition, history, mediates the individual; it mediates the immediate, the existing subject; it is the ground of the development of the immediate.

But development aims not only at a mediated immediacy but also at a mediated ultimate.

As all desire is ultimately desire of God, the presence of the Absent, [Sum theol I 44 4 3m], so too all development is ultimately towards God, towards a participated possession of God.

[Contrast Hegel for whom Religion mediates Philosophy; and Philosophy is absolutes Wissen; the term is a mediated immediacy of Absolute Spirit. As E.Coreth rightly notes, Philosophy mediates religion; it is about Being and so most of all about Being Itself; it gives religion an intellectual depth without ~~A~~ thereby constituting more than a component in a fully religious being. But what is true of philosophy, also is true debita proportione servata of all development]

Not only is history concerned with the development, that is not only the mediation of the immediate but also the mediation of the ultimate, but also this development itself is not unaware of its concern with the ultimate.

Contemporary Western Civilization is in universal history the exception in which in Nietzsche's phrase, God is dead.

How much that is a matter of fornicating after false gods, e.g., the vanished god, Progress, how much it is a rejection of false notions of God, how much it is inauthentic flight from the question of the ultimate, are nice questions.

In any case, religion remains a basic point in history, whether it is present and influential, whether it is sound or aberrant, whether it is no more than the presence of a vacuum.

f) History and Apologetic.

The truth of Catholicism is not independent of singular and concrete historical facts located in the Near East during the first century A. D.

But the foregoing affirmation is not to be confused with the ~~false~~ statement that the truth of Catholicism is to be settled by common historical research investigating events in the Near East in the first century A.D.

Common historical research yields no more than the bare bones; it is not history but the highest common factor in historical inquiry.

Again, while the truth of Catholicism is not independent of precise and ancient historical facts, still these facts are not the one and only thing on which such truth is dependent.

Truth presupposes the existence of a mind: verum et falsum sunt in mente.

Supernatural truth presupposes not only a mind but also the grace of God and the existential response to that grace.

Truth about the past presupposes the mediation of a tradition: fides ex auditu. It is the massive, unparalleled tradition of the Catholic Church, an existential history, that always has been the fundamental mediation between the believer and the facts about Jesus of Nazareth.

History, the mediation of that tradition, its transfer from le vécu of existential history to le thématique of narrative, critical, metodical history, is a secondary phenomenon for the Catholic.

[N B It is not a secondary phenomenon for the protestant, the liberal, the secularist in Western civiliztion. For them, that existential history contains an aberration that began in the middle ages, in the Greek councils (Harnack as the theologian on undogmatic Christianity), in the Frühkatholizismus of the later epistles in the NT, in St. Paul, in the leap between Jesus of Nazareth and the Urgemeinde. To establish the aberration of the ∅ tradition, tradition is not enough; there also is needed the mediation of the tradition and its destruction by criticism.]

Irenaeus' and Tertullian's appeals to prescription still have in an analogous form their point. The Catholic tradition is a historical fact about historical facts prior to any mediation and explicitation by historians.

If the facts, to which the tradition bears witness, are a stumbling-block to common historical research, it remains that the tradition itself is as much a sign, a signum levatum in Gentibus, as the signs to which it testifies.

Historismus. The Methodical aspect.

Historismus has been defined as the accepted «correct» manner of writing history about the year 1900. K. Heussi, Die Krisis des Historismus, Tübingen 1932.

De Smedt, Principes de la critique historique, Liège, Paris, 1884.

Bernheim, Lehrbuch der historischen Methode, Leipzig, 1894, 4 1903.

Langlois et Seignobos, Introduction aux études historiques, Paris 1892.

E.C. Butler, The Modern Critical and Historical School, Dublin Review, 1898, pp. 121-139.

K. Heussi assigns four characteristics to this manner of conceiving the proper writing of history.

First, it is concerned to determine for us what in themselves are already structured facts. To reach them one has no need of any set of systematic or philosophic principles. The structure is already there and all the historian has to do is follow his method to determine just what it is; this method is totally independent of philosophic views.

Secondly, historical objects are related; there is an intelligible Zusammenhang that links the lot together.

Thirdly, there is historical devlopùent.

Fourthly, historicalstudies are not concerned with «die 'Tiefe' der Dinge.. den eigentlichen Gehalt, die Substanz, das Wesen, die Idee, die Gestalt, den Sinn der Dinge..» p. 89. Such essays as Harnack's Wesen des Christentums are historically marginal, peripheral; they dont' help or contribute anything of moment to history.

The grounds of Historismus semm to be (1) the anti-Gehelian reaction of die historische Schule, (2) the conception of the autonomy of the sciences which developed by prescinding from philosophic issues, (3) the desire of the specialist to do his own work without any meddling from such obviously incompetent people as philosophers and theologians, and (4) a set of superficial assumptions about the nature of human knowledge, and (5) the historical object as the object of a concrete understanding (insight into data).

It seems necessary to distinguish between the experience that leads historians to reject Historismus and, on the other hand, the reasons given by such men as Heussi, Marrou, Aron.

According to Marrou, a follower of Langlois and Seignobos ends up offering as history a book of blank pages. The more one sets all preconceptions aside and attends solely to the critically established facts, the more one is driven simply to editing textes with indices and foot-notes. De la connaissance historique, Paris 1954, p. 54.

A. Descamps, Sacra Pagina, I, takes Marrou to task for his scepticism [pp.132-136]. But Descamps seems to presuppose the Historismus that Marrou attacks: he holds that biblical theology is primarily a matter of philologico-historical method, that there is no need for a hybrid method that is at once mi-historique and mi-théologique, that the interpreter has to acknowledge the authors to be believers but need not himself be a believer [pp.138-144].

The need of distinguishing the historians' experience from their reason is illustrated by K. Heussi:

p. 64: .. dass Geschichtschreibung und Philosophie durch keine klare Linie getrennt sind.

p. 63: .. es ist gewiss richtig, dass exakte Quellenbearbeitung, reine Tatsachenkritik, streng im Rahmen exakter Tatsachenfeststellung sich haltende Geschichschreibung nicht unmittelbar beeinflusst werden können; aber es erscheint als ganz ausgeschlossen, dass prinzipielle Erwägerungen, wie sie hier angestellt wurden, nicht überhaupt auf die Sache selbst, also auf die Geschichtschreibung, zurückwirken und sie verändern.

p. 56: Damals [um 1900] war es so, dass man den «subjektiven» Anteil an aller historischen Erkenntnis sehr stark betonte, ihn aber für eine unvermeidliche, mehr oder minder starke Trügung der Auffassung eines an sich fest gegebene, ein für allemal eindeutig strukturierten Gegenüber betrachtete. Danach wandeln sich die Anschauungen der Menschen, es bleiben die Dinge. Nach der von uns vertretenen Auffassung sind die so strukturierten Dinge nur im Denken der Menschen, aber vom gleichen Standpunkt ergeben sich die gleich strukturierten Dinge im Denken der Menschen; das Gegenüber ist nicht eindeutig und fertig strukturiert, keine starre Grösse, sondern unerschöpflicher Anreiz zu immer neuen historischen Auffassungen.

What is true in the foregoing is that observation without understanding will not lead to any structured knowledge.

What is false is the relativist perspectivism.

By perspectivism is meant that there are several viewpoints, standpoints, from which the several aspects of the historical facts come to light.

By an absolute perspectivism is meant that the several viewpoints can be placed in a genetic series (that excludes dialectical aberrations) and the several aspects can be united in the aspects of one objective reality. In brief, absolute perspectivism admits the complexity yet retains the absoluteness of truth, the existence of a goal of a single and coherent set of propositions in correspondence with reality.

A relativist perspectivism, while it acknowledges the intrinsic relationships of philosophy and history-writing, still has no philosophy by which it can resolve the problem of historical truth.

Relativist perspectivism seems to be ultimate with E. Rothacker, Logik und Systematik der Geisteswissenschaften, Bonn 1947, p. 144:

.. das zweite Glied einer neuen Kritik der Vernunft. Es gälte nicht nur zu zeigen, dass der Einfluss von Weltanschauungen auf das Erkennen und Schaffen ein mehr oder weniger gorsser, sondern dass er ein radikaler ist. Als neues Glied müsste in diesem Zusammenhang die Erkenntnis treten, dass es primär Forderungen des Willens und nicht kognitive Akte sind, die hinter diesen Weltanschauungen stehen.. Alle Synthesis ist vom Willen geleitet.

Ibid., Diese Form des Relativismus begründet nur «Wahrheit» auf den Willen. Die Richtigkeit kritisch festgestellter Daten und Fakten oder theoretisch rechtiger Folgerungen wird durch dieselben überhaupt nicht berührt.

Es gilt deshalb zunächtst, theoretische und empirische Richtigkeit von weltanschaulicher Wahrheit scharf zu unterscheiden.

Nicht als griffen diese Weltanschauungen nicht auch in den Bereich der logischen Systeme ein.

E. Rothacker, Logik und Systematik, p. 149:

Weshalb vermag sich die Einsicht, alle Synthesis sei vom Willen mitbestimmt, d.h. dogmatisch, dennoch so schwer durchzusetzen.

Es ist selbst ein typisch dogmatisches Vorurteil, das ihr entgegensteht! Das Dogmatische will sich nie selbst erkennen. Und so sehr die Aufgabe der Philosophie in ihrem modernen 'wissenschaftlichen' Stadium gerade die sein müsste, gegenüber allen dogmatischen Inhalten Grenzlinien zu ziehen, so unterliegt sie in bezug auf sich selbst meist einem immanenten Zug jedes 'Glaubens' ener (diesmal wirklich psychologisch zu verstehenden) Schutzmassnahme des handelnden Lebens, das der Unbefangenheit bedarf, um seine substanziellen Ziele nicht aus dem Auge zu verlieren.... Der Idealismus der Freiheit ist die Dogmatik der Autonomie, der objektive Idealismus die Dogmatik eines harmonischen Lebensgefühls, der Naturalismus die Dogmatik der Sinnlichkeit. Alle drei Systemgruppen sind auf dem Grunde der mit ihrem Titel bereits bezeichneten Prämissen erbaut und aus diesen sind ihre Systeme in (idealiter) unwiderlegbarer Schlüssigkeit abzuleiten. An die Prämissen wird aber allezeit geglaubt.

p. 157: Einzig und allein die Verbindung mit der Welt des Handelns und der Anspruch einer schliesslichen Anwendbarkeit ist es, welcher philosophische Systeme ihre Einseitigkeit verdanken, aber zugleich mit dieser verdanken sie ihr auch ihre Form, nämlich der Charakter, inhaltliche Wahrheiten zu verknüpfen. Im Felde der Wahrheit gibt es nur einseitige Systeme, die Weltanschauungsfreie Systematik aber spricht nicht mehr von wahren Inhalten der Vernunft, sondern allein von Strukturgesetzen derselben.

G. Ebeling, Die Bedeutung der historisch-kritischen Methode, ZfThK 47 1950 33:

Der Historismus am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts, in dem diese Entwichlung gipfelte, zog alle Normen und Werte hinein in einen grenzlosen Relativismus, der die grosse Krise offenbar machte in die der Geist der Neuzeit hineingeraten war. Es wäre eine Täuschung zu behaupten, dass diese durch den Historismus gekennzichnete Krise überwunden wäre. (Evidence from efforts to eliminate historical approach and so be rid of problem; efforts from Dilthey and from problem of historical understanding give much promise of possibility of reaching a solution without surrendering die Strenge der historisch-kritischen Methode).

p. 34: Die moderne Geschichtswissenschaft ist fraglos noch weit entfernt davon, die historsch-kritische Methode in dieser Weite des hermenutischen Problems mit zufriedenstellenden Kategorien theoretisch einwandfrei darlegen zu können.

R. Bultmann, Das Problem der Hermenutik, ZfThK 47 1950 63 s.

63: Historical phenomena are, not vieldeutig, but vielseitig, komplex.

They can be investigated from many viewpoints, (64) historical, sociological, psychological, or any other that grows out of the historical connection between the phenomenon and the interpreter.

.. sie nur aus der geschichtlichen Verbundenheit des Interpreten mit dem Phänomen erwächst. Jede solche Fragestellung führt, wenn die Interpretation methodisch durchgeführt wird, zu eindeutigem, objektiven Verständnis. Und natürlich ist es kein Einwand, dass sich das echte Verstehen in der Diskussion, im Streit der Meinungen, herausbildet. Denn die simple Tatsache, dass jeder Interpret in seinem subjektiven Vermögen beschränkt ist, hat keine grunsätzliche Relevanz.

Die methodische erwonnene Erkenntnis ist eine 'objektive', und das kann nur heissen: eine dem Gegenstand, wenn er in eine bestimmte Fragestellung gerückt ist, angemessene. Die Fragestellung selbst 'subjektiv' zu nenne, ist sinnlos. Sie mag so heissen wenn man darauf blickt, dass sie natürlich jeweils von einem Subjekt gawählt werden muss. Aber was heisst hier wählen? Als solche erwächst die Fragestellung ja nicht aus individuellem Belieben, sondern aus der Geschichte selbst, in der jedes Phänomen, seiner koplexen Natur entsprechend, verschiedene Aspekte darbietet, d.h. nach verschiedenen Richtungen Bedeutung gewinnt oder besse: beansprucht, -- und in der jeder Interpret, entsprechend der in der Mannigfaltigkeit des geschichtlichen Lebens wirkenden Motive, die Fragestellung gewinnt, in der für ihn das Phänomen redend wird.

Perspectivism: the interpretation fits the object, when the object is placed within a determinate Fragestellung.

The perspectivist intepretation is objective, because the Fragestellung results from history: on the one hand the object is such that it presents many aspects, wins or demands significance

from many viewpoints; on the other hand, it is history again that produces the interpreter, the multiplicity of human motives, the arising of the Fragestellung that brings to light the significance of the historical object.

This is phenomenology, insights under the control of method, where method escapes involvement in the basic context of a realist philosophy.

The objectivity that Bultmann can claim is the objectivity of the fact that the interpretation occurs, that it expresses a significance grasped from an historically occurring point of view, that such

But there is a further objectivity that asks whether the historically occurring point of view is or is not part of a historical aberration, where judgement whether it is or is not such an aberration rests on the criteria of basic context.

What is to be granted to Bultmann is: (1) that the historical object is not significant without an effort to understand ((rejection of Historismus); (2) that efforts to understand occur only in concrete historical circumstances under concrete historical influences; (3) that methodical errors, such as I believe Bultmann exemplifies, are corrected only within the historical process of people coming to reject them as errors (as Historismus has been rejected).

Hence, the Archimedean point is method. Die historsch-kritische Methode has developed and it can develop still further. Cf. Ebeling, Die Bedeutung, ZfThK 47 1950 44.