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PHILOSOPHY OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES AT THE END OF MODERNITY

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In this paper questions about the legitimation crisis of the modern human sciences are distinguished from ones about the cognitive crisis of these sciences. It is argued that the legitimation of the human sciences requires an overcoming of epistemological foundationalism, which, however, should not imply a farewell to all foundational frameworks. The paper discusses the possibility of developing such a framework.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses some core aspects of the non-analytical (continental) philosophy of the human sciences. It tries to show how these aspects are connected with the so-called "legitimation crisis" of the humanities. It is a bit difficult to speak about the modern human sciences and their legitimation crisis for at least two reasons. First, the subject is very gen-

eral, and second, it is not clear how to relate the legitimation crisis of the modern human sciences to their institutional and cognitive crises. At the end of the sixties Walter J. Ong identified four main types of charges brought against these sciences: (a) the human sciences are not effectively related to extra-curricular life, and they are not responsive enough to the global problems of modern societies since they encourage (in accordance with their main methodological principle of "value neutrality") retreat from political activism; (b) in emphasizing the relativistic theoretical viewpoint they fail to investigate and to educate for emotional and intellectual sharing of all cultures; (c) they often represent their mode of critical analysis as a universal ideology, taking the place of political philosophy and theology; (d) they are insufficiently reflective about their cognitive aims, and, as a consequence, their cognitive structure resists the incorporation of new research subjects (Ong (1969)). Twenty-five years after Ong's diagnosis Günter Scholz added three new types of charge: (i) the human sciences form the cognitive base of Eurocentrism as they impose Western cultural norms and standards upon non-European cultural traditions; (ii) like the theories of natural science, the discourses of the human sciences are products of "epistemological foundationalism" and "logocentrism"; (iii) although the human sciences are distinguished by peculiar forms of epistemic rationality, they are not able to prevent the instrumental *Entzauberung* of the world (Scholz (1994)).

The common denominator of all these types of charges is the maladjustment of the modern human sciences to historical actuality. As a result, their "legitimation crisis" arises from their protective academic self-insulation from the ongoing global issues of humanity. Paradoxically formulated, in trying to thematize the cultural values of human life the scholars

of the human sciences avoid facing the real conflicts in values of the modern world. This thesis expresses one of the many possible ways of formulating the specificity of the legitimation crisis. Obviously, to overcome this crisis requires (of course, not only) developing a new "philosophical identity" of the human sciences. In the remainder of this paper I wish to concretize this claim and inquire which philosophical discourse, if any, is relevant for articulating the identity in question. Usually, the starting point in the diagnosis of a particular crisis of modernity is an inquiry into the historical roots of the symptoms being recognized. Here I shall proceed in a reverse way. I will not touch upon the issue of the cognitive autonomy of the human sciences as it is achieved as a cultural-historical process. My first task will be to give an outline of the main strategies of legitimizing the historical necessity of the human sciences. The discussion will raise the question of the nature of the research that takes place in the human sciences. Against this background, I shall reflect upon the post-metaphysical discourse that might lay the framework for overcoming the legitimation crisis of the human sciences. Following this line of reasoning, I shall make the claim that the problem of the philosophical identity of the modern human sciences is not to be reduced to a narrow epistemological problem.

2. STRATEGIES OF LEGITIMIZING THE HUMAN SCIENCES

The contemporary student of the human sciences is caught on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand, she must explain her theoretical enterprise in terms of scientific rationality referring to the norms and rules of a given general method - structuralism, hermeneutics, functionalism, and so on. On the other hand, she must elaborate a viewpoint that

goes beyond scientific rationality in order to offer a humanistic alternative to the dominant type of objectifying theorization that lays the foundation of the modern expansion of instrumental rationality. The tension between obeying the standards of scientific rationality and developing a critique of science is the pivot on which all strategies of legitimizing the historical necessity of the human sciences turn. In what follows I am going to sketch six such strategies:

(I) *Naturalizing the human sciences.* On this strategy, to opt for socially effective (i.e., effective in resolving the practical problems of modern societies) human sciences is to give up the human sciences' pretensions to cognitive autonomy. The champions of the naturalist strategy state that in order to survive, the human sciences must be completely naturalized. They can only justify their existence if they refrain from any pretensions to construct theories that are not reducible to the theories of natural science. From this perspective, the human studies are applications of general theories of such natural sciences as evolutionary biology, cognitive science (AI, cognitive psychology and formal linguistics), neurolinguistics, neuropsychology, etc., to particular cultural phenomena. Some proponents of the strategy suggest that there are "second-order" natural-scientific theories in disciplines like sociobiology, ethology, human and cultural ecology, and evolutionary epistemology which should serve as "mediators" between the general theories of natural science and the concrete human studies. Other authors advocate a kind of Chomskyan methodological approach to naturalizing the human sciences. According to them, if the students of the human sciences do not want to study only epiphenomena, they have to base their investigations on a theory as basic as Chomskyan "universal grammar"

(the human prerequisite for acquisition of language and culture).

(II) *Developing the human sciences as a sort of interpretative critique.* The point here is that the interpretative methods of the human sciences legitimize their existence in modern societies because in many cases these methods prove to be adequate to the practical purposes of social criticism. This strategy is most typically illustrated by Michael Walzer's idea that the interpretive human sciences constitute diverse research contexts within which interpretations become critical (Walzer (1986)). Another example of the strategy are the conceptions which equate interpretive-scientific critique with cross-cultural critique. A great number of students of the human sciences subscribe to the view that without violating the principle of value neutrality, the theoretical ideas of these sciences must support political practice aimed at new attitudes towards given social and cultural phenomena. An important premise of this view is that the very cognitive structure of human-scientific research "creates" a critical distance from interpreter's own cultural reality. So, the interpreter becomes an "integrated critic" of her/his culture. According to James Bohman, the cognitive structure of the critically oriented human sciences is based on a "critical circle" (in analogy with the hermeneutic circle) which is not vicious, but reflexive. At the same time, this author holds the view that there is nothing unique about the epistemic organization of the critical human sciences, except that they have made their purposes explicit (Bohman (1991), p. 227). In my view, however, the demand to make those purposes explicit is relevant to critical social science, but not to the critical human studies. The task of the former is to promote an understanding of present social conditions that can

become a basis for their transformation in order to enhance human emancipation. Thus, each critical social science must specify in its explanatory scenarios the idea of human emancipation as a goal that cannot be achieved within the present social order. In contrast to classical critical social science (e.g., the Marxian program, or the different post-Marxian variants of the "critique of ideology"), critical human studies should not be oriented to macrocultural theoretical models. For the time of macrocultural critique is over, the human-scientific critique is to be confined to critical case studies of particular cultural and social phenomena. These studies achieve their critical effect through an interpretive self-reflexivity showing the interpretative resources and the communicative capacities of the interpreter's own culture. The irreplaceability of this kind of self-reflexivity in contemporary societies provides the chief argument of the second strategy of legitimation of the human sciences.

(III) *The search for an identity of the human sciences outside epistemology.* Since early romantic philosophy, attacks on Enlightenment attempts at a "universal scientification" of the human studies have become common. The critics of these attempts have contrasted the situatedness and the finitude of each theoretical attitude toward cultural phenomena with the notion of rational knowledge of cultural phenomena. The redemption of the human sciences from their commitment to epistemological standards, methodological norms, and logical criteria of truth opens the door to reactivating the (pre-scientific) humanistic tradition. By fulfilling this task, the human sciences enrich modern culture with discursive practices governed by the practical (non-epistemological and non-methodological) rationality of *phronesis*. The historical roots of

this Gadamerian strategy go back to the struggle of the old *studia humanitatis* against the modern human sciences which were looking for their identity by developing a specific scientific method. *Cum grano salis* this struggle is to be described as a tension between the "*phronesis* of educational rhetoric" and the "epistemology of scientific research." This tendency still continues today, and it is responsible for the possibility of seeing the human sciences (and their legitimation in modern culture) from an anti-epistemological point of view. In equating the "logic of the human studies" with the structure of dialogue, the proponents of this strategy stress the primordially of the rhetorical dimensions of the human sciences. A new aspect of the strategy provided the so-called "compensation thesis" (formulated by Joachim Ritter (1974) and Odo Marquard (1981)). According to this thesis, the reactivation of the pre-modern humanistic tradition through the human sciences is not to be eliminated from the process of modernization. According to Marquard, the increase in the speed of modernization as a result of which cultural phenomena become obsolete is compensated for by an increase in the prospects for old cultural phenomena being reactivated by means of the "story-telling" character of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. By narrating different kinds of stories (and not by providing theoretical explanations), the human sciences give an answer to the transitoriness of the modern European world. Thus, they play the role of an "adapting hermeneutics" to the loss-of-familiarity in modernity. It is this role that legitimizes the historical necessity of the human sciences.

(IV) *The pragmatic (and deconstructivist) reorientation of the human sciences.* In fact, this strategy is built upon the former strategy aimed at a restoration of the humanistic tradition by

means of de-methodologization (and de-scientification) of human studies. In contrast to the former strategy, however, here the idea of a substantiation of the *Geisteswissenschaften* within the framework of a universal philosophical hermeneutics is abandoned. The pragmatic reorientation of the human sciences is a part of the program for substituting edification for epistemology. The way of legitimizing the human sciences leads to transforming them into a part of what Rorty calls an "edifying hermeneutics." In this regard, reformulating the human sciences in the spirit of hermeneutic neo-pragmatism contributes to overcoming the false distinctions of all forms of knowledge in modern culture. The cultural function of these sciences is to intensify the dialogue between the different cognitive types of science, political and religious discourses, the creative discourses of literature, and so on. In equating the non-foundational with the interpretative, the adherents of this strategy conceive of the human sciences as a way of universalizing the interpretative attitude in modern culture. (In this strategy one should include not only Rorty's picture of the human sciences as a sort of "edification", but also the variants of deconstructivism aimed at deconstructing the epistemological representationalism of the traditional humanities. Although strongly rejecting any form of hermeneutic holism and universalism, these variants support the neopragmatist program of the non-foundational reformulation of the human sciences.)

(V) *The human sciences may receive their legitimacy from the fact that they generate non-ideological meta-narratives "under post-modern conditions".* On this strategy, the era of all ideological and philosophical meta-narratives is over. Nevertheless, there is a need in modern societies for cultural integrity. This need

can be satisfied by developing meta-narratives that are not ideologically imposed upon local and contingent discursive practices, but rather provide (post-metaphysical and non-foundational) knowledge that can orient the woman of "late modernity" to select aims and goals for her future life. The human sciences find legitimacy through creating such meta-narratives which are not divorced from any kind of epistemological standards. There is an appropriate epistemology which is, however, both non-foundational and non-naturalist. I would like to suggest that this is an epistemology of "utopian projects." (Here I am using the term "utopia" in the sense of projecting cultural modes of existence that are not yet actual.) By means of its standards one is going to articulate the "orientational knowledge" of the human sciences. The meta-narratives that are the upshot of this articulation take the form of "projective theories of culture." The starting point of these theories is not the bifurcation between symbolizing mind and objective reality, but the projects of new modes of symbolic-cultural-constitution-of-reality. In this perspective, the traditional epistemological duality between symbolizing mind (culture) and objective reality (nature) is itself a product of a given cultural mode of existence. It is a duty of the human sciences to replace traditional theories of culture (or more accurately, the theories of culture based upon traditional epistemology), and to create the theoretical integrity of culture under "post-modern conditions." Attention was drawn to this strategy of legitimation for the first time by the pioneers of contemporary philosophical anthropology (Max Scheler, Helmuth Plessner and others).

Each of these strategies focuses on a given role that the human sciences play (or, may play) at the time of the global (philosophical, ideological, aesthetic, and moral) crisis of

modernity. Whether the human sciences possess the resources to play this role depends entirely on the cognitive organization of their experience. Thus, in order to evaluate the plausibility of the different strategies and to select the most appropriate role the human sciences should play "at the end of modernity," one should reflect upon some issues of their cognitive organization.

3. THE HUMAN SCIENCES BETWEEN RESEARCH AND RHE- TORIC

From a philosophical point of view, the idea of the "end of modernity" is based upon an attempt to develop a (post-metaphysical) discourse for understanding the closure of modern culture. In discussing this idea I will not take a pro-modernist or anti-modernist position. It is not my task here to investigate under what conditions modernity comes to a close, or whether modernity has exhausted its intellectual resources. I am only referring to the idea of the "end of modernity" with respect to the "destiny" of modern culture defined as a "processual system" of discursive practices that are created by positing a self-sufficient subject, confronting a world as an ensemble of "mere objects." In this regard, the "end of modernity" is rather a long (perhaps never-ending) process of overcoming the principles and the distinctions of epistemological foundationalism which govern the discursive practices of modernity. (To put it differently: The "end of modernity" is a never-ending process of de-coding the semiotic codes that "sort out" the discursive practices based on epistemological foundationalism.) I will try to show that the very cognitive organization of human-scientific experience as an integrated alternative to the dominant system of discursive practices

"contributes" to the "end of modernity" as such a process. If so, then the role of the human sciences in the never-ending process of overcoming modernity may provide a legitimation of these sciences.

It is important to stress at this point that definitions of modern culture in discourse-theoretical and semiotic terms only have the status of preliminary definitions. In the next section I shall introduce a definition in hermeneutico-ontological terms. Against the background of Heideggerian "ontological difference," a semiotic or a discourse-theoretical definition of culture is a definition elaborated on the ontical level. By contrast, to define culture in hermeneutico-ontological terms demands that we transcend the ontical level. Yet, there is no incompatibility between the two ways of defining culture. By defining culture in the framework of hermeneutic ontology one should refer to the existential modes of Being-in-the-world. The most important empirical (ontical) feature of these existential modes is that they are organized in manifolds of (semiotically codified) discursive practices which implement the symbolic (re)production of the "worlds" constituted by the different modes of Being-in-the-world. That is to say: On the ontical level the modes of Being-in-the-world are modes of cultural existence which persist in time through their symbolic (re)production. Thus, between the discourse-theoretical and the hermeneutico-ontological definition of culture there is an "ontico-ontological homomorphism."

The kernel of the cognitive organization of the human sciences is the research dialogue between interpreter and the cultural (symbolic) objects under study. Until the shift from Renaissance humanism to the modern humanities, different kinds of rhetorical criteria (such as those indicated by Quintilian in his *Institutes of Oratory*) determined the cognitive organi-

zation of the so-called liberal arts. One of the radical consequences of the transformation of *studia humanitatis* into modern human studies was the redemption of the dialogical interpretation from pure rhetoric and its emancipation as an epistemological foundation of research in the human sciences. The dialogical interpretation took the form of a research dialogue (with specific epistemic standards and criteria) in the program of a universal hermeneutics developed by Georg Friedrich Meier (1718-1777), who for the first time in the modern era defended the cognitive autonomy of the sciences which do not deal with explanations of natural facts but with interpretations of semiotic artifacts¹. The emancipation of the research dialogue brought the rhetorical aspects of the hu-

¹ Meier (1757) introduces the distinction between the *hermeneutica universalis* (*die allgemeine Auslegungskunst*) and the particular branches of applied hermeneutics. The former is a hermeneutic version of Leibniz's *characteristica universalis*. Meier's universal hermeneutics is not a substitute for rational metaphysics. It is not concerned with logical or metaphysical truth, but only with hermeneutic truth, i.e. the truth of acts of interpretation. In dealing with this kind of truth *characteristica universalis* provides the methodological framework of all interpretative sciences, which Meier identify with the branches of applied hermeneutics. Among the latter Meier distinguishes *hermeneutica sacra* (the science of theological interpretation), *hermeneutica juris* (the science of legal interpretation), diplomatic hermeneutics (the interpretative examination of documents), moral hermeneutics, mantic hermeneutics (the interpretative theory of natural signs), and hieroglyphic hermeneutics (the interpretative theory of arbitrary signs). Thereby, Meier suggests the first methodological definition of the interpretative sciences: They are research activities governed by rules of interpretation that aim at reaching hermeneutic truth. Moreover, Meier develops a specific philosophical discourse (in contemporary terms: a kind of hermeneutical semiotics), which legitimates the necessity of the human (interpretative) sciences by arguing the irreducibility of hermeneutic truth to any other kind of truth.

manities into a new existence. My claim is that since the emergence of the modern human sciences in the eighteenth century many of these aspects constituted a "rhetorical dimension" of interpretative research work. The discussion of this dimension is a problem area into which I do not propose to enter here except to observe that the tension between rhetoric and research in the modern human sciences reveals important forms of complementarity between imaginative and cognitive tools that are peculiar to the research dialogue of these sciences. In my opinion, the analysis of these forms is a step towards resolving the problem of the legitimation crisis formulated above.

Let me start out with the following question: Why is the very process of cognition in *Geisteswissenschaften* guided by a kind of "dialogical rationality"? I will try to answer this question by referring to some ideas of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, and more specifically, to Gadamer's notion of the "fusion of horizons." In so doing, however, I will try to show that the fusion of horizons in the process of research dialogue has a complex structure which not only does not exclude but requires the methodological identity of the human sciences.

The first task in thematizing a phenomenon of symbolic self-construction *qua* object of human-scientific interpretation consists in delineating a relevant medium in which the research work is to be embedded. Suppose that this phenomenon is an exotic ritual. In this case, the medium will be created by a "fusion" of the interpreter's horizon and the cultural context in which the ritual activities take place. In the process of carrying out a research dialogue this medium changes through including different elements both of the interpreter's horizon (theoretical assumptions, "personal ideology," elements of the cultural world-view, moral considerations, and so on) and of

the cultural context under study (native schemes of self-interpretation, rules of constructing and construing ritual symbols, patterns of communicative interaction, etc.). Unlike Gadamer, I do not think that the interpreter is "passively embedded" in the medium of research dialogue. In my view, during this dialogue the interpreter is in a reflective position towards the changes of the medium. This does not mean that the interpreter is "behind" (as a Cartesian monological subject, or, as a Fichtean self-reflective "I") the medium of research dialogue. To stress the moment of self-reflection does not mean also trying to rehabilitate the speculative philosophy of self-consciousness. The emphasis upon the moment of self-reflection in the interpretative research dialogue means rather that the interpreter plays an active role in the formation of a dialogical medium.

The preceding discussion leads me to the conclusion that there is a dialectic in the process of research dialogue. It is a dialectic between revealing the symbolic self-constitution of a phenomenon under study and reflecting upon the interpreter's own resources of carrying out a dialogical mode of theorization. The analysis of this dialectic brings into focus the relationships between cognitive and rhetorical aspects of the modern human sciences. In order to make this thesis clear I will differentiate between three topics of the research dialogue in human-scientific experience. The three topics will be described under the following headings: (a) bridging the gap between "experience-near" and "experience-distant" concepts; (b) reaching the integrity of the cultural objects "dispersed" in different interpretative strategies; and (c) taking into consideration the effective-historical dimension of the research dialogue.

To begin with, a research dialogue (no matter how it is "methodically canonized") is a unique encounter between two cultural individualities. In trying to understand the "hidden meaning" of the object under study the interpreter projects a pre-conception about what the object as an "individual totality" (e.g., the totality of all activities that make up an exotic ritual) is. Since the interpreter always brings to the dialogue a pre-conception which is an individual configuration of particular traditions, by projecting this pre-conception she reveals her own individuality. Yet the "unique encounter" between the two individualities stands inescapably within the history of all disciplinary discourses which determine the scenario of the research work. Therefore, there is an interplay between the immediate (pre-conceptual) grasp of the object as an "individual totality" and the thematizing constitution of it as a theoretical object belonging to the "trans-subjective knowledge" of such (in case of the exotic ritual) disciplinary discourses like cognitive anthropology, sociology of religion, structural semiotics, and so on. This interplay is associated with resolving a twofold task of research dialogue: Taking cultural objects as individual totalities, the human sciences seek both to excavate their hidden meanings, and to develop general models. (The study of the exotic ritual is both scrutinizing the cumulated symbols and modelling general "grammatical rules" that govern the ritual activities.) Research dialogue as an interpretative enterprise of penetrating into the hidden meanings of cumulated symbols requires the use of (what C. Geertz calls) "experience-near concepts." The latter are interpretative concepts by means of which one can offer "thick descriptions" of the textures of the lived experience that constitutes research dialogue. "Experience-near concepts" are an outcome of the "fusion" of the interpreter's pre-conceptions and the "fabrics of meaning"

which characterize the object under study. On the other hand, the search for general models requires taking a "conceptual distance" from the lived experience. Thus, one introduces (again in Geertz's terminology) "experience-distant concepts." (These concepts can be borrowed from such theoretical frameworks as structural semiotics, the theory of ideology, the sociology of knowledge, different variants of the theory of action, and so on.)

Now, despite the divergence between these two sorts of concept, research dialogue is a homogeneous enterprise. A closer look at the cognitive structure of this dialogue shows that the interpreter works out tools that enable her to move from the language of "experience-near concepts" to the language of "experience-distant concepts." Given that the conceptual organization of all human sciences involves both sorts of concept, the search for "intermediate concepts" becomes necessary once the task of the integrity of research dialogue is faced. My contention is that there is a kind of "metaphorical concept" that mediates between the two sorts of concept. It is important to emphasize at this point that this kind of concept does not refer to the inherent metaphorical content (if any) of the cultural objects under study. That is to say: "metaphorical concepts" are constructed in the process of research dialogue not by means of conceptualizing the original metaphorical meanings of the symbols that constitute the cultural objects under study. Rather, these are concepts generated by the inner logic of research dialogue. At the same time, to stress the importance of metaphorical concepts in the human-scientific experience does not simply mean to support the trivial view that because the figural elements of writing break through the restraints of pure theoretical thematizations of cultural objects, the human sciences are something between science and litera-

ture. What I would like to pay attention to is the fact that the metaphorical concepts in the human sciences make possible the appropriation of the schemata of a cultural object's self-interpretive constitution to theoretical thinking through experience-distant concepts. In this regard, metaphorical concepts involve transfer of native conceptual schemata from the context of self-interpretative constitution to a context of theoretical reflection. These concepts are metaphorical because they transfer experience-near concepts to a theoretical language as "something like" experience-distant concepts. It is this metaphorization of experience-near concepts, which brings general theoretical models into closer connection with the original symbolic self-constitutions of cultural objects. As a rule, metaphorical concepts do not remain explicit in human-scientific discourses. Rather, these concepts become "effaced" or suppressed by the explicit cognitive structures of human-scientific experience². They exist as a "hidden layer" of this experience, which makes research dialogue a homogeneous enterprise.

Cultural objects may exist with different "faces" in different contexts. What a cultural object means is not a network of stable meanings. There is no "semantic substrate," but only different "faces" actualized by the kinds of dialogical interaction with the object under study. A cultural object, in this regard, determines a plurality of scenarios for carrying out a research

² The conception of "effaced metaphors" was developed by Jacques Derrida (1971) in a completely different context. According to him, the philosophical *logos* (metaphysics) is the mythology of the white man that has effaced in itself those pre-metaphysical discourses which brought it into historical existence. These effaced discourses, precisely, are metaphorical. Derrida characterizes their implicit existence within the metaphysical texts as "an invisible drawing covered over in the palimpsest."

dialogue with it. The multifariousness of an object's possible "faces" represents the second topic of the research dialogue I would like to address here. The change of the object's "face" in the process of the research dialogue requires a flexibility of the interpreter's position. Thus, for instance, at an initial stage of her research a student of abstract expressionism (following Harold Rosenberg) may see in her object a "religious movement" whose main aim is liberation from Value — political, moral, aesthetic. As her research progresses, a new "face" of her object can emerge. She may turn her attention to that branch of abstract expressionism, typified by Mark Rothko, which is not so energetic and gestural. As a consequence, she may discover this style as an attempt to bring into an abstract unification cultural values which are otherwise entirely separated. This new "face" reveals abstract expressionism as a "meta-axiological cosmic symbolism" that is essentially akin to Joan Miró's aesthetic ideology. However incommensurable, both "faces" (as a "religious movement against Value" and as a "cosmic symbolism" unifying various kinds of cultural values) stress the importance of abstract expressionism more to American culture as a whole than to the history of modern painting in particular. They epitomize the tendency in post-war American culture to minimize the ambiguities of interpreting (physical, social, and subjective) realities through creating more restrictive codes of communication. Yet, a comparison of abstract expressionism with other styles of late modernism shows another "face". Unlike the styles (above all cubism) which try to explore the differences between representation and reality, abstract expressionism tries to destroy the representational picture of reality. In this regard, abstract expressionism is a struggle to establish anti-representationalist aesthetic and intellectual values. This multifariousness of (partial-

ly overlapping and partially conflicting) "faces" requires applying different "interpretative genres" for differentiating between the interpreter's theoretical attitudes in "communicating" with the object's "faces." As Bakhtin points out, the genre comes into being only through its thrownness toward the Other. By the same token, "interpretative genres" come into being only through their communicative thrownness toward a given aspect of the object under research. Examples of such genres (as rhetorical tools of the research dialogue in the human sciences) are ethnosemantic interviewing of the participant's point of view, psychoanalytic explanations, the interpretative participation in the analysand's narrative and so on. The space of possible "interpretive genres" determines the boundaries of a given research dialogue.

The third topic of the human-scientific experience I am going to discuss is the rhetorical reproduction of the cultural object's narrative mode of being. *Per definitionem* a cultural object is an object which constitutes itself by means of self-interpretation. The primary form of this self-interpretative constitution is narration. The existence of each cultural object is narratively related. (Here I adopt the ontological view that the immanent narrative coherence of cultural objects is not only an outcome of the acts of the interpreter's imagination. Rather, narrative interpretation only reproduces the object's inherent narrative.) Hence, to thematize a self-interpretative object requires reproducing its inherent narration. This very reproduction possesses an inevitably fictional element. To reproduce the inherent narration of a cultural object means to develop a construction that is inherently fictional. In other words, the theoretical thematization of a cultural object necessarily involves a narrative interpretation of the object's inherent narration. A theoretical construction in the human sci-

ences is also a (re)construction of a narrative. This is why the human scientist often takes the role of an imaginative writer. The unavoidable narrative interpretation is the third topic that demonstrates a specific cooperation between cognitive and imaginative elements in the human sciences. All theoretical constructions in the human sciences are, as this has been shown in particular by Hayden White with respect to the historical disciplines, characterized by certain generic plot structures (such as Romance, Tragedy, Comedy and Satire). In my view, fictional narratives are the rhetorical tools by means of which the interpreter arranges the theoretical scenario of her research dialogue. (For this reason, White insists that the poetic imagination of the interpreter serves as the pre-critically accepted paradigm of what a theoretical explanation should be.) In this regard, the semantic models of theoretical constructions in the human sciences are determined not only by the relevant empirical data but also by the "imaginative content" of the narrative interpretations.

So much for a general overview of the cognitive organization of human-scientific experience. From this overview one may conclude that the socio-cultural roles ascribed to the human sciences by different strategies of their legitimation are related to the specific way of constituting theoretical objects in these sciences. If so, in trying to overcome the legitimation crisis one is to articulate arguments in that philosophical discourse which can provide an identity of the human sciences by means of creating a general picture of constituting theoretical objects in the process of research dialogue.

4. TOWARDS A POST-METAPHYSICAL LEGITIMATION OF THE HUMAN SCIENCES

I agree with Gadamer and many others that traditional epistemological philosophy has exhausted its possibilities for providing a philosophical identity of the human sciences. But at the same time, a philosophical discourse that radically overcomes (or deconstructs, or dissolves) every kind of meta-theoretical foundationalism proves to be unable to elaborate on such an identity. As a consequence, conceptions as different as naturalistic epistemology, epistemological anarchism, and hermeneutic neo-pragmatism share the rejection of any "foundational distinguishing feature" of the human sciences. Yet, the specific tension (and complementarity) between research and rhetoric (and more generally, between epistemology and hermeneutics) as it is incorporated in the research dialogue of human-scientific experience indicates that there is a cognitive specificity of the human sciences which is to be analysed in philosophical terms. I will try to show that this analysis leads to defining a "foundational distinguishing feature."

It is (post-metaphysical but not post-foundational) philosophical analysis that may provide the cognitive identity of the human sciences. In my view, the discourse that allows such an analysis is hermeneutic ontology. Although this ontology (especially in its variant based on Dasein's analytic) is essentially akin to hermeneutic human studies, it is not a particular scientific discipline but a philosophical discourse that studies all kinds of scientific research as theoretical modes of existence. The framework of this meta-theoretical study is Heidegger's existential conception of science developed in *Being and Time*. From the perspective of this conception one can point

out three principal moments of the "ontological genesis" of the human sciences:

(a) The modification of everyday circumspective deliberation into theoretical interest for a research dialogue. As in the case of the objectifying theoretical attitude, theoretical interest is generated here by a "breakdown" of primordial concerned dealing with intramundane things. This interest is not oriented towards an ultimate goal. It is the interest in a dialogue that never ceases. Each attempt at satisfying it implies the raising of new questions. For this reason, it remains in principle an unsatisfiable interest.

(b) The formation of a basic hermeneutic circle through projecting the interpreter's pre-understanding of the cultural phenomena under study. By means of this projection the research dialogue takes a methodological shape. It is the potential infinity of this dialogue in which the interpretative constitution of theoretical objects occurred. These objects are not distinguished by an existence *per se*. They have a being only within the potentially infinite dialogue. The logic of the interpretative constitution of theoretical objects is determined by the theoretical interest in a hermeneutic dialogue as an instrumentally uncontrolled communication.

(c) The creation of a hermeneutic trans-subjectivity in the process of research dialogue. This trans-subjectivity is the most important "product" of the research-dialogical mode of Being-in-the-world. Moreover, the "fusion of horizons" of each concrete research dialogue is a moment of the integral effective history of the hermeneutic consciousness underlying the development of the modern human sciences.

In my view, the unity of these three moments defines what I called a "foundational distinguishing feature" of the human sciences. Yet the modern human sciences are not only a kind of theorizing but also an "ingredient" of modern culture. More specifically, they are that "locus" of modern culture, in which the latter "generates" its theoretical self-reflection. Both the epistemology of interpretative research and the hermeneutics of the rhetorical uncovering of "hidden meanings" are dimensions of this self-reflection. From the hermeneutico-ontological point of view, the latter is also to be revealed against the background of the "ontological difference." In contrast to the natural sciences, the humanistic disciplines are not characterized by algorithmic procedures for objectifying the delineation of research areas. There is no "region of beings" which is not to be studied from an interpretative-dialogical perspective. Even physical nature is no exception because one can ask in a hermeneutic manner, how physical nature becomes thematized as manifolds of theoretical objects of modern physics. Thus, the experience of the human sciences constitutes not regions of theoretical objects but an integral "interpretative universe" which coincides with the universe of all possible cultural phenomena. By stressing this potential infinity of interpretative thematization, which is a consequence of the infinity of research dialogue, I would like to pay more attention to the fact that the "interpretative universe" is a thematic world constituted by a theoretical mode of Being-in-the-world-through-carrying-out-a-research-dialogue. In other words, through the cognitive organization of the human-scientific experience the Being (of cultural existence) becomes revealed as an infinite dialogue. But now the question arises as to how one can relate this thesis to the previous claim that the human sciences are the "locus" of modern culture, in which the latter

"generates" its theoretical self-reflection. As a first step one can answer this question by construing modern culture as a totality of peculiar existential modes that is behind the cultural phenomena which are artifacts of these existential modes. (The modes of modern cultural existence are to be divided into two main types: existential modes based on the epistemic subject/object cut, and existential modes based on the dialogical "fusion of horizons." Speaking in ontical terms, the former are modes of socio-cultural existence governed by discursive rules and principles that impose the distinctions of epistemological foundationalism, whereas the latter are organized by the discursive practices of potentially infinite interpretative dialogue.)

Now, I would like to stress the hermeneutico-ontological meaning of the notion of totality mentioned above. It does not mean a sum or a set of modes of existence, but the wholeness of modern culture that has a character of Being of all cultural phenomena produced by particular modes of existence. It is the Being of all "cultural beings." Since modern culture is also a historical epoch, the totality of modern modes of existence unfolds (speaking again in hermeneutico-ontological terms) the (modern) historical experience of Being. Furthermore, the totality of modern modes of existence means an ontological complementarity between the modes governed by epistemological-foundational discursive rules and the modes organized by the discursive practices of interpretive dialogue. (Typically the former are illustrated by the epistemological rules of the objectifying scientific disciplines, while the latter are exemplified by the hermeneutic rules of human-scientific studies.) In the framework of this view (and by modifying some ideas of late Heidegger) one can formulate the thesis that the "history of Being of culture" is to be seen as utterly dependent on the "history of cultural beings." In other words, one is to give con-

creteness to the ontological history of culture by having recourse to the ordinary history of discursive practices by means of which the manifolds of cultural phenomena are generated. At the same time, the "modern epoch of Being of culture" (or, the modern experience of Being) is to be ontologically conceived in terms of the complementarity between the representational discourses of "beings-in-the-ensemble" as proposed to man as epistemic subject and the hermeneutic discourses of an infinite interpretative-dialogical universe.

It is clear that the account of ontological historicity of culture I have outlined introduces a kind of "productive misunderstanding" of the late Heidegger's ideas on the history of Being. The main point of deviation concerns the very notion of Being. My interpretation of the "ontological difference" in this paper does not touch any metaphysical questioning of the meaning of Being. Rather, it addresses the reverse issue of the Being of cultural meaning, or the Being of culture as contrasted with the particular "cultural beings" generated in the modes of human existence. In light of this culturological "productive misunderstanding" of the late Heidegger, the history of metaphysics loses its privileged status. The history of the Being of culture must not be seen in terms of the history of Western metaphysics. Since the Being of culture is the totality of modes of cultural existence that is not reducible to the sum of these modes, the various configurations of existential modes in their historical dynamics do constitute the "epochs of the Being of culture." This means that the epochal history of the Being of culture can be revealed through an analytic of the dominant existential modes of each epoch. In so doing, one should focus on the forms of "coming-to-pass of Being's unconcealment" (Heidegger) that distinguish the different existential modes. In my view, these forms are expressed in the

discursive practices that correspond to the existential modes. The principles and the rules of these practices express the historical experience of the Being of culture. Thus, the rules and the principles of the discursive practices of modern objectifying science as a theoretical mode of Being-in-the-world express Being's unconcealment as "beings-in-the-ensemble" proposed to man as epistemic subject. It is this proposedness of Being as represented presence (or representational picture) that lays the foundation of all procedures of objectifying theorization, instrumental calculations, and technological manipulations. The reduction of Being to a presence of mere objects and of man to an epistemic subject makes epistemological foundationalism a kernel of modern culture. But again, the principles and the rules of discursive practices are not themselves the epochs of the Being of culture which compose the history of the Being of culture. Rather, the historical dynamics of the configurations of different types of such principles and rules reveal the content of the epochal history of the Being of culture. Thus, the modern epoch of the Being of culture is defined by the "cooperative tension" of (the principles and rules of) epistemological foundationalism and interpretative universalism. (Here I cannot discuss in details the "productive misunderstanding" of the late Heidegger's history of Being I am suggesting. But one point must be mentioned. By stressing that one can discover the content of the history of the Being of culture through recourse to existentially relevant discursive practices (and only to the variety of metaphysical systems), one rehabilitates the rights of existential analytics for developing a hermeneutic ontology. As a consequence, the "productive misunderstanding" I am striving for depends on a reformulation of some ideas of late Heidegger in the light of ideas from *Being and Time*.)

Following this line of reasoning I am in a position to sketch a scenario for a hermeneutico-ontological legitimation of the human sciences. Although it is impossible to summarize succinctly the complex role of the interpretative universe constituted by the human sciences in modern culture, a few generalizations are possible. The modern experience of "the Being of culture" (or, the "coming-to-pass of Being's unconcealment" in modernity) takes the form of an interplay between (dominant) epistemological foundationalism and hermeneutic dialogism. Instrumental rationalization as a dominant tendency of the process of modernization is completely based upon discursive practices ruled by epistemological foundationalism. In this regard, epistemological foundationalism is "at the center" of modern culture. The interpretative universe of human-scientific experience is an "internal otherness" (of the dominant tendency) of modern culture. The "expansion" of this universe through widening the scope of human-scientific reflection contributes to the decentralization of the epistemologically-centered culture of modernity. Here I would like to refer to another Heideggerian idea – the distinction between the *Überwindung* of epistemological (Cartesian) metaphysics and the *Verwindung* of this metaphysics³. Since the human-scientific experience is an internal alternative to the epistemological foundationalism of modern culture, the "expansion" of the interpretative universe can never radically

³ The distinction between *Überwindung* and *Verwindung* of metaphysics plays a central role in Gianni Vattimo's conception of "weak thought." In opposing the French deconstructionists and post-structuralists, Vattimo (1988) claims that to *verwinden* the era of metaphysics means to overcome it by prolonging thought based on the ontological difference. The going beyond of metaphysics is only possible through "weakening" it.

overcome the metaphysics of presence and representationalism. But the "historical duty" of the modern human sciences is to make possible an *Überwindung* of metaphysics (i.e. epistemologically-centred culture) through a long *Verwindung* (an infinite process of overcoming) of metaphysics. The conditions of the possibility for such a *Verwindung* are determined by the three basic features of research dialogue discussed above. The complementarity between research and rhetoric (epistemology and hermeneutics) leads to a (never-ending) destruction of the metaphysical rigidification of presence as it unfolds in the total instrumentalization of modern life. More specifically, the "expansion" of the interpretative universe opposes the reduction of Being to objectness through: (1) increasing the "metaphorical content" of modern culture; (2) creating new "interpretative genres" and thereby enriching the forms of non-instrumental communication; (3) revealing the "forgotten" narratives of modern modes of existence.

Of course, these three aspects of the socio-cultural role of the modern human sciences cannot provoke anything like a global transformation of modern culture (or, a global overcoming of the "instrumental organization of beings") which might give rise to a "new epoch of Being." But the "cooperative tension" between rhetoric and methodologically organized research (or in terms of late Heidegger, between "poeticizing" and "thinking") makes possible a new kind of "non-objectifying thinking" that provides a new chance for going beyond technological thinking and instrumental domination over (physical, social and subjective) reality. In actualizing this

chance precisely, one finds a way out of the legitimation crisis of the modern human sciences⁴.

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⁴ I would like to thank the anonymous referee for his/her comments on the previous version.

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