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THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY AS AN EVENT: ITS INTERPRETATION AND MEANING

The paper proposes to consider the long nineteenth century not as a period in history, but as an event, that is, something that happens to a human being and thus informs the world picture and the image of the human. As far as culture studies are concerned with researching the specifically human ways of realisation of the image of the human being within the world picture, this approach to the long nineteenth century appears to be justified. To see the long nineteenth century as an event one must reveal and research the basic intuitions that hold the event together and make it whole. The author looks for these basic intuitions that makes the nineteenth century an event of the European culture-forming process in the semantics of grounding meanings, actual and potential, which are being explicated within the cultural dynamics of the century. Using the Eric Hobsbawm's idea of the long nineteenth century, the author shows that the period, understood as the event, closely resembles the Axial Age of Karl Jaspers. It is so because the new reality of the human universe had been discovered. This new reality is the reality of emotions, something that we now call an emotional life. This reality differs from the Baroque affects in being not the reaction to the external stimuli but a result of inner, subjective developments that arise to meet the burden of authorship. Subjectivity as the authoring of one's Being appears in the beginning of the long nineteenth century. It manifests itself fully in the Romantic era. The task of the Romantics is to give voice to this new emotional reality, to make it a matter of a creative text. The author emphasizes the presence of a kenotic, going-down process the Romantic ideology enters the public consciousness. This kenosis explains the premature decay of Romanticism, with the remnants of form and content becoming the performatives of the masses. Romanticism, therefore, should be viewed as yet another "incomplete project". The Romantic kenosis is, therefore, the basic meaning of the long nineteenth century that makes the period an event, giving to it the ground for the wholeness. The event made this way informs the future of the culture-forming process and is responsible for the dangers in connection with the Romantic remnants.

Key words: long nineteenth century, Romanticism, subjectivity, emotion, kenosis.

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ДОВГЕ ХІХ СТОЛІТТЯ ЯК ПОДІЯ: ЙОГО ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЯ ТА ЗНАЧЕННЯ

У статті пропонується розглядати «довге дев'ятнадцяте століття» не як історичний період, а як подію, тобто як те, що відбувається з людиною і, таким чином, формує світогляд та образ людини. Оскільки культурологія займається дослідженням суто людських способів втілення образу людини у світогляді, такий підхід до «довгого дев'ятнадцятого століття» видається обґрунтованим. Щоб розглядати «довге дев'ятнадцяте століття» як подію, необхідно виявити та дослідити основні інтуїції, що утримують цю подію разом і роблять її цілісною. Автор шукає ці основні інтуїції, які роблять дев'ятнадцяте століття подією європейського процесу формування культури, у семантиці заснованих значень – актуальних та потенційних, що розкриваються в рамках культурної динаміки століття. Використовуючи ідею Еріка Гобсбаума про «довге дев'ятнадцяте століття», автор показує, що цей період, якщо його розуміти як подію, дуже нагадує «осьову епоху» Карла Ясперса. Це тому, що було відкрито нову реальність людського всесвіту. Ця нова реальність – це реальність емоцій, те, що ми зараз називаємо емоційним життям. Ця реальність відрізняється від барокових афектів тим, що є не реакцією на зовнішні подразники, а результатом внутрішніх, суб'єктивних процесів, що виникають для того, щоб витримати тягар авторства. Суб'єктивність як авторство власного буття з'являється на початку довгого дев'ятнадцятого століття. Вона повною мірою проявляється в епоху романтизму. Завдання романтиків полягає в тому, щоб надати голос цій новій емоційній реальності, перетворити її на предмет творчого тексту. Автор підкреслює наявність кенотичного, низхідного процесу, за допомогою якого романтична ідеологія проникає у суспільну свідомість. Ця кеноза пояснює передчасний занепад романтизму, коли залишки форми та змісту стають перформативами мас. Отже, романтизм слід розглядати як ще один «незавершений проєкт». Отже, романтична кеноза є основним змістом «довгого дев'ятнадцятого століття», що робить цей період подією, надаючи йому основу для цілісності. Подія, сформована таким чином, визначає майбутнє процесу формування культури та є причиною небезпек, пов'язаних із залишками романтизму.

Ключові слова: довге дев'ятнадцяте століття, романтизм, суб'єктивність, емоція, кеноза.

Introduction. The nineteenth century is undoubtedly among the most important and interesting periods in the history of culture, and the fact seems to be universally acknowledged. It appears to be more important, though, that the century, for all the multifaceted developments that took place within the period, is perceived as a coherent and meaningful whole. It is more than only one in a series of consecutive centuries but a distinct cultural phenomenon in its own right, which is held together by a certain intuition beyond chronology. When Eric Hobsbawm dates the long nineteenth century (Hobsbawm, 1996), he not only transcends its chronological boundaries; wishing “to understand how and why the world has come to be what it is today” (Hobsbawm, 1996: ix), he rather attempts to grasp the particular impression of the century’s wholeness. Thus, the century’s boundaries are extended; and the nineteenth century ceases to be a period of time; it becomes a sort of novel, *ein Roman*, – that is, an interpretative space, a semantic realm in which a certain specific and fundamental sense pertaining to this realm is preserved, despite the shifting variety of meanings that replace one another. It is obviously clear that this fundamental sense is something that is not readily accessible to a researcher; it is not something that is readily accessible to the contemporaries either. It is something to be searched for and revealed in the process of interpretation.

Statement of the problem. It is probably this very semantic nature of the century that baffles historians, who are accustomed to viewing historical time as the time of facts. Thus, the nineteenth century is usually described through a collection of period facts – through a collection of achievements and accomplishments (see, for a short instance, (Boyd, 1901), (Hanson, 1900), (Laver, 1966), (Marvin, 1921), (Northrop, 1901)). Indeed, in terms of factual density, the nineteenth century may well be one of the most crowded periods in world history. However, the cultural researcher is interested not so much in the *fact* as in the *act* as something pertaining to human existence, which is always and to the highest degree a meaningful human (“subjective”) activity. Such subjective human activity is always pregnant with potential meanings and is therefore a semantic entity, rather than merely a factual and a sensory one. In the semantic realm of culture, the cultural researcher is interested not so much in the efficiency of rail transport and the length of telegraph lines under the Industrial Revolution, but rather in the train ticket and the telegram announcing the arrival. It means, *inter alia*, that the nineteenth century is to be treated not as a period, but as an event, that is, something that builds the human life.

However, the causes of historical facts are usually sought in the interplay of economic and political fac-

tors¹, and it is precisely because of this general disposition that historians can be sometimes perplexed by semantics – that is, by meaning – and even more so by the potential sense of events.

Perhaps it is precisely this stance taken by historians that explains why Karl Jaspers’s concept of the Axial Age, *Achsenzeit* (Jaspers, 1963), although frequently cited, appears to be falling out of fashion. Axial Age (approximately 800–300 BCE) is the period when humanity undergoes a decisive turn towards the attempts to conceive the non-sensory realm of the humane. We should perhaps be thinking neither the individual nor human-kind, but the humane as a quality that can be roughly interpreted by the idiom ‘human nature’. The humane, the human nature constitutes an invariant that enables us to identify phenomena pertaining to human existence as distinct from all the rest. This invariant, however, possesses a particular characteristic: it is revealed, that is, realised over the course of history through a series of approximations. The concept of Axial Age is therefore an attempt to give meaning to and to humanize history, since, within this concept, history is viewed as a space of meanings of human existence.

The concept of Axial Age has been criticised for failing to address the factors that lead humanity to the cultural turning point it describes². However, the absence of external factors bringing forth a cultural turning point implies that we should look for internal causes inherent in the culture-forming process itself, rather than investigate its factual entourage. Similarly, none of the factors determining biological growth of a human being is sufficient to explain the intrapsychic changes that indeed bring about the transition, for example, from childhood to adulthood³. External factors are of decisive importance to human development, and to culture as well, but they are not determining. They can slow down the development, even bring it to a complete halt; however, it is practically impossible to determine the development of person or culture solely in terms of external factors, just as it is impossible to decide the fable and features of a modernist novel solely from the mechanics of a fountain pen⁴.

¹ Marx had said about this: “I am not a Marxist” (see Friedrich Engels’ letter to Konrad Schmidt, 5 August 1890). It is not a Marxism, though; it is more of a cognitive custom with a positivist flair.

² «...Jaspers’s interest in spiritual or immaterial factors makes his approach to history rather peculiar» (Smith 2015: 317).

³ Of course, the author does not seek to deny the influence of the environment on psychological development. Rather, she seeks to counter efforts to reduce psychological processes to the influence of the environment.

⁴ Of from any other medium for that matter. The medium is the message only when the message lacks its own content entirely.

In precisely the same way, the advent of the steam locomotive is nothing more than a fact of industrial history. The point is that, entirely in line with Marx, the history of industry opens up a path for us to understanding human psychology: “Man sieht, wie die Geschichte der Industrie und das gewordene gegenständliche Dasein der Industrie das aufgeschlagene Buch der menschlichen Wesenskräfte, die sinnlich vorliegende menschliche Psychologie – We see that the history of industry and the material reality of industry as it has come into being are an open book revealing the essential forces of humanity, vividly presented to us through human psychology” (Marx, 2008: 94).

For a cultural researcher, therefore, every historical fact is of interest in terms of how it expresses the way humans see and build their world. From this perspective, a historical period, as a coherent cultural phenomenon, is an event that defines worldview, and it is precisely this worldview that would give to the historical period its unity as an event.

To approach the (long) nineteenth century from this perspective, one needs a certain conception of the history of culture-making, one that differs from Rankian *wie es eigentlich gewesen war* in that the logical and axiological emphasis shifts from the mere facts of existence to their subjective truth. In other words, neither a positivist conception of history as a facts sequence, nor an objectivist construct that, with mechanical inevitability, leads humanity into yet another historical impasse, will fail to be sufficiently effective. We need a structurally relevant metaphor that is free from these drawbacks.

Results. Oswald Spengler, being an organicist, would compare the history of culture to the natural history of an organism; this is a decent metaphor, but it does not fully take into account that what we are interested in is not history in and of itself, however we might understand it, but the history of the human world and the ways in which it is created.

Still, there is perhaps the theoretical metaphor that allows us to view a historical period as a single event without compromising the human-centred nature of the tasks undertaken by the cultural researcher. We will be looking at the idea that personality development is structurally and dynamically the same as the development of culture.

Generally, psychologists choose to talk about the development of the psyche, thereby mechanising⁵ our understanding; however, in a more practically orientated psychological tradition, one can also speak of

the development of personality⁶. Personality, just like culture, is a process; it is not innate but acquired; both culture and personality, in their development, pass through various qualitatively defined stages, which take up certain periods of time, without losing their qualitative distinctiveness in the process. Thus, a period in the history of culture can be viewed as an event by analogy with a period of personality development.

In fact, the metaphor is not new. Heraclitus said that “A man, when he gets drunk, is led by a beardless lad, tripping, knowing not where he steps, having his soul moist (B117 DK)”. That fragment suggests that a grown-up drunkard is more distant from being a cultured human being, than the child who shows him his way. Consequently, it suggests that different levels of individual development are used as a metaphorical measure for being a cultured Greek. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel easily compares history to stages of human development (see Hegel, 1961: 316 ff). Marx muses that, unlike many others, the Greeks were normal children, thereby describing Greek civilisation as the childhood of humanity: «Es giebt ungezogene Kinder und altkluge Kinder. Viele der alten Völker gehören in diese Kategorie. Normale Kinder waren die Griechen – There are naughty children and children who have grown up too quickly. Many ancient peoples fall into this category. The Greeks were normal children» (Marx, 2006: 45, 18–34). The examples are numerous, but the thing is that the widespread use of this metaphor suggests that it is something more than a commonality and that it reflects a certain truth⁷. Of course, this is not to suggest that a one-to-one cor-

⁶ General psychologists tend to understand personality as a combination of measurable traits; the closer to clinics, the less statistically minded psychologists are. While there certainly are clinical typologies of personality, clinicians know well enough that each personality is a unique thing which largely defies classifying. We need a novel to describe a personality; clinicians can do this in a vignette. For the purposes of this paper, we understand personality as an organizing principle for the whole of mental experience. To put it more elegantly, one can borrow from Jean Piaget: “The personality is the submission of the ego to an ideal which it embodies but which goes beyond it and subordinates it...” (Inhelder and Piaget, 1958: 349).

⁷ It should be noted that we are not going to resort to the so-called “recapitulation theory”. We do not deal with biological processes. Besides, and not in the least, what we are interested in is a structural parallel between the life story of an individual mind and a history of culture. Dynamics of the mind, either individual or cultural, is not a biological phenomenon, for the mind itself is informed with culture and vice versa.

⁵ The psyche is a mechanism, after all.

respondence can be established between the stages of personal development and those of cultural development (if only because the periods of psychological development are quite varied, whilst attempts to introduce periods in the history of culture will bring the necessity to speak of 'long' and 'short' historical intervals as a sort of semantic adjustment of a chronological scale). And still, certain coincidences do come to mind.

Jean Piaget says: «We shall no doubt come across analogies between the child and the primitive at every step; this will be, however, in the course of studying the child himself without any preconceived ideas, rather than because we are deliberately seeking such analogies» (Piaget, 1929: 88). In Piaget, we find that one of the characteristics of the child's mind is a tendency to believe without explanation, that is, without rational confirmation of the truth. Truth in Greek is called *Aletheia*, something that is always already present and never covered; truth does not hide itself, nor does one need to seek it out. In a sense, it is 'right here'; one need only listen and look to see and hear everything. A child's world is structured in exactly the same way. A child simply needs an effort of paying attention in order to 'know everything'. In Ancient Greece, this effort to pay attention was required of *theoroi*, the theorists. Accounts of what was observed were called *theoria*. In this sense, antiquity is truly the childhood of humanity. It belongs to Jaspers's Axial Age, for it is here that the observation of physical things gives way to the exploration of the metaphysical, that is, the unobservable.

From the perspective of personality development, the most significant event of childhood is the period of the original ("empty") self⁸, original and empty in much the same sense as geometers speak of the so-called «empty point», the origin. It is precisely this event that defines the wholeness and integrity of the period of childhood. The (child's) self in this pronominal exterior appears to exist, but only *in potentia*, and not yet *in actu*. It only indicates the subject, grammatically but not culturally. As it functions indicatively, it is still a mere sign that does not belong to the child itself. «The consciousness of self arises in fact from the dissociation of reality as conceived by the primitive mind and not from the association of particular contents. That the child shows a keen interest in himself, a logical, and no doubt a moral, egocentricity, does not prove that he is conscious of his

self, but suggests, on the contrary, that he confuses his self with the universe, in other words that he is unconscious of his self» (Piaget, 1929: 125). But surely we remember: «...*Ich denke* muß alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können; denn sonst würde etwas in mir vorgestellt werden, was gar nicht gedacht werden könnte, welches eben so viel heißt, als die Vorstellung würde entweder unmöglich, oder wenigstens für mich nichts sein – ...*I think* must be capable of accompanying all my ideas; for otherwise something would be conceived in me that could not possibly be conceived, which amounts to saying that an idea would either be impossible, or at any rate be nothing to me (B132 5-8)» (Kant, 1998: 178). This passage shows that the original self does not yet belong. It is indeed an empty point at the centre of the child's world, which is being filled with impressions from the surroundings; the world, as it were, runs into it like water into a funnel⁹. Therefore, a child's world is centripetal, the child's position is receptive, and the child's actions are reactive.

Historical and cultural analogue of this psychological event is the Socrates' daemon. It is impossible to speak of the personality in the ancient world prior to Socrates. However, Socrates' personality is not yet complete: he speaks of the daemon as something he can sense, therefrom he still requires sensory reinforcement for his thinking. He is still wavering between the visualised ideas and sculptured ideals of the Antiquity and his own path of self-reflection.

This Socratic journey towards the emergence of subjectivity, something the human being is entirely entitled to, runs through the reflection on one's own capacity to be that very self, through the act of appropriating the status of a subject. The empty origin of the self must become a fulfilled starting point of authoring the world; *potentia* must be transformed into *actus*.

From this point onwards in the history of the creative process, it is impossible not to speak of the personality, of the self as the author¹⁰. Here, the world must become centrifugal rather than centripetal. A person's position within this world must become creative rather than receptive, and acts must become proactive, thus becoming deeds. This second great event in the history of an individual happens during adolescence, when personality becomes a life-changing reality. Withing the cultural history the analogous event appears to occur during the Romantic era. It marks the beginning of the long nineteenth century.

⁸ Children usually start using the first-person singular subject pronoun at the age of 2½ to 3 years. From this point onwards, personality development begins. It is impossible to speak of personality before this stage – neither in a psychological sense nor indeed in any other sense.

⁹ Perhaps this is just what Locke meant when he had been speaking of *tabula rasa*, although he was most likely referring to the intellect rather than subjectivity.

^{10As} Fichte put it: 'I' posits 'not-I'; the subject (pre)supposes the object.

Hobsbawn struggles to define Romanticism. “As a style, a school, an era in the arts, nothing is harder to define or even to describe in terms of formal analysis...” (Hobsbawn, 1996: 257). The observation is correct. It is precisely because of these difficulties that we should look into another sort of interpretation.

Romantics grew out of Kant’s critique in a certain, culturally and psychologically ‘natural’ way. In the Third Antinomy antithesis Kant states: “Es ist keine Freiheit, sondern alles in der Welt geschieht lediglich nach Gesetzen der Natur – There is no freedom; instead, everything in the world happens solely in accordance with the laws of nature (A445=B473 3-5)” (Kant, 1998: 549). It means that while nature itself was rendered inaccessible¹¹ by the concept of *Ding an sich selbst*, we can find freedom only outside nature. Freedom, (or “spontaneity”, which is more attractive to the young generation¹² of Romantics) is not at all a ‘natural’ thing but can be legitimately thought of as of both the source and the result of culture which is, by its own nature, specifically human. Thus, culture is a “natural” result of a subjective culture-creating effort. It so appears that Kant had introduced the topic of subjectivity, the subject, and, eventually, the self as the closest introspective counterpart to the concept of subjectivity as the problem(s) that led, explicitly or implicitly, the charge of Romantic thought. It is likely that this very theme lends coherence and unity to the

Romantic movement, bringing together its diverse perspectives and traditions.

The Romantic self requires, however, just like Socrates’ self-reflection, an external anchor. As it is with every adolescent, Romantics wanted some big things to support their emotion-infused imagery, and big ideas to ground their idealised aspiration: one can remember Novalis equating his beloved to abbreviation of the Universe (“Meine Geliebte ist die Abbrueviatur des Universums”). The awakening subjectivity wants to root itself in a certain external, ‘natural’ environment, in order to recapture the sense of lost childhood comfort that goes alongside the newly gained freedom. This is exactly how teenagers feel when they find themselves at the centre of a centrifugal, scattering world, a world that now conceals its truths *per specula et aenigmata*. The teenagers’ desire to find an authority of their own in order to make something of the world, which is yet out of reach translates into Romantic desire to regain the objective world one can conceive, and thus to transform the thing-in-itself into a thing-for-themselves. Friedrich Hölderlin had been writing a play *Der Tod des Empedokles*: but Empedocles had said in his poem: “I go about among you an immortal god, no longer a mortal... (On Purifications 352)” (Fairbanks 1898: 203). This desire for complete control over objectivity¹³ is always implicit already in the Romantics’ quest to circumvent the logical constraints imposed by Kant on epistemology. It inevitably gives rise to a mystical-magical mindset: for the mystic, knowledge is attained through non-logical means, whilst the magician transcends physical limitations. Such Romantic mythologisation of thought is akin to routine ‘mystical-magical intoxication’ of adolescents. Romantic appeal to nature (the very same nature which, according to Kant, stands in opposition to freedom and culture), to folk sources of meaning, even to a natural science – to all that exist objectively in relation to creative subjectivity – works to the same effect. These circumvention manoeuvres are designed to restore the Absolute as a legitimate object of knowledge. Hegel’s project is, in a sense, a brilliant Romantic demonstration.

A teenager’s life is so short. The turbulent period subjectivity’s coming out gives way to melancholy (Søren Kierkegaard says that “Subjektiviteten er Sandheden” – subjectivity is truth. This is a disheartening realisation: it literally means that there can be no other, referential truth; everything depends on the author and on no one else) and to a kind of coming

¹¹ In 1872, summarising the century’s scientific progress, Emil du Bois-Reymond tells his colleagues, nature scientists and physicians: “Unser Naturerkennen ist also eingeschlossen zwischen den beiden Grenzen, welche einerseits die Unfähigkeit, Materie und Kraft, andererseits das Unvermögen, geistige Vorgänge aus materiellen Bedingungen zu begreifen, ihm ewig stecken. Innerhalb dieser Grenzen ist der Naturforscher Herr und Meister, zergliedert er und baut er auf, und Niemand weiss, wo die Schranke seines Wissens und seiner Macht liegt; über diese Grenzen hinaus kann er nicht, und wird er niemals können – Our knowledge of Nature is thus stuck in between of the two barriers: on the one hand, it is our incapacity to understand matter and force, and on the other hand, it is our inability to tell the processes of mind from their material grounds, that would hinder us eternally. In between of these barriers the natural scientist is lord and master; he dissects and builds up, and no one knows where there lies the roadblock for his knowledge and power; <but> he cannot go over these barriers and never will do” (du Bois-Reymond, 1884: 40).

¹² Rudolf Haym specifically underlines the generational aspect (Haym, 1961: 10 ff). Hobsbawn also thinks it is important to see the “There had never been a period for young artists, living or dying, like the romantic...” (Hobsbawn, 1996: 260). Even Jacques Barzun quotes, incidentally, Harry Overstreet (see Overstreet, 1927: 43) to hint that romanticism is, at least in a sense, at adolescent stage (Barzun, 1945: 180).

¹³ «...the adolescent goes through a phase in which he attributes an unlimited power to his own thoughts so that the dream of a glorious future or of transforming the world through Ideas (even if this idealism takes a materialistic form) seems to be not only fantasy but also an effective action which in itself modifies the empirical world» (Inhelder and Piaget, 1958: 345-346)

to terms with that very ‘natural’, ‘objective’, ‘social’ reality in which the teenager seeks to find a foothold (In Hermann Hesse’s *Der Steppenwolf* we read about «...das Geheimnis vom Untergang der Person in der Menge... Ich war nicht mehr ich, meine Persönlichkeit war aufgelöst im Festrausch wie Salz im Wasser – ...the mystery of a person’s disappearance within the crowd... I was no longer myself; my personality had dissolved in the festive frenzy like salt in water» (Hesse, 1955: 182)). Hegel, who began his career with *The Tree of Liberty*, ended his life as a full professor and rector of the Berlin University, in whose philosophy the Absolute Idea had already been cognised in its necessity. Yet the circumstances of his death are, in themselves, very reminiscent of a Romantic gesture worth of young Werther (“In 1831 a cholera epidemic broke out in Berlin; both Hegel and Schopenhauer fled, but Hegel returned prematurely, caught the infection, and died in a few days” (Durant, 1933: 333)). Romanticism, as befits, ended with the death of the hero¹⁴. In fact, every teenager is a romantic hero. And vice versa.

¹⁴To treat Hegel romantically is a tricky task. It seems very natural that Hegel should belong to German classics in philosophy which is not to be mixed into the romantic medley. And still Hegel is an ambivalent figure. On the one hand, “Die moderne Zeit interpretiert er als Anfang eines Zeitalters, indem der Mensch (der Humanus) als neuer höchster und letzter ‚Heiliger‘ gilt und die Möglichkeit hat, sich dazu zu formieren – die Moderne als Chance auf den Beginn human gestalteter, freier Existenz – He interprets the modern era as the dawn of an age in which the man (the Humanus) is regarded as a new, supreme and ultimate ‘saint’ and has the opportunity to shape itself accordingly – modernity oneself as an opportunity for the dawn of a humanly shaped, free existence” (Vieweg, 2023: 7). It looks like an outward Romanticism, not only because of the theme of freedom, but also in Hegel’s stylistic choices. On the other hand, Hegel’s adherence to the objective Idea and negligent disposition towards the individual human life suggests strongly his totalitarian tendencies. Those tendencies, though, are not alien to Romanticism, because of the Romantic infatuation with an Absolut. Actually, Hegel did express the contradiction ingrained in Romanticism that is the contradiction between the idea of the Subjective and the ideal of Volksgeist. Anyway, Haym states about Hegel that: “...in ihrem *Princip* ist diese Philosophie *romantisch* geblieben, in ihrer *Ausführung* ist sie der schlechtesten Reflexion und der dürrsten Scholastik verfallen – in its *principle* this philosophy remains Romantic, in its *design* it deteriorates into the worst ill-conceived reflection and the driest scholastics” (Haym, 1962: 230). All those things said, Hegel is the best sample of the inner contradictions of Romanticism; maybe that explains why his philosophy fell out of grace almost immediately after his death.

The significance of adolescence for the person lies in the fact that in this period an adolescent establishes – an excessively stark and always not quite rational, yet entirely distinct ethical and aesthetic criteria of one’s own to fully realise the potential of freedom and thus to survive the burden of authorship. The newly discovered space of the subjective is abundant with emotions. These are not the school affects of the Enlightenment: they are complex, irrational and raw. Moreover, they look very natural: the Nature itself appears within the subjective space as if to root the self in something real. That is why emotional life are the most cherished Romantic phenomenon. Perhaps emotions (we could well have said “passions”) are the most important driver of every Romantic mind and the Romantic Age as a whole. Romantics discovered the new reality of emotions; here lies the great cultural significance of Romanticism. Emotions claim to be expressed, it is a part of experiencing emotions; Romantics provided metaphors, lexicon and style to make emotions matter¹⁵, make them subject of conversation. Here comes the novel, *der Roman*: the (semantic) space to express the subjective meanings, but also to ground the self; the place to belong.

However, it is this desire to belong, to become grounded, that provoked a sort of kenotic movement, a move down to the lay public, which caused the premature decline of Romanticism. Through the century we can witness the romantic *membra disjecta* saturating everyday consciousness¹⁶. The highest tension of the reflective attempts of the few¹⁷ has turned into widespread interest in private life; philosophy gave a broad way to psychology, and logic as a universal science¹⁸ surrendered to ethnography. Thus, a romanticised reserve has emerged and entrenched in

¹⁵What Romantics did not happen to do is to make emotions the matter of reflection, to realise the identity of freedom and responsibility. Modernists would attempt that.

¹⁶“... und auch Caroline schüttelte den Kopf über “die Jungen Offiziere, die in der Garnison dichten – ...and even Caroline (Schelling) shook her head at the „young officers who wrote their barrack poetry” (Haym, 1961: 861).

¹⁷“... a small minority in society can still echo the thunder of the earthquake which shake all humanity” (Hobsbawm, 1996: 257).

¹⁸“Alfred Rosenbergs, einer der Chefideologen der Nazis, strafte den weltbürgerlichen Denker Hegel gerade wegen dessen Universalismus ab: „kosmopolitischer, unvölkischer Narr“ – Alfred Rosenberg, one of the leading ideologues of the Nazis, disparaged the world-citizen thinker Hegel precisely because of his universalism, calling him “a cosmopolitan, unpatriotic lunatic” (Vieweg, 2023: 6).

everyday worldview, which is more than enough for us¹⁹. Romantic *membra disjecta* constantly appear in any given sphere of the human mind. Even those in the twentieth century who were quite comfortable to criticise the Enlightenment, did it from the Romantic standpoint²⁰.

Conclusion. In this sense, what makes the long nineteenth century a distinct event in the history of cultural creativity is this kenosis of Romanticism, with the resulting romanticised reserve having infused the ideological fabric of the nineteenth century. Romantic lexicon, style and themes constitute yet another

“incomplete project” that still wants reflection. The axiological dynamism of the nineteenth century is ambivalent. The values Romanticism had brought to the fore – namely subjectivity, freedom, the new reality of emotion – were the tasks to be resolved within the culture-forming process. The decomposed elements of romantic form and content had been appropriated instead, primarily as a performative instrument for securing the social subject’s affiliation²¹. It is an example of a disheartening axiological dynamic that now, “in the new age of unreason”²² we must take into account.

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¹⁹“In a yet wider sense the approach to art and artists characteristic of romanticism became the standard approach of nineteenth-century middle class society, and still retain much of its influence” (Hobsbawm, 1996: 258-259).

²⁰...Horkheimer and Adorno unmask enlightenment ideas as dangerous myths, they appeal to romantic dream of reconciliation with a nature that is at once innocent, archaic and redemptive. (Roberts and Murphy, 2006: ix). Further: “Romanticism’s redemptive myths celebrating original genius and archaic origins, aesthetic politics and aesthetic gods provide justification for retrograde totalitarian fantasies” (Roberts and Murphy, 2006: x).

²¹Occasionally, Oscar Wilde had said something that sounds very close: “Death and vulgarity are the only two facts in the nineteenth century that one cannot explain away” (Wilde, 1926: 235).

²²See (The Guardian Editorial).

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