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Aus dem Inhalt: Joachim Harst, Christian Moser, Linda Simonis: Languages of Theory. Introduction • Maria Boletsi: Towards a Visual Middle Voice. Crisis, Dispossession, and Spectrality in Spain's Hologram Protest • Peter Brandes: Poetics of the Bed. Narrated Everydayness as Language of Theory • Annette Simonis: Stephen Greenblatt and the Making of a New Philology of Culture • Dagmar Reichardt: Creating Notions of Transculturality. The Work of Fernando Ortiz and his Impact on Europe • Michael Eggers: Topics of Theory and the Rhetoric of Bruno Latour • Nicolas Pethes: Philological Paperwork. The Question of Theory within a Praxeological Perspective on Literary Scholarship • Achim Geisenhanslücke: Philological Understanding in the Era After Theory • Joachim Harst: Borges: Philology as Poetry • Regine Strätling: The ›Love of words‹ and the Anti-Philological Stance in Roland Barthes' »S/Z« • Markus Winkler: Genealogy and Philology • Christian Moser: Language and Liability in Eighteenth-Century Theories of the Origin of Culture and Society (Goguet, Smith, Rousseau) • Linda Simonis: The Language of Commitment. The Oath and its Implications for Literary Theory • Kathrin Schödel: Political Speech Acts? Jacques Rancière's Theories and a Political Philology of Current Discourses of Migration • Helmut Pillau: »Ein großer weltlicher Staatsmann wider alle Wahrscheinlichkeiten.« Gertrud Kolmar und Jean-Clément Martin über Robespierre • Pauline Preisler: Die abstrakte Illustration. Paul Klees »Hoffmanneske Märchenscene« und E.T.A. Hoffmanns »Der Goldene Topf« • Nachruf, Rezessionen.



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für Allgemeine und Vergleichende
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Markus Winkler

Genealogy and Philology¹

The present paper deals with the use of the term *genealogy* in theory. I will first try to highlight the hidden metaphorical status of this use and the ambiguity that it conveys. In doing so, I will try to outline how this metaphoricity and its inherent ambiguity may be brought to fruition in the philological analysis of texts and in theory itself. The paper is subdivided as follows:

1. The use of the term *genealogy* in theory and the interest of this use to philology.
2. A philological comment on the metaphorical status of this use and its inherent ambiguity inherited from mythical genealogy as a form of founding narrative.
3. The imitation of mythical genealogy and its inherent ambiguity in theory (Nietzsche) and literature (Goethe).
4. Genealogy's ambiguity in theory: an example taken from current political discourse.
5. Conclusion.

1. Any application of the term *genealogy* in theory has to take into account its well-known use by Nietzsche, Foucault and their successors. I am referring in particular to Nietzsche's *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*) and *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (*Genealogy of Morality*) and to Foucault's 1971 essay "Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire" ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History") as well as to his 1970 lecture *L'ordre du discours* (*The Order of Discourse*) and his posthumous essay "Qu'est-ce que les Lumières?" ("What is Enlightenment?"), inspired by Immanuel Kant's famous 1784 essay. By way of simplifying to the extreme, one may say that in these texts, *genealogy* designates a way of 'unmasking'² and de-legitimizing established and cherished values, concepts or practices by questioning their founding historical narratives. Genealogy as a philosophical form of historical research, "a genre of historical-philosophical writing with a critical intention,"³ opposes the 'Platonic' modalities of traditional historical writing insofar as the latter is (supposedly) informed by the search for pure

1 The theoretical parts of the present paper draw on my introduction to the following volume: Markus Winkler in collaboration with Maria Boletschi, Jens Herlitz, Christian Moser, Julian Reidy, Melanie Rohner. *Barbarian: Explorations of a Western Concept in Theory, Literature and the Arts. Vol. I: From the Enlightenment to the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2018, forthcoming.

2 Cf. David Hoy. "Genealogy, Phenomenology, Critical Theory." *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 2.3 (2008): pp. 276-94.

3 Martin Saar. "Understanding Genealogy: History, Power, and the Self." *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 2.3 (2008): pp. 295-314, here p. 312.

origins, continuous developments (themselves based on tradition) and recognizable ends of historical processes.⁴ Genealogy aims at undoing these ontological and teleological implications and the metahistorical point of view that they presuppose by exposing the heterogeneity and shockingly low provenance (*Herkunft*) of those values, concepts and practices as well as the contingency of their emergence (*Entstehung*).⁵ This form of genealogy indeed claims that historical events are considered to be nothing but the manifestations of unstable power relations: “Les forces qui sont en jeu dans l’histoire n’obéissent ni à une destination ni à une mécanique, mais bien au hasard de la lutte. [...] Elles apparaissent toujours dans l’aléa singulier de l’événement.”⁶—“The forces operating in history are not controlled by destiny or regulative mechanisms, but respond to haphazard conflicts. [...] they always appear through the singular randomness of events.”⁷ Thus Foucault, following Nietzsche, points out that whenever genealogy deals with historical periods considered as highly civilized, “c’est avec le soupçon,—non pas rancunier mais joyeux, d’un grouillement barbare et inavouable”⁸—“it is with the suspicion—not vindictive but joyous—of finding a barbarous and shameful confusion.”⁹

Obviously, this sort of ‘genealogical’ critique of the way we look at established values, concepts and practices (such as the asymmetric opposition of civilization and barbarism in the passage just quoted) is of considerable interest to the analysis of political discourse. Yet it may also inspire the philological approach to literary texts, philology being understood here as the critical practice that deals with the historical-textual, linguistic, and interpretative aspects of literature. As a form of theory, genealogy may indeed help focus our philological attention on poetical and fictional (literary or artistic) genealogies as ways of uncovering the past of what on the diegetic level is given as present. However, the reverse is true as well. In my paper, I would indeed like to show that philological practice, while drawing on theory’s use of the term *genealogy*, may in turn modify this theory by highlighting what theory’s use of the term involves.

⁴ Michel Foucault. “Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire.” *Œuvres*. Vol. II. Paris: Gallimard, 2015 [1971], 1281–1304, here p. 1294. On Foucault’s reading of Nietzsche’s genealogies, see Martin Saar. “Understanding Genealogy” (note 3); Colin Koopman. “Foucault’s Historiographical Expansion. Adding Genealogy to Archaeology.” *Journal of the Philosophy of History* 2.3 (2008): pp. 338–62; Ernst Müller/Falko Schmieder. *Begriffsgeschichte und historische Semantik: Ein kritisches Kompendium*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2016, pp. 575–86.

⁵ Cf. Foucault. “Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire” (note 4), pp. 1282–86 for Foucault’s analysis of Nietzsche’s genealogical keywords *Herkunft* and *Entstehung* as counter-concepts of *Ursprung* (origin).

⁶ Foucault refers here to Nietzsche. *Zur Genealogie der Moral* II, § 12. For a detailed analysis of Nietzsche’s use of the term genealogy, see my chapter on Nietzsche in the monograph mentioned in note 1.

⁷ Michel Foucault. “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.” *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, pp. 76–100, here p. 88.

⁸ Foucault. “Nietzsche, la généalogie, l’histoire” (note 4), p. 1295.

⁹ Foucault. “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History” (note 7), p. 89.

2. What this use involves first is metaphor. Indeed, when Foucault and his recent successors present genealogy as a ‘method’¹⁰ of historical research or as radically historicist ‘critique’,¹¹ they leave out the fact that their use of the term *genealogy* is metaphorical.¹² In its dominant, non-metaphorical use, as documented by major language dictionaries, *genealogy* means “[a]n account of one’s descent from an ancestor or ancestors, by enumeration of the intermediate persons,”¹³ that is, a family pedigree. Linking the present generation to its predecessors and tracing the lineage back to its origin (in the ideal case), genealogical accounts tend to be *legitimizing* narratives, as witnessed by ancient mythological models such as Hesiod’s *Theogonia* or the *Genesis*.¹⁴ Genealogy in fact emerges as a type of mythical narrative and later crystallizes into figural representations such as family trees as well as charts and records.¹⁵ A closer look at the mythological model-genealogies however reveals that the mythical legitimization of the present through a founding narrative of the present’s past origin may also tend to *de-legitimize* this legitimization by narrating e.g., how one generation revolted against the preceding generation, as it is the case in Hesiod’s *Theogonia*. Thus, genealogies may also be narratives of emancipation through rupture with the past. Emil Angehrn describes this ambiguity of the genealogical narrative as follows:

Die genealogische Herkunftsgeschichte ist nicht nur Rückführung auf das gründende Erste, sondern auch Herausführung aus ihm: Die Dialektik des Ursprungs ist die von Begründung und Befreiung. Nicht nur wer sich seiner Herkunft versichert, sondern auch wer sich von ihr emanzipiert, kann sich selber finden: Nicht nur wissen, woher man kommt, sondern auch, wovon man sich frei gemacht hat und wohin man geht, ist ein Modus der Identitätsgewinnung.¹⁶

10 Cf. Michel Foucault. Sécurité, territoire, population. Cours au Collège de France (1977-1978). Ed. Michel Senellart/François Ewald/Alessandro Fontana. Paris: Galimard/Seuil, 2004, p. 121.

11 Cf. Mark Bevir. “What is Genealogy?” Journal of the Philosophy of History 2.3 (2008): pp. 263-75, here p. 265.

12 Saar hints at the fact that Nietzsche’s use of the term genealogy is metaphorical, but that it has become in the meantime “ein zentraler philosophischer Topos” (Martin Saar. “Understanding Genealogy” [note 3], p. 11).

13 OED. Oxford English Dictionary online. <http://www.oed.com/>.

14 Cf. Klaus Heinrich. “Die Funktion der Genealogie im Mythos.” Parmenides und Jona. Vier Studien über das Verhältnis von Philosophie und Mythologie. Basel: Stroemfeld/Frankfurt a. M.: Roter Stern, 1982, pp. 9-28. Accordingly, genealogies served during the Ancien régime to prove aristocratic descent (Sigrid Weigel. Genealogik. Generation, Tradition und Evolution zwischen Kultur- und Naturwissenschaften. München: Fink, 2006, p. 24).

15 Cf. Sigrid Weigel. Genea-Logik. (note 14), pp. 10, 23.

16 Emil Angehrn. “Ursprungsmythos und Geschichtsdenken.” Der Sinn des Historischen: Geschichtsphilosophische Debatten. Ed. Herta Nagl-Docekal. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1996, pp. 305-32, p. 311.

Genealogical accounts of past origins not only link the present to its founding past, but also lead the present out of its past: The dialectic of origins consists in both founding and liberating the present. Those who trace back their lineage, but also those who emancipate themselves from their lineage, may both find their proper selves. Knowing from where one comes as well as knowing from what one has freed oneself are ways of finding one's own identity. (My translation)

In their use of the term *genealogy*, Nietzsche and Foucault obviously emphasize and even absolutize this emancipatory moment of rupture insofar as their uncovering of the hidden 'barbarous confusion' in the present's past aims at ending the past's authority over the present and its values, concepts and practices. However, this use of the term to designate a method of 'unmasking' the low provenance and contingent emergence of presently cherished values, concepts and practices may well resort to the genealogical narrative's legitimizing function as well. Thus in Nietzsche (who by the way was not the first to apply figures of genealogy to philosophical thought¹⁷), the genealogical conjectures on the 'barbarian' provenance of highly civilized societies leads to a vindication of barbarism as powerful totality capable of generating 'higher' forms of human and social life.¹⁸ In the preface to *On the Genealogy of Morality* e.g., he outlines his understanding of genealogy pragmatically by presenting it as a way of uncovering "the *descent* of our moral prejudices"¹⁹—"Herkunft unserer moralischen Vorurtheile;"²⁰ and of approaching the "real *history of morality*"²¹—"wirkliche[n] Historie der Moral"²², namely "that which can be documented, which can actually be confirmed and has actually existed, in short, the whole, long, hard-to-decipher hieroglyphic script of man's moral past"²³—"das Urkundliche, das Wirklich-Feststellbare, das Wirklich-Dagewesene, kurz die ganze lange, schwer zu entziffernde Hieroglyphenschrift der menschlichen Moral-Vergangenheit."²⁴ In doing so, genealogy however will uncover "that much older and more primitive kind of morality which is *toto coelo* removed from altruistic evaluation"²⁵—"jene viel ältere und ursprünglichere Art Moral, welche *toto coelo* von der altruistischen

17 Cf. Sigrid Weigel. *Genea-Logik* (note 14), p. 27. Cf. also Stefan Willer/Ulrike Vedder. "Genealogie." Metzler Lexikon Literatur- und Kulturtheorie. Ed. Ansgar Nünning. 5th ed. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2013, pp. 263-64.

18 Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche. *Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*. Ed. Giorgio Colli/Mazzino Montinari. Vol. 5. München: dtv, 1980, p. 11.

19 Friedrich Nietzsche. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Trans. Carol Dieth. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 4.

20 Friedrich Nietzsche. *Zur Genealogie der Moral. Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*. Ed. Giorgio Colli/Mazzino Montinari. Vol. 5. München: dtv, 1980, p. 248.

21 Ibid. p. 8.

22 Ibid. p. 254.

23 Ibid. p. 8.

24 Ibid. p. 254.

25 Ibid. p. 6.

Werthungsweise abliegt.”²⁶ The programmatic uncovering of the older kind of morality thus veers to the claiming of this kind of morality.

Reflecting from a philological point of view on the metaphorical status of the philosophical use of the term *genealogy* therefore makes us realize that this use conveys a semantic complexity that opposes conceptual simplification. In contexts other than those of genealogies in the non-metaphorical sense, the term indeed becomes part of an ‘absolute’ metaphor (as opposed to metaphor as a rhetorical figure of speech). Absolute metaphors are, to quote Hans Blumenberg, “*Grundbestände der philosophischen Sprache* [...], ‘Übertragungen,’ die sich nicht ins Eigentliche, in die Logizität zurückholen lassen”²⁷—“*foundational elements* of philosophical language, ‘translations’ that resist being converted back into authenticity and logicality;”²⁸ they have a “*begrifflich nicht ablösbare[.] Aussagefunktion*”²⁹—“conceptually irredeemable expressive function,”³⁰ which consists in ‘guiding’ and ‘framing’ concept-based and theory-oriented research and as such undergoes historical change.³¹ We hold that thinking the history of presently cherished values, concepts and practices in terms of genealogy proceeds from an ‘absolute’ metaphor in the Blumenbergian sense and that this metaphor may unfold a de-legitimizing or legitimizing dynamic, as do the mythical narratives from which the metaphor itself emerges.

3. From a philological point of view, Nietzsche’s genealogical accounts of presently cherished values, concepts and practices thus prove to be, at least at times, a literary staging of the ambivalent attitude towards the past provenance of those

26 Ibid. p. 251.

27 Hans Blumenberg. “Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie.” *Archiv für Begriffs geschichte* 6 (1960): pp. 7-142, here p. 9.

28 Hans Blumenberg. *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*. Trans. Robert Savage. Ithaca: Cornell University Press and Cornell University Library, 2010, p. 3.

29 Blumenberg, “Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie” (note 27), p. 9.

30 Blumenberg. *Paradigms for a Metaphorology* (note 28), p. 3.

31 On the pragmatic function of absolute metaphors, cf. Blumenberg. “Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie” (note 25), p. 11, 59 (English: Blumenberg. *Paradigms for a Metaphorology* [note 28], p. 5, 52); on ‘absolute’ metaphors as “metaphorische Leitvorstellungen” (“leading metaphorical representations”) cf. Blumenberg. “Paradigmen zu einer Metaphorologie” (note 27), pp. 9-11, 17, 19, 20, 23-24, 69; Blumenberg. *Paradigms for a Metaphorology* (note 28), pp. 3-5, 10, 13, 14, 17-18, 62-63, and Hans Blumenberg. “Ausblick auf eine Theorie der Unbegrifflichkeit”. *Ästhetische und metaphorologische Schriften*. Ed. Anselm Haverkamp. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2001, p. 193: “Metaphern sind [...] Leitfossilien einer archaischen Schicht des Prozesses der theoretischen Neugierde”— “[M]etaphors are fossils that indicate an archaic stratum of the trial of theoretical curiosity” (Hans Blumenberg. “Prospect for a Theory of Nonconceptuality”. *Shipwreck with Spec tator. Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997, p. 82); on the ‘framing’ function of metaphors cf. Dietrich busse. *Frame-Semantik. Ein Kompendium*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012, pp. 300-1, and on the genealogical tree as absolute metaphor in Kant’s *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, see Weigel, Sigrid. *Genea-Logik*. (note 14), p. 27.

values, concepts and practices. The same holds true with Foucault's resuming account of the Nietzschean accounts, e.g. the above-quoted passage, in which he characterizes the genealogical uncovering of the "grouillement barbare" as joyful.³²

Literary genealogical accounts are by definition not mythical, but when they are explicitly literary, they may *imitate* mythical genealogical accounts to stage their ambiguity. I quote a prominent example of such explicitly literary staging, namely Iphigenia's long and detailed genealogical account in Act I of Goethe's *Iphigenia in Tauris*. This account is without equivalent in Euripides and in Goethe's modern predecessors. Iphigenia uses it to legitimize her refusal to marry Thoas: presenting herself as the descendant of the Atrides, a lineage characterized by a sequence of horrible crimes (such as fratricide, infanticide and cannibalism), she intends to deter king Thoas from his project to marry her. Thoas, the barbarian, on the contrary underscores her humanitarian accomplishments and the divine "blessing" that has ensued. Both involve that she has in fact long revolted against her family origins. Her presently cherished values and practices being—to use Nietzsche's formula—"toto coelo" removed from those past origins, her genealogical account cannot be but a mythicizing claim of her family's past; it is also a cathartic representation of what she has left behind, an undoing of the past's authority over the present (and as such it fails to legitimize her present refusal to marry Thoas). The ambiguity of Iphigenia's account and the ambivalence it betrays of her own attitude toward her family history are perfectly conveyed by the question with which Thoas interrupts Iphigenia's account: "Sage nun, durch welch ein Wunder / Von diesem wilden Stamme du entsprangst." "And tell me by what miracle thou sprang'st / From race so savage."³³ "Entsprangst"—"sprang'st from" means obviously both: "descended from" and "emancipated from."

4. How can genealogy as theory and method acknowledge and bring to fruition this ambiguity and ambivalence instead of imitating it, such imitation being literature's appanage, but not theory's? To suggest an answer to this question, I would like to outline a genealogical analysis of a political symbol, namely the one used by the Identitarian Movement ("Identitäre Bewegung"). This current pan-European far right youth movement originated in France in 2002 as the "Génération identitaire" movement, a youth wing of the "Bloc identitaire". The

32 Hence from our point of view, it does not go without saying that genealogy is a clearly and unambiguously critical form of historiography ("dass Genealogie eindeutig kritische Geschichtsschreibung ist"; Martin Saar. *Genealogie als Kritik: Geschichte und Theorie des Subjekts nach Nietzsche und Foucault*. Frankfurt: Campus, 2007, p. 10). See also David Hoy. "Genealogy, Phenomenology, Critical Theory" (note 2), p. 284: "Foucault's own rhetoric [...] has perhaps not been as consistent on the question of the regressive slide into barbarism."

33 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Iphigenie auf Tauris*. Werke. Weimarer Ausgabe. I. Abtheilung. 10. Band. Weimar: Böhlau, 1889, p. 18. Translation by Anna Swanwick in: *Selections from the Dramas of Goethe and Schiller*, Trans. by and with Introductory Remarks by Anna Swanwick. London: John Murray, 1843, p. 17.

German branch was founded in 2012 on Facebook.³⁴ The movement's program consists in promoting 'ethno-pluralism' (in fact racial separatism) as opposed to liberal multi-culturalism. It fights for a 'Festung Europa' and against 'mass immigration' and the 'islamization' of Europe, against the 'moral decadence' of 'our' democracy and against 'globalism' and 'western-liberal universalism.' The movement has close ties with the "Institut für Staatspolitik," a think tank of the New Right founded in 2000 by Götz Kubitschek and Karlheinz Weißmann, as well as with the PEGIDA movement and the AfD party. Specialists in the research on political extremism and the German *Verfassungsschutz* ("Office for the protection of the constitution") consider it as a form of right wing extremism.

The Identitarian movement's symbol is the encircled Greek letter Lambda against an orange background, as designed on the Spartan shield in Frank Miller's and Lynn Varley's 1998 comic book *300* and the 2007 Hollywood movie of the same name (director: Zack Snyder). The book as well as the movie based on the book retell the battle of Thermopylae (480 BC), focusing (in a historically inaccurate way) on King Leonidas' and his 300 Spartans heroic defense of the Thermopylae pass against a huge Persian army led by king Xerxes. The Lambda thus functions as the initial of both "Leonidas" and "Lacedaemonians."

The comic and movie are characterized by orientalist, racist and homophobic stereotypes as well as by extreme and graphic violence (some critics speak of fascist aesthetics). To de-legitimize the Identitarian movement's symbol however, genealogical analysis will rather focus on its 'low' provenance and contingent emergence: the symbol proves to be a product of the despised globalized cultural industry, given that the movement has in fact borrowed it from an American comic book and Hollywood movie. These in turn are commercial exploitations of post-Cold War respectively post-9/11 anxieties that are not specifically European. Genealogical analysis might also emphasize that the many adaptations of the Thermopylae example throughout occidental history include Hermann Göring's radio speech of 30 January 1943, in which the sacrifice of German soldiers during the (lost) battle of Stalingrad is compared to that of the 300 at Thermopylae.³⁵ This Nazi adaptation obviously defies the Identity movement's distancing itself from the 'Old (Nazi and neo Nazi) Right.' Genealogical analysis thus makes "visible all of those discontinuities that cross us" and reveals "the heterogeneous systems which, under our self's mask, prohibit the formation of any form of identity."³⁶

Yet this analysis requires as complement a phenomenological interpretation of the symbol's function. From this perspective, the use of the symbol proves to be part of the Identitarian movement's mythicizing attempt to found the present

³⁴ See the Austrian and German branch's website: <http://www.identitaere-bewegung.de/idee-tat/>.

³⁵ On the main adaptations of the Thermopylae example, see Markus Winkler. "Leonidas." Der Neue Pauly. Supplemente 8: Historische Gestalten der Antike. Rezeption in Literatur, Kunst und Musik. Ed. Peter von Möllendorff/Annette Simonis/Linda Simonis. Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 2013, col. 609-20.

³⁶ Foucault. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" (note 7), p. 95.

fight for the preservation of ‘ethno-pluralistic’ European identity against ‘Islamization’ on an exemplary story of the past (mediated by the comic book and movie). As such however, the attempt deprives both the present fight and the past story of their respective historical contexts, according to the structure of mythicizing, as defined by Roland Barthes:

Le mythe prive l’objet dont il parle de toute Histoire. En lui, l’histoire s’évapore; c’est une sorte de domestique idéale : elle apprête, apporte, dispose, le maître arrive, elle disparaît silencieusement : il n’y a plus qu’à jouir sans se demander d’où vient ce bel objet. Ou mieux : il ne peut venir que de l’éternité [...].³⁷

Myth deprives the object of which it speaks of all History. In it, history evaporates. It is a kind of ideal servant: it prepares all things, brings them, lays them out, the master arrives, it silently disappears: all that is left for one to do is to enjoy this beautiful object without wondering where it comes from. Or even better: it can only come from eternity [...].³⁸

The present analysis indeed resorts to myth as a constitutive, legitimizing factor, as a semiotic system or form of thought. This in turn legitimizes the attempt to classify the way in which the Identitarian movement’s symbol becomes significant.

Accordingly, the above-mentioned ambiguity and ambivalence of genealogy as a metaphorically induced method becomes instrumental: the proposed analysis of the symbol de-legitimizes its use by pointing to the contingency of the symbol’s emergence and to the successive meanings which its present use conceals; this tendency of the metaphor is obviously close to Foucault’s definition of genealogy as critical “history of the present”³⁹ (“*histoire du présent*”).⁴⁰ On the other hand, the very definition of the symbol’s mythicizing function resorts to myth as a semiotic system, that is, to quote Ernst Cassirer, a ‘symbolic form’ or one of the “forms of human culture”,⁴¹ namely the non-contingent, founding and as such *legitimizing* ‘condition of possibility’ of the symbol’s mythicizing dynamic. To be sure, the symbol’s concrete meanings emerge, as we have seen, contingently; yet, its way of creating meaning is not contingent, but a form of constituting.⁴² Thus, our resorting to myth as a constitutive, *legitimizing* factor

37 Roland Barthes. *Mythologies*. Paris: Seuil, 1970, p. 225.

38 Roland Barthes. *Mythologies*. Trans. Annette Lavers. New York: The Noonday Press, 1991, p. 152.

39 Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books, 1995, p. 31.

40 Michel Foucault. *Surveiller et punir. Œuvres*. Vol. II. Paris: Gallimard, 2015 [1975], p. 292.

41 Ernst Cassirer. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Volume Two: Mythical Thought*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953, 279.

42 Ernst Cassirer. *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Erster Teil: Die Sprache*. 9th ed., Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1988, p. 43 and Ernst Cassirer. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms. Volume One: Language*. Trans. Ralph Manheim. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953, p. 107.

in turn *legitimizes* our attempt to classify the way in which the symbol becomes significant.

5. Our philological rethinking of genealogy leads us to the following conclusion: as a metaphorically induced method or theory, critical genealogy unfolds a dynamic that is not only “radically historicist”,⁴³ as Mark Bevir claims in his reading of Nietzsche and Foucault, but also phenomenological (in the Cassirerian sense of the word).⁴⁴ Accordingly, we question the opposition that, in an article inspired by Kant’s “Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?” (“Response to the question: What is Enlightenment?”), Foucault establishes between “transcendental” criticism on the one hand and “archaeological” and “genealogical” on the other.⁴⁵ Whereas the former, he claims, deals with “the search for formal structures with universal value,” the latter is “a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying” – an investigation which Foucault, provocatively and misleadingly, labels as “historical ontology of ourselves”. I have tried to show that this alternative is invalid, as is Foucault’s claim that only genealogy, in his understanding, will enable us to “separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think”.⁴⁶ To Foucault’s rather simplistic alternative, we oppose a genealogical approach which is simultaneously historical and phenomenological. As such, it draws not only on the conflictual interplay of legitimization and de-legitimization that characterizes mythological genealogies, but also on the structural hallmark of the figural representations of genealogies (mythological and other), namely the no less conflictual interplay of systematic classification and historical derivation.⁴⁷

43 Mark Bevir. “What is Genealogy?” (note 11), p. 265.

44 On the compatibility of genealogy and phenomenology, see also David Hoy. “Genealogy, Phenomenology, Critical Theory” (note 2), pp. 289-94.

45 This article was first published in English in the Foucault Reader (note 7), pp. 32-50, where it is presented as “based on an unpublished French manuscript by Michel Foucault” (p. iv) and “[t]ranslated by Catherine Porter” (32). On its French version, first published in Foucaults Dits et écrits (1994), see the explanations in Foucault. Œuvres. Paris: Gallimard, 2015. Vol. II, pp. 1650-1654 (notes on “Qu'est-ce que les lumières?”). Given its publication history, I renounce quoting the French version.

46 Michel Foucault. “What is Enlightenment?” The Foucault Reader (note 7), pp. 45, 46.

47 Cf. Sigrid Weigel. Genea-Logik. (note 14), p. 36. Weigel characterizes the structure of genealogical patterns as „das Zusammenspiel und den Widerstreit zwischen synchroner Klassifikation (mit dem Effekt der Bildung von Einheiten) und diachroner Ableitung (als Projektion in die Dimension der Zeit)“.