

# Elementa

*Intersections between Philosophy, Epistemology  
and Empirical Perspectives*

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Transitions

*Edited by Tommaso Sgarro*

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# The Human “Historicity” as a Permanent Transition in the Philosophy of Ignacio Ellacuría

Tommaso Sgarro

*Università degli Studi di Foggia (Italy)*

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[tommaso.sgarro@unifg.it](mailto:tommaso.sgarro@unifg.it)

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## ABSTRACT

*Ignacio Ellacuría was brutally murdered in November the 16th, 1989 by the hands of El Salvador's Armed Forces; ten years later in 1999, a quick but detailed “schema” of Xavier Zubiri's anthropology, which he had used for a course he taught between July and August 1968 at the Centro de Estudios Superiores para el Desarrollo (CESDE) in Medellín, was published within the second volume which collected the Jesuit's philosophical writings. The “schema” brings together many of those theses that form the basis of his most important work, and which came out posthumously, “Filosofía de la realidad histórica” (1990); this was developed in close comparison with the thought of the great Spanish philosopher whose Ellacuría was student and collaborator. The historiographical reconstruction of the salient passages of Ellacuría's research on the relationship between historicity and history in the broader Zubiri anthropological context makes possible to highlight some peculiar aspects of the Jesuit's thought, which is not merely limited to offer a new and different line of interpretation of Zubiri's thought. The prominence of the idea of history as a transition within the social body, characteristic of the human experience, offers a new perspective, all internal to the Ibero-American philosophy of liberation, and at the same time, allows us to trace new and different sources in Ellacuría's philosophical production.*

*Keywords:* animal of reality; estado; historicity; history; Ignacio Ellacuría; liberation philosophy; possibility; reality; social body; Xavier Zubiri.

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Between 1953 and 1954, Xavier Zubiri (1898-1954) gave about thirty lectures at the Madrid Chamber of Commerce entitled *The problem of Man*;

as his best-known pupil, Ignacio Ellacuría (1930-1989) pointed out, this was the first attempt by the Spanish philosopher to study man in a unitary way. It was from these lectures that Ellacuría reconstructed, between 1967 and 1968, an “outline” of the presentation of Zubiri’s anthropological problems (also in the light of the work carried out after 1954), that he held as a course between July and August 1968 at the Centro de Estudios Superiores para el Desarrollo (CESDE) in Medellín entitled *Lantropologia di Xavier Zubiri*. He published it for the first time in the second volume of the collection of philosophical writings of the Jesuit edited by the UCA (Central American University “José Simeón Cañas”) in 1999, ten years after the brutal murder of Ellacuría occurred in El San Salvador on November 16, 1989 at the hands of the Salvadoran Armed Forces. In an attempt to show some interesting and original aspects of Ellacuría’s work, I will try to trace a quick trajectory analyzing the relationship between *life* and *historicity* from the 1968 work to *Filosofía de la realidad histórica* (1990)<sup>1</sup>, which represents his philosophical testament. On one hand, the close relationship with Zubiri, one of the most important European philosophers of the twentieth century, and his dramatic death contributed to build around Ellacuría a halo of myth and interest; on the other hand, this polarization has often forced the interpretation of his thought into a constant oscillation that goes from Zubiri’s theories to those of the South American political struggle and liberation theology. These two aspects are preponderant and decisive in his work; however, they often prevented us from seeing the originality of the path that lies primarily, as Hector Samour wrote, in having considered philosophy not as: “a mere intellectual process or the product of a conceptual dialectic, extrinsic to the very life of the philosopher, but the product of an intelligence vitally and existentially committed to the revelation and realization of truth in the social and historical reality in which it is located” (Samour, 2003, p. 20). What I will try to analyze is how Ellacuría presents the dynamism life-historicity and its actualization within the *social body*, with the aim of proposing a timely, partial, reconstruction and a precise historiographic evaluation on one of the aspects that seem to be at the basis of the most original concept elaborated by Ellacuría: that of *historical reality* (Brito, 2020).

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<sup>1</sup> We will take into consideration the 2007 edition present in the edition of Ellacuría’s works edited by UCA.

## 1. LIFE AS A QUESTION ABOUT THE "LIVING"

In the text of 1967-1968 Ellacuría starts from the idea of man as a *living reality*, reviewing the question of life formally understood as a spontaneous or immanent movement as it is presented in Zubiri's anthropology (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 303). The qualification of this *movement*, however, is rather problematic for the latter, since it immediately recalls the Hegelian dialectic of history. Life, however: "is in the way of producing movement neither spontaneously nor immanently, but [...] in a way of being in movement: the way according to which movement affects the living [...]" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 303). Life is the living in movement, the mode of being of this movement is the mode of being of life itself (Vargas, 2009); therefore, it is not a matter, as for Hegel, of identifying the origin of movement but its mode: "human substantiality, therefore, even though it is intrinsically mobile and in movement, does not have life because it moves, but its life is in what that movement has intrinsic to substantiality as a source of actions, [...] to live is to possess oneself in its substantiality, to move substantially, to be *autós* in movement" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 304). Is not the movement that is autonomous, which is not alive, but who is in possession of the movement, that is, the man. To live is to be in possession of oneself, and this possession for man is the set of vicissitudes that determine his own life as movement. The close interconnection between one thing and the other, therefore, means that man cannot be interpreted as a soul alone (intrinsically substantive), nor as a body alone (intrinsically accidental), but in their union, in a substantiality that is actualized through the category of *possibility*. This is the reason why: "life does not admit only species; it admits above all and radically degrees: one is more or less alive" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 304); it should therefore be analyzed not under the form of life experience, but as a *way of living*: life is its making, its happening (Pelegrina Cetrán, 2002). Substantivity is not proper to life but to the living, and in this difference the path of Zubiri's reasoning is built. Zubiri, in fact, speaking of the three moments that delineate man's life *nacer, tener un decurso* and *morir*, rejects any substantialist position, because it is not life but man that is; it derives a modal conception that is constructed through the ideas of *collocation* (*locus/colocación*) and *state* (*situs/situación*). These are two fundamental concepts because they are connected to the structure *suscitación-respuesta* that characterizes life, not so much and not only as a succession of states, but rather as a tension that leads from one state to another, life as the very dynamic of living:

The living being is "between" things, some external and some internal, that keep it in an activity that is not only constant, but primary. By virtue of this

it is in a certain state of equilibrium, not static but dynamic, in a kind of stationary state, as physicists would say; not a stillness but a quiescence. [...] In this state it is “between” things. And this “between” has two characters. One of installation: the living being is placed among things, it has its locus determined among them. Another modal: the living being thus placed is arranged or situated in a certain way before them, has its *situs*. The category of *situs*, which had no role in Aristotle’s philosophy, shows its portentous originality and importance in the subject of life. Location and situation, locus and situs, taken in their full breadth and not only in a spatial sense, are the two radical concepts at this point. They are not two independent concepts. (Zubiri, 1982, p. 46)

About the structure *suscitación-respuesta* proposed by Zubiri as the first state of living, Ellacuría proposes an interpretation that seems to particularly emphasize the use of the word *estado* as reinforcing the strongly dynamic character of the process itself. An emphasis that is functional to the Jesuit’s reasoning, but which finds its *raison d’être* in Zubiri’s own words already in *Naturaleza, Historia, Dios*: “Things are not in motion because they change, but they change because they are in motion. When the actualization of possibilities is the result of one’s own decision, then there are not only states (*estados*) of movement, but events. Man is an entity that happens, and this happening is called history” (Zubiri, 1944, p. 15). The qualification of movement is, therefore, the core of the very reasoning for Ellacuría, as is already evident in the text on Zubirian anthropology, composed of three writings elaborated for different occasions between 1964 and 1966 (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 77), where it is emphasized that *suscitación* is directly related to *estado vital* in its relationship with action. Not being able to deepen further here the structure of the substantivity of the living in Zubiri, these elements are sufficient to understand how it is marked by an internal dynamism, which for man passes from being mere motility of the entity (as in Aristotle) to *action*: this is precisely the point that seems to interest the Jesuit most in the connection between living and history.

In Zubiri himself, moreover, the use of the term *estado* completes a progressive maturation in its use from *Naturaleza, Historia, Dios*, passing through *Sobre la esencia*, where it assumes a first and fundamental valence through the qualification of the *estado constructo* of reality (Espinoza, 2000/2001), up to *Inteligencia y logos*: “modern philosophy in general has not taken into account the question of the reality of the state. In my view, it is necessary to redeem it” (Zubiri, 2008, p. 465). This redemption is achieved through a new and precise qualification, from the philosophical point of view, of the term: “it is first of all a ‘staying in’ as a way of being, and a ‘staying in’ as a way of ‘staying-in’: it is a ‘being-remaining’. And

this state is therefore a physical and real moment" (Zubiri, 2008, p. 465). "Staying" therefore has to do with the very materiality of reality, and the dimension of "staying" does not evade man. Ellacuría captures the urgency that leads Zubiri to re-evaluate the term and that allows us to define life in its substantiality, not only as a succession of states, but rather as that tension that leads from one state to another and that characterizes the historical character of man. The *estado* is therefore for Ellacuría the ontological precondition of *situación*, and it is this "being" that allows the location of man, to define that dynamism with respect to the surrounding environment, and gives him "intramondanity" constructing the space of the same anthropological question: "The *situación* is, first of all, the radical condition for there to be things for man, and for things to discover to man their powers and offer him their possibilities" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 241). For Zubiri there are three categories that make up *situación*: *status*, *habitus* and *situs*.

What allows the radical condition of the situation is for man the *sentient intelligence* that actualizes in a singular way the intramundane reality. Ellacuría thus retraces the entire arc of Zubiri's reflection, insisting, however, particularly on the datum of the dynamic immanence of human "being" in the world: "The situation involves man in a certain state, to the extent that he is affected by things themselves, insofar as they are real. This state is the one with which we have to face new situations. A state that takes us out of the previous state" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 317). This is possible because man plans (*proyecta*), but starting from what, in what way and with respect to what? Not everything depends on man, and in fact man himself does not depend on himself but, materially, is the fruit of a generativity that is substantiated in a genetic transmission, formally, a transmission of "forms of reality". If, on the one hand, planning has a clear vocation towards the future, on the other hand, it cannot prescind from the past.

Ellacuría outlines what he defines as "the splendid study" in which Zubiri analyzes the profound sense of the radical substantiality of human life, but he also underlines how it does not stop at the mere radical structures of man as a living being; it is necessary to deepen other three inescapable dimensions of his substantiality: the *social*, the *historical* and the *moral*, that is, what man does among things, but above all what man does among other men, that is, what is the peculiarity of human dynamism: *action*. This highlights the propaedeuticity of the anthropological analysis outlined by Ellacuría to the analysis of the "practical" dimension of human life: what emerges is the close link that the Jesuit builds between sociality and history (present, but not so markedly in Zubiri), because: "each one, by the simple

fact of making his own life, discovers that his situation is created by others. [...] While man uses, modifies, etc. other things, what he does primarily with other men is to live together. Thus, when referring to people, the word 'other' takes on a special character" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 329). It is not at all an intellectual datum that binds to the other and allows him to be grasped, but the fact that man is an *animal of reality*: "because of the psychophysical structure of his sentient intelligence, constitutively poured out on others" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 330). Not only that, that of man more than an attitude towards the other is a habit: it is a physical habit, because it is a *reality of habit*. The man is therefore physically linked to others, it is therefore given a material definition of the concept of *habitus* because: "in it a 'have', and because it is a power, it exerts a 'pressure' on me. The social is not defined by pressure, but by the habitus of otherness. The social is not the presential in itself, but the social is presential because it is social" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 331). Thus, the dimension of sociality maintains the same categories as the *situación* of human reality.

Ellacuría's survey of Zubiri's social dimension proceeds in stages but, at the same time, is broad and in-depth, demonstrating the incredible knowledge that the Jesuit has of his master's thought. What is of interest here is to highlight how *possibility* is the aspect that allows us to link the social dimension to the historical dimension. If sociality defines the dynamics of possibility from the point of view of human planning as planning towards the future, historicity defines its coexistence with the past; here the question of the relationship between history and historicity opens up: "the possession of self, in which man's life consists, is an appropriation of possibility, which makes man, unlike other beings, a historical reality" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 347). History, as well as nature and life, is not something other than the reality of the living being, but it is a substantive element of its being reality.

## 2. MAKING HISTORY, HAVING HISTORY

In the oral lectures Zubiri gave between 1953 and 1954, speaking of the social reality of man he says: "The social constitutes the definition of otherness as a system of possibilities. And in this sense it must be strictly said that others form for me a *social body*, has the form of corporeality because they definitively define the system of real and actual possibilities with which I will exist" (Zubiri, 1986, pp. 307-308). The Basque philosopher clarifies that this body has no substantiality, but the lemma is not particularly explored. It will be during the course *Estructura dinámica de la reali-*

*dad* held between November and December 1968 that Zubiri will detail it and relate it to history:

We humans find ourselves in a social body that, first and foremost, constitutes our world. This world is constituted by a system of possibilities. Possibilities given to man, which man encounters, and this dynamism, the dynamism that is triggered by these possibilities of the social body, is completely different from the dynamism that is triggered by social structures as social structures. Precisely, if the latter is the dynamism of communization, the dynamism of the system of possibilities of the social body as such is something completely different: it is precisely *history*. (Zubiri, 1989, p. 260)

Ellacuría perhaps grasps even more than Zubiri himself did in the years between the 50s and 60s the importance that the relationship between history and the social body has for the construction of a non-dialectical philosophy, both in the Hegelian sense and in the Marxist one; thus he writes in 1968: "Only the social body 'has' history, even if it does not follow that the social as such is history. The material subject of history is the social, but the formal subject is the social as a body" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 339). Thus, the distinction between *making history* and *having history becomes* necessary, from whose confusion derives the contrast between: "a conception of history as something purely individual or, on the contrary, as something supra-individual" (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 340). The relationship between the two verbs needs to be clarified, since by the fact that only the individual makes history, it has been concluded that history has no other subject than individuals, just as by the supra-individual character of history, it has been concluded that there is a supra-individual subject that makes history. For Ellacuría this clarity is possible only by delineating the inter-current relationship between *historicity* and *history*; history is made by the individual man only to the extent that the material profile is made formally historical by the fact that it is incorporated into the defining system of possibilities of the *social body*; it is not a matter of a mere incorporation (as for Hegel) but of a *co-possibility of happening*. As Oscar Barroso notes: "If Zubiri said that every human being is 'religious' to reality, Ellacuría would say that – insofar as history is the culmination of the 'giving' of the real – man is religious to the history of the real" (Barroso, 2004, p. 96). If history is constituted by historical facts, it is nevertheless reality insofar as it bears witness to the present, real insofar as it is continuity with something that precedes it; from a formal point of view then: "it is tradition, that is, reality itself that, as reality, is shaping the present from the past. Tradition, in fact, is not experiential in nature, because what is important in it is the very reality of experience and the way in which experience was constituted.

[...] its constitutive moment” (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 340). This *making of the human act* that becomes history marks the difference between the mere human act and the human act as historical, because not everything that man does belongs to history, but only those dimensions of his doing in which he is incorporated into his *social body*. There is thus a fundamental difference between human *temporality* and *historicity*:

the incorporation of an event into the social body, in the form of an increase or decrease in possibilities, is what places the historical fact in that modification, by virtue of which it is no longer so much the doing of certain powers as the realization of certain possibilities, which transform the fact into an event. The incorporation of the doing into the subject that has history, in this consists the event. History is an interweaving of events. (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 341)

Therefore, history must be configured as an interweaving of events that are constructed starting from the historicity of man in the social body as a realization of *possibility*. What is subverted is the very sense of the Hegelian dialectical movement, since it is not the origin of the dynamic movement between human historicity and the history of the social body that is sought but its “how”. Between history and historicity there is no bond of necessity, but a dynamic relationship, of openness, because: “historical time is not composed of past, present and future, but of precession, contemporaneity and succession, which represent the temporary condition in which the social body is left by the incorporation of the real and effective time of human life. It is time converted into social co-possibility” (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 342).

If man is therefore the “what” of the social body, it is in the “how” of man as historicity that the movement of history must be sought; this movement unfolds not from a necessary or necessitating mechanics, but from the social body as a body open to its possibilities: this is what makes historical time open, as much to the present as to the past and future. It is undeniable that Ellacuría focuses everything on the individual-social body relationship in order to avoid any possible fall into a universalization of history, which Zubiri himself admits at least under the aspect of the unity of the human species as a monophyletic unity. For this reason, for the Jesuit, at least up to the moment he is writing, there has never been a universal history, because all men have never constituted themselves in a single social body, and yet universality had become possible because of the interconnection of social bodies; in any case, that a universal history is possible does not mean that it must be interpreted under the necessitating category of law. History is not an automatic movement, but a march that

must be interpreted from the point of view of the dislocation of the social body, its continuity and the internal modification of the possibilities of the social body itself. It is a matter of rejecting every fatalist perspective (Ellacuría, 2009, p. 282) and determinist (Ellacuría, 2009, pp. 299-302) within a historical reading of reality, of rejecting historicism in favor of a living historicity, which is action of the individual in the social body.

### 3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE "HOW" OF LIFE-HISTORY DYNAMISM AND HISTORICAL REALITY

Ellacuría does not reject the dialectical process in an absolute sense, but the idea that it can represent the unity and dynamism of all that is, in its passage from logic to reality: "for Ellacuría, negativity is based on the dynamic reality of things and is the result of a judgment and human action on a concrete situation or on a certain processual configuration of historical reality that hinders, prevents or limits the real and effective giving of a reality" (Samour, 2003, p. 181). What comes to be rejected, therefore, is a merely dialectical reading of reality, both in the Hegelian and Marxian sense, as it clearly emerges in a text written between 1974 and 1975. The text is elaborated after Ellacuría attended, in January 1974, Zubiri's course *Tres dimensiones del ser humano: individual, social, histórica*, and is propaedeutic to the posthumous work *Filosofía de la realidad histórica* on which the Jesuit has been working since 1972; "history – he writes – is not born from the absolute spirit. [...] History is born from personal individuals, insofar as they form a social body [...] Hegel intends the absolutization of history as substantialization; he hypostatizes history. [...] Hegel and Marx differ in the determination of the historical dialectic, but are similar in the substantiation of the process" (Ellacuría, 2001, pp. 91-91). History, moreover, as per Zubiri: "is not the system of social forms insofar as they are real, but insofar as they are principles of possibility of modes of being in reality. It is then that we have history. The dynamism involved in history is not social dynamism, but the dynamism of possibility" (Zubiri, 2006, p. 90).

One of the elements that then must be defined is the nature of this dynamism; the impersonal place that is the *social body* has among its characters the: "*processual dynamism*. Since all reality is structural, all reality is also inherently dynamic, and in the case of material realities this dynamism is processual" (Ellacuría, 2007, p. 254). Reality in its being a whole of form and matter is absolutely dynamic, the category of *estado* in reality is always to be considered as a "limiting concept"; this is the case of that

“being” proper to the social body, which is among the objects of sociological analysis: “the *social state* is a kind of limiting concept of a reality that by its nature must ‘be’, but to whose being one must proceed; and this not only because society includes innumerable dynamic elements that drive the process, but because it itself, as a whole, is dynamic, since it assumes in a larger unity the dynamic components that compose it” (Ellacuría, 2007, p. 254).

That of the social body, therefore (if we speak in sociological terms, *society*) is a processual and structural dynamism, which implies its very unity. This is because the social body as a place that “has” history is composed of a somatic part, which has to do with humanity as a species biologically understood, and a formal part that is the dimension of the other. This emphasis on the relationship between historicity and the social body is also due to the different Zubian source used by Ellacuría to talk about the category of *possibility*; if in *Natura, Historia, Dios* in fact, history is the place of the appropriation of possibilities, in the anthropological writings is more marked the active role of man in the construction of possibilities as a moment of opening and, therefore, realization of the historicity-history relationship. The *possibility* is such only if there is another in whom it is actualized, so that the simple biological life can unfold historically in the social body: “if it is essential for man for his very structure to have a social body in which he lives impersonally, it is no less essential for him to have a social body in which he lives in communion. It is absolutely chimerical, impossible, to find people who in one way or another do not live in personal communion with each other” (Zubiri, 2006, p. 59). Ellacuría further clarifies Zubiri’s thought, “The social body is thus the precise concept of human society, which has its roots in the species and its formal character in the habitus of personal otherness” (Ellacuría, 2007 p. 255). What we call *society* is nothing more than the simplification of this process that takes place in each individual human with his coming to *life*. It is transmitted genetically, but the ways of being in reality are handed down: it is because there is tradition, that human life does not start from scratch. This is the reason why the problem of the movement of reality has to do not with its origin but with the “how” of the movement itself.

Human life is such in its becoming *by living*: “To live is precisely to possess oneself, to truly possess oneself as reality. Life as a course is but an argument of life, because in life man possesses himself dynamically and transcendentally, but this course is life only because in it man possesses himself” (Ellacuría, 2007, p. 348). In this regard, the lemma *estado* within *Philosophy* assumes a relevance greater than that of the same Zubirian texts from which it comes: “Things, including the living being, modify the vital

state and the living being responds to this modification, thus acquiring a new state" (Ellacuría, 2007, p. 317). In the wake of Zubiri, the *state* cannot be considered immobility; on the contrary, it is a *reversible* and *modifiable* dynamic equilibrium. This modifiability and reversibility of *being that* characterizes the living prevents, clearly, to consider the "how" in the dialectical sense, since the latter is always progressive; at the same time, however, it is not about the act-power "dynamism" of Aristotle that does not allow any reversibility as Zubiri had already pointed out in *Estructura dinámica de la realidad* (Zubiri, 1989, p. 49). Therefore: "it is true that life has to do with movement – whatever philosophical interpretation one gives to movement – and therefore has to do with time. All bodies in the universe, however, are affected by movement, but there are very different forms of being in movement and very different forms of movement itself" (Ellacuría, 2007, p. 402). There is a material history, affecting the cosmos and genetically affecting human beings, formally due to the *poder* of matter, an inherent and natural unfolding of an evolutionary nature (Zubiri, 1996, p. 447), but then there is human history as an unfolding of *possibilities*, for which man is an active living reality: "this activity is certainly processual, because the living reality is always 'passing' from one state to another, so that the very concept of state is only a limiting concept, since the activity of the living is always in transition and progressing from one state to another" (Ellacuría, 2007, p. 316). This vital dynamism is contextualized and "liberated" by unfolding as a *historical* processuality in the *social body* characterized in the form of a permanent transition:

In each of its moments – one should discuss what is the appropriate temporal measure of the social moment – society remains in a certain state, but the social state is itself a permanent transition from one state to another. [...] If we combine, then, the structural and the dynamic character of the social body, we conclude the dynamic-structural character of the social body: the process of society is a structural process. [...] What can be said is that the intrinsic dynamism of society is a processual and structural dynamism, which implies the unity of the social body, the totalization of the subsystems in a single structural system, and the processual and totalizing dynamism of this unitary whole that is the social body. (Ellacuría, 2007, p. 254)

It is a material dynamism but not materialistic (as in Marx), vital (Zubiri, 1989, p. 150) but not vitalistic (as in Bergson), liberating but not finalized (as in Hegel). It is the determination of that plan of action that allows the passage from life to historicity, determined primarily by the *power of the present*: "everyone is a child of his time. The 'today' discovers a formal dimension, which constitutes the 'historical level'. [...] the power of the present constitutively implies a version of the past and is a prospective

power, because possibilities are constitutively prospective” (Ellacuría, 1999, pp. 344-345). Ellacuría’s is not *presentism*, but the recognition of historicity as the first projectuality of life: “man is not historic because of what he knows, but because of what he is as reality, insofar as he is a sentient intelligence. His historicity does not consist in the relativism of the forms of the logos, but in the character of open essence that gives him, with respect to a social body, his dimension of sentient intelligence, in the course of time. [...] Settling in a social body, man is more than what he would be as a pure individual. But, because of his historical dimension, he can be different in every situation” (Ellacuría, 1999, p. 347). History as *betraying transmission* according to Zubiri’s idea, is realized in its making within the social body, and that making happens now because it is within a dynamic process: “without history, without the historical process, Ellacuría argues, not only would man, in the sense of humanity, cease to realize himself, but he would probably even leave his most proper and most splendid aspects without realization or actualization; and the very being of humanity would be truncated” (Samour, 2003, p. 81). That intrinsic movement that is life, therefore, is as such because it is dynamism, thus a realization of possibilities that are human creations, but in their concrete situation, in that situation that is given to man in a concrete moment and as such is susceptible to concrete variations that can vary from one moment to another. If the biological movement of human life is linear, birth-death, the course of life is a continuous transition, a constant oscillation. The movement of reality as history can only be thought of as functional, not substantial, and is closely connected to the biography of each individual, as the same intellectual and personal path of the Jesuit demonstrate: “Ellacuría’s philosophy stems from a personal experience framed in this historical context, and his reflection would not be intelligible without taking it into account” (Samour, 2003, p. 211). The very question of the relationship between Zubiri’s philosophy and Ellacuría’s must be read not under the problem of origin but of the “how”, of a philosophical form, Zubiri’s, being transmitted into Ellacuría’s: it is not a process of mere transmission of ideas, but of transmission of forms of philosophical reality.

In this regard, a final historiographical consideration, in order to better frame what has been reconstructed here, should be made starting with some suggestions from a 2018 essay by Ronald Carrillo (Carrillo, 2018). If Héctor Samour in *Voluntad de liberación*, a valuable guide to move in Ellacuría’s thought, highlighted the Jesuit’s dialogue with Marx (Samour, 2014) and Hegel as a determining element to understand his thought, Carrillo’s text emphasizes the link of some passages of the Jesuit with *existentialism*, particularly (in some ways unexpectedly) with the

philosophy of the Frenchman – considering the readings of Heidegger and Sartre as secondary funds –. As for Sartre, according to Ellacuría, the man is a project, and in the case of the Jesuit it finds its actualization in historical reality. In this respect, the *life-historicity* dynamic is propaedeutic to the liberation movement as the very horizon of history (Savignano, 2014), not within the universality of history, an idea that still operates in Zubiri, but within the individual biography that becomes historicity of the social body, where only freedom can be authentically affirmed.

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## RIASSUNTO

*Ignacio Ellacuría viene brutalmente ucciso il 16 novembre 1989 per mano delle Forze Armate di El Salvador; dieci anni, dopo nel 1999, sarà pubblicato all'interno del secondo volume che raccoglie gli scritti filosofici del gesuita, uno "schema" riassuntivo e di approfondimento dell'antropologia di Xavier Zubiri, che egli aveva utilizzato per un corso tenuto tra luglio e agosto 1968 al Centro de Estudios Superiores para el Desarrollo (CESDE) di Medellín. Lo "schema" raccoglie molte di quelle tesi che, sviluppate in un serrato confronto con il pensiero del grande filosofo spagnolo del quale fu allievo e collaboratore, sono alla base della sua opera più importante, e uscita postuma, "Filosofía de la realidad histórica" (1990). La ricostruzione storiografica dei passaggi salienti della ricerca di Ellacuría sul rapporto tra storicità e storia nel più ampio contesto antropologico zubiriano, permette di evidenziare alcuni aspetti peculiari del pensiero del gesuita, che non si limita solo ad offrire una nuova e differente linea interpretativa del pensiero di Zubiri. La preminenza dell'idea di storia come transizione all'interno del corpo sociale, caratteristica dell'esperienza umana, offre una prospettiva inedita, tutta interna alla filosofia della liberazione ibero americana, e al contempo permette di rintracciare nuove e differenti fonti nella produzione filosofica di Ellacuría.*

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