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The time of the history of philosophy

O tempo da história da filosofia

Maurizio Trudu
Università degli Studi di Ferrara, Ferrara, Italia

Resumo

Este artigo examina o problema do 'tempo da história da filosofia', argumentando que toda tentativa de reconstruir o passado filosófico implica uma concepção implícita de temporalidade. A tese central é que a história da filosofia não constitui uma crônica neutra de doutrinas, mas um campo no qual a própria filosofia reflete sobre sua condição temporal. Diferentes modelos historiográficos – do humanismo renascentista à sistematização do século XVII, da leitura dialética de Hegel ao historicismo e à hermenêutica do século XX – expressam modos distintos de compreender a relação entre filosofia e tempo. Ao analisar essas abordagens, o artigo evidencia tanto os desafios metodológicos quanto as implicações filosóficas do confronto entre pensadores separados por distâncias históricas. Sugere-se que a legitimidade desse confronto depende do reconhecimento de um horizonte no qual passado, presente e futuro coexistem, em vez de reduzir o pensamento a opiniões isoladas ou à imediaticidade do presente. O objetivo não é oferecer uma história exaustiva, mas esclarecer como a questão do tempo molda nossa compreensão da própria filosofia. Dessa forma, o artigo contribui para o debate atual sobre o estatuto da historiografia filosófica e defende que a história da filosofia pode servir como um recurso vivo para enfrentar questões filosóficas contemporâneas.

Palavras-chave: história; filosofia; método; hermenêutica; interpretação.

Abstract

This article addresses the problem of the 'time of the history of philosophy,' contending that any attempt to reconstruct the philosophical past necessarily presupposes an implicit conception of temporality. Its central claim is that the history of philosophy should not be regarded as a neutral chronicle of doctrines but as a domain in which philosophy reflects upon its own temporal condition. Distinct historiographical models—from Renaissance humanism to seventeenth-century systematisation, from Hegel's dialectical narrative to historicism and twentieth-century hermeneutics—embody different ways of conceiving the relation between philosophy and time. By examining these approaches, the article underscores both the methodological difficulties and the philosophical stakes inherent in comparing thinkers across historical distance. It argues that the legitimacy of such comparisons rests not on reducing thought to isolated opinions or to the immediacy of the present, but on acknowledging the horizon in which past, present, and future coexist. The aim is not to produce a comprehensive history but to elucidate how the question of time informs our understanding of philosophy itself. In doing so, the article contributes to ongoing debates concerning the status of philosophical historiography and defends the view that the history of philosophy may function as a living resource for engaging with contemporary philosophical issues.

Keyword: history; philosophy; method; hermeneutic; interpretation.

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1 INTRODUCTION

L'histoire est la science des choses
qui ne se répètent pas.
Paul Valéry, Variété

The question of the meaning and value of the history of philosophy has accompanied the discipline since its earliest formulations. From the very beginning, the issue has been not merely that of compiling doctrines from the past, but of clarifying the relation between philosophy and time: how philosophical thought relates to its past, to the interpreter's present, and to the possibility of the future. Writing a history of philosophy is never a neutral undertaking; it always presupposes an interpretative horizon within which the philosophical past is understood, transmitted, and brought into dialogue with contemporary concerns[1].

This problem is not merely historiographical but philosophical in its own right. Every account of the philosophical tradition presupposes a particular conception of philosophy itself: as timeless truth, as a situated and contingent practice, or as the progressive unfolding of rationality. In this respect, the history of philosophy inevitably reflects a view of the very nature of philosophy and of its relation to historical becoming. It is therefore unsurprising that, across the centuries, conceptions of the history of philosophy have shifted in response to broader cultural and epistemological transformations.

This article addresses the problem of the 'time of the history of philosophy'. Its aim is not to provide an exhaustive survey of historiographical approaches, but to demonstrate how each conception of the history of philosophy entails, whether explicitly or implicitly, a particular understanding of temporality. To this end, the discussion considers several key moments in the development of philosophical historiography—from Renaissance humanism and the seventeenth century, through Hegel and historicism, to twentieth-century hermeneutics—in order to highlight the different ways in which philosophy and time have been thought together. The guiding purpose is to assess the legitimacy of comparing thinkers across historical distance and to reflect on how a history of

[1] For a reconstruction of the histories of the history of philosophy, reference is made to the monumental work Santinello (1981, 1979, 1988, 1995, 2004).

philosophy might preserve the vitality of thought by maintaining past, present, and future within a shared horizon.

2 THE TIME OF HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

The question raised by such an undertaking compels us to examine the very concept of the history of philosophy itself. It is essential to determine which historical–philosophical methodology enables us to pursue the task we have set. The ways of interpreting the history of philosophy are numerous and varied, a diversity that arises in part from the complexity of the subject matter. Defining what is meant by the history of philosophy immediately entails a reflection on the very status of philosophy itself. The legitimacy, or otherwise, of comparing two philosophies that are chronologically distant is a question situated within the broader debate over how the history of philosophy should be understood. This issue brings with it another central problem pertinent to the present inquiry: every history of philosophy implicitly contains a conception of temporality. Thus, any investigation into the history of philosophy necessarily involves an inquiry into the concept of time. Different histories of philosophy embody different conceptions of time. We shall therefore begin by briefly examining some fundamental stages in the development of the history of philosophy (Capecci, 2005). This preliminary analysis will help us to understand how the question of the history of philosophy is closely interwoven with that of the ‘time’ of philosophy. As we shall see, only within this framework can we identify the methodological foundations required to address the guiding question of our inquiry.

2.1 Renaissance humanism

The debate concerning the origins of the history of philosophy is both extensive and complex. Influences in this direction can already be discerned within Aristotelian philosophy (Mondolfo, 1952, pp. 27–28)[2]. However, the

[2] M. Dal Pra’s reconstruction follows similar lines, though with an important distinction. He argues that, while Aristotle undoubtedly engages with the history of philosophy, his use of it indicates that he does not conceive of it as a broad sequence of events. Rather, Aristotle turns to it in search of the antecedents of his own philosophy. In other words, Aristotle conceives of his philosophy as an outcome that is not independent of the history of thought (Dal Pra, 1950, p. 70). Dal Pra’s

concept of the history of philosophy in the sense familiar to us today appears to have emerged during the Humanist and Renaissance periods (Santinello, 1981). It is within this historical context that philosophical historiography, in the proper sense, seems to have taken shape. In the Humanist era, general histories of thought began to appear, accompanied by a speculative and methodological outlook that laid the foundations for this kind of historical–philosophical production. Humanism witnessed the maturation of historical consciousness and a new understanding of history, marked by an interest in the past combined with the capacity to situate oneself temporally, regarding each era as a complete entity. In this way, the emergence of an awareness of historical distance becomes evident (Gilmore, 1955).

A paradigmatic example of Humanist philosophical historiography is Agostino Steuco, author of one of the earliest works to articulate a cohesive vision of thought and the concept of *philosophia perennis* (perennial philosophy). His work is characterised by a reconstruction of ancient thought as the development of a single, unified source, proposing the evolution of a 'universal science' representing an unbroken tradition of genuine knowledge shared across all peoples. This philosophy is to be documented as an original and foundational wisdom, despite the fragmentations produced by historical distance from the original sources.

Another significant thinker is Pico della Mirandola, whose reflections on human dignity are closely tied to the significance of culture in recognising diverse traditions. Pico draws upon a range of philosophies and cultures to uncover commonalities — not in a merely syncretic sense, but as an integration of truths achieved through a process of historical–philosophical concordance (Garin, 1993). Humanist thought thus seeks convergence among diverse traditions, emphasising meaning and purpose within human existence. This approach replaces the predominantly medieval mode of dialectical analysis with a philological examination of texts, in which truth is understood within its historical context. The historiography of Humanist philosophy promotes a form of universalism grounded in the unity of knowledge, where awareness of temporality does not entail the relativity of truth but rather its manifestation within the temporal

position can be seen as an extension of a theory previously advanced by Jaeger (Jaeger, 1935, p. 1).

realm. Access to this truth is possible only through the temporal dimension, since knowledge manifests historically and thereby becomes subject to investigation as historical time.

2.2 The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

Another significant milestone in the development of the history of philosophy is found in the body of works that began to emerge from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, responding to the need for a systematic historical organisation of philosophical thought (Stanley, 1662; Hornius, 1655). These works are distinguished by their attempt not merely to provide an account of available material but to trace the stages of philosophical development. Different philosophical movements are presented according to temporal and geographical criteria, thereby offering a general overview of the various philosophies and the circumstances in which they arose. It is in this context that the term ’history of philosophy’was first coined (Jonsius, 1659). Key features of this new approach include the capacity to organise material effectively, the reliability of its reconstruction, and, above all, the precision of the philological work undertaken in assembling the sources. In summary, in contrast to the Humanist approach the seventeenth-century histories of philosophy are characterised by a commitment to include as much material as possible within the historiographical reconstruction, without assuming any bias in its collection. Consequently, the analysis produced is largely free from commentary. The validity of the historical–philosophical reconstruction rests not on the truth of the philosophical theses themselves but on the accuracy of the historiographical method. In this context, the ‘time’ of philosophy coincides with historiographical time: a history of philosophy must reconstruct the context and the network within which a philosophy develops.

2.3 Hegel

In Germany, during these same years, there was a proliferation of treatises on the history of philosophy, accompanied by the development of manuals devoted to the subject. This body of work reflects the growing

importance that the discipline had acquired within philosophical education. These treatises, in continuity with earlier works, are characterised by a post-Humanist spirit that does not remain indifferent to any manifestation of thought, while emphasising the fundamental importance of identifying all sources and potential sources of error that might have hindered the attainment of truth.

Hegel himself, in his discussion of the history of philosophy, takes into account this vast range of contributions, which had assumed crucial significance in Germany during his time (Hegel, 1883). His reflections on the history of philosophy, as presented in his lectures, begin with what he calls the ‘common conceptions’ of the history of philosophy, by which he refers to the philosophical historiography of his era.

The object of Hegel’s critique is the fundamental character of the post-Humanist history of philosophy, which, as we have seen, is marked by a doxographical approach. According to this view, the historical account should present the doctrines of various philosophers as individual positions, without value judgement and without any claim to truth. For Hegel, however, this results in nothing more than a ‘history of opinions,’ in which each opinion is a subjective representation, a contingent thought that could always be held otherwise.

Furthermore, Hegel contends that this conception of the history of philosophy has another significant consequence: historical data appear to testify to the failure of philosophy itself. It seems impossible to make a definitive choice among competing theories, thereby rendering an authentic criterion of truth seemingly alien to philosophy.

In questioning the history of philosophy, Hegel makes clear that his inquiry concerns the truth of philosophy—a question to which the doxographical paradigm is unable to respond. His approach suggests that the only condition under which the history of philosophy can be established as a science is through the historicisation of philosophy in a distinctive sense. On this view, philosophical historiography derives its legitimacy from philosophical understanding itself. In other words, the history of philosophy does not possess a merely historical significance but penetrates into the very essence of philosophy. This assumption carries an important consequence: Hegel’s historicisation of philosophy entails the incorporation of history into logic, conceiving the history of thought as the rational unfolding of a principle situated within an a priori dimension. Thus, unlike

the Humanist paradigm, history is not a site in which to retrospectively search for a possible guiding thread that discloses a truth, nor is it a doxographical collection. Rather, it is the unfolding of the self-differentiation of the idea, which becomes the history of philosophy when this development is recognised as the realisation of the idea itself. The idea thereby becomes the point of convergence between historical becoming and the logical development of thought. For Hegel, the 'time' of philosophy is the present; indeed, the domain of the concept presupposes the act of actualisation as its fundamental meaning. In other words, it is the present that constitutes the past, for it is only in the present that the past is established. The fact that what comes later arises from what came before does not carry foundational significance, as it does in doxographical accounts, but instead testifies to the surpassing of the past in the present, which confers meaning upon the entire process.

2.4 Historicism

The question of the history of philosophy finds significant development within the debate on historicism, which spanned the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Rossi, 1956, p. 10). According to F. Meinecke (1936), the German term *Historismus* was not used in a negative sense but rather to denote the philosophical historicism of G. Vico, as introduced by K. Werner in his study of the Italian thinker. Meinecke did not attempt to establish the precise origin of the word *Historismus*, nor the exact year of what he described as 'one of the major spiritual revolutions in Western thought' – namely, the recognition that spiritual life no longer partakes in immutable, transcendent truths, but is instead a continuous process of becoming and development. His aim was rather to identify the moment when reason, having lost its timeless character, revealed itself as a historically mutable force, always open to new individual expressions. Meinecke sought the origins of this historical reason and its critical foundations, emphasising that only towards the end of the nineteenth century did historicism, as a philosophical grounding of historical becoming, begin to supplant the earlier, negatively perceived historicism understood as the mere preservation of the past, excessively bound to history. The development of the historical sciences in the nineteenth century, marked by their reorganisation and an exceptional

historiographical output, corresponded to a parallel philosophical reflection concerned with thematising the historical nature of the human world. For our purposes, what is of particular importance is to underscore the methodological requirement underlying the rise of historicism. Indeed, historicism first emerged as an interpretative method. In a characteristic formulation, Dilthey writes:

> Hegel constructed the community on the foundation of the universal will of reason; today, however, we must proceed from the reality of life [...]. Hegel built metaphysically; we, on the other hand, analyse what is given. The current analysis of human existence evokes in all of us an awareness of fragility, of the power of dark impulse, of the suffering that arises from darkness and illusions, of the finitude inherent in all that is life [...]. We strive to understand and represent this reality in history through adequate concepts. And as objective spirit is thus freed from its unilateral grounding in universal reason, which once expressed the essence of the world spirit, and freed as well from ideal construction, a new concept of it becomes possible, in which language, custom, every form of life and lifestyle are comprehended alongside family, civil society, the state, and law (Dilthey, 2017, p. 239-240).

Dilthey's text exemplifies a central tenet of historicist thought: the call for an approach to reason that is more open, dynamic, and expansive—one that does not reject reason itself but resists the rigid completeness of Hegelian rationality. This resistance is grounded in an appreciation of historical vitality and of the role of the irrational within it, thereby highlighting the fundamental problem of history, a problem that Hegel's metaphysics tended to sidestep. The aim is no longer to proceed from the 'world spirit' to reach the 'absolute spirit,' but rather to acknowledge that the manifestations of life constitute the true foundation of historical knowledge. The goal, instead, is to attain a universally valid understanding of the historical, social, and political world – that is, the human world – in order to establish a new philosophy attentive to both the lessons and the limitations of positivism. In other words, the project is to articulate the guidelines for an interpretative method of history. The difficulties inherent in this conception become evident, and reach their height, in Dilthey's philosophy, which marks a tension that may be described as one between philosophy and experience. More precisely, the problematic aspect of historicism lies in explaining the transition from the individual's lived experience to the 'historical connection,' which, as such, is no longer directly experienced by the individual.

Put differently, it raises the question of how the vitality of the individual relates to that which exists beyond and before them. Addressing this problem is essential to understanding how historical knowledge is possible, for even the individual who lives within history is defined by this relationship between subjectivity and 'objective spirit.' To bridge the gap between subjective vitality and what lies beyond the individual, between lived experience and trans-subjective structural connections, historicist thinkers were compelled to re-engage with certain metaphysical and teleological structures, despite their earlier critiques. For our purposes, it is crucial to note that this internal tension within historicism gave rise to the development of distinct interpretative methodologies, which, through a self-critical reflection on historical consciousness, sought to secure a historically grounded and foundational character for both historical events and their comprehension. The evolution of Husserl's phenomenology and Heidegger's hermeneutics would subsequently take these themes to a more advanced stage of development.

2.5 Ontology of actualisation

For our purposes, one of the most pertinent examples of this development can be found in Gadamer's thought, particularly in his analysis of the notion of the classic. The distinctive features of the 'classic' within philosophical works illustrate how the historicist conception of historical progress is inadequate for grasping this particular object of inquiry.

As Gadamer emphasises, one of the defining characteristics of the classic lies in its normative quality. This normative dimension constitutes a genuine historical category, insofar as it designates a specific historical epoch without, however, acquiring a 'trans-historical' value. In other words, the classic is a mode of historical being (Gadamer, 1960, p. 597). What is classic is removed from the volatility of temporal change and remains consistently accessible. Each new interpretation of the classic thus establishes a direct relation to the original 'classic,' which serves as the source to which subsequent interpretations or developments refer. The normative significance of the classic is revealed precisely in this relation to its origin (Gadamer, 1960, p. 599). This, then, is the specific sense in which the classic work prescribes a norm. Moreover, a further

characteristic of the classic arises from this normative quality: the classic exhibits a temporal structure that is not successive but rather ‘achronic.’ In other words, the ‘time’ of a philosophical work is not that of ordinary temporal sequencing. In the classic, we discern a general feature of historical being, ‘whereby it is preserved within the destructive passage of time.’ The very nature of the ‘historical’ lies in the fact that what is preserved from the past, and thereby allows for historical knowledge, must be retained as though it were not past.

The classic, therefore, is that which endures because it embodies and discloses itself. It does not speak of something that has vanished, nor is it merely a testimony to what is no longer present; rather, it speaks in the present and to every present. Consequently – and this is a crucial point for our purposes – that which is designated as classic does not require ‘making present,’ since the very notion of the classic inherently bridges historical distance. The temporality of the classic is thus not ordinary time; it is not divided into past, present, and future. The concept of the classic itself seems to offer a way of overcoming the challenge posed by historicism. Through its continuous mediation between past, present, and future, the classic appears to constitute the foundation of every historiographical orientation. Interpreting and engaging with the classic is therefore not a solipsistic act of the subject, for it is always projected into a living dimension of historical transmission. In these terms, the subjective perception of history can coexist with a ‘universal law’ of the preservation of the past – a law that is not a metaphysical construct a priori. However, although Gadamer’s perspective sheds light on how the time of the ‘classic’ differs from ordinary temporality, it also presents a fundamental problem. Gadamer’s position is associated with a school of thought often referred to as the ‘ontology of actualisation’ (Vattimo, 1988, p. 201-223), which develops specifically in response to the experience of historicity. While the ontology of actualisation has introduced a range of practical, pre-rational elements into the domain of scientific precision and has disclosed the achronic structure of the work’s temporality, it has simultaneously fostered an interpretative practice oriented entirely towards the present. This orientation risks reducing the temporality of the classic to the present alone.

3 THE METHOD OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

As this brief overview has shown, the question of the legitimacy of comparing two or more thinkers from different eras leads to an inquiry into the history of philosophy, which ultimately reflects a deeper question concerning the 'time' of philosophy. This inquiry, as we have demonstrated, first emerged in humanistic and Renaissance thought. During this period, the 'time' of philosophy was conceived as the unity of past, present, and future – an attainable unity, insofar as history was regarded as 'revealed history', a sign of a truth transcending history itself. Subsequently, we observed how this paradigm began to shift in the seventeenth century. The problems inherent in a framework of revealed history became increasingly apparent, posing a risk to the reliability of historical reconstruction itself. Such a bias threatened to undermine a 'scientific' account of the progress of thought. Consequently, the approach to the history of thought developed into a precise, philological reconstruction, in which various doctrines were presented 'neutrally,' without evaluative judgement. In this context, the time of philosophy came to be understood as equivalent to ordinary historical time, that is, the chronological succession of events. It was precisely in opposition to this conception of the history of thought that the Hegelian philosophical revolution arose, in which the 'time' of philosophy was understood as the very unfolding of the absolute in the present. In this perspective, historicity and the diversity of opinions find unity in a principle that takes place within history itself. This alignment of the logical and the historical – the unfolding of spirit and the plurality of the historical dimension – p appeared problematic to historicists and Neo-Kantians. Consequently, we have briefly shown how the historicist 'galaxy' was characterised by the attempt to rehabilitate certain 'vital' elements of the historical process, aiming at a reconstruction that could freely account for the 'irrational' within history, without being bound to a trans-historical element.

The internal difficulties of this conception – specifically, its inability to account for the connection between individual historical elements and the causal network we call history – gave rise to a renewed line of inquiry.

Here, we have taken Gadamer's perspective as a paradigm of the 'ontology of actualisation'. Through this lens, the philosophical concept of time

emerges as a co-belonging of past, present, and future. However, Gadamer's position assigns such fundamental importance to the present that it risks compressing interpretation into a 'presentified' act of understanding. The trajectory outlined above has led us to demonstrate that questioning the history of philosophy necessitates a reflection on the 'place' and 'time' of philosophical considerations. The latter is not merely the present but rather the co-belonging of present, past, and future. A history of philosophy that seeks not to betray its object of inquiry must begin from this consideration and develop a methodology that enables it to keep its subject 'alive'.

The specificity of this object of study renders the various approaches within the history of philosophy inevitably fragmented. This is not a limitation but rather an essential feature of the analytical methodologies applied to this field. No interpretation can, in fact, aspire to comprehend even a single philosophy in its entirety. Several factors account for this. First, the historical dimension is so vast and complex that it cannot be exhausted by philosophical-historical analysis. The interrelation of theoretical, practical, and social aspects, for example, inevitably entails a degree of reductionism within historical-philosophical inquiry. Second, philosophies are not static; they are dynamic and interactive with the surrounding world. From this follows the recognition that a philosophy constitutes a sedimentation of multiple elements. A historical-philosophical methodology, while necessarily reductive, must nonetheless take this layered complexity into account. In other words, it must employ a range of tools capable of grasping the richness and intricacy of this particular object of study.

A key point emerges at once: the interpretation of philosophy must engage with this stratification; it must 'dig' beneath the surface. In other words, the dimension within which philosophical interpretation operates cannot be reduced to a purely chronological one. The connections between philosophical worlds are distinct from those observable at the surface level. The time of philosophy is not that of the immediate present. Philosophy is not a 'presentified' gaze upon the immediacy of the world's appearance; it sustains a relation to tradition. The distinctive nature of its object of inquiry compels us to question the mode through which the interpretation of philosophical development ought to grasp philosophical time.

Broadly speaking, two paths present themselves: one may either remain at the level of interpreting historical forms, confined to the surface and observing their appearances, or move beyond these appearances in order to seek the underlying element—the common ground—that sustains all manifestations. In other words, the interpreter must immerse themselves in the depths of philosophical manifestation. This brings us back to the guiding question of the legitimacy of comparing two philosophies from different eras. The surface of philosophical manifestation would suggest that communication and connection between philosophies separated by time is problematic, so that all that could be achieved would be a history of reception. The question we cautiously pose, however, is to what extent an analysis of the deeper manifestation of thought in two or more authors might reveal congruences or divergences. These congruences and divergences are not limited to reconstructing the thought of the authors but also involve engaging with these thoughts as something 'living,' capable of addressing us still and of providing tools with which to confront contemporary philosophical problems. In other words, the aim is to understand the outcomes of two or more philosophies by discerning their affinities and, above all, their divergences, and to construct a framework from which we can situate ourselves and interrogate our present. For thought to articulate itself, it requires a horizon within which the three moments of time are, in some sense, co-present. This place (Vitiello 1992; 2013) encompasses both the past and the future, together with the present that separates them – not as what from the past has passed or what from the future has yet to come, but as their traces: what memory preserves of the 'no longer' (Vitiello 2013, 47-74) and what anticipation foresees of the 'not yet.' This horizon of thought does not encompass the movement of time in its usual articulation as past–present–future; rather, it retains what endures within time. This horizon, then, is the space in which time takes place, the container of time. The interpreter's gaze rests upon what is stable within time—this space. Consequently, the essence of the time of philosophy is not temporal in the traditional sense but lies in the stability of temporal succession. In other words, the time of philosophy is a projection onto the horizon of time, where past, present, and future are held as markers, as indicators, actualised within a stable horizon. This is a time that eludes change, for it is the phenomena that flow within it.

Only by interpreting time as this horizon can one develop a historical-philosophical tool that makes possible the comparison of two or more chronologically distant philosophies. Yet the fundamental meaning of this horizon is not to be understood as a form of syncretism or as a trans-historical dimension. Rather, it involves interpreting the meaning that traverses the canonical temporal dimension, without reducing it to a 'presentified' form. If we will, it is a hermeneutics of the temporal horizon that does not collapse the horizon into the present. The present is both a trace of the past and a sign of the future. This conception avoids a syncretic stance, for it is precisely its structure – its engagement with signs – that makes it possible to recognise extreme distance at the very moment of coming into proximity with the other: when two elements, two signs of past, present, or future, are brought into nearness, their profound remoteness becomes apparent. Thus, the history of philosophy possesses the important capacity to penetrate ordinary historical time in order to uncover the distinctive time of philosophy, which appears as a horizon accompanying the development of human civilisation. On this basis, one can understand the legitimacy of 'enabling communication' between thinkers from different epochs. This is possible because these thinkers are events, signs which, by the very nature of thought and within the horizontality of philosophical time, belong to one another. This very co-belonging addresses us, allowing us to perceive their proximity and, within that proximity, their differences. By situating ourselves within this dimension, we can pursue a history of philosophy that transcends mere chronological succession.

4 CONCLUSION

The analysis undertaken here has indicated that the history of philosophy cannot be reduced either to a catalogue of doctrines or to a chronological record of past ideas. Every attempt at historical reconstruction presupposes a conception of time and, through it, an understanding of the nature of philosophy itself. The 'time of philosophy' does not coincide with the linear succession of dates and events but emerges as a more complex horizon in which past, present, and future are interwoven. On this basis, the comparison of thinkers and systems separated by centuries is not merely a methodological device but an intrinsic

possibility of philosophy itself. Philosophy unfolds through inheritances, continuities, and ruptures; in this sense, the history of philosophy is not ancillary to philosophical inquiry but constitutive of it, sustaining the dialogue between tradition and actuality, between memory and projection.

The discussion therefore points towards a conception of the history of philosophy as a space in which thought becomes conscious of its own temporality. Such a conception avoids both the reduction of doctrines to isolated opinions and the levelling of history into a timeless present. Rather, it makes possible a balance between distance and proximity, interpretation and fidelity. In this balance lies the prospect of a philosophical historiography that not only preserves the past but also offers critical resources for engaging with contemporary questions and for opening future directions of thought.

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DADOS DO AUTOR

Maurizio Trudu
Doutorando na Università degli Studi di Ferrara, em co-tutela com a Bergische Universität Wuppertal. A pesquisa foca na filosofia transcendental, particularmente nas filosofias de Husserl e Fichte. Estudante de promoções na Università degli Studi di Ferrara, em co-tutela com a Bergische Universität Wuppertal. O foco de pesquisa está na filosofia transcendental, especialmente nas filosofias de Husserl e Fichte. Universidade de Ferrara, Filosofia, Doutorado Universidade de Wuppertal, Faculdade de Ciências Humanas e Culturais, Grupo de Filosofia.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0003-0220-2941
E-mail: trdmrz@unife.it