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# Phenomenology and Marxism according to Landgrebe: On “The Problem of Teleology and Corporeality in Phenomenology and Marxism”

Noé Expósito, Agata Bak

## Preview

The aim of this paper is to explore the link that Landgrebe establishes between phenomenology and Marxism in “The Problem of Teleology and Corporeality in Phenomenology and Marxism” (1977) and unfold its more far-reaching implications for both traditions. Landgrebe’s short 2 yet dense paper explores the very basic insight he considers both thinkers to hold in common, namely, that praxis is an essential feature of human consciousness and needs to be grounded in philosophical inquiry. The first step in our research is accordingly to reconstruct Husserlian phenomenology in order to demonstrate the close relationship between corporeality and teleology, between nature and history, and between the human being and the social world. Landgrebe reminds us that “it is not possible even to approach the problem of teleology in an adequate manner if the approach is not based on an analysis of corporeality, i.e. of man as a corporeal being.” What Marxism leaves undone, then, is a transcendental grounding of human embodied praxis, a project that the post-Marxian tradition typically fails to consider.

**Phenomenology and Marxism according to Landgrebe:  
On “The Problem of Teleology and Corporeality in  
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The aim of this paper is to explore the link that Landgrebe establishes between phenomenology and Marxism in “The Problem of Teleology and Corporeality in Phenomenology and Marxism” (1977) and unfold its more far-reaching implications for both traditions.<sup>2</sup> Landgrebe’s short yet dense paper explores the very basic insight he considers both thinkers to hold in common, namely, that praxis is an essential feature of human consciousness and needs to be grounded in philosophical inquiry. The first step in our research is accordingly to reconstruct

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The present paper represents further work on a topic the authors have already addressed on at least two occasions. A draft of this text was presented during the international workshop “Exploring Landgrebe’s Contributions to Phenomenology” at the Catholic University of Louvain-la-Neuve in September 2017. The authors wish to express their gratitude to Sylvain Camilleri for his invitation. Our first joint work on Landgrebe’s publication dates back to 2016 and was published as a commentary on Landgrebe’s “The problem of teleology and corporeality in phenomenology and Marxism” (1977): see Agata Bak and Noé Expósito, “Nota introductoria a ‘El problema de la teleología y la corporalidad en la fenomenología y en el marxismo,’ de Ludwig Landgrebe,” *Acta Mexicana de Fenomenología* 2 (2017), 81–92. The authors wish to express their gratitude towards Elizabeth A. Behnke who kindly accepted to review and proofread the manuscript, polished the style and suggested some philosophically relevant changes.

<sup>2</sup> Ludwig Landgrebe, “Das Problem der Teleologie und der Leiblichkeit in der Phänomenologie und im Marxismus,” in *Phänomenologie und Marxismus*, Bernhard Waldenfels, Jan M. Broekman, and Ante Pažanin (eds.), vol. 1, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977, 71–104. There is an English version of the paper in *Phenomenology and Marxism*, trans. J. Claude Evans, Jr. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), 53–81. In what follows we quote the paper referring both to the German original (first page reference) and to the English text (second page reference).

Husserlian phenomenology in order to demonstrate the close relationship between corporeality and teleology, between nature and history, and between the human being and the social world. Landgrebe reminds us that “it is not possible even to approach the problem of teleology in an adequate manner if the approach is not based on an analysis of corporeality, i.e. of man as a corporeal being.”<sup>3</sup> What Marxism leaves undone, then, is a transcendental grounding of human embodied praxis, a project that the post-Marxian tradition typically fails to consider.

The structure of our paper is as follows. In section one we analyze Landgrebe’s interpretation of Husserlian investigations on embodiment. We deal especially with embodiment and motility as the core of the Husserlian consideration of the subject, and with teleology and history as an embodied practice. This step makes it possible not only to integrate history into the core of the analysis of subjectivity, but to comprehend the scope of phenomenology as a transcendental enterprise of responsibility.

In section two we wish to further analyze the thesis that embodied teleology is common for both movements—as Landgrebe puts it, “this intimate connection between the two problems exists both in phenomenology and in Marxism, and opens up the possibility of a fruitful dialogue”—and to address an essential ambiguity of the notion of nature in Marx, an ambiguity that Landgrebe himself highlights.<sup>4</sup> According to his text, a phenomenological contribution to Marxism would consist of disclosing the transcendental ground of Marxian theses. In order to do this, however, we must discern the notion of science underlying both reflections.

As a final introductory remark we need to emphasize that in the context of this inquiry, phenomenology and Marxism both have specific meanings for Landgrebe. The phenomenology he draws on is obviously that of Husserl—particularly a certain vision of Husserlian phenomenology based on Landgrebe’s privileged access to the emerging developments in his master’s research manuscripts, as well as to the texts he himself helped to prepare for publication. On the other hand, here “Marxism” refers only to Marx’s works, above all to “the early writings up to the *Communist Manifesto* and the *Critique of Political Economy* of 1857, the preparatory work for *Capital*.<sup>5</sup>

## **Embodiment and Motility as the Core of the Husserlian Consideration of the Subject**

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<sup>3</sup> Landgrebe, “Das Problem der Teleologie und der Leiblichkeit,” 71/53.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 71/53.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 72/54.

The living body (*Leib*) is an ambiguous and central notion in Husserlian phenomenology. It appears as something constituted, and yet constituting—as something that pertains to the natural world (and thus is in some sense material) and at the same time is the first and most intimate layer of consciousness (and in this sense is utterly different from material nature).<sup>6</sup> It is not something that I am merely connected to, but is *mine*, and it plays a central role in knowledge, which, as Husserl frequently stresses, is grounded and validated in subjective experience.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Embodiment in Husserl according to Landgrebe*

As Husserl's assistant, Landgrebe was familiar with manuscripts related to the proposed publication of *Ideas II* and with Husserl's reflections on intersubjectivity.<sup>8</sup> As the editor of *Experience and Judgment*, he was also well aware of the scope and problems of so-called genetic phenomenology, along with Husserl's lifelong engagement with problems concerning corporeality.<sup>9</sup> This is why from the opening pages of “The problem of teleology and corporeality in phenomenology and Marxism” he insists on tracing teleology back to its genesis, that is, to the corporeal movement that is teleologically oriented toward achieving goals. The second section of the paper quotes several passages from *Ideas II*, providing significant examples of Husserl's views on the living body. What is distinctive about bodily self-experience is its double character as a part of the world, on the one hand (although the body in this sense is nevertheless always incomplete, since we never manage to see it “completely”), and on the other hand, as something lived in intimacy and directly lived through. This kind of experience is unique to one's own body, in contrast to other things or realities,

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<sup>6</sup> See Ludwig Landgrebe, “Das Problem der passiven Konstitution,” in *Faktizität und Individuation* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1982), 71–87, here 82. There is an English version of the text, translated by Donn Welton, in *Analecta Husserliana* 7 (1978), 23–36, here 30–31.

<sup>7</sup> See Ludwig Landgrebe “Der phänomenologische Begriff der Erfahrung,” in *Faktizität und Individuation* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1982), 58–70. There is an English version of the text, translated by Donn C. Welton, in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 34 (1973), 1–13. In what follows we quote the paper referring both to the German original (first page reference) and to the English text (second page reference).

<sup>8</sup> For more on the relation between Husserl's final assistants Landgrebe and Fink, as well as on their relationship with Jan Patočka, see Sara Fumagalli, *Wege zu einer neuen Phänomenologie. Landgrebe, Fink und Patočka im Dialog* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> See Cathrín Nielsen, Karel Novotný, and Thomas Nenon (eds.), *Kontexte des Leiblichen / Contexts of corporeality* (Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz, 2016); Ignacio Quepons, “Intentionality of Moods and Horizon Consciousness in Husserl's Phenomenology,” in Marta Ubiali and Maren Wehrle (eds.), *Feeling and Value, Willing and Action* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015), 93–103; Elizabeth A. Behnke & Cristian Ciocan (eds.), *Studia Phaenomenologica* 12: *Possibilities of Embodiment* (2012); Elizabeth A. Behnke, “Husserl's Phenomenology of Embodiment” in James Fieser & Bradley Dowden (eds.), *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2011.

experienced exclusively as “worldly” thanks to and through our body. Such unique and intimate experience is proper to the body conceived as *Leib* rather than *Körper*, and Landgrebe traces this distinction to two different experiences of movement: the *motus localis*<sup>10</sup> of things and the *self-movement* of the living body.<sup>11</sup> The nature of this difference is set forth by Husserl in *Ideas II*: “Sheer material things are only moveable mechanically and only partake of spontaneous movement in a mediate way.”<sup>12</sup>

Our own living body is disclosed first and foremost and in an unreflective way as an activity – namely, that of movement. This is why kinaesthetic sensations are one of the first self-experiences; we experience ourselves as active and acting in the world, and the first manifestation of such experience is “I move (myself).” This movement, in contrast to the change of spatial localization, is subjectively directed, and it is thanks to such movement that the subject is capable of constituting the surrounding world. This particular constitutive activity of the embodied self is expressed by Husserl in terms of the following typical conditional: “Every I-move [myself] realized (K) would realize (E). Let us suppose that I change K in K’, so E becomes E’ etc.,” where K stands for kinaesthetic change, while E (*Erscheinung*) refers to correlative change in the appearance of things.<sup>13</sup> Or as Landgrebe puts it, “in order to see a thing correctly, I must turn my head, change the position of my body, etc.”<sup>14</sup> Let us insist that this constitution is always and at the same time twofold or bidirectional. In other words, the world is constituted around the embodied self, but at the same time, the self discovers itself as the center of reference—the nullpoint of all spatial orientation—and as the source of free movement. “Each new movement learned widens at the same time the horizon of the experienceable. Each new experience of our world is at the same time a new experience of ourselves in terms of our

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<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Landgrebe, “Das Problem der Teleologie und der Leiblichkeit,” 79/59.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 79/59.

<sup>12</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 159.

<sup>13</sup> “Irgendein angesetztes Ich-bewege (K) würde verwirklichen (E). Gesetzt, ich wandle K in K’, dann muss E übergehen in E’ etc.,” in Edmund Husserl, *Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie: Analysen des Unbewusstsein und der Instinkte. Metaphysik. Späte Ethik. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1908–1937)*, ed. Rochus Sowa and Thomas Vongehr (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 77 (subsequently cited as Hua XLII).

<sup>14</sup> Ludwig Landgrebe, “Das Problem der Teleologie und der Leiblichkeit,” 80/60.

capabilities.”<sup>15</sup> Thus it is movement and orientation that grant us an “absolute There.”<sup>16</sup>

It is clear now that the Husserlian notions of sensations and of embodiment should not be identified with mere passivity and receptivity. Rather, they must be conceived as “sensuous activity” (*sinnliche Tätigkeit*), an expression that Landgrebe takes from Marx.<sup>17</sup> The first notion the subject has of such activity is, as we said, that of a self-consciousness of embodiment, which is a discovery that “I move (myself).” Nevertheless, according to Landgrebe, this experience is tightly intertwined with the “I can,” with “capabilities.” The body is experienced as free movement and nullpoint, as encounter with things, but objects are also presented as things that can be grasped, removed, or achieved. This second experience is grounded in corporeal movement, and while it is a transcendental feature, it is also quite an early discovery in the factual development of human subjectivity. It is a “very early discovery, which every human individual must make in the course of his or her development”; this discovery “is, as it were, the *hour of the birth of man’s humanity*,”<sup>18</sup> since its goal-orientation not only entails a primitive notion of history (of the “success or failure” of a past movement), but considerably broadens Husserl’s early notion of intentionality.<sup>19</sup>

The disclosure of the world to subjectivity is possible by virtue of movement (and the spatial orientation of things) and of capabilities (*Vermöglichkeiten*). This is the notion of embodied praxis. In this context, it is necessary to inquire into the origin of knowledge, which is human intentional activity *par excellance* and one of the capabilities. Like Husserl, Landgrebe emphasizes the need to secure the lifeworldly legitimacy of all knowledge (including, of course, its scientific aspect). Lifeworldly legitimacy can be characterized as the validity of any act of knowledge grounded in our acquaintance with objects, including a tacit conviction about their existence constituted in practical terms (e.g., I can grasp it), of which the intentional arc would be just one variant. In Husserlian—and Landgrebian—phenomenological inquiry into the way the world is constituted, we then arrive at the notion of practical familiarity with objects. “Thus,” Landgrebe asserts, “the roots of the original acquaintance with the ‘There’ of the other cannot be found in the functions of the I-think and its linguistic articulation; it is to be found in the

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<sup>15</sup> Ludwig Landgrebe, “Der phänomenologische Begriff der Erfahrung,” 67/11 (translation modified).

<sup>16</sup> Ludwig Landgrebe, “Das Problem der Teleologie und der Leiblichkeit,” 93/74.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 79/60.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 81/61.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 89/68.

execution of the elementary functions which are guided by the ‘primal striving’ (*Urstreiben*) of the given “There.”<sup>20</sup>

Human knowledge, its possibility of truth or evidence, is thereby grounded in quite a different level than one might expect. Practical acquaintance as embodied praxis is based on the execution of primary functions that are guided by this “‘primal striving’ of the given ‘There.’” Instincts are often an underconsidered aspect of Husserlian work, but in the context of embodiment, they need to be fleshed out, so to speak.<sup>21</sup> The “original tendency” is the ultimate source of intentionality, and for Landgrebe it discloses the possibility of the clarification (*Erklärung*) of an essential correlation between the world and embodied subjectivity. Instinctive life is prior to any consciousness and yet it is already polarized. As shown in *Experience and Judgment*, this drive gives rise to interest or attention, as well as to other conscious aspects of fully-fledged subjective life, but it is also a leading clue for Landgrebe, since it is the locus where the link between “intersubjectivity” and “individuality” is at work.<sup>22</sup> This question is basic, for as Landgrebe reminds us, “*intersubjectivity*” is just “the Husserlian title for human society.”<sup>23</sup> This point is relevant for our inquiry into Marxism and Landgrebe pinpoints this relevance as follows:

This concept of an egoless striving must rather be referred to an experiential content which allows us to speak of a universal instinctive intentionality in such a manner that the individualization of the ‘absolute There’ is not cancelled in this instinctive intentionality, but rather from the very beginning refers to the other and thus to a common ‘There.’<sup>24</sup>

This is why he emphasizes that “Husserl finds this primal drive in its sexual drive as ‘instinctive [primal] intentionality of communalization.’”<sup>25</sup> The basic point

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 95/73.

<sup>21</sup> See James G. Hart, “Genesis, Instinct, and Reconstruction: Nam-in Lee’s Edmund Husserl’s *Phänomenologie der Instinkte*,” *Husserl Studies* 15 (1998), 101–123.

<sup>22</sup> We are not committed to any option in the debate about the authorship of *Experience and Judgment* and we prefer to think of it as a Husserlian text arranged by Landgrebe. For an exhaustive explanation of the origins of this publication, see Jagna Brudzińska, “Erfahrung und Urteil,” in Sebastian Luft & Maren Wehrle (eds.), *Husserl-Handbuch* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2017), 104–113.

<sup>23</sup> Ludwig Landgrebe, “Das Problem der Teleologie und der Leiblichkeit,” 95/74.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 95–97/74–75.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 96/75; the phrase “instinctive intentionality of communalization” is from a 1930 manuscript of Husserl, cited in Bernhard Waldenfels, *Das Zwischenreich des Dialogs. Sozialphilosophische Untersuchungen in Anschluss an Edmund Husserl* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 298n.289.

here is that “as a primal drive (*Urtrieb*) it is from the very beginning referred to the other and finds its fulfilment and disappointment in the other: ‘the reference to the other *as* other and to his correlative drive lies in the drive itself.’”<sup>26</sup> In this sense corporeality is also the primal locus of intersubjectivity and of the possibility of a common history.

#### *Embodied Praxis*

It should now be clear that Landgrebe and Husserl both insist on the originally practical character of consciousness and human existence: it is the “I can” discovered through our free movement. From this basis stem all superior human capabilities. It is important to note that according to this account, even cognitive functions would be “posterior,” since they are founded on the primitive practical ground. This is why the ground for teleology can already be found at this very basic level of embodiment.

In fact, this is something that was always very clear within the Husserlian framework. Unfortunately, however, it was only discovered very late, once the “official” and deeply dualistic vision of Husserlian phenomenology had already been established.<sup>27</sup> Husserl distinguishes between different layers of praxis, ranging from the most primitive genetic stratum to fully-fledged human action. In one research manuscript, he identifies 1) the originary “praxis” of genesis of and for the world, which is something we have already discussed; 2) the praxis of knowing, which arises on the basis of the constant pre-givenness of the world and its anticipation in horizontal apperception, which is affected and awakened toward new singular apperceptions and motivated to realize what is anticipated as “being,” to posit different modalities of being, and so on, always proceeding from the most fundamental unreflective basis toward a more differentiated stream of perceptions (be they concordant or not) and other intellectual operations; and finally, 3) acting “praxis,” or action in a proper sense, which amounts to accomplishing and realizing what is not yet real and validating what is not yet

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<sup>26</sup> Ludwig Landgrebe, “Das Problem der Teleologie und der Leiblichkeit,” 95/75; the words Landgrebe is citing here are from Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Dritter Teil: 1929–1935*, ed. Iso Kern (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 593–594.

<sup>27</sup> The impact of the ongoing publication of new volumes of *Husserliana* was such that the work that aims at analyzing issues contained in these materials was entitled “The New Husserl” – see Donn Welton, *The New Husserl: The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003).

validated. It is constitution in a properly active and creative sense, as we know from *Ideas I*, for example. But it stems from this original pre-given flow.<sup>28</sup>

Phenomenology thus discloses the deep meaning of teleology, which is the basic way in which human beings inhabit the world. They are indeed corporeally oriented toward things, and world-constitution is a practical organization of space around oneself. Human beings (and this is something that makes them unique among both inanimate things and animals) discover themselves as capable of action and of shaping a world—perhaps most importantly, a social world—through their actions. It is because of this awareness that they have history, in contrast to “animal communities”:

Society as the ‘life of the species’ is only possible in that this life of the species becomes history through absolute individualization, i.e. becomes a history which humanity *has* as the life of the species. Animal communities have no history, the living and dying of its members is a succession.<sup>29</sup>

**And** This is precisely the nexus between Marxism and phenomenology, for both conceptions propose a particular vision of humanity, that is, one in which human beings are predominantly agents of praxis. However, in order for phenomenology to become “the science of the basis”<sup>30</sup> sought by Marx—which according to Landgrebe should not be taken in “the sense of the natural sciences, but [as] a science of the structures of the life-world in which alone nature is originally there for us as a ‘basis’”—it is necessary to trace the so often misunderstood notion of the teleology of history back to the lifeworld of praxis.<sup>31</sup>

### **Phenomenology and Marxism according to Landgrebe**

Let us consider two moments in the relationship between Marxism and phenomenology. The first refers to their critical approach to the naturalist sciences; the second addresses Landgrebe’s inquiry into ambiguities of Marxian thought, an inquiry that leads him to consider a basic and tacit concern

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<sup>28</sup> Our summary here relies on the following passage: “1) *Urtümliche ‘Praxis’* der Genesis für Welt, für weltlich Seiendes. 2) *Die Praxis der Erkenntnis*, das ist auf dem Grund der ständigen ‘Vorgegebenheit’, der Antizipation von Welt in der jeweiligen Horizonthaftigkeit der Apperzeption, affiziert und geweckt, zu Sonderapperzeptionen, <geweckt>, das als seiend Antizipierte zu verwirklichen, Seinsmodalitäten <zu> entscheiden, und so immer höher hinauf. 3) *Handelnde Praxis*: als seiend Gewisses und zu Bewährendes oder auch Bewährtes, als Seiendes nach seinen vom Wirklichsein ausgeschlossenen Möglichkeiten ansetzen und vermöglich verwirklichen. Das ist eine Praxis der Fortkonstitution – schöpferisch so wie 1) in höherer Stufe” (*Iua XLII*, 74).

<sup>29</sup> Ludwig Landgrebe, “Das Problem der Teleologie und der Leiblichkeit,” 97/75.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 102/80.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 102/80.

underlying Marx's approach. In turn, this is related to the crisis of the lifeworld both philosophers lived.

#### *Phenomenological Critique of the Notion of Science*

According to our reading, transcendental phenomenology, as set forth in Landgrebe's text, is far from being considered as speculative and formal idealism; this statement is worth insisting on even today, despite our growing knowledge about Husserl's posthumous heritage. Landgrebe stresses that phenomenology must be conceived as a critical exercise that directly concerns all scientific enterprises. This is because it is a fundamental responsibility of phenomenology to investigate the legitimacy and limits of all particular statements (including those of science).<sup>32</sup> Landgrebe thus recovers the initial motivation of phenomenology, that is, its total opposition to any scientific excess that ignores its own basis and conditions of possibility—i.e., its roots in the lifeworld—and claims for itself the sole right to universal explication. In the beginning, Husserl's critique targets psychologism, but it also affects historicism, and in general it aims at any pretension to world-explication that forgets everyday conscious life prior to science and wants to reduce multiple layers of reality to a single “ultimate” layer.

Landgrebe points to the fact that this original intuition permeates all aspects of the phenomenological enterprise, and he insists that philosophy is called to initiate a global project of inquiry into the origin of the sciences “*in the experience of pre-scientific life*.”<sup>33</sup> This is in fact a permanent goal in Husserlian phenomenology; its expression may vary, but it is present throughout his work. Those who ignore the fact that the scientific enterprise is anchored in the lifeworld fall prey to a special kind of oblivion and succumb to the fallacy of taking something (scientific results) for ultimate when it is only the result of special kind of abstraction, taken for granted in society. In contrast, the phenomenological enterprise constitutes a critique of the assumptions or “prejudices” that function in “dogmatic” thinking. However, it is important that this ultimate expression of what the transcendental enterprise is does not open a hiatus between phenomenology as transcendental idealism and phenomenology as study of the lifeworld. Instead, as we have attempted to show, the notion of the transcendental also embraces aspects such as corporeality or instinctive life. But what we want to consider first and foremost here is that Landgrebe also understands the transcendental enterprise as a critique of *actual conditions*.

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 78/58.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 78/58.

### *Tracing Teleology Back to the Lifeworld in Marxism*

The problem of teleology in the context of Marxism and its characterization as a practical philosophy rather than a scientific one is not a novelty at all. On the contrary, it is an integral part of a debate initiated in the 1920s by such authors as Karl Korsch<sup>34</sup> or Georg Lukács.<sup>35</sup> Nor is the very attempt to find common ground between phenomenology and Marxism an innovation. For example, already in the late twenties Herbert Marcuse suggested such a possibility in a paper entitled “Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism.”<sup>36</sup> To be sure, it was based on a “hermeneutical phenomenology” that drew on Heidegger’s rather than Husserl’s work, and Marcuse finally remained unconvinced that such a synthesis was even possible; at best it was very problematic. Nevertheless, the attempt to bridge both traditions was continued by such authors as Tran Duc Thao<sup>37</sup> and Enzo Paci<sup>38</sup>; by prominent thinkers related to phenomenology such as Jean Paul Sartre<sup>39</sup> or Maurice Merleau-Ponty<sup>40</sup>; and more recently, by San Martín,<sup>41</sup> just to mention a few (mainly those of Husserlian inspiration). In addition, the four volumes of *Phänomenologie und Marxismus* (1977–1979) offer a splendid basis for further work on this matter.<sup>42</sup> These selected examples

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<sup>34</sup> Karl Korsch [1923], *Marxism and Philosophy* (London: NLB, 1972).

<sup>35</sup> Georg Lukács [1923], *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971).

<sup>36</sup> Herbert Marcuse [1928], “Contributions to a Phenomenology of Historical Materialism” *Telos* 4 (1969), 3–34.

<sup>37</sup> Tran Duc Thao [1951], *Phenomenology and Dialectical Materialism*, trans. Robert S. Cohen and Daniel J. Herman (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1980).

<sup>38</sup> Enzo Paci, *Fenomenologia e dialettica* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1974).

<sup>39</sup> Jean Paul Sartre [1960], *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, vol. 1, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith, (London: NLB, 1976).

<sup>40</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty [1948], “Marxisme et Philosophie,” in *Sens et non-sens* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 152–165; see Mª Carmen López Sáenz, “Fenomenología y marxismo: El compromiso político de Merleau-Ponty,” *Daimon: Revista Internacional de Filosofía* 51 (2010), 103–121.

<sup>41</sup> Javier San Martín, “Fenomenología y marxismo,” in *La fenomenología como teoría de una racionalidad fuerte: Estructura y función de la fenomenología de Husserl y otros ensayos* (Madrid: UNED, 1994), 101–138.

<sup>42</sup> Bernhard Waldenfels, Jan M. Broekman, and Ante Pažanin (eds.), *Phänomenologie und Marxismus. Band 1: Konzepte und Methoden*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977; *Band 2: Praktische Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977); *Band 3: Sozialphilosophie*. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977); *Band 4: Erkenntnis- und Wissenschaftstheorie*, (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979).

demonstrate that far from being an outdated project, it is quite a persistent and present one. In order to grasp the value of Landgrebe's contribution to the debate, we need to read his text in light of its historical and philosophical context.

The paper we are commenting on sets the stage from the very beginning, for as we have mentioned, Landgrebe insists that "it is not possible even to approach the problem of teleology in an adequate manner if the approach is not based on an analysis of corporeality, i.e. of man as a corporeal being," and thus he states that "the thesis which is to be elaborated and defended here is that this intimate connection between the two problems exists both in phenomenology and in Marxism, and opens up the possibility of a fruitful dialogue."<sup>43</sup> This very relation is where the originality of Landgrebe's proposal lies; indeed, the issue could only be raised by someone who was not only familiar with Husserl's research manuscripts, but was concerned with the *meaning* and *practical function* of phenomenology, rather than being exclusively concerned with canonical interpretations. In fact, as Landgrebe observes, the fate of Husserl's writings was in some sense parallel to the case of Marx, given the progressive dogmatization of Marxian "doctrine," which tended to present its notions as fixed and immutable. Landgrebe's intuition is that Marx would be against such rigidification. The idea is then to reconsider the teleology of history – which is the pivotal point for Marxism – on the basis of the notion of corporeality we have already analyzed. It is on this ground that Landgrebe states his thesis as follows:

The teleological continuity and unity of history is not predetermined, but must be produced in the particular 'There'. Thus, the idea of a teleology of history does not have its origin in 'theoretical' considerations, but in practical human interests.<sup>44</sup>

In order to grasp this notion, it is necessary to elucidate some Marxian terms. For Landgrebe, "the theoretical and, above all, practical political dispute between the various schools of Western and Eastern Marxism turns on the question of the correct understanding and correct application of these tools which Marx forged."<sup>45</sup> Further, argues Landgrebe, these fundamental notions can only be fully grasped—in their original and transcendental dimension—through Husserlian phenomenological investigation. This is why it seems necessary to put these traditions in dialogue. It might seem that Landgrebe's essay dedicates more space to Husserl than to Marx, but this is due to the fact that he emphasizes the necessity of rereading Marx from a phenomenological standpoint. As he explicitly states, the resulting clarifications should not imply "instructing Marx as

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<sup>43</sup>Ludwig Landgrebe, "Das Problem der Teleologie und der Leiblichkeit," 71/53.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 93/72.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 73/54.

to what he really saw and wanted. But they can help us understand the reasons for the incredible influence of the Marxist tradition.”<sup>46</sup>

Having stated the possibility of reaching a common ground between Husserlian and Marxian approaches, Landgrebe then proceeds to analyze more specific theses such as the following: “*The concept of nature is not univocal in Marx. Its ambiguity is the cause of the debates concerning the correct Marxism.*”<sup>47</sup> However, the ambiguity at stake here goes beyond the traditional ambiguity about how to interpret the notion of nature, e.g., “nature” as opposite to “spirit” (*Geist*) or as “essence” against “existence” (*essentia* and *existentia*), which leads to the conclusion that “the discourse about ‘human nature’ is ambiguous,” although Marx, in any case, “generally uses this expression in the sense of essence.”<sup>48</sup> Landgrebe stresses, on the contrary, that the “essential ambiguity of the word ‘nature’ which maintains the debate about Marxism alive is different,” and he elucidates its relevance as follows:

This ambiguity in the concept of nature and in the sciences of nature runs through all attempts to interpret the Marxist texts and through the dispute concerning the true significance of the Marxist approach. The ambiguity in the concept of ‘nature’ thus produces the ambiguity in the concept of science. It is also decisive for the understanding of the relation between the ‘material basis’ and the ‘superstructure’, and for the dogmatizing of this relation.<sup>49</sup>

Landgrebe argues that in order to address this ambiguity it is necessary to inquire back into the transcendental-phenomenological origins of the concepts concerned, and thereby to understand both the meaning and the validity of such fundamental Marxist notions as “material basis” or “superstructure” and their nuances. For “only when we have seen through this ambiguity can we understand that the science of the basis which Marx projected is not a science in the sense of the natural sciences, but a science of the structures of the life-world in which alone nature is originally there for us as a ‘basis’”<sup>50</sup> Or in other words, “Only in this manner can we understand the limited, though within this limitation legitimate, justification of calling the Marxist investigations ‘materialist’, and the

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 103/81.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 100/78.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 101/78.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 101-102/79.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 102/80.

extent to which one can say, for example, ‘history is the genuine natural history of man.’”<sup>51</sup>

Consequently, the relationship between Husserl and Marx is not arbitrary at all; on the contrary, “the attempt to bring the phenomenological and the Marxist approaches to the problem of teleology into dialogue with one another is demanded by the things themselves.”<sup>52</sup> This statement can only be fully understood once we realize that all the problems built around Marxism are anchored in more basic considerations, for example, the question of the relationship between corporeality and teleology. For it is only possible to address the problem (or the meaning) of a “teleology of history” if what “teleology” itself means has already been established. This is why phenomenological analyses are not merely *descriptive*, but—perhaps even most prominently—*normative*. However, the necessary legitimacy can only be *discovered* (and not merely presupposed as a hypothesis or *ad hoc* assumption) on the basis of a new articulation of “a ‘science’ of a different style as a ‘science of the life-world’, whose point of departure and mode of investigation can only be worked out by transcendental philosophy,”<sup>53</sup> a science that could deal with “the question of the origin and thus the legitimacy within the life-world of the notion of a teleological efficacy, and the question of the justification for understanding the process in which man finds himself entwined as a teleological efficacy.”<sup>54</sup> The link between teleology and corporeality already brought to light here, as well as the particular sense conferred upon the notion of the transcendental, leads us to appreciate full meaning of the final words of the paper:

If phenomenological transcendental philosophy also means critique of dogmatism and openness to the problems which are posed in our ‘There’, it must also take up the problems Marx posed *as* problems in its theory of crisis, for they deal with the same crisis, though in an *earlier* form than *ours*.<sup>55</sup>

At this point it should be clear that Landgrebe does not merely give us theoretical tools to reread both Husserl and Marx and to comprehend different interpretations and misinterpretations; instead, he also provides us with a very suggestive standpoint, which we believe remains underexplored, from which to

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<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 74/56.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 74/57–58.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 101/79.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 78/59.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 103/81.

comprehend the link between phenomenology and Marxism in their practical aspect. The practical perspective that animates both styles of philosophy is guided by a will toward critical comprehension of our contemporary historical situation, which is, according to both thinkers, that of *deep crisis*. Thus it is possible to venture the suggestion that *both of them deal with the same crisis*: as Landgrebe tells us, “for Marx, it was the experience of a radical historical crisis” that “forced him to pose the question concerning the meaning of this process” in order to be able to address the question of “what is to be done.”<sup>56</sup> Guided by the same motivation, “Husserl investigates in his late work the ‘crisis of European science’, searching out the origins and possibilities of overcoming this crisis.”<sup>57</sup> We therefore conclude that Landgrebe’s proposal for working out a perspective encompassing both phenomenology and Marxism—a project of continuing relevance for contemporary philosophy—rests on the recognition of praxis as embodied and embodied praxis as inherently teleological, a joint thesis that is not a merely theoretical hypothesis, but can be phenomenologically demonstrated by investigating the deepest dimensions of actual human existence.

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 76/57.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 99/77.