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## Organ Projection

In the early 1860s, at a meeting of the Berlin Philosophical Society during which the age of the human race was being discussed, Carl Schultzenstein remarked that everywhere the human being has appeared, he has been obliged first to invent a suitable way of life for himself and to procure this by artifice, in such manner that, in the human being, art and science take the place of the animal instinct. In this way, the human being becomes the creator of himself, even of his body's formation and refinement. To which Ferdinand Lasalle assented, replying: "This *absolute self-production* is precisely the most profound point in humankind."<sup>1</sup>

Here we have happened on a remark that will be useful in articulating a concept of projection in the sense that we would like to understand it.

Use of the term "projection" adheres strictly in all cases to its basic etymological meaning. In the military, missiles are called projectiles; in building design, one speaks of architectural projections; and apart from projects undertaken in the world of business, the term is especially endemic to draftsmanship, referring to every sort of sketch, map, plan, blueprint, and in particular to the cartographer's grid. Who, for instance, is unfamiliar with the parallel- and meridian-lined grid known as "Mercator's projection"?

Beyond these specific instances, what is of greater interest is just how frequently physiologists and psychologists use the word to describe the relation of the sensations to external objects and to describe the formation of representations [*Vorstellungen*] in general.

In all of these cases, *to project* is more or less to throw out or forth, to place before or displace outward, to relocate something interior into the outside world. When taken literally, projection and representation are not actually all that different, insofar as the inward act of representing is not independent of the object placed before the eyes of a representing subject.

A few instances will suffice to demonstrate how the expression thus far has been used in scientific works. In *The Independent Value of Knowledge*, Carl von Rokitansky writes, with reference to the displacement of things in space: "We are never conscious of the images inside of us, but only of the things we have projected outside ourselves." Carl Gustav Carus is a bit less direct: "In seeing, it is the object's own action of light that we perceive internally, and not an *image* of this action of light that another would also see. The visible world emerges for us only as the sensation that is aroused in the retina projects itself outward, as it were." Commenting on Ludwig Feuerbach's anthropological standpoint, Karl Rosenkranz alleges that the human being projects his own nature in the form of a representation of a subject existing outside of himself, which should be differentiated from him; and that, when it comes to religion, the human being estranges himself from his own nature by projecting representations that correspond to no reality.<sup>2</sup>

In his *Elements of Psychology*, Frederik Anton von Hartsen briefly describes the projection that is thought to be the soul apparently stepping forth from the body as the "*expulsion* of spiritual attributes." He writes about the projection of both sensations and desires and claims he is able to prove that the projection of psychic attributes takes place not only in space but in time as well.<sup>3</sup>

So far, the theory of projection has played a significant role in the study of spatial representation and the direction of vision as well as in explaining the upright position of the perceived object with respect to the inverted retinal image.

Generally speaking, depending on whether projection is accepted or rejected, two theoretical camps emerge, which Helmholtz has identified as "empirical" and as "nativist" theories. To the former belong, beside the Herbartians, Helmholtz and the majority of physiologists, including Johannes Müller, Carl Ludwig, Otto Funke, Carl Lange, and above all Friedrich Ueberweg, whose treatise "Toward a Theory of Vision"

effectively revitalized the subject after a period of apparent dormancy. Even more recently, the subject was taken up in Eduard Johnson's contributions to the *Philosophische Monatshefte*, in Paul Kramer's "Notes toward a Theory of Spatial Depth Perception," and in Carl Stumpf's book *On the Psychological Origins of Representations of Space*.<sup>4</sup>

But the dispute remains unsettled. Ludwig has significantly suggested that "the verb 'to place outside' is only a figurative expression designating a phenomenon whereby the psyche *correlates* a condition present in the brain to an object located outside of the eyes, as its cause."<sup>5</sup>

One such correlation between an image [*Bild*] in the sensorium and an object outside of it is that of fact. This is, to say the least, most closely affiliated with the projection. Though he does not use the word itself, even Johannes Müller seems with a "quasi" to want to avoid abandoning the concept entirely: "We can conceive of the visual representation as a quasi displacement forward of the entire retinal field of vision." Wilhelm Wundt proposes a slight restriction to this view, "which presupposes an inherent or at least a strictly given correlation of the retinal points with the corresponding points in external space." Adolf Horwicz also clearly designates the projection "as the outward displacement of sensations into the object, as the correlation of the same with an external object."<sup>6</sup>

Having suggested that there exist absolute correlations of this kind—in which an internally necessary relation inheres in both sides, each of which is constantly confronting, presupposing, and projecting the other—we will leave the issue unresolved for the time being, and we will turn instead to a process that truly warrants being called projection, because all that underlies it are the sort of facts that preclude all difference of opinion. A detailed elaboration of this type of projection—*organ projection*—will justify itself in the course of our investigation, the actual theme of which it is.

The underlying facts are familiar, historical, as old as humankind. But what is new is our treatment of them, proceeding from their genetic context and from the point of view of projection that is here applied to them for the first time.

This previously untrodden path leads straight to the historical and cultural foundations of epistemology in general. Our point of departure is the human being, who, in all he thinks and does, unless he breaks with himself entirely, can proceed from nothing other than his thinking,

acting self. We are not dealing with a hypothetical *bathybius-being* nor with a hypothetical ideal human being, but with the human to whose being may attest only the traces of and changes in the things he has made with his own hands.<sup>7</sup> This being alone is the fixed point at which all knowledge begins and aims. At all times, in all places, he attests to himself!

The boundary that had been assumed until very recently between a historical and a non-historical age, determined to the year on the basis of the biblical record—this has been set fluctuating, from the beginning of terrestrial creation, in centuries-long blocks of time.

Cave findings tell a story that is no less irrefutable than rolls of papyrus and libraries of clay tablets. They constitute a very real literature, a lapidary and pictographic script consisting of fossils and pottery, tools and rudimentary markings. This testimony lets us infer the nature and condition of human and animal kinds, as, under primitive conditions of competition, they fought simultaneously to wrest life from one another and to establish dominion.

In light of these findings, and of others that are unfolding new labyrinthine paths for contemporary linguistic research, the concepts of the historic and formerly so-called prehistoric are blurring to the point of indistinction. Those who pursue a distinction or demarcation of one sort or another are going to have to get used to the idea that the actual prehistoric human is a being no trace of which exists, not even in the crudest tool—for with the first tool history commences, because it is the first work. Insofar as history is understood as the progression of human work, the first work is, to say the least, the inception of something like history. Hence, incipient history only begins to take recognizable shape as history proper where a separation of workers by vocation begins to appear in the division of labor generally, in preparation of the eventual fixed division of the members of the social body into castes and the state body into estates.

All work is activity, but only conscious activity is work. Animals do not work. In the so-called animal colonies of ants and bees, one finds a division of mere industriousness. The division of labor, of conscious vocational work—that is what comprises the historical state and is already history.

Between actual prehistory—that is, human being prior to all history—and genuine history, incipient history has been assigned its place.

In the works published on this subject from the standpoint of a theory of descent, more often than not an author will tend to supplement with outright fantasy his depiction of the physique and the way of life of primitive human beings. As a result, one is asked to imagine the primitive human being at one moment as a brute among brutes, at another as an animal-like creature endowed from the outset with the germ of historical potential.

In view of the rude and savage animal world, in the vicinity of which we have to imagine the "budding" human being, we cannot overestimate its physical characteristics. Doubtless he displayed gorilla-like strength and agility. He must have possessed the enormous strength of storied historical men or modern-day acrobats, though of course he would have lacked their artistry and skill. Our own modern athletes' occasional feats of strength must have been, for primitive human beings, an ordinary, unremarkable, natural aptitude shared by all.

So long as the human being had to confront rapacious beasts unarmed, he needed to be able to match them in the strength of his bite and nails, in the power of his fist and arm, in the simian speed with which he moved. Imagine the force and dexterity needed to beat a steer to the ground using only a fist, to break iron with one's hands, to hold a hundred-weight from one's teeth, to swing from a trapeze and walk the tightrope. Imagine a single human being possessing all of these powers and you will have an idea of how the primitive human was physically fitted to survive his quite literal life-or-death struggle with a hostile nature and its colossal beasts.

One is thus forced to assume that, prior to all weapon and tool manufacture, the primitive human being had only, besides the tremendous power of his muscles and the agility of his limbs, his more or less animal-like teeth and nails as means of attack and defense.

The use and perfection of man-made weapons naturally resulted in a corresponding reduction in physical exertion and the softening of this natural weaponry. As the human being began to produce means calculated to provide protection and security as well as a relative degree of comfort in existence, thereby increasing his intellectual activity, the human physique, no longer compelled to unusual exertion and the show of force, gradually achieved a certain balance and poise. His predatory traits receded to the same degree that his intellect emerged. The

wounding and lethal features of his physical body were gradually displaced into weapons, giving way to a human appearance. The jaw receded into the organs of speech, the clawlike extensions of the hands he once walked upon became the protective nail coverings for his fingers as they worked. With demands subsiding, a convivial being with upright posture replaced the crudely modeled body formed for a savage way of life.

Of course we can only sketch a very broad-stroked outline of how these developments are supposed to have unfolded, based on inferences drawn from contemporary ethnography. Comparative geology has, on the other hand, established for us well-defined periods of time in which to group certain developments.

According to the general laws of development, for which there exist thousands of points of comparison the world over, Karl Siegwart, among others, assumes in his work on *The Age of the Human Race* that the human being is supposed to have passed through four distinct stages of civilization:

the crude, animal-like state of nature in which the savages lived is supposed to have lasted for millions of years; the half-savage way of life, marked by the advent of the Stone Age, he numbers at roughly one hundred thousand years; the period of incipient culture (passage from the higher Stone Age into the Bronze Age), which is characterized by the continuing development of forms of government, religion, and society, he estimates at seven millennia; and the period of higher civilization of one separate human clan (the ancient Greeks and Romans), is said to have existed for centuries.

Siegwart calculates the duration of the post-Tertiary Period and the known age of the human race at 224,000 years.<sup>8</sup>

Any pertinent attempt at working man out from his rude beginnings can proceed only on the basis of the theory of organic development. However, the prevailing conflict of opinion means that it is impossible at this point to decide which theory is better suited to doing so: either Darwin's theory as elaborated in *The Origin of Species* or a theory that instead assumes "original dispositions" unique to each species.

Among the works we will be pursuing here, Otto Caspari's *The Prehistory of Humankind* argues a brilliant position. The author is not partisan. After acknowledging the efforts of those who have earned their prominence as leaders in the field of the science of human beings on general

ethnopsychological grounds, he introduces his own argument as follows: "I believe Darwin is owed great respect. It seems to me that I have only attempted to carry over into the study of the earliest spiritual life of humankind his renewal of a theory of descent in the study of natural history, through which he brought to light a fertile insight into the value of the history of organic development." Nevertheless, for Caspari, a thriving development depends entirely on whether "together we keep the ideal in sight and refuse to allow ourselves to be swayed by the spirit of a skepticism that recognizes in humankind no aims at all."<sup>9</sup>

From there, Caspari turns to his task: to lift the primitive human being out from the animal world and bring him toward the ideals of humankind, though not without again emphasizing the precondition of an "original disposition." Caspari explains the ascent of the human being from the animal in terms of the animal's absolute lack of the original disposition to manual dexterity and speech. "We have to recognize that the ultimate root from which particular factors of development are cultivated is to be sought only in dispositions of a spiritual and physical sort. All development originally proceeded from this inwardly rooted disposition to a splendid character and a temperament capable of being cultivated."

Now here we stand, with the human being before us, ascended from its original condition of unremitting defense against bloodthirsty predators, poised now to attack and destroy by means of apparatuses and *tools* manufactured by his own hand to increase the natural strength of the same.

Here is the actual threshold of our study: the human being, who, with the first equipment, the work of his own hands, discards his historical test piece to become the altogether historical human being, situated within the progress of self-consciousness. The human being is the only secure starting point for thoughtful reflection and for orientation in the world. This is because the human being is absolutely certain first and foremost of himself.

Occupying the center between the twin goals of research—the geological beginnings and the teleological future—is the human being: the fixed point from which thinking proceeds, forward and back, to expand the boundaries of knowledge, and to which it returns, in renewed health, from those regions to which research has no access because subjective interpretation has led it there astray.