

## Introduction

The three essays gathered in this volume seek, each in their own manner, to develop a novel approach and propose multiple directions in our philosophical thinking on history and furthermore about our historical consciousness. Indeed, the question of history, if not “back” at the forefront of current ethical and political debates, is without doubt engaging profound and significant shifts and transformations in the very meaning and orientation of contemporary philosophical investigation. Who are we who are so inherently historical? That is also: who are we to be in the wake of our past and in the advent of our future?

Certainly, such questions have haunted philosophical thinking since its inception. And furthermore, it is also noticeable that these same questions have not only affected the philosophical tradition itself as they also have concerned theology, sociology, political theory, anthropology as well as the natural sciences. Our project, however, is to pose anew this interrogation within the history of philosophy by pursuing the idea of the singularity of past and future historical events and thereby entirely rethink our responsibility towards that which in each singular historical events remains wholly irreducible to a teleological or eschatological narrative of historical comprehension. Our task, in this

sense, is to propose both a sustained diagnosis of how philosophy, through its own-most concepts, intents and signifiers, has approached the question of the meaning and the essence of history as well as suggest another thinkability for history drawing from a resolved attention towards that which in each singular historical event resists the systematic and complacent application of hermeneutical horizons always too prompt to reveal the possibility of determining the general economies of signification in the name of a reconciled historical consciousness.

Are we not today commanded to rethink our philosophical conceptions of history, historical knowledge and consciousness, testimony, memory and commemoration, reconciliation and forgiveness by marking how, where and why the singularity of historical events refuse their appropriation in view of a pacified historicity? And furthermore, are we not ordered by the unremitting returns of historical events – which each time uniquely refuse their retention in a consigned past – to confront history itself wholly otherwise than according to the traditional logic of crisis or the equally established meta-logic of apocalyptic revelation? Or differently said, are we justified today – and have we ever been? – in appropriating past historical events as if these were graspable or representable within committed narratives of sense and signification or, and by extension, in foreseeing future historical events by and through the repetition of the same commitment?

The first essay of this volume, *Neither Crisis Nor Apocalypse*, intends to reframe and dismantle the conventional logics through which the question pertaining to the meaning and the essence of historical becoming

has been posed and grasped in the philosophical tradition. By a sustained engagement with the writings of Gunther Anders on the threat of nuclear catastrophe, our aim here is to suggest how and why the teleology of crises through the constitution of general economies of signification for history always and already capable of surmounting and overcoming the trauma of historical events as well as the eschatology of apocalyptic discourses whereby would be revealed the truth of history and thereby the turn towards another beginning beyond history reduce and ultimately annul, each in their own specific manner, the singularity in each historical event. In this sense, we propose to rethink the singularity of events in history through the idea of catastrophe which, following our proposition, marks for each historical event a unique and unhealable caesura of historical teleology and eschatology. The second essay, *To Live and to Die in History*, engages with what we call the spectral returns of history and furthermore how these incessantly overwhelm our lived present by each time exceeding the possibility of a measured historical consciousness. By critically questioning Heidegger's history of the truth of Being and pursuing Derrida's deconstructive question, we attempt here to rethink a novel paradigm for a renewed philosophy of history oriented by a hyperbolic responsibility and an irreducible idea of justice for the singularity of both the past and the future dying and living in history. The third and final essay, *History Supposes Justice*, proposes a philosophical examination and development of an idea of justice not as ground or foundation of historical becoming but as a form of incessant suspension and interruption of the predominance and preponderance of truth as the uni-

versal signifier of a resolved historical consciousness. Our hypothesis, retrieving Levinas' radical proposition "Truth presupposes Justice", intends to develop a finite historical subjectivity which, through its finitude, brings forth an infinite aporetization of the paradigm of truth and where, without teleology or eschatology, could be incited a renewed philosophical exigency, that of engaging in the task of inventing a wholly different relation between the singularity of historical events and the universality of historical significance, that is of unleashing the need for the construction of an irreducible historical responsibility for the each time unique deconstruction of the pretences of universality in the name of the singular.