Ludwig Landgrebe was born on March 9, 1902, in Vienna, Austria. After obtaining his *Matura* in 1921, he studied Philosophy, Geography, and History at the University of Vienna for three semesters (D. Landgrebe 2009, 65). During the summer of 1923, Landgrebe left Vienna and continued his studies in Philosophy at the University of Freiburg (Landgrebe 1975b, 133). On the recommendation of his uncle, Eduard Leisching—a former student of Brentano and an old friend of Edmund Husserl (*Ibid.*), 133)—Landgrebe started working from the very beginning of his stay in Freiburg as the private assistant of the founder of the phenomenological movement. On February 24, 1927, Landgrebe obtained his Ph.D. in philosophy with a dissertation under Husserl’s direction entitled *Wilhelm Dilthey’s Theory of the Human Sciences* (D. Landgrebe 2009, 67), which was published the following year (Landgrebe 1928). Landgrebe remained in Freiburg as a scientific collaborator of Husserl until 1929 (D. Landgrebe 2009, 67).

During his days in Freiburg, Landgrebe was in charge of the Phenomenological Society founded by Gerda Walther, with the support of Oskar Becker; however, the society was not as successful as the Göttingen Circle of Husserl’s early students (Spiegelberg 1982, 240). As Husserl’s assistant, Landgrebe transcribed and edited the 1923–1924 lectures on *First Philosophy*, as well as working on other materials that Edith Stein had already transcribed and organized for further publication (*Ibid.*, 242). Among such manuscripts we may find *Ideas* II and III (Hua IV, xviii), along with the still unpublished project *Studies on the Structure of Consciousness* (Melle 2015, 3; Zirión 2018).

Two years after publishing his dissertation, Landgrebe started working on his habilitation (Landgrebe 1975a, 140). In September of 1930, he became a German citizen (D. Landgrebe 2009, 70), which allowed him to get a stipend for writing his habilitation thesis, *The Concept of Experiencing* (*Der Begriff des Erlebens*). Nevertheless, after Husserl retired from the university, Landgrebe struggled to obtain the degree. Since Heidegger was not inclined to help him (*Ibid.*), Landgrebe approached Cassirer, who was unfortunately fully occupied with his own students (*Ibid.;* Hua–Dok III/4, 248–304). Given the difficulties of obtaining the habilitation in Germany, Landgrebe moved to Prague to work with Oskar Kraus, once more through a recommendation from his uncle Leisching (Hua–Dok III/4, 302).

In 1933, Landgrebe finally obtained the approval to present the habilitation, although since Kraus was a harsh critic of Husserl, he had asked Landgrebe to write on a different topic (Landgrebe 1975b, 142). By 1934, Landgrebe had accordingly produced a new text with the title
The Nominative Function and Linguistic Meaning, a study on Anton Marty, while the original project remained unpublished (D. Landgrebe 2009, 84) until 2010. As Van Breda mentions, “Neither his departure from Freiburg in 1929, nor his appointment (Habilitation) to the University of Prague in 1935, had interrupted his collaboration with Husserl” (Van Breda 2007, 49). During his stay in Prague, Landgrebe worked intensively on Husserl’s manuscripts on the lifeworld (Hua XXXIX, Ivii–Iviii) and on the edition of Husserl’s studies on logic that was published after the latter’s death as Experience and Judgment. Besides these duties, Landgrebe continued, with the author’s permission, his systematic transcriptions of Husserl’s stenographic research manuscripts. But in addition, right after his arrival in Prague, Landgrebe made arrangements with the Prague Philosophical Circle to support the transcription of this material. According to Van Breda, by 1936 Landgrebe had obtained a modest grant permitting him some trips to Freiburg (Van Breda 2007, 49). To express his gratitude to the Circle, Husserl offered to allow the original manuscripts Landgrebe was transcribing to remain in the care of the Prague Philosophical Circle. This, then, was the inception of the original project of publishing Husserl’s complete works.

Nevertheless, right after Husserl passed away, Father Van Breda began making arrangements with Husserl’s family and invited Landgrebe the year before the World War broke out to join the project of preserving Husserl’s legacy in Leuven instead of Prague (Ibid., 61, 63f.). Landgrebe and Fink worked together in Leuven until Landgrebe’s deportation in 1940 (Landgrebe 1972, 149).

After the war, Landgrebe was able to rejoin the German academic community, and in 1945 he gave his first public lectures, first at the University of Hamburg and then in Kiel. During these years, Landgrebe became increasingly interested in the works of Hegel and Marx. This does not mean that he renounced his interest in phenomenology; on the contrary, Landgrebe combined his investigations of Marxism with a series of studies, progressively published in different academic journals, on the possibility of rethinking the idea of humanity in a phenomenological perspective beyond naturalism and materialism. In 1956 Landgrebe became professor at the University of Cologne, and there he founded the Cologne Husserl Archive (Ibid., 157) in collaboration with Paul Janssen and Ulrich Claesges (Spiegelberg 1982, 655). During these years he also promoted the collection Phaenomenologica. In 1963, by invitation of José Gaos, Landgrebe participated in an International Symposium on the Lifeworld at the International Conference of Philosophy in Mexico City (Gaos 1963, 25–50); this encounter with the Spanish-speaking community eventually resulted in Spanish translations of two of his books by his former student Mario A. Presas (Landgrebe 1963, 1968). In 1970 Landgrebe became emeritus at the University of Cologne, and in 1971 the Catholic University of Cologne honored him as doctor honoris causa. In May 1980, Landgrebe delivered a lecture at the State University of New York at Stony Brook (“The Concept of the Life-world in Husserl’s Phenomenology”) and participated in the Husserl Circle meeting at Ohio University (“The A Priori of the Life-World and the Problem of History”—cf. Landgrebe 1981, 139); then in 1981, some English translations of several of his most important essays appeared (McKenna et al. 1981; Welton 1981). Ludwig Landgrebe passed away August 14, 1991, in Bergisch Gladbach.

In addition to setting the tone for much modern scholarship on Husserl’s phenomenology (in open controversy with persisting criticism arising from the early reception of his master’s writings), Landgrebe also wrote several essays attempting to rethink the very aim of the phenomenological project. He was particularly interested in the link between the origin of intentionality and the implicit teleology involved in the self-movement of the lived body. Such a perspective allowed him to show how it is possible to understand concrete life as the very origin and key for describing the development of meaning of the lifeworld in general (Landgrebe 1981).

In this regard, Landgrebe argues—against Heidegger’s criticisms of the transcendental reduction—that Husserl’s philosophy, particularly after the discovery of genetic phenomenology, does
not necessarily imply a Cartesian position. This is particularly emphatic in his essay “Husserl’s Departure from Cartesianism” (Landgrebe 1961).

Moreover, the main insights of his philosophical career can already be seen in the motivations guiding his early works: on the one hand, the aim of the doctoral dissertation on Dilthey was to show how the possibility of grounding the human sciences rests on the notion of the nexus of meaning allowing us to understand concrete life as a singular totality (Landgrebe 1928, 308); on the other hand, the goal of the study on Marty was to perform an analysis of the origin of meaning from nominative acts (Landgrebe 1934). His long study entitled The Concept of Experiencing is devoted to a phenomenological reflection on the very notion of lived experience from a phenomenological and ontological perspective. In this work Landgrebe explores the importance of the interplay of passive synthesis, practical horizons, and affectivity in the original constitution of the surrounding world, thereby attempting to reconcile the phenomenological projects of Husserl and Heidegger (Landgrebe 2010).

The mature work of Landgrebe focuses on the relevance of the lived body for a dynamic and genetic account of intentionality and the horizons of the lifeworld. In this context Landgrebe attempts to explore alternatives to a merely formal and logical emphasis on the notion of intentionality. For Landgrebe, before considering intentionality a formal structure, we should recognize its origin in the tending-toward involved in the self-motivated movement of the lived body, understood as the primal potency of subjectivity. “The lived body (Leiblichkeit) should not be understood only as constituted, but also as constituting, as a system of capabilities (System von Vermöglichkeiten)” that we become aware of because of “the ‘I can’ (Ich-kann), which is a practical consciousness of ‘being-able-to-rule’ over my body (‘Walten-können’ im Leibe)” (Landgrebe 1982, 82).

This focus on movement and tending-toward allows him to specify how sensations, far from being mere exhibitions of the objective contents of the experience, are always lived in dynamic and affective contexts. Therefore, the involvement of the lived body is essential in the account of intentionality and of transcendental subjectivity as such. However—and against Merleau-Ponty, for instance—this does not mean that subjectivity is individuated because of embodiment (Ibid., 86).

The progressive development of Landgrebe’s reflections goes on to consider the relation between self-motivated movement, history, and individuation through the notion of teleology. As he declares at the beginning of his paper “Faktizität und Individuation,” the reach of such notions goes beyond the field of general logic (namely, the relation between the general and the particular), extending instead to individuation “insofar as it is a fundamental problem of the knowledge of history” (Ibid., 102). The main question Landgrebe raises runs as follows: “Is individuation, inasmuch as it is individuation of human essence, a product of history, namely, the historical development of the society, or is it a prior condition for something like history actually to be given for us?” (Ibid.). In response to such questions, Landgrebe considers the phenomenological analysis of his two masters, Husserl and Heidegger. Thus, he articulates his own response by comparing the notion of “facticity” in both authors. Moreover—taking as his point of departure Husserl’s statement that “history is the grand fact of absolute being,” which is at the same time the topic of one of his studies in Facticity and Individuation (Ibid., 38–57)—he demonstrates the necessity of tracing back the question regarding teleology to the “depth-dimension of the original stream of life” (Tiefendimension der urströmenden Lebensdikkeit) insofar as it is understood as the “self-temporalization of transcendental subjectivity” (Ibid., 105). Landgrebe studies this genetic analysis in detail in “The Problem of Passive Constitution” (Ibid., 71–87).

In this regard, Landgrebe also calls into consideration the Heideggerian notion of “affective disposition” (Befindlichkeit) (Ibid., 112), which allows us to understand the notion of facticity as...
the transcendental condition of possibility for the constitution and the openness of the world. In this way, “the world is originally revealed through ‘Befindlichkeit’” (Ibid.). His original insight in this regard first involves showing that the affective dimension of the facticity of individual existence is the condition of possibility for the “life history” (Lebensgeschichte) of each of us. However, Husserl’s descriptions had already demonstrated that such “being there” (Da) as a “zero-point of orientation” of our body (Nullpunkt-funktion des Leibes) is precisely the condition of possibility for the openness of the surrounding world. Therefore, such affective disposition or temperament is connected with our concrete embodiment.

According to Landgrebe, such a link is related to the Husserlian notion of the “living present” (lebendige Gegenwart). The importance of this idea resides in the insight that “the consciousness of possibilities finds its origins and roots in such a consciousness of the I can.” Therefore—according to Husserl—“the consciousness of the ‘I can’ is genetically prior to the explicit consciousness of the ‘I am’” (Ibid., 67). Only from this perspective it is possible to understand the main thesis of Landgrebe: “Each new learned movement enhances at the same time the horizon of what is to be experienced. Each new experience we gain from our world is at the same time a new experience of ourselves in our capabilities” (Ibid.). This genetic and transcendental-phenomenological analysis is crucial for understanding the problem of history, since “phenomenological reflection does not merely lead to the history of experience and to the lifeworld as common grounding. It is, on the highest level, transcendental self-experience—transcendental in the sense that it discovers the self through whom and for whom a history of experience is possible” (Ibid., 70).

Additionally, along Landgrebe’s career we may find various studies on the work of Marx, especially concerning a fruitful dialogue with Marxism. Some of his most important studies on this theme are “Hegel and Marx” (1948), “The Critique of Religion in Marx and Engels” (1957), and his contribution to the series Marxismus Studien with his work “The Problem of Dialectic” (1960). However, his most important contribution in this regard appears in 1977 in the essay “The problem of teleology and corporeality in phenomenology and Marxism.” There, Landgrebe draws upon all the notions and descriptions we may find in Facticity and Individuation (note that almost all the papers collected in this volume were originally published before 1977) in order to consider, among other topics, the key concerns of Marxist theorists of that time—namely, to establish 1) the extent to which it is possible to speak about a teleology of history in Marx; 2) how it is possible to understand the relation between nature and culture (Geist); and 3) how it is possible to understand Marxism as a science, and in this respect, what its object and appropriate method could be. With regard to the first problem, Landgrebe holds that it is completely impossible to address the problem of teleology if we fail to consider the analysis of the lived body, i.e., the very existence of the human being as an embodied entity (Landgrebe 1977, 71).

This is precisely the novelty of Landgrebe’s contribution: instead of considering Marxism as a doctrine, he claims that it is possible to reframe the problematic of the teleology of history—decisive for Marxist philosophy—by taking phenomenological analysis as its point of departure: “The continuity and teleological unity of history does not exist previously, but must first be produced in each ‘being-there.’” Therefore, the idea of a teleology of history does not have its origin in a theoretical consideration, but in the “highest practical interests of the human being” (Ibid., 93). The result of such reflection is not a mere theoretical remark; instead, such a phenomenological approach also makes a practical attitude possible.

Moreover, the main insight of Landgrebe’s interpretation of Marx consists in analyzing the core notions of the latter’s reflections on nature and culture in terms of Husserl’s genetic phenomenology. Seen in this light—and this is a response to the second problem mentioned—Marxism is not a science in the sense of the natural sciences, but a science of the “structures of
the lifeworld” (*Ibid.*, 102) as the horizon of the historical realities that are human beings. But this leads to the third problem, namely, the scientific character of Marx’s enterprise and the determination of its object.

The reach of such phenomenological analysis is not only *descriptive* but also implied possible consequences, and as Landgrebe claims, such legitimacy can be disclosed only from the articulation of “a ‘science’ in a different style as a science of the lifeworld, a science whose point of departure and mode of investigation can only be worked out by transcendental philosophy” (*Ibid.*, 101). This science is supposed to have in view “the origin, and thus the legitimacy within the lifeworld (das lebensweltliche Recht), of the notion of a teleological efficacy” (*Ibid.*, 78). Therefore, both notions—teleology and corporeality—are crucial for both phenomenology and Marxism, which is explicit in the title of his essay.

In this way, Landgrebe’s approach opens up a practical perspective with regard to the relation between Husserl and Marx. Just as for Husserl the phenomenological enterprise is not only a critical reflection upon the historical crisis of human sciences, understood as a crisis of humanity, but a reflection that must culminate in “a far-reaching transformation of the whole praxis of human existence” (Hua VI, 333), so is it the case that for Marx, philosophical understanding is not only a critical response to the world’s crisis, but a call for a radical transformation of the world.

**References**


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