

Tradition – An Ambiguous Conjunction of Time, Body and the Other

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ABSTRACT · How are temporality and embodied intersubjectivity connected? In the first part of my essay I highlight some of the ways temporality and embodied intersubjectivity relate to each other in Edmund Husserl's phenomenological approaches to these topics. Following rising levels of complexity, I show that tradition constitutes an exceptionally dense and interesting intertwining of time, body and the other. Tradition however can manifest in two very different ways: as authentic tradition, and as inauthentic tradition. This ambiguity cannot be explained in terms of time, body and the other alone, but requires a recourse to the constitution (and loss) of meaning. In the second part I therefore discuss the inherent ambiguity of tradition as Husserl and others conceive of it, namely its possibility to function both as carrier of validity and meaning, on the one hand, and as carrier of mere empty convention, on the other.

KEYWORDS · tradition; time; body; intersubjectivity; habit; documents; authenticity; inauthenticity

I. Sundry Intertwinings of Time and the Others

The aim of this paper is to explore connections between temporality and embodied intersubjectivity. Since Edmund Husserl offers not only detailed theories of time, embodiment and the other, but also an analysis of a phenomenon which combines temporality and embodied intersubjectivity in complex ways, namely tradition, I have chosen to follow his phenomenological approach. The first part of this paper thus leads up to Husserl's nuanced theory of traditionality, which allows us to understand tradition as what I will call a *triple threefold or conjunction of time, body and the other*. The second part of the paper then explicates Husserl's distinction between *authentic* and *inauthentic* traditions in terms of the constitution (and loss) of meaning and validity.¹

So what are the theoretical loci of temporality and intersubjectivity in phenomenology? At least in Husserlian phenomenology, temporality is primarily seen as the necessary form of all acts. Acts and their matter are structured temporally; as is well known, the study of those structures and their genesis is a recurrent aim of Husserl's works, beginning with the early lectures on inner time consciousness, through the Bernau manuscripts and the late C-manuscripts. In most of these texts, Husserl is concerned with the act-side of the processes of constitution, which means he is interested in how subjective time is structured and how it appears to us, from the standing-streaming living present, through retention and protention to memory and anticipation.

From these matters we ought to distinguish temporality on the object-side of the transcendental correlation, i.e. the temporal dimension of whatever we constitute. Reading time off a clock, my acts of perception are temporally structured, I need retention to have an understanding of how the movement of the hands represents the flow of time for example; I also need to have gained a previous understanding of how to read a clock to begin with, which is either habitual or needs to be remembered actively. On the other hand, the object of my perception it-

¹ I would like to thank both the participants of the workshop at which this paper was first presented as well as the anonymous reviewers whose helpful comments I have tried to follow throughout.

self also explicitly references the flow of time and it is itself encountered in space-time, which is obviously different from my subjective time. Similarly, reading a story is a temporally structured activity, but the story itself is also temporally structured; it also appears in space-time, possibly bound to a book. This is not true of all acts of course, as some objects contain neither an explicit reference to time (like most spatio-temporal things we encounter) nor an implicit temporal structure; mathematical objects can serve as a prime example of these non-temporal entities.

It is important to keep this difference between act and object in mind when discussing the relation between temporality and intersubjectivity, because while acts are temporal, they can never be totally intersubjective; my acts are my acts precisely because they are only my acts. Were others to experience them exactly as I do, these others would in some sense have to be me. Which is not to say that we cannot thematise acts intersubjectively or that the possibility of certain acts is not founded in intersubjectivity; many acts are indeed only possible because we are and understand ourselves as part of a community of subjects. Communicative acts might serve as an example, but so do acts of (self-)identification, which we can only perform after we have been introduced to language, society, societal roles, traditions, narratives, trends etc., which we can then either embrace or reject to constitute our identity or personality, and which all relate to intersubjectivity in one way or the other: We learn language from others and the very function of language relies on triangulating the meaning of speech with others; society is a way or mode of intersubjectivity and roles within society simply cannot exist without intersubjectivity; narratives as well as trends are shared between subjects and also serve as ways of constituting group identities and ordering groups. Yet the fact remains that it is not on the act-side that temporality and intersubjectivity meet: my acts and their matter cannot be intersubjective, only their content, their objects – or the acts as objects, if I chose to share what is going on in my mind.

A strict focus on inner time-consciousness will therefore be unable to bring the full wealth of connections between intersubjectivity and temporality into view. From a noetic point of view, since all acts are temporalisations, temporality is fundamental, while intersubjectivity is not. Once we take a noematic stance however, embodied intersubjectivity gains in importance, because any form of objectivity implies intersubjectivity as its transcendental correlate: no objectivity without intersubjectivity.

The very horizon of our everyday lives – which Husserl calls the “life-world” (*Lebenswelt*) (Hua VI, 105–193) – is per definition co-constituted by a connected multitude of subjects: the life-world as the universe of common-sense truths, shared values, collectively trusted practices and public institutions implies the existence of other subjects – for without other subjects there can be no commonly agreed-upon truths, no sharing of values, no collective trust and no public in general. The structures we live in and rely on are all intersubjective.

Even everyday objects involve the other(s): whichever object we encounter within the life-world implies at least the ideal possibility that another subject might encounter it as well. Take perception: the object of perception cannot be ontologically private. If only I can see something (for non-contingent reasons), its status as a perceptible ought to be questioned (if only I can see the pink elephants, I might very well not be perceiving, but hallucinating them). Note that the content of the perception does not matter at this point. By virtue of something merely being perceived, the embodied other as an ideal, potential co-perceiver comes to the fore. The embodied nature of this potential co-perceiver stems from the fact that perception itself is embodied: perception occurs from a certain point of view, which must be bodily inhabited, and through senses which are part of the lived-body.

Our acts of empathy, appresentation or imagination which allow the other to appear to us (be it face to face or as an imagined co-perceiver), are as temporally structured as any other act. But this temporality of our consciousness is not the only temporality in play in the encounter with the other! The others themselves (as objects of our acts) appear in space-time and the genesis of alterity includes many different temporal structures, beginning with the subjective flow of time-consciousness in which anything whatsoever must appear, leading to the objective “world-time” (*Weltzeit*) (Blumenberg 1986), in which I and the other both appear simultaneously as human beings. But if this temporality of our shared world is supposed to be

objective, the constitution of this objective or mundane time in turn implies intersubjectivity, since the very ideas of objectivity or worldhood imply relations to the other, be they actual or only possible others. Mundane time is shared or shareable time and, hence, this time is objective in as much as it is common to many subjects. *So the (subjective) temporal flow of consciousness is foundational for intersubjectivity (and thus objectivity) and intersubjectivity is foundational for any mundane form of (objective) temporality.*

After we have established what we might call the formal necessity of intersubjectivity for the constitution of objectivity, we can start looking at the objects of the life-world themselves. As it turns out the life-world is full of material or concrete indications of the other: all artefacts we have not designed and made ourselves refer to others for example – not just qua real objects which imply potential co-observers, but as something made, crafted or designed by a human agency different from ours.

In the life-world the others themselves also appear with a temporal index. Whoever made a thing must have existed before making it and before I perceived the product; whoever receives a thing from me must be co-existent; prospective users are, obviously, indexed as existing in the future etc. Fashion might be a good example for this: fashion indicates a designer, a producer, a wearer and possibly an audience. It is also inherently temporal in that pieces are “very now” or “so last year” or “timeless” or suited for special occasions or seasonal.² Yet this intertwining of time and alterity is not limited to life-worldly objects: any situation we encounter is the correlate of us-now, shaped by us-earlier. So are many of the ways we deal with any given situation (conceptually as well as emotionally). Culture as a whole is always “implicitly” understood as “formation of human forming” (Hua VI, 379, author’s translation) – and so are we ourselves as cultured beings. And thus we turn to the intersubjectivity and temporality of the constitution of our own selves.

We relate in certain ways to ourselves and to our own formation. A sane person is thus one who has a past, a present and a future (though it may be short) and who relates to these dimensions. They own their past, they plan or fear their future, they enjoy their present etc. This relation to one’s own past, present and future pertains not only to mundane time, but is a transcendental-genetic issue, as we constantly relate to earlier acts in retention automatically, but also in the acquisition of habits. Habits are the way in which beings come to be historical rather than merely temporal – and, for Husserl, this is something we cannot possibly avoid: we are always already within a historical horizon (cf. Hua VI, 378). Habitualisation means retaining the validity of an earlier act, e.g. a decision or a judgement, and building on it. For example, every logical act of assertion amounts to the institution (*Stiftung*) of a lasting claim to truth, until it is revised or revoked. Similarly, deciding turns us into one thus decided (Hua IX, 211; cf. Moran 2014, 38). Habitualisation scales to intersubjectivity: once a group of people have come to a common decision, they have become, as a group, thus decided.

The relation to others appears to be equally essential to the formation of the person as the relation to one’s own time, as we are, as persons, playing social roles, formed by the Look of the other (Sartre 1943), answering their claims, taking on responsibilities or fleeing them etc. The specific form of intersubjectivity involved in the formation of a person we might call the social. In short, we live in a temporal-intersubjective horizon as temporal-intersubjective beings, more specifically, we live in a socio-historical life-world as socio-historical beings, i.e. persons.

Since the complex temporal structuring essential to the constitution of the transcendental correlation between us and the world is historical in the way described, Husserl simply calls it the *historical apriori* (Hua VI, 381). The way this historical apriori is enacted is tradition. Tradition is the transmission of meaning and validity over time and between subjects.

2 Lichtenberg wittily reverses the relation between fashion and time, writing “A girl, not twelve fashions old.” (Lichtenberg 1984, 472) – fashions could certainly be considered a more important measure of time than mere boring years.

Strictly speaking there are two forms of tradition in this sense, one intersubjective, one intrasubjective; in everyday discourse we only call the former “tradition”, but the transmission of meaning and validity over time between subjects does not necessarily imply numerically different subjects, as we also transmit meaning and validity from our younger self to our older self in the form of habitualisation. I might for example at some point judge that eating too many sweets is bad and decide not to do so anymore; if I uphold this judgement and keep to my decision, if I remain decided through the course of a given period, this already counts as sedimentation or habitualisation; my younger self has successfully instated a tradition (the question when exactly a behavioural pattern becomes a habit in the everyday-sense is psychological). But since we are concerned with time, body and the other, we will leave now this notion of intrasubjective or internal tradition and turn to intersubjective tradition or tradition proper.

As tradition qua transmission of meaning and validity over time and between subjects is involved in both the constitution of ourselves as well as the world and its objects, Husserl can go as far as to speak of “being as tradition” (Hua VI, 381, author’s translation): whatever is, whatever appears to us – including ourselves – is constituted by a transcendental inter-subjectivity which transmits, exchanges, shares, challenges meaning. The way Husserl engages with this important topic is typical of his mathematically inclined way of thinking.

Husserl’s discovery and christening of the historical apriori along with some of his most pertinent thoughts on tradition stands at the end of the famous Beilage III to the *Krisis*, called *The Origin of Geometry*. Now geometry might appear as a paradoxical starting point for an investigation into the connections between time and the embodied other since both mathematical objects as well as mathematical truths are time- and bodyless and are irrelative to any specific individual in terms of being and validity (which is why we used them as an example for non-temporal entities above). To be more specific, mathematical objects are not located in space-time and mathematical propositions are *tense-less* and *space-less*: “2+2 equals 4” is true whenever and wherever, as soon and as long as the meaning of the terms is fixed. The present tense, here, does not indicate a specific present or now, as opposed to an earlier or later time. This is part of what Husserl means when he speaks of ideality.

However, to appear (rightfully) as hyper-temporal and universal, mathematical truths still need a first foundation/institution, in which a subject discovers and asserts the proposition, followed by a second foundation in writing, giving it a “language-body” (*Sprachleib*) (Hua VI, 368), which allows the transmission over time and space. Through documentation, ideality is written into its sensual embodiment, as Derrida (1987, 199) puts it. The ideal is realised to be re-discovered in reading.

For Husserl, the process of tradition through documents is responsible for the endless openness of the horizon of humankind (Hua VI, 369). Without documentation, tradition would only reach a very limited number of recipients, always in danger of being forgotten or lost through the death of the community. Documentation is an essential feature of tradition as we know it. For us, tradition through documentation is a most complex intertwining of temporality, the body and the other, as shall become more apparent in the three following triads – I will name this triple triad a *conjunction*:

Bodily Triad: Tradition through documentation implies three bodies: firstly, the body of the one documenting, the scribe, so to speak – an embodied subject performing certain bodily acts. Secondly, the material body of the inscription – the material handled by the scribe, be it stone, ink & paper or microchips and screen. Thirdly, the body perceiving the inscription, the body of the reader. (Again, the writer and the reader might be the same person, but as writer and reader they are different.)

Intersubjective Triad: The other is also involved (if not bodily present) in three ways. The other or another subject is implied as the subject who intuited (or at least apprehended) the content, after all, any propositional content indicates a genesis in which it appeared (Hua VI, 375), i.e. any given statements, claims, stories etc. have to have appeared to someone, have to have been constituted by a transcendental subject, have to have been interpreted by a person, to be given as statements, claims and stories. Put more briefly: A text implies an author (arguably,

this could be myself, but not as reader). Secondly, the other is implied in the documentedness, so to speak – someone must have at some point set things in motion to inscribe the content (and be it through designing a program). Thirdly, the other is involved in the act of reading itself – doubly so, since language is inherently intersubjective (there are no private languages) and the act of perceiving implies intersubjectivity, as noted above. So while there is no immediate prethematic bodily exchange, the embodied other is necessarily implied, represented and involved. As the other(s) qua authors/founders, makers of documents and potential co-speakers/readers are both embodied as well as temporal, the intersubjective triad is as intimately related to the other two triads as they are to this one.

Temporal Triad: The same threefold involvement holds for time: since writer, writing and reader are embodied, they appear in space-time (or had to appear in space-time or will appear in space-time), so the time of embodiment is the first temporality of this triad. (As we are talking about the spatio-temporal dimension of three parties – writer, writing and reader – this first dimension of the temporal triad is also, in itself, a triad.) Secondly, as subjects, both reader and writer have subjective times in which primal foundation, writing, reading and hence secondary foundation take place, the secondary foundation being the way in which the reader apprehends the text. Thus, the second form of temporality is that of the mind, the subjective time of consciousness. Finally, the content has its own temporality – and be it in the negative form of hyper-temporal truth (as is the case with mathematical treatises for example). The temporality of the content is neither spatio-temporal nor subjective; it is *sui generis* and constitutes the third form of time in the temporal triad.

Thus, I contend that in (documented, external) tradition we find a triple threefold of time, body and the other.

II. The Ambiguity of Tradition

After we have established tradition as a conjunction of temporality, embodiment and intersubjectivity, I would like to engage the phenomenon of tradition a little further, as tradition manifests in two very different ways: broadly speaking as *authentic* tradition as well as *inauthentic* tradition. This difference (and its consequences) however cannot be explained merely in terms of time, body and the other; to understand the *ambiguity*, we have to go beyond them and seek recourse to the processes of the constitution and loss of meaning. To do so is therefore the aim of the second part of this paper.³

The core positive function of tradition is here seen as the preservation and transmission of meaning (Sinn) through time and space, from one subject to the other. Tradition allows us to access resources of meaning which we can use, transform, add to and in turn pass on. Through traditions, our past and future stretch far beyond birth and death in some sense, in that we are born into and formed by an ongoing development of traditions – and in turn, we also form them by carrying them on, modifying, creating or abolishing them. We are thrown into an already existing historical horizon, which concerns the inner history of our family-members, the transactional history of the family as a whole, the history of our neighbourhood, our class, our milieu, our profession, our nation etc. Some of those entities rely on certain documented forms of tradition for their constitution. Arguably such huge, anonymous entities as states or markets can only exist due to tradition through documentation, while smaller entities like friendships or relationships constitute themselves through tradition without (much) explicit documentation. The (conceptual as well as empirical) specifics of how exactly meaning is transmitted, how documentation works in detail, how collective memory is connected to and formed by tradi-

³ For an in-depth discussion of authenticity and inauthenticity in Husserl, see Arnold 2022.

tion etc., are obviously outside the range of this paper; but they form topical points of interest around which phenomenology and empirical research might be integrated.

As in other forms of transmission, tradition can break down in several different ways. The initial foundation might only seem meaningful, but could turn out to be nonsensical. As Husserl points out in *The Origin of Geometry*, inherited assertions for example are either sedimentations of truth or false claims (Hua VI, 377). In the latter case, the tradition fails to transmit truth. There might also occur a failure to properly express a true insight. The medium or process of transmission might be faulty. The recipient might make any number of mistakes in receiving or rather understanding whatever is being transmitted. A text might be nonsensical to begin with as the writing might e.g. be damaged or the reader might misread or misinterpret. These are all failures of transmission. Yet Husserl points us towards a still different case of breakdown, in which there is no obvious mistake or failure of transmission, but in which tradition can still be said to fail. This difference between phenomenologically valid and phenomenologically invalid traditions can be hard to pin down, but it is crucial to Husserl and influences his work from start to finish.

Husserl uses several different metaphors to describe the difference between the good and bad modes of tradition, but that of emptiness appears to be fundamental. A tradition can be said to be empty once it fails to transmit meaning or validity or truth, but only transmits something which looks meaningful (certain phrases or patterns of behaviour for example). In which case we might speak of a mere habit or a mere convention, as opposed to a habit or tradition proper: something we have inherited (from our ancestors or even our own younger self), but which lacks meaning. In the sense we defined “tradition” and “habit” above, empty traditions and habits are therefore not real traditions and habits. What they share is the transmission of the claims to validity and the (e.g. linguistic or ritualistic) form.

Although the language of authenticity is usually associated with Heidegger, Husserl uses the terms “authentic” (*eigentlich, echt*) and “inauthentic” (cf. Hua XXXIX, 527, author’s translation), to describe this difference between phenomenologically good and phenomenologically bad traditions: while authentic tradition is transmission of meaning over time and between subjects, inauthentic tradition is the transmission of the empty form or practice over time and between subjects. Husserl offers and discusses several different examples of inauthenticity and the ways it comes about, the most extensive discussions revolving around the inauthentic practices of current science and the history of the loss of meaning – at the heart of which Husserl finds the processes of mechanisation or technisation.

In § 9 of the *Krisis*, Husserl speaks of an outright “depletion of meaning of mathematical science through technisation” (Hua VI, 45, author’s translation), which results in a state in which most scientists do not fully and intuitively understand the theorems they are using or even the results they achieve. The methods, however, somehow work and the funding comes through, but true insight into the meaning of their activities is absent. Science has degraded to a sort of technique. This is part of what Husserl calls the “crisis” of science.⁴ Unfortunately this emptying of scientific traditions is inherent to the sciences themselves and the process observed is a “collapse of science through science in its methodisation as technisation” and Husserl therefore diagnoses a “loss of reason through the effects of reason itself” (Hua XLII, 430, author’s translation) – at least if reason is understood one-sidedly as the faculty of instrumental reasoning and quantifying. Natural science can only proceed through specialisation and mathematisation, both of which lend themselves to tendencies which threaten the successful transmission of meaning: in specialisation, I ignore the meaning of any theorem not belonging to my narrow field of expertise, while I might still use results from other, nearby fields. Through mathematisation, nature might vanish behind the “veil of ideas” (Hua VI, 52, author’s transla-

⁴ For a recent update on the debate of what exactly the crisis consists in, cf. Heffernan (2017), Knies (2016), Trizio (2016).

tion), leaving us with symbolic formulae which we might use proficiently but without proper understanding of what exactly is mathematised by them. This loss of meaning in the sciences and in a broader sense in our scientific, rational culture occupies Husserl from the end of World War I onwards until his death in 1938.

Yet the problem of inauthenticity appears much earlier and under a different guise – it already underlies the early phenomenological battle cry “to the things themselves”. Phenomenology sets itself against all philosophy which only deals in empty terminology without bringing to intuitive understanding what it deals with. Famously, the *Logical Investigations* revolve around the problem of describing the difference between fulfilled and empty significations (cf. Hua XVIII, esp. the VI. Meditation).

Husserl calls philosophies which rely only on empty significations “metaphysics” and phenomenology anti-metaphysical “in the sense of rejecting any metaphysics which draws from non-scientific sources and which deals in hollow substructions” (Hua IX, 526, author’s translation). Metaphysics in this sense is nothing but inauthentic philosophy, as dealing in hollow substructions is the mode of discourse which lacks meaning, trading in inherited terminology which might be highly technical but is utterly empty. Thus, inauthenticity can be found as a threat phenomenology has to overcome both at the beginning and the end of Husserl’s phenomenology.

Interestingly Husserl also uses the terminology of technisation to describe inauthenticity in other contexts than science and philosophy. Here is a remarkable quote stemming from the summer-semester of 1930, concerning technisation in personal matters:

Can “ethical” life turn into life of an ethical business-as-usual? There is indeed danger here. For the absolute ought, absolute value is only in absolute position-taking, as an absolute love; and a mechanised love would be no love. While love becomes habitual, it is still true and real only in active pursuit. Being habitually firmly directed must become actual in action in actual loving evaluation. Regarding this we have to add: A devolving technique is a rule-governed activity directed towards goals, but in the end its reasons, which give it a rational meaning, are not awakened, they are “forgotten”; they are not only not really reproduced, but they are not awakened and in the background – like for instance insights which I have at my disposal, ready to be reactivated in a “secondary evidence”. Only when I follow them am I still rational and rational in autonomous self-responsibility. Such a technisation we also find in the ethical realm. I can decide absolutely in the current situation through apperception and its specific evidence of transferral. I can do so too [...] through appeal to an essential principle, which might be pertinent here, although I might not be able to reactivate it as a principle completely. Should it have become merely formal, in which case its meaning is not available to me at all times, my actions in accord with it are without value. (Hua XLII, 436, author’s translation)⁵

5 Kann „ethisches“ Leben Leben in einem ethischen Betrieb werden? Hier ist in der Tat eine Gefahr. Denn absolut Gesolltes, absoluter Wert ist das nur in der absoluten Stellungnahme, als einer absoluten Liebe; und eine Liebe, die mechanisiert wäre, ist keine Liebe. Obschon Liebe habituell wird ist sie doch echt und wirklich nur in aktiver Betätigung. Das habituell fest Gerichtetsein muss im Handeln aktuell werden in aktueller liebender Wertung. Hier ist aber zu sagen: Eine verfallende Technik ist ein geregeltes Tun auf Ziele hin, aber letztlich sind die Gründe, das Vernunftsinns Gebende, nicht geweckt, sie sind „vergessen“; sie sind nicht nur nicht wirklich reproduziert, sondern sie sind auch nicht geweckt und im Hintergrund – wie etwa Erkenntnisse, über die ich wirklich als meine verfüge, bereit, reaktiviert zuwerden in einer „sekundären Evidenz“. Nur wenn ich ihnen folge, bin ich noch Vernünftiger und vernünftig in autonomer Selbstverantwortung. Eben solche Technisierung haben wir auch im Ethischen. Ich kann mich absolut entscheiden in der momentanen Situation durch Apperzeption und der ihr eigenen Übertragungsevidenz. Ich kann es auch [...] durch Appell an ein Wesensprinzip, das hier in Frage kommt, wobei ich vielleicht nicht dazu komme, es als Prinzip voll zu reaktivieren. Ist es aber bloß formal geworden, wo ich über den Erkenntnisinn nicht jederzeit verfüge, so ist mein Handeln danach wertlos. (Hua XLII, 436)

As in his theory of science, “technisation” in the ethical realm describes the process through which traditions lose their meaning. “Technisation” then describes a state in which reasons for doing something are forgotten, the meaning of the activity is lost and cannot be (easily or autonomously) reactivated, while the activity itself continues – ‘mechanically’ so to speak. This equals a loss of autonomous self-responsibility, since I have become unable to answer myself as to rhyme or reason of my actions. My habits have become ossified, my internal as well as external traditions have become inauthentic.

Husserl’s own example of love is especially expressive of what is at stake. While falling in love is more like a shift in the structure of attention, being in love is a habit. However, the difference between being in a relationship habitually and being in it out of mere habit is substantial. In an authentic relationship the meaning of the relationship is still present in all its dimensions, my time is spent meaningfully, the dimension of inter-corporeality is non-empty, but expressive, the other appears as of genuine interest and so do their own interests: a successful conjugal conjunction, so to speak. In an inauthentic relationship, a relationship which only subsists out of convention, meaning has fled from the temporal, bodily and intersubjective dimension of our being-together. The same holds, *mutatis mutandis*, for all attempts at intersubjective transmissions of meaning and validity. Demotic customs can lose meaning, political procedures can become empty, institutions can retain their form but lose all purpose. In all such cases, time, body and the other are still necessarily involved in the way outlined above, yet the validity or vitality of the conjunction is radically different from the cases of authentic traditions.

Authenticity and inauthenticity are extreme sides to a spectrum. Most habits are probably neither fully authentic nor fully inauthentic; living fully authentic lives might turn out to be an anthropological impossibility, since we are not equipped to keep all meanings of all our habits present at all times. Thus, it might be ethically more important to retain the abilities to reflect on our habits and change them on occasion than to strive for total authenticity. And while the contact (including conflict) between traditions is outside the purview of this paper, we can surmise that keeping an open mind towards other traditions might enable us to spot inauthenticities within our own, and that being aware of our own inauthentic tendencies might make us more lenient and understanding towards others.

The difference between authentic and inauthentic traditionality concerns the dark side of tradition: while authentic tradition preserves meaning and enables progress, inauthentic tradition stifles personal as well as societal developments. Living within ossified traditions can rob our lives of meaning as much as a total lack of traditions. Tradition can be thus an enabling, but also a disabling conjunction of time, body and the other.

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