

## Abstract:

This paper systematically interprets the concept of origin, *Ursprung*, as elaborated by W. Benjamin in the critical-epistemological prologue to *The Origin of German Tragedy*. The two main theses of the dissertation are: i) In Benjamin's conception, one must always speak of plural *origins* of artistic genres or historical epochs. Benjamin understands the notion of origin as referring to a specific art form or historical epoch. Forms or epochs are always already a multiplicity; so are origins. In this multiplicity, then, is represented the unity of truth, which for Benjamin is an essential mystery. ii) Benjamin's text does not adequately explain the relation between origin and history, since he understands it through the perspective of Leibniz's concept of the monad, which is based on the duality of possibility and reality. Therefore, Benjamin's notion of origin must be corrected in this respect and the Leibnizian monad replaced by Deleuze's notion of virtuality. If Benjamin claims that origin virtually contains the course of history, then this must be understood from a Deleuzian standpoint, which means that the epoch is actualized in a creative way. From the Leibnizian point of view, which Benjamin himself holds, historical happening is merely the realization of what already exists as a possibility; the element of creativity, of *happening* in a strong sense, is absent.

In addition to developing these main theses, the thesis also systematically delineates Benjamin's conception of origins and history from theories of history prevailing in his time, thus aiming to complement the existing Czech literature on Benjamin, which focuses mostly on the development of his thought itself. By distinguishing Benjamin's position from historicism, historicism, model theory, and hermeneutics, the background of some of the author's statements, which themselves seem opaque, can be revealed. The aim is to create a more plastic picture of Benjamin's thought, which subtly and often imperceptibly defined itself against many intellectual currents of the time.

## Keywords:

W. Benjamin, origin, *Ursprung*, history, virtuality, G. Deleuze