

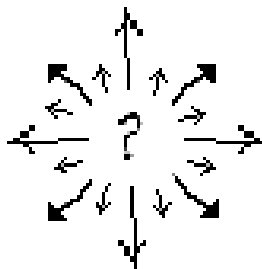
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Special issue on “Even when one does not have
to philosophize, one still philosophizes”

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Introduction: Touching Fictitious Reality in Philosophizing

Alexander L. Gungov
(University of Sofia)

Witnessing each year's incoming graduate students in philosophy who will be taught in English at University of Sofia, I always wonder about the reasons, which have brought them to the program, and the goals, which the newly admitted students are trying to pursue. Only a few of them value the prospective degree as the ultimate achievement which they can expect, while some others are attracted by the scholarship. The predominant reason, guiding them to the University, seems to be a search for another dimension of life, different from the studies they have already gone through; some of them have already basic experience in philosophy and continuing in this direction seems appealing to them. Apparently philosophy and, perhaps, philosophizing is viewed as a special discipline unlike all of the positive subjects offered at the others Departments.

Thinking about my students' academic preferences and about the main points of this introduction, I noticed myself reflecting on the city of Sofia's name day, September 17, which is dedicated to Divine Wisdom, Sophia. According to another and predominant interpretation, the patron of the Bulgarian capital is a 2nd century Saint by the name of Sophia whose daughters, Faith, Hope, and Love were declared martyresses. Although the three daughters bear the names of the principal Christian virtues, it was my intuition that these virtues are not just a religious matter, but deserve philosophical attention too. This assumption found confirmation in Peter Costello's elaborate argumentation on the phenomenology of the divine. Not only by its etymology but due to its innermost intention, philosophy opens the horizon for transcendental love being the condition of any other love.¹ This could be also claimed about faith and hope, connecting the three virtues with Heidegger's

¹ Peter Costello, "Towards a Phenomenology of Religion Across the Limits of Reason Alone," *Sofia Philosophical Review*, 8.2:124.

temporal ekstases: faith being past, hope embodying future, and love coinciding with present.² Temporality is the indispensable characteristic of Dasein's Being as existence; as Andrey Patkul underlines, Being is ontologically different from any that-which-is.³ Neither Being nor temporality are entities; hope, faith and love escape the status of sheer entities as well. Ontologically, they are among Dasein's modes of Being as existentials, but ontically the three virtues do not have a place amid other entities and in this sense are fictitious. What is fictitious has been of prime concern to philosophers since the time of Socrates, when he pondered death, that is, what is not yet. And even Epicurus, with his ingenious plea not to be concerned about death since it never coincides with one's life, develops another type of fictitiousness in his moral utopia.

Philosophers' coping with death, nothingness and human finiteness is justifiably called "exiting from hell" as Paola-Ludovica Coriando suggests.⁴ Until Heidegger, this struggle with the threat, on the side of the fictitious, had been along the lines of overcoming finiteness (with the exception of Montaigne who, according to Thora Ilin Bayer, believed we can win over the fictitious side of life "by attaining the fullness of life while acknowledging the ever-presence of death"⁵); since Heidegger, this struggle has being transformed into appreciating finiteness and realizing that the only salvation is possible within its borders.⁶ Ontically, fictitious existentials offer the primordial support in fulfilling this new task. The impetus to this radical philosophical attitude is found in anxiety, an anxiety which has no real cause. Anxiety brings Dasein back to his existence as his mode of Being and enables him/her to develop an explicit ontology through philosophizing.⁷

Love and care, perceived as the leading existentials, seem to occupy the central place in early Heidegger. Matched with wonder and cultivation of prudence, they form, since the time of Aristotle, the

² Ibid., 120.

³ Andrey Patkul, "Philosophy as Science and Philosophy as Philosophizing in Heidegger," *op. cit.*, 130.

⁴ Paola-Ludovica Coriando, "'Actually leaving hell'? About the status and the necessity of philosophy," *op. cit.*, 32.

⁵ Thorallin Bayer, "Socrates' Profession," *op. cit.*, 94.

⁶ Ibid., 90.

⁷ Andrey Patkul, *op. cit.*, 134.

branches of theoretical and practical philosophy.⁸ Even earlier, human efforts and attention were attracted by another fictitious aspect of the social world to which high esteem has been attached; these are the precious metals and money. If it can be argued whether gold's preciousness is real or fictitious, it is clear that money, in particular, money not backed by gold, possesses ideal, and not real, value; the same is even truer about various financial instruments including now-famous derivatives. Ontically, money is hardly anything, deserving minimal respect; ontologically, it dares competing with Being as that which "determines entities as entities," that "in terms of which entities are already intelligible as entities"⁹ in all social interactions, especially in the modern world and nowadays.

Money, playing the role of pseudo-Being, easily transforms faith into fanaticism, love into fixation, and hope into illusion and delusion.¹⁰ Philosophy is summoned to elaborate an elegant and convincing "mask-discourse" and sophistry¹¹ (using Jean-Pierre Cléro's expression but not with exactly the meaning he gives it) aiming at promoting the pseudo-existenciales of fictitious financial reality. *Eudaimonia*, being the highest happiness or flourishing of life, can still be achieved on the road of Aristotle's intellectual virtues: prudence and wisdom together with practical virtues of justice, temperance, and courage, as is clearly shown in the essays of Donald Phillip Verene and Manuel Knoll;¹² to a certain extent, even financial speculation is not substituted for contemplation as long as disinterested theoretical contemplation is capable of serving the finan-

⁸ Manuel Knoll, "To Philosophize or Not to Philosophize?" op. cit., 99.

⁹ William Blattner, *Some Terminology in Being and Time*, <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/blatnew/heid/terms.htm>, last accessed on 20.09.2015.

¹⁰ Jean-Pierre Cléro, "What is Fiction?" *Sofia Philosophical Review*, 4.1:41. The author elucidates the possibilities of fiction to lead to mistakes and fallacies. A more detailed account on philosophical dimensions of fiction is provided in Jean-Pierre Cléro, "What is Fiction?" *Sofia Philosophical Review*, 4.1:34-64 and Jean-Pierre Cléro, *Essai sur les Fictions*, Hermann, Paris, 2014, 570 p., reviewed by Arab Kenouche in *Sofia Philosophical Review*, 8.1:89-127.

¹¹ Jean-Pierre Cléro, "The Play between Prometheus and Epimethious," *Sofia Philosophical Review*, 8.2:69 and 76.

¹² Donald Phillip Verene, "Prolegomena Philosophiae," op. cit., 15; Manuel Knoll, "To Philosophize or Not to Philosophize?" op. cit., 102.

cial markets. The trick here obviously is that this notion of happiness has very little to do with the Greek understanding of the same term.

There is also a sharp difference between philosophical speculation and financial speculation. For Hegel, speculative reasoning is the highest form of rationality, overcoming the limitations of intellectual formalism. It is thinking about the unconditional, based on concrete identity together with an element of difference, and does not accept the abstract identity of the understanding, or the gap separating truth from untruth. The kernel of speculative reasoning is the so-called speculative sentence. In a reflective sentence, the subject is attributed certain predicates and the role of the subject and predicate are clearly outlined. The subject in reflective reasoning is what is at the center of reflection and predicates are the various features which the subject possesses that are revealed by the predicate(s). In speculative reasoning, by contrast, subject and predicate are not fixed. In speculative reasoning, they are in an interaction, in which not only the predicate defines the subject, but vice versa too, i.e. they freely swap roles. Between them there is an unfolding tension as in a hermeneutical circle.

As an example of a statement fixed and strictly delineated within the limits of understanding, we could take the definition “money is a measure of the value of goods, it is a medium of exchange, the standard of value and a resource by which to maintain value.” In this case, the subject and its predicates are clearly and unambiguously identified. However, to reach the complete truth, it is necessary to move to speculative reasoning. To some extent, this can be demonstrated with the idea that the measure of value is also a medium of exchange. Obviously, the measure of value is a medium of exchange, i.e. subject and predicate easily and freely can swap their roles. The medium of exchange determines the measure of value by the amount of money and/or by the quality of the metal coins, while the measure of value can also determine the medium of exchange, for instance, via the basic interest rate declared by the central banks. Speculative reasoning can be illustrated more adequately with the statement “Money is power.” The characteristics of power clarify the nature of money, and the peculiarities of money contribute to understanding the nature of power. Money and power, of course, do not always interact like this and can be regarded as relatively independent.

The financial meaning of speculation is usually confined to the understanding of a very risky investment. This is undoubtedly true, but

such belief omits something very significant, which is of particular importance for our discussion. Derivatives, for example, are increasingly cut off from the life-bearing source—surplus labor—and increasingly possess an independent and self-sufficient being in an unconditional way. Derivatives define themselves in absorbing and unfolding the entire substance of the stock exchange. They are not obliged to refer to a reality outside themselves and de facto they do not. They produce their own reality and are similar in that to the code of Baudrillard's simulacra. It can reasonably be argued that financial speculation produces a hyper-reality, where real and virtual are inseparable.

Hegel applies the term speculation to the most developed philosophical thinking. It is well known that philosophy, in his system, is the apogee of society, culture, and science; it is the real science approaching its subject with concepts purified of any sensible matter and being the realm of genuine and concrete thinking, which leaves abstraction to common sense.¹³ Nevertheless, this elitarian or even aristocratic position does not express the whole truth about the place of philosophizing in Hegel. His *Phenomenology of Spirit* lucidly shows that the entire journey of spirit is due to spontaneous philosophizing. Beginning with the sense of certainty and proceeding to absolute knowing, through the various stages of unfolding of spirit; each step of passing from delusion to a clearer vision and to yet another disappointment is marked by philosophizing. Consciousness, self-consciousness, and spirit are expressions of the ultimate reality for Hegel. However, for sense-certainty they are nothing; here emerges the same issue of the ontical fictitiousness of certain aspects of reality, which have been approached by means of philosophy throughout the centuries.

Dealing with what is beyond the ontical borders of the world, philosophers have always occupied an ambivalent position:¹⁴ on the one hand, they spend their time on nothing palpable or useful and in this sense are harmless; on the other, philosophers somehow succeed in transforming fictitious issues into most urgent questions in the common use; this makes the powerful of the day aware of philosophers' skills to master the potential of nothingness, turning it into an instrument for practical life.

¹³ Donald Phillip Verene, "Prolegomena Philosophiae," op. cit., 21.

¹⁴ Thorallin Bayer, "Socrates' Profession," op. cit., 88.

In the 21st century, philosophers have got some very well-versed competitors—the financial speculators. Both philosophers and speculators are immersed in a fictitious domain of reality; nevertheless, they differ significantly. Philosophers, following the steps of Socrates, are mostly interested in the human condition, while speculators are dedicated to sophistry¹⁵ on a global scale, substituting the non-existence of financial capital for ontological existentials.

Recalling Plato's parable about the Olympic Games, it is our inclination to admit that the Games are impossible without spectators.¹⁶ Today's Olympics, however, differ crucially from the ancient ones in the transformation of roles played by all participants: merchants have become stock and securities traders; athletes play not according to the sport's rules, but follow the capricious will of the financial markets; and among the spectators are not only philosophers but huge crowds of outcasts who have nothing better to do than watch. Hopefully, the advantage of speculative philosophers over the outcasts is that philosophers might be able to see the ontological level of reality behind the ontical sense-certainty of the show. Philosophers are called to look beyond the instilled illusion of the Games at the seemingly fictitious domain that determines the entire circus cum carnival. This philosophical exercise could be the route to full-blooded individual life and, perhaps, happiness,¹⁷ but this is barely possible without seeing the face of the Other and responding to his/her call no matter what will be our attitude to the scene on show.

¹⁵ Ibid., 90.

¹⁶ Donald Phillip Verene, "Prolegomena Philosophiae," op. cit., 25.

¹⁷ Manuel Knoll, "To Philosophize or Not to Philosophize?" op. cit., 104.

Prolegomena Philosophiae

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Abstract

Beginning from Aristotle's claim in the *Protrepticus* concerning what it means to philosophize, this essay considers three modern claims about the nature of philosophy, found in Berkeley's *Three Dialogues*, Hegel's preface to the *Phenomenology*, and F. H. Bradley's description of metaphysics in *Appearance and Reality*.

Introduction

Among the fragments from ancient authors, relating to the early dialogues of Aristotle, in the Princeton revised Oxford translation of Aristotle's *Works*, appears: "If you ought to philosophize you ought to philosophize; and if you ought not to philosophize you ought to philosophize: therefore, in any case you ought to philosophize." A second sentence follows that intends to elaborate the point:

For if philosophy exists, we certainly ought to philosophize, since it exists; and if it does not exist, in that case too we ought to inquire why philosophy does not exist—and by inquiring we philosophize; for inquiry is the cause of philosophy.¹

This statement is one of the many renderings of the most famous passage in Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, the original composition of which has been lost in its entirety. The *Protrepticus* stands in a dialectical relation to the *Antidosis* of Isocrates and is imitated in the debate over the value of philosophy in Cicero's *Hortensius*. Isocrates's view of philosophy stands opposite to that of Aristotle, who regards contemplation as the goal of the philosophic life. Isocrates insists that the pursuit of wisdom is the achievement of a life of temperance and just action. He says:

¹ *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2:2416–17.

For since it is not in the nature of man to attain a science by the possession of which we can know positively what we should do or what we should say, in the next resort I hold that man to be wise who is able by his powers of conjecture to arrive generally at the best course, and I hold that man to be a philosopher who occupies himself with the studies from which he will most quickly gain that kind of insight.²

Aristotle does not deny the value of philosophy in the pursuit of prudence, but he does not hold this pursuit to be the final end of wisdom.

Much of Aristotle's dialogue or "hortatory essay" (*logos protrepticos*) has been reconstructed from Iamblichus's *Protrepticus*.³ On the passage regarding whether to philosophize, Quintilian comments: "Sometimes two propositions are put forward in such a way that the choice of either leads to the same conclusion: for example 'We must philosophize (even though we must not philosophize) ['philosophandum (est, etiam si non est philosophandum')].'"⁴

A modern citation is that of Jacques Derrida, in the concluding paragraphs of his essay on "Violence and Metaphysics," which he simply attributes to "a Greek."

It was a Greek who said, 'If one has to philosophize, one has to philosophize; if one does not have to philosophize, one still has to philosophize (to say it and think it). One always has to philosophize.'⁵

² Isocrates, *Antidosis*, in *Isocrates*, trans. George Norlin, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 2000), 335 (271).

³ See Anton-Hermann Chroust, *Aristotle: Protrepticus, A Reconstruction* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964). The Urtext of reconstruction of the fragments is that of I. During in *Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia*, vol. 12, 1961. Much can be learned concerning the *Protrepticus* from Werner Jaeger's discussion of it in *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of Its Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), chap. 4.

⁴ Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, ed. and trans. Donald A. Russell, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classical Library, 2001), 400–1 (5.10.70).

⁵ Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 152.

Derrida employs this claim about the necessity of philosophy as part of his theme of coupling Judaism and Hellenism, ending his essay with a line from the Circe chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*: "And what is the legitimacy, what is the meaning of the *copula* in this proposition from perhaps the most Hegelian of modern novelists: 'Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet'?"⁶

As Anton-Hermann Chroust, the author of its English edition, puts it, the *Protrepticus* has as its purpose to be "an eloquent eulogy of speculative philosophy and an exhortation to live the 'philosophic life,' that is, a life dedicated to speculative philosophy."⁷ Chroust believes that the discussion of the interconnection of philosophic wisdom and happiness in Plato's *Euthydemus* is the likely source of Aristotle's main theme of the importance of the philosophic life in the *Protrepticus*. This discussion in the *Euthydemus* concludes with Socrates saying:

Since you believe both that it [wisdom, *sophia*] can be taught and that it is the only existing thing which makes a man happy and fortunate, surely you would agree that it is necessary to love wisdom [*philosophhein*] and you mean to do this yourself.

Clinias, the young boy Socrates is addressing, affirms: "This is, just what I mean to do, Socrates, as well as ever I can." Socrates then says:

When I heard this I was delighted and said, There Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, is my example of what I want a hortatory argument [*protreptickon logon*] to be, though amateurish, perhaps, and expressed at length and with some difficulty.⁸

In Chroust's reconstruction of Aristotle's text, the passage on philosophy is: "The term 'to philosophize' (or, 'to pursue philosophy') implies two distinct things: first, whether or not we ought to seek [after philosophic truth] at all; and, second, our dedication to philosophic speculation (*philosophon theoria*)."⁹ In his commentary on this state-

⁶ Ibid., 153.

⁷ Chroust, *Aristotle*, xvii.

⁸ Plato, *Euthydemus*, trans. Rosamond Kent Sprague in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1977), 719–20 (282c–d).

⁹ Chroust, *Aristotle*, 3.

ment, Chroust summarizes the tradition of its claim as found in various fragments, most probably starting from the report of it by Alexander of Aphrodisias, the ablest of the commentators on Aristotle's corpus. But versions have been given by Clemet of Alexandria, Lactantius, and Boethius. Chroust's summary of Aristotle's claim is:

You say that one should (or must) philosophize; then you should (or must) philosophize. You say that one should not (or must not) philosophize, then (in order to prove your contention) you must philosophize. In any event, you must philosophize.¹⁰

Chroust's summary formulation brings out the ambiguity of whether Aristotle's claim is that one "should philosophize" in the sense of a choice one can make and that one "must philosophize" in the sense of necessity, not allowing for choice. One has a choice as to what form of life to lead, but mortality is a necessary condition of human life, about which there can be no choice.

Following his initial claim concerning the choice or necessity of philosophy, Aristotle proceeds to elaborate on and extol the merits and nature of philosophy more generally, saying, for example, that

the fact that all men feel at ease in philosophy, wishing to dedicate their whole lives to the pursuit of it by leaving behind all other concerns, is in itself weighty evidence that it is a painless pleasure to dedicate oneself wholeheartedly to philosophy.¹¹

There is perhaps nothing in the history of philosophy to equal the *Protrepticus* as a praise of philosophy, unless it be some of Cicero's statements.

Preceding the passage quoted above, advocating *philosophon theoria*, Aristotle characterizes *phronesis* as true wisdom.¹² *Phronesis* becomes the term central to Aristotle's political philosophy, and the intellectual virtue discussed in his ethics. Prudence or *phronesis* is necessary to govern human actions and civility, but contemplation (*theoria*),

¹⁰ Ibid., 48–49.

¹¹ Ibid., 24.

¹² Ibid., 2–3.

from which our word “theater” is derived, is tied to the achievement of the highest human happiness, or *eudaimonia*, literally that state of having a good daimon. Contemplation is simply to look upon or observe for the purpose of understanding, without regard to any subsequent doing or making. *Theoria*, *theorein* is what is at issue in Aristotle’s advocacy of the human necessity to philosophize. It is given that prudence is necessary for the conducting of human affairs, but is contemplation a necessity for human beings?

This is the question at the heart of the *Protrepticus*, and at the heart of philosophy itself, for philosophy is the only field that takes the meaning of its own existence as a central problem. When a physicist pauses to ask what physics is, the physicist is no longer engaged in pursuit of the knowledge of natural phenomena but is reflecting on the philosophical question of the place of physics in human knowledge. When science turns to reflect upon what science is, scientific investigation itself comes to a standstill. The production of any new philosophy is a redefinition of what philosophy is. It arises from grasping the nature of philosophy in a new way.

The existence of philosophy, like human existence, is characterized by the fact that it conceives Quintilian’s formulation as a version of “hobson’s choice”: an apparent freedom to take or reject something offered, when in actual fact no such freedom exists: an apparent freedom of choice where there is no real alternative. By interpreting Aristotle’s claim in this way, I wish to go between the horns of any dilemma that the various versions of Aristotle’s text may contain. To gain perspective on what this ancient definition entails, I wish to consider claims about philosophy made by three figures in the history of philosophy—Bishop Berkeley, G. W. F. Hegel, and F. H. Bradley—each of these being holders of metaphysical positions.

Bishop Berkeley

In his preface to *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, Berkeley says: “We spend our lives in doubting of those things which other men evidently know, and believing those things which they laugh at and despise.”¹³ Other men know—or think they know—that the mind is the brain and that the world is composed of material things that exist

¹³ George Berkeley, *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, ed. Colin M. Turbayne (Indianapolis: Liberal Arts Press, 1954), 5.

independently of our perception of them. These facts about ourselves and the world are indubitable common sense.

Berkeley, the first philosopher of the great idealist tradition beyond Plato, finds the first so-called fact doubtful. Philonous, who represents Berkeley, asks Hylas: “You make certain traces in the brain to be the causes or occasions of our ideas. Pray tell me whether by the ‘brain’ you mean any sensible thing.” Hylas replies: “What else think you I could mean?” Philonous reminds Hylas that sensible things have their existence in the mind: “Sensible things are all immediately perceivable; and those things which are immediately perceivable are ideas, and these exist only in the mind. This much you have, if I mistake not, long since agreed to.” Hylas, the materialist, replies: “I do not deny it.” Philonous then draws the obvious conclusion: “The brain therefore you speak of, being a sensible thing, exists only in the mind.”¹⁴

This argument is one of the most simple and clever in the history of philosophy. It is matched only by that of Socrates in the *Phaedo* when he speaks of his disappointment in realizing that Anaxagoras’s account of causality was inexact. Socrates says:

It was a wonderful hope, my friend, but it was quickly dashed. As I read on [in Anaxagoras’s book] I discovered a man who made no use of his Intelligence [*nous*; he used his mind but did not realize it was the cause of what he was claiming] and assigned to it no responsibility for the order of the world, but adduced reasons like air and ether and water and many other oddities.

Socrates then applies Anaxagoras’s materialist doctrine of causality to his own being, asking, in effect: Do I think these bones and sinews are Socrates?

Socrates says:

But to call things like that reasons is too peculiar. If it were said that without such bones and sinews and all the rest of them I should not be able to do what I think is right, it would be true; but to say that it is because of them that I do what I am doing, and not through choice of what is best—although my actions are controlled by intelligence—would be a very lax

¹⁴ Ibid., 52.

and inaccurate form of expression.¹⁵

The behaviorist doctrines of Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* and B. F. Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* have been put to rest, but versions of behaviorism as a philosophy of mind forever raise their heads. They appear in Hegel's day in Lavater's physiognomy and Gall's *Schädelehre* (craniology or phrenology), the reduction of the human self to facial expressions or to the diagnosis of bumps on the skull. Hegel, in his section on these "sciences" in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, says Gall's doctrine reduces the mind (*Geist*) to a bone—to a *caput mortuum*. Lavater's doctrine misses the fact that the face functions not only as a window to the soul but as a mask, with which we pass through the affairs of the world.

Hegel dismisses phrenology with a pun, saying that the "linking of high and low [mind and body]" is the same as that which "in the living being nature naively expresses in linking the organ of its highest perfection, the organ of procreation, with the organ of pissing [*Pissen*]."¹⁶ The wisdom of the phrenological science of spirit reduces *Wissen* to *Pissen* in contrast to the true or phenomenological science of spirit that knows the difference between these two human capabilities. "Body language," a popular psychology that emerges from time to time (e.g., in *Psychology Today*), being a method for judging the meaning of people's personalities and situations, is a version of Lavater's "science" and, to an extent, of Gall's as well. The expert in body language draws conclusions based on the coupling of some broad principles concerning human activity with commonsensical observations and the fortune teller's art of stating what is often obvious in such a way that it appears divinatory.

In regard to the status of things in the world, Berkeley believed his view that *esse* (to be) is *percipi* (to be perceived) reflected good common sense. He thought it in accord with the ordinary view that, if something is real, it could be perceived. Instead his view was laughed at. The well-known incident of Dr. Johnson's attempt to refute Berkeley by

¹⁵ Plato, *Phaedo*, in *The Last Days of Socrates*, trans. Hugh Tredennick and Harold Tarrant (New York: Penguin, 1969), 161–62 (98b–99a).

¹⁶ For a full discussion of Hegel's account of phrenology see Donald Phillip Verene, *Hegel's Recollection: A Study of Images in the Phenomenology of Spirit* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), chap. 7.

kicking the stone capsulizes how his metaphysics seems to be contrary to common sense. Dr. Johnson thought that if stones had no material existence, as Berkeley claimed, and that they were “ideas” in the mind, his foot ought to pass through the stone without resistance. If Berkeley had thought that what we normally think of as material objects were the same as what we normally think of as ideas, Dr. Johnson’s foot would have refuted Berkeley.

In advancing the first version of modern idealism, Berkeley faced the issue that continues to stalk it as a philosophical position.¹⁷ No idealist had denied the existence of things independent of my ideas of them. Idealism is not solipsism. Berkeley makes this point clear for all idealism in a passage in *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge*:

For, though we hold indeed the objects of sense to be nothing else but ideas which cannot exist unperceived; yet we may not hence conclude they have no existence except only while they are perceived by us, since there may be some other spirit that perceives them though we do not.

He continues:

Whenever bodies are said to have no existence without the mind, I would not be understood to mean this or that particular mind, but all minds whatsoever. It does not therefore follow from the foregoing principles that bodies are annihilated and created every moment, or exist not at all during the intervals between our perceptions of them.¹⁸

For Berkeley, when an object is not being perceived by an individual mind it is being perceived by the eternal mind of God, such that ultimately all things are ideas in the mind of God, who is all mind, omnipotent and omniscient. The idealist, however, need not bring forth Berkeley’s God to avoid the absurdity of solipsism. We might instead assert, with Hegel, that there in principle can be no thing-in-itself, for the Kantian thing-in-itself is itself an idea of the thing held in mind. We

¹⁷ A. C. Ewing, *The Idealist Tradition from Berkeley to Blanshard* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957).

¹⁸ George Berkeley, *Of the Principles of Human Knowledge*, in *The English Philosophers from Bacon to Mill*, ed. Edwin A. Burt (New York: Random House, 1939), 538–39.

may simply accept the paradox, the double truth, that we can think of things as independent and external to our thought of them and at the same time affirm that this is a thought mind has of them. *Nous* is in all things and is also the way in which we apprehend them. The world itself is *nous* and its relation to our power of *nous* as an individual thinker and perceiver is an internal relation. There is no absolute, external relation, except as a whole that we are always determinately approaching, but which we never determine, in the logic of Hegel's "true infinity" (*wahrhaft Unendliche*).

The world of hard facts that C. S. Peirce insists we must continually confront, is there—but as we confront these facts they become modified by our confrontation of them, and they are unable fully to maintain their independence of mind in the face of empirical science. In order for common sense to maintain itself against philosophical speculation, it must claim itself as a standard. It must begin to doubt what it thought it evidently knew and to believe what it laughed at and despised. It enters an inverted world in which it cannot abandon common sense and yet cannot verify itself as common sense without leaving common sense. If to be is to be perceived is a conception the mind has of objects, then to be and not be perceived is also a conception the mind has of objects.

G. W. F. Hegel

In his preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel says:

As regards philosophy in its proper and genuine sense, we find put forward without any hesitation, as entirely sufficient equivalent for the long course of mental discipline [*den langen Weg der Bildung*—for that profound and fruitful process through which the human spirit [*Geist*] attains to knowledge—the direct revelation of the divine and the healthy common sense of mankind [*den gesunden Menschenverstand*], unconcerned with and undisciplined by any other knowledge or by proper philosophizing. These are held to be a good substitute for real philosophy, much in the way that chicory is lauded as a substitute for coffee.¹⁹

¹⁹ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie, 2d ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1955), 125–26; *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, vol. 3 of *Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 63.

In regard to the Absolute, all that is required is a feeling that there is a divine order to things, and in regard to comprehending the nature of human experience, all that is required is the Germanic idea of “healthy common sense” or, put in English expression, a “healthy dose of common sense.”

Religious faith and common sense make unnecessary philosophizing and the study of the history of philosophy that is the basis of philosophizing. We are relieved of the burden of acquiring *Bildung* by realizing that we already are doing philosophy when we are thinking commonsensically, in the way that the figure in Molière’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* learns that he has been speaking prose all along, for otherwise he would have been speaking poetry.

Hegel continues, and considers whether instead of substituting common sense for philosophy we might substitute inspiration (*Genialität*). We might then engage in “philosophizing by the light of nature [*ein natürliches Philosophieren*], which thinks itself too good for conceptual thinking [*für den Begriff*], and, because of the want of it, takes itself to have direct intuitive ideas and poetical thoughts—such philosophizing trades in arbitrary combinations of a merely disorganized imagination [*Einbildungskraft*] of the marketplace, producing fictitious creations that are neither fish nor flesh, neither poetry nor philosophy.”²⁰ Abandoning common-sense thought goes to the opposite extreme of manufacturing fine-sounding ideas that make up a kind of high non-sense.

Hegel says that in all spheres of science, and even in practical endeavors, it is never doubted that a considerable amount of time must be spent learning what is required to engage in them. But, as he says:

As regards philosophy, on the contrary, there seems still an assumption prevalent that, though every one with eyes and fingers is not on that account in a position to make shoes if he only has leather and a last, yet everybody understands how to philosophize straight away, and pass judgment on philosophy, simply because he possesses the criteria for doing so in his natural reason—as if he did not in the same way possess the standard for shoemaking too in his own foot.²¹

Everyone has an opinion and thus everyone can philosophize

²⁰ Ibid., 126; 63–64.

²¹ Ibid., 125; 63.

straight away.

In a little manuscript titled “Wer denkt abstrakt?” (Who Thinks Abstractly?), written in April 1807 or shortly thereafter—about the time of the appearance of the first copies of the *Phenomenology*—Hegel points to the essence of his philosophical position: “Denken? Abstrakt?—*Sauve qui peut!* Rette sich, wer kann!”²² Let whoever can save himself do so. Philosophy is not for everyone, and Hegel has no ambition to instruct the world against its will. He speaks of a scene in a recent comedy, in which a Minister goes around during the whole play in an overcoat, then in the last scene suddenly unbuttons it and lets loose his flashing star of wisdom. Hegel then says he here will unbutton his metaphysical overcoat (*metaphysischer Überrock*). His flashing star of wisdom is that philosophy or metaphysics is not the formulation of abstractions, as many people think, but the attempt to think anything in terms of the whole of experience. The flashing star of wisdom is the Absolute.

Common-sense thinking is based on reducing things to classifications through which they can be tagged as such-and-such and thus claimed to be known. Hegel thus inverts the claim of common sense to be concrete thought and metaphysics to be abstract. Common-sense thinking is what keeps us from seeing things as they really are in their fully determinate nature. Common-sense thinking is for everyone; philosophical thinking is only for the few who can save themselves from the abstractions of the many.

Ten years before Hegel wrote the *Phenomenology*, in what has come to be known as “The Earliest System-Program of German Idealism,” he spoke against what might be considered a parallel to common-sense thinking in philosophical thinking. He said that the philosopher must have as much aesthetic power as the poet, and that “Men without aesthetic sense are our literal-minded philosophers [*unsere Buchstabenphilosophen*].” For these philosophers, like men of common sense, “everything is obscure as soon as it goes beyond the table of contents and the index.” Poetry, Hegel says, is the “instructress of humanity” [*Lehrerin der Menschheit*]. Here Hegel, at age twenty-six, at the beginning of his career, holds that “we must have a new mythology, but

²² G. W. F. Hegel, “Wer denkt abstrakt?” in vol. 2 of *Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1970), 575.

this mythology must be in the service of ideas, it must be a mythology of Reason [*Mythologie der Vernunft*].”²³

I do not think Hegel ever abandoned this aim. His works, especially the *Phenomenology*, contain a stylistic dialectic between *Bild* and *Begriff*. The alert reader, even the reader of the *Science of Logic*, will consistently find an image coupled with a concept. Poetry always takes us out of common-sense thought and language. Poetic power is what philosophy requires as its beginning point and constant companion. The mythology of reason is Hegel’s answer to Plato’s quarrel with the poets. If philosophy is a necessity, poetry is, too.

F. H. Bradley

In his preface to *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay*, Bradley transcribes several sentences from his notebook. Among them is “Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct, but to find these reasons is no less an instinct.”²⁴ He introduces this claim by reminding his readers that we tend to hold our own pursuits in too much regard. Thus,

The metaphysician cannot perhaps be too much in earnest with metaphysics, and he cannot, as the phrase runs, take himself too seriously. But the same thing holds good with every other positive function of the universe. And the metaphysician, like other men, is prone to forget this truth.²⁵

Metaphysics is an art of reasoning. There can be no such thing as a metaphysical proof, in the sense that there can be no counterargument to the argument upon which a particular claim depends. For any argument advanced in metaphysics, and in philosophy generally, it is not beyond human wit to devise a counterargument. There are no conclusive arguments in philosophical inquiry. All such arguments fall within some stated or implied narrative that makes the arguments meaningful. No great work of philosophy offers an argument to prove its truth. Great

²³ G. W. F. Hegel, “Das älteste System program des deutschen Idealismus,” in vol. 1 of *Werke* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971), 234–36.

²⁴ F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality: A Metaphysical Essay* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), x.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, ix–x.

philosophers in great works simply begin to make statements and distinctions. Arguments come in along the way, as their ideas are expressed. Bradley comes closer than most with his use of argument in his *Book of Appearance*.

In the *Book of Appearance*, Bradley considers whether various classic themes can be considered to be the absolute itself, such as substance, relation and quality, space and time, motion and change, causation, the self, things-in-themselves. In each case he shows that the attempt to claim such to be the absolute principle of the real ends the reasoning that supports it, in an indefinite regress, that must be summed, which is a self-contradiction. The principle of self-contradiction cannot itself be proved because it is the condition that governs any proof whatsoever. The absolute is thus no one property of the whole but the whole itself. To affirm less is to reduce reality to one of its aspects. Bradley says: "I am so bold as to believe that we have a knowledge of the Absolute, certain and real, though I am sure that our comprehension is miserably incomplete."²⁶

In effect, Bradley restates the issue of the *Protrepticus* with his question: "Is it possible to abstain from thought about the universe?" He holds that "even the average man is compelled to wonder and to reflect."²⁷ But to do so we must pass beyond common sense as the complete standard of thought. As Aristotle says in his famous assertion in the *Metaphysics*, philosophy begins in wonder (*thauma*). Wonder originates from the experience of an *aporia* in thought—when thought finds it cannot be consistent in some instance with itself. Bradley regards metaphysics as motivated by the same sense of mystery that gives rise to poetry, art, and religion. He says that when these cease to be of interest to us, so will metaphysics: "when, in short, twilight has no charm—then metaphysics will be worthless."²⁸

Bradley is firm that metaphysics is not properly conceived as an activity of the human self that supersedes the other functions of the mind. It should set the standard for proper reasoning. He holds the position that is held by many, that to attempt to deny metaphysics is to engage in metaphysical claims. He says:

²⁶ Ibid., 3.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

And the opponent of metaphysics, it appears to me, is driven to a dilemma. He must either condemn all reflection on the essence of things—and, if so, he breaks, or, rather, tries to break, with part of the highest side of human nature—or else he allows us to think, but not to think strictly.²⁹

To every person capable of reflection, questions of the ultimate nature of things and their reason for being and their causes occur in one form or another, just as ethical questions naturally occur to such persons. But most people put these questions aside as unanswerable, or settle on some provisional view, only later to find it doubtful, and for the questions to recur.

In the mental life of the non-philosopher, yet reflective person, these questions come and go, like ghosts, receding into the background only to reappear unexpectedly. Philosophy brings these mental shades into the light of reason and approaches them systematically, with the careful use of language in its power to express ideas. Bradley says: “I certainly do not suppose that it would be good for everyone to study metaphysics, and I cannot express any opinion as to the number of persons who should do so.” He adds: “But I think it quite necessary, even on the view that this study can produce no positive results, that it should still be pursued.”³⁰

Metaphysics is written into the human condition, into our selfhood, whether or not we wish it to be so. Those who become philosophers cannot help themselves, and humanity as a whole cannot help itself, as it has allowed philosophy to persist for twenty-five centuries in Western culture, even though philosophy, during these centuries, has held an uneasy and often difficult and dangerous position in relation to the politics of the *polis*. By those who take it up, the philosophic spirit is transmitted from generation to generation. Once it was allowed into society at the hands of the Presocratic physicists, philosophy never left. Like the spectators of the great games at Olympia, the philosophers are there. And, curiously, without the spectators the games are not there.

²⁹ Ibid., 3–4.

³⁰ Ibid., 4.

Conclusion

We may join Aristotle's principle of the psyche—that all human beings desire to know—to Hegel's dictum of the true—that the True is the whole—to formulate a doctrine of wisdom. There are three kinds of knowledge that contend to make philosophy unnecessary: common sense, poetry, and physics (understood as empirical science generally).

Common sense cannot replace philosophy because by means of it nothing can be known that is not the subject of common experience. Common sense cannot take us to the extraordinary experience upon which philosophical knowledge depends, as Plato says in the *Seventh Letter*:

for this knowledge is not something that can be put into words like other sciences; but after long-continued intercourse between teacher and pupil, in joint pursuit of the subject, suddenly, like light flashing forth when a fire is kindled, it is born in the soul and straightway nourishes itself.³¹

Poetry, although gained through the inspiration of the Muses and sustained by their mother, Memory, can only begin the wisdom philosophy seeks, for poetry, tied to images, cannot take us to what can be known only noetically: the forms that are beyond the images. Physics—although the archetype of the knowledge of nature, and requiring the power to theorize—is tied to the empirical. Unless it becomes philosophy it cannot take contemplation beyond the knowledge of the natural and cosmological to the whole, to wisdom, that, as Cicero says, is a knowledge of things divine and human.

Philosophy becomes unavoidable once we realize that our natural propensity to know has as its center to know ourselves as knowers. This realization is a learned ignorance, based on awareness of our mortality as a being, standing like a middle term of a syllogism, between animals that are mortal but do not reflectively know that they are mortal and gods, who are immortal and have no need of self-knowledge, being just what they are. Although all that is human exists in this middle position between the purely natural and the purely divine, not all people, I think, are imbued with Aristotle's principle of the desire to know. In regard to

³¹ Plato, *Seventh Letter*, trans. Glenn R. Morrow in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 1659 (341c–d).

knowing, the ancient distinction holds that there are the few who know, there are those who can come to know through the teachings of those who know, and then there are those who do not know.

In generation after generation, in the great city of the human race, only some people become philosophers or seek to become philosophers. Most people live apart from its pursuit—they are the *hoi polloi* of the Greek *polis* and the citizens of the Cartesian world of scientific research, technology, electronics, and gadgets and the ethics of diversity and globalization that today invade and condition our lives. Over and over again only a small number of people take up the pursuit of philosophy, a number that likely remains constant.

No one enters philosophy willingly; one day one finds oneself in it and slowly realizes one has somehow been here all along. Once in philosophy, it is as impossible for us to leave as it was for Socrates. Philosophy leaves the individual no alternatives. As to the question of whether philosophizing is necessary or whether it is not, there is only a single answer, as the *Protrepticus* suggests.

“Virtually Leaving Hell”? About the Status and the Necessity of Philosophy

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Abstract

Traditionally, philosophy has always been considered as the most elevated human activity and the culmination of human thinking. However, what accounts for its “necessity”? Could philosophy, perhaps, help human being “escape from hell,” from finitude, and death? And, if yes, in what way? By negating finitude and transforming it metaphysically, or just indicating its place? If classical philosophy, understood as metaphysics, considers the human being as “residing in two worlds,” the postmetaphysical experience concentrates on finitude as such. In this essay, the author examines several positions within metaphysical and postmetaphysical thinking, attempting to delimitate a space for their possible meeting.

1. Introduction

Besides the indisputable presence of several philosophical (especially ethical) topics in the contemporary media, nowadays philosophy as such seems to be a matter only for a few scholars. Even those who are willing to recognize the dignity of philosophical thought, and who do not share the truism that philosophy as such is simply “useless,” are usually not willing to see philosophy as a *necessity* or even an *inevitability*. In light of the (apparent but also factual) detachment from “real life” of numerous philosophical questions, that certainly doesn’t happen without a reason. In addition, since the end of the modern age at the latest, “philosophy” contains a broad variety of different, even contrary ways to assess its objectives and to reach results.

Philosophers do not share those views. The traditional written records, in particular, have repeatedly emphasized not only the *dignity*, but also the *necessity* of philosophy. The fragment of Aristotle’s *Protreptikos*, which was chosen as the motto for this volume, impressively highlights this self-

assessment: “If you ought to philosophize you ought to philosophize; and if you ought not to philosophize you ought to philosophize: therefore, in any case you ought to philosophize.”¹ Nevertheless, the argument which is made here and which tries to justify the *inevitability* of philosophy for all human beings—and not only for a few scholars—does not necessarily seem to be imperative and compelling. If this sentence claims that humans are *in fact* unable to avoid philosophy, it could be argued that concrete life-experience teaches us that most humans are *in fact* very well able to avoid philosophy. Philosophy is (and *in fact* remains), no matter whether legitimately or not, a matter of a few interested individuals, who have either turned philosophy into their profession or who possess the necessary “repose,” but also the necessary intellectual and cultural background, in order to deal with philosophical topics and questions.

Even in light of the philosophical tradition, the almost sophistic-seeming argument of *Protreptikos* seems to be of secondary importance compared to the emphasis that philosophy is the *highest form* and the *highest implementation* of human life. Whether philosophy is practiced by everybody or stays as such a matter of a few, privileged people, this fragment documents notably and clearly an approach, which at least *tends to* inhere in the philosophical self-concept proper.

In the following deliberation, I will initially try to follow this philosophical self-concept, especially the metaphysics of the occidental tradition. Afterwards, I would like to draw attention to the realignment of metaphysics by Immanuel Kant and Martin Heidegger’s concept of the “history of being.” The primary idea of the following sections is to show how the *necessity* and inevitability of philosophy have been justified and how we can still pursue a discourse about the necessity of philosophy in present times.

II. The Necessity of Philosophy in Metaphysics

Since the beginning of philosophical thought in ancient Greece, until modern times, to philosophize counted as the highest implementation of human life. The *bios theoretikos* was seen as the ideal that accomplishes human life and finds its own destination. This self-concept

¹ *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2:2416–17.

of philosophy may seem more than strange at first sight. Arguably hardly any painter, poet or musician would have claimed this concept for his or her own art or proper vocation. No matter how much they were touched by their own destination. However, starting with Plato philosophers constantly do so. It could simply be concluded that philosophy and modesty are not destined to walk hand in hand through history. This self-concept of philosophy, however, really expresses a lot about the process of philosophizing as such, or at least about the *requirements* of classical philosophizing.

Classical occidental philosophy consistently portrays itself as a rational diffusion of ultimate truths, including the existence of a higher principle, which was identified as god—“the god of the philosophers.” Only from a retro-perspective, does this god seem to be the religiously worshiped god. From that point of view, the immodesty of philosophers is in fact the immodesty of (human) *ratio*, which forced everything into the pattern of its subduing, causative, and finally always well-calculated approach. If *ratio* is understood to be the distinctive characteristic of the human being as an *animal rationale* and if *ratio* possesses the inherent ability to understand “ultimate truths,” it is only logical to claim that being human climaxes in the philosophical application to reality, which aims for highest truths.

The “immodesty” of philosophy is based upon the immodesty of (human) *ratio*. Those led towards a constant confidence, which was not able to see and to tolerate a rupture between rationality and reality. If a human being is understood to be an *animal rationale*, and as the high-point of life between “life” and “being” without a fracture/rupture, but involving a constant compatibility with and *rational accessibility* of “ultimate reasons,” it is only a consequence that the philosophical implementation of *ratio* is understood as the highest destination of humankind: as the ultimate completion of *ratio*, which *in fact* can be practiced by all human being, but is *ideally* “necessary,” in order that one live up to the fullest characteristics of human being.

That humankind is not only rational was not unknown to classical philosophers, even though human moods and feelings were not regarded as phenomena on their own—including a concept of universal dignity—

in the classical self-interpretation of human beings.² But the knowledge of the “other” of the *ratio* often comes up in classical philosophical designs, even though it is often reduced to a simple companion, or even an obstacle towards the straightforward way of understanding. In *Protreptikos* and in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, philosophy is also linked with luck. Purely staying in the dimension of the first principles is a special, in fact the highest, form of *hedonism*, which is not comparable to any terrestrial luck.

This initially Platonic, then Aristotelian attitude is typical for all occidental historical traditions and is based upon a socio-historical development, which is neither self-evident nor without problems. The primacy of “theoretical” rationality as opposed to “practical” rationality, and the primacy of rationality and reasoning as such, has not only formed the history of European philosophy, but the self-image of occidental people, having an impact in paving the way for European and planetary history. If not only the “dignity” and the “actual destiny” of mankind is embedded in *theory*, but also the “highest happiness” of humankind is included in philosophical-theoretical reflection, a certain view of humankind is established, which is bound to characterize the hierarchy of human goals and necessities for centuries and millenniums.

The question of the necessity, of the dignity, of the status of philosophy, cannot be isolated from the question of what philosophy actually means according to its traditional self-concept as the highest implementation of human *ratio*. Let us firstly deal with this question, in order to verify why and under which circumstances it has managed to keep the status of the highest activity of the human mind for centuries.

In occidental written records, philosophy is primarily identified with *metaphysics*. Metaphysics with its status as *prima philosophia* is identified as the first and fundamental implementation of *ratio*, which grounds to all further strands and disciplines of philosophical reflection. But what is the ambition of metaphysics, what are its goals?

Since its beginning in the era of Plato, and thematically since the beginning of modern times, metaphysics is divided into *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*. Both forms of metaphysics are

² See by the same author Paola-Ludovika Coriando, *Affektenlehre und Phänomenologie der Stimmungen. Wege einer Deutung des Emotionalen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 2001).

founded upon the ambition to come up with a distinctive and absolute characteristic, which is accessible through rationality. Metaphysics has a dimension of “true” being, which is divided by an ontological gap from actual reality. At the same time it can be characterized as a “bridge” towards rationality.

Metaphysica generalis or ontology poses the basic question of being as such and entities, and climaxes in the question of substance, which tries to examine and describe the ultimate basis of reality. Several terms were created and used by metaphysics for being and entities—*idea* (Platon), *ousia* (Aristotle), *substantia* (Thomas von Aquin), *res cogitans* and *res extensa* (Descartes), *Monade* (Leibniz)—only to name the most striking. All of those are attempts to understand the reality, which we are facing, and (which is more crucial) to grasp this reality with all its characteristics of perishability and infirmity, and *founded upon* a higher reality, *in contrast to* empirical reality. The ambition of all metaphysics is the attempt to intellectually reach and name a distinctive basis for human being, including the potentially destabilizing experiences of finiteness and perishability.

That is the basis from which *metaphysica specialis* aims to try to answer basic questions of human existence, above all the three basic questions of the existence of god, the immortality of the human soul and human freedom. While the basic ontological questions of the *metaphysica generalis* may indeed seem as a purely theoretical occupation of a few scholars, the *metaphysica specialis* touches upon topics and areas, which actually concern or at least potentially concern every human being as a human being as such. In its “special” kind of questions, metaphysics becomes *existentially* important. Even though metaphysics as such suppresses this existential level of questions in favor of a purely “rational” (that is, according to its own perception independent from sentiments) way of answering those questions.

Arguably—as an outstanding example—the numerous “proofs” of the continuing existence of the human soul after death may seem to be artificially constructed, but the actual end of human life is an experience which affects every human being. This is irrespective of whether the individual human being is looking for, and possibly finds, a religious answer to this question or if the individual hides behind the superficial indifference, which more and more characterizes our contemporary times.

Let us stay with those questions for a short while and let us exam-

ine their content, in order to verify why philosophy came up with the ambition, which was also due to those types of question, to be the highest implementation of human life.

If a common denominator of all human existence, throughout all cultures and traditions, is to be found, there could be different answers to the question of human *finiteness*, based upon the experience of *narrowness* and *time limits*, which people have come up with in fields such as philosophy, religion, poetry or art. It is noteworthy that the answer to this question does not necessarily have to be a “theoretical” answer.

The Italian sculptor, alpinist and writer Mauro Corona often quoted Antonin Artaud, with a phrase that better describes the experience of human finiteness in all its varieties—the unrest which characterizes human existence—than all existing philosophical and anthropological discourses altogether: “Nessuno ha maiscritto, dipinto, scolpito, fattomusica o quant'altro, se non per uscire di fattodall'inferno.” (“Nobody has ever written, painted, sculpted, made music or did anything else without the desire to actually ascend from hell.”³). To ascend from hell, to leave hell, to “actually” escape from hell, even if only for a few moments, to forget and to transfigure hell: that is according to Artaud and Corona the ultimate reason for all human creation, for all art and extraordinary activities of mankind. Is that not also true for philosophy and, if so, in a very explicit way? Because I hold the opinion that this is true, it is worth further examining the meaning of this “ascent” from and this “leaving” of hell.

If we understand the phrase “the ascent from hell” only from an on-

³ Artaud writes: “Nobody has ever written or painted, graved or modelled, constructed or invented anything, if not, to escape from hell.” (Antonin Artaud, *Van Gogh le suicidé de la société* (Editions Gallimard, 1974)) Mauro Corona, quotes this phrase, slightly modified, among others in Mauro Corona, *Confessioni Ultime* (Mailand: Chiarelettere, 2013). See also Mauro Corona in *Corriere della Sera*, 21 luglio 2009, 21: “Antonin Artaud disse: «Nessuno ha mai scritto, dipinto, scolpito, fatto musica o quant' altro, se non per uscire di fatto dall' inferno». Aggiungerei altre cose per uscire dall' inferno ma ne basta una: salire montagne. Si va sulla vetta di un monte non per pompare i muscoli bensì per alzarci dal pantano, sollevarci un poco, uscire fuori con la testa come talpe a primavera. E da lì respirare, annusare l' aria, guardare in alto più vicini a quell' alto. E poi, proprio come talpe, tornare nelle tenebre.”

tic-existential point of view, or even only psychologically, we will only be able to grasp a superficial meaning, of what it actually expresses. An ontic-existential or psychological interpretation of this phrase might be as follows: through art or other extraordinary activities man is searching for the sense of his *own existence*. The individual “departs from hell,” by overcoming oneself, by proving oneself by transfiguring reality through art. In this ontic meaning “hell” is not more than a subjective state, which might be found in unfortunate circumstances, of a certain biography, in a concrete pain, in negative experiences of human existence, by which some people are more deeply affected than others.

But we can also understand this phrase in a different way. Maybe “hell” is not referring to biographical occurrences, but to human being as such. If that’s the case, then, the “ascent” from hell, which is mentioned in this phrase, the “escaping” from hell, would need to be understood not in an ontic-existential way, but in a fundamental way.

A lot of arguments can be brought up in favor of this interpretation of the phrase. Even the “happiest,” the most “successful” and most fulfilled human existence will be confronted with the actual end of life—with the *knowledge* of the proper and foreign death, with the carrying out and the bearing of that knowledge and that experience. The “hell” which Artaud and Corona are talking about is not limited to a few negative experiences, which man may or may not have. In the face of death, life as such is “hell”: *hell means to be aware of the finite nature of human existence*.

The *metaphysica specialis* tries to provide an answer to this fundamental human experience—an answer that exceeds an individual’s scheme of life, an answer that in its specific embodiment was meant to be a matter of “a few scholars,” which is however subliminally tied to the basic experience of Christian religion and has therefore shaped the self-concept of occidental humanity until the beginning of modern times.

If occidental humanity, just like humans originating from other eras and cultures, do actually know “hell” from their own life-experience, the human being has “always” been able to leave hell thanks to the *ratio* and its cognitive abilities, which enable the human mind to reason. This is not only true from an existential perspective, but also from a rational-ontological point of view. For occidental classical philosophy, *ratio* is the liberating force, which releases humans from the “hell” of finiteness and the experience of death. That is the case because

ratio leads the human being—in fact all human beings no matter if they know it or not—to a different reality where death has already been overcome, not only in a religious way but beforehand and universally, in fact *apriori*, because death is rationally transcended and defeated.

Could philosophy be accredited with a higher honor, a higher necessity, than the capacity to let man rise from hell *ontologically*, in a more universal and more fundamental way than all kinds of art and even faith?

III. The Necessity of Philosophy in Kant's Critique of Metaphysics and the Consequences for the Human Self-Concept

The above mentioned self-concept of *ratio* was not meant to be taken as accompanying humankind through all chapters of human history. As is widely known, the first rupture of this human self-concept, coincides with the attempt to give up the primacy of theoretical reasoning, in favor of a shift from the basic questions of *metaphysica specialis* to practical philosophy. Kant's concept of a realignment of metaphysics initiates the end of *metaphysica specialis*. The "transcendental dialectic" may simply seem as an educated discourse with a certain conveyed line of arguments. The truth, however, is that it justifies an attitude which will reach up to Nietzsche's anti-metaphysics. Kant writes in *The Critique of Pure Reason*:

But now this kind of cognition is in a certain also to be regarded as given, and metaphysics is actual, if not as a science yet as a natural predisposition (*metaphysica naturalis*). For human reason, without being moved by the mere vanity of knowing it all, inexorably pushes on, driven by its own need to such questions that cannot be answered by any experiential use of reason and of principles borrowed from such a use; and thus a certain sort of metaphysics has actually been present in all human beings as soon as reason has extended itself to speculation in them, and it will also always remain there. And now about this too the question is: How is metaphysics as a natural pre-disposition possible? i.e., how do the questions that pure reason raises, and which it is driven by its own need to answer as well as it can, arise from the nature of universal human reason.⁴

⁴ Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 147 (B21-2). The the original quote reads as follows: "Nun ist aber diese *Art von*

Since Kant, the dilemma of human reasoning stems from the fact that it brings up a bulk of questions, which reach beyond its abilities. This is because Kant limits the “abilities” of reasoning (concerning the answering of questions), but not its posing of questions. In this manner, Kant launches a disruption, which will play an important role for a new human self-concept.⁵ According to Kant the essence of the human being as such, but also the essence of philosophizing is to be found in this rupture. Philosophy, its essence, its necessity is based upon the rupture between (human) tasks and the limits of the (human) ability of theoretical reasoning, which is not able to fulfill certain tasks.

Kant doesn’t determine philosophy as such, but metaphysics as naturally given. This does not only indicate that every individual as a human being possesses the ability to philosophize, but it also determines the necessity

Erkenntnis in gewissem Sinne doch auch als gegeben anzusehen, und Metaphysik ist, wenngleich nicht als Wissenschaft, doch als Naturanlage (metaphysicanaturalis) wirklich. Denn die menschliche Vernunft geht unaufhaltsam, ohne daß bloße Eitelkeit des Vielwissens sie dazu bewegt, durch eigenes Bedürfnis getrieben bis zu solchen Fragen fort, die durch keinen Erfahrungsgebrauch der Vernunft und daher entlehnte Prinzipien beantwortet werden können, und so ist wirklich in allen Menschen, sobald Vernunft sich in ihnen bis zur Spekulation erweitert, irgendeine Metaphysik zu aller Zeit gewesen, und wird auch immer darin bleiben. Und nun ist auch von dieser die Frage: *Wie ist Metaphysik als Naturanlage möglich?* d. i. wie entspringen die Fragen, welche reine Vernunft sich aufwirft, und die sie, so gut als sie kann, zu beantworten durch ihr eigenes Bedürfnis getrieben wird, aus der Natur der allgemeinen Menschenvernunft?”

- ⁵ The whole body of metaphysics is anthropocentric. We do not know if other living creatures besides us humans experience the finiteness of life and are able to put this experience into thoughts—maybe in a way that’s hidden from us. That animals may have “human like” experiences concerning their own finiteness was alien to the horizon of metaphysics, but also to Kant’s way of thinking; and still today we know way too little about non-human animals, in order to claim of ourselves that we are able to give an answer to this question—whether one way or another. We can solely talk about ourselves—about our own situation: Philosophy essentially is always anthropology in the way that it is occupied with the analysis of the character of the human being. *Philosophie ist im Wesentlichen immer Anthropologie im Sinne einer Wesenserörterung des Seins des Menschen.* That’s how it shall stay in this essay as well.

of philosophy as a means to consider those ideas of pure reasoning, containing subject matters that can never be theoretically determined.

The shift of the responses of *metaphysica specialis* to the field of *practical* reasoning seems to be a refusal of the ambition of the “logos” to answer the basic questions of human existence purely based on rational reasoning. On the other hand, however, Kant explicitly links those questions to the essence of humankind, in such a way that being human is unimaginable without any theoretical or practical link to those basic questions.

The further development of occidental philosophy—at the latest since Nietzsche—bans the basic questions of the *metaphysica specialis* from the process of thinking and even classifies them as “erroneous.” This constitutes a fundamental disruption in the self-concept of humankind. The outcome of this development is still effective today, even in an intensified manner.

Starting with Nietzsche, this reflection upon the character of the human being, does not only lead to a new definition of human character. It furthermore opens the view on the *historicity* of humankind, but possibly also towards a way of *renouncement*.

It is the renouncement of the all-embracing *ratio*, the renouncement of a former conception of the human being’s character, the renouncement of the all-encompassing confidence, which has for more than 2000 years, with all (and not only positive) outcomes, helped to shape the self-image of occidental people (and also planetary history, due to the planetary extension of occidental influence).

After Nietzsche, it is especially Heidegger’s “history of being” that tries to conceptualize the essence of humankind and of being, but also the essence and the necessity of philosophy in an epoch-making way. Therefore, it is worth to follow further our question about the self-image of philosophy and the necessity of philosophical thought from the form of thinking associated with the “history of being.”

IV. The Human Being and its History—the “Differently Beginning” Necessity of Philosophy

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger examines the basic characteristics of human existence with a focus on individual mine-ness. In the thirties of the last century, however, the groundbreaking “event-based” thinking, leads to a plurality of human self-interpretations, which are all based upon the history of being as such, in its eras, devotion to oneself or in

withdrawing from oneself. The self-interpretation of the human being as an *animal rationale* (together with its metaphysical implications, which were still effective in Kant’s reasoning), does not, from the point of view of the “history of being,” constitute (à la Nietzsche) a misapprehension that needs to be overcome. Instead, it signifies a certain form of *withdrawal of being*. Its outcome determines the occidental way of thinking and occidental history since Plato and increasingly since early modern age. But also this way of thinking and really particularly this way of thinking—and that brings us back to our initial question—considers the necessity of philosophy. It is a genuinely different necessity, which is concerned here, especially a genuinely different philosophical constitution. The necessity of philosophical thought, however, is also compelling in the “history of being” way of thinking, just like in the classical tradition. Here as well, this necessity depends upon the character of the human being, the “character,” however, is approached from a *historical* point of view.

A lot of evidence could be brought to bear for Heidegger’s reestablishment of the “necessity” of philosophy. In order to do so, the whole body of his hermeneutical phenomenology would need to be discussed, including the “immanent change,” which has been drawing the “history of being” towards the center of consciousness since the thirties of the last century. Due to the fact that this is not possible in this discussion, we are opting for a direct proof, which allows us to immediately enter the thematic complex with which we are dealing.

In the *Contributions to Philosophy (of the Event)*, which is considered to be his main input to the way of thinking, which is determined by the “history of being,” Heidegger writes as follows:

17. The necessity of philosophy

All necessity is rooted in hardship. As the first and utmost mindfulness of the truth of be-ing and of the be-ing of truth, philosophy lies in the first and utmost hardship.

This hardship is what drives man round among beings and brings him first of all in front of beings in the whole and into the midpoint of beings, thus bringing man to himself—and thus in each case letting history begin or founder.

What drives man round is his thrownness into beings, a thrownness which determines him as the thrower of being (of the truth of be-ing)...

The necessity of philosophy consists in the fact that as mindfulness it does

not have to eliminate that hardship but rather must persevere in it and ground it, i.e., make it the ground of man's history.⁶

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⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (Of the Event)*. Translated by Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega - Neu, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis 2012, p.p. 61. Published in German as Martin Heidegger, *Gesamtausgabe 65: Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*, edited by F.-W. Herrmann. Klostermann, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, p. 45; the original text reads as follows „17. Die Notwendigkeit der Philosophie

Alle Notwendigkeit wurzelt in einer Not. Die Philosophie als die erste und äußerste Besinnung auf die Wahrheit des Seyns und das Seyn der Wahrheit hat ihre Notwendigkeit in der ersten und äußersten Not.

Diese Not ist Jenes, was den Menschen im Seienden umtreibt und ihn zuerst vor das Seiende im Ganzen und in die Mitte des Seienden und so zu sich selbst bringt und damit jeweils Geschichte anfangen oder untergehen läßt.

Dieses Umtreibende ist die Geworfenheit des Menschen in das Seiende, die ihn zum Werfer des Seins (der Wahrheit des Seyns) bestimmt. [...]

Die Notwendigkeit der Philosophie besteht darin, daß sie als Besinnung jene Not nicht beseitigen, sondern ausstehen und begründen, zum Grund der Geschichte des Menschen machen muß.“

⁷ See Martin Heidegger, *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989), 32; translation modified. For the original text, see Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. Gesamtausgabe Band 65. Ed. by F.-W. by Herrmann (Frankfurt a. M.: Klostermann, 1989), 45: “17. Die Notwendigkeit der Philosophie. Alle Notwendigkeit wurzelt in einer Not. Die Philosophie als die erste und äußerste Besinnung auf die Wahrheit des Seyns und das Seyn der Wahrheit hat ihre Notwendigkeit in der ersten und äußersten Not.

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Dieses Umtreibende ist die Geworfenheit des Menschen in das Seiende, die ihn zum Werfer des Seins (der Wahrheit des Seyns) bestimmt. [...]

The hardship (“*Not*”), which is mentioned here, was not unknown to classical philosophy or more precisely phrased: *a shape* of this hardship was not unknown to classical philosophy and metaphysics. Because the above mentioned hardship is first of all, and generally speaking, the hardship that bothers every man as a human being. Heidegger himself describes this hardship which characterizes the “thrownness” of man into the “essent” and at the same time the hardship, which destines man as the “thrower of the essent.” The “unrest” of being human stems from the fact that man exists as an intermediate link between thrownness and conception. The factuality of life experience (to be born and to die) and the necessity to compose a “world” out of this factuality, no matter if this world is existential-individual or historical, is the basic experience of being human. Every era of being human, no matter if explicitly aware of that fact or not, is shaped by this basic experience of the existence: the human being finds himself in his world as factual existence and “designs himself” out of his thrownness. His life succeeds or fails in the tension between what is “given along” (the factual conditions of his existence) and the “given up” (the adopting of and carrying on with factuality).

This structure, which Heidegger described, has never been *explicitly* considered in classical philosophy, because classical philosophy is guided by the human being as an *animal rationale* and doesn’t know the dimension of what Heidegger calls “being-there” (Dasein). Nevertheless, classical philosophy does possess a knowledge about the “thrownness” of the human being in terms of its finiteness and actual dependency upon its world. Elements of this experience even trace back to Plato. However, Platonism, and afterwards the whole of occidental philosophy, have always tried to elevate the experience of finiteness. Classical philosophy has tried to do so by coming up with the concept of a “true world,” where this experience could *rest* and could be *appeased* as the human being detaches and releases himself from encapsulation in actual lived experience and finds his destiny.

However, the hardship which is described in the way of thinking rooted in the history of being is a *different* hardship. It is a hardship that cannot be eliminated. It is a hardship, which, above all, *should not* be

Die Notwendigkeit der Philosophie besteht darin, daß sie als Besinnung jene Not nicht beseitigen, sondern ausstehen und begründen, zum Grund der Geschichte des Menschen machen muß.”

eliminated. A hardship, which endured and carried out, ought to become *the reason for history*. It is *this particular* hardship and not in the defeat of finiteness, which lays the foundation for necessity of philosophy according to “history of being.”

Philosophy is not anymore necessary in order to help man to overcome its finiteness, but to explicitly guide him towards this finiteness. This guiding into, or better phrased this *shouting into*, finiteness could rescue man from his abandonment of being.

Without going into the texture of “contributions to philosophy,” which is traced back by history of being in a “sixfold texture” (the resonance, the pass, the jump, the foundation, the future ones, the last god). Let us try to understand how the thinking shaped by the “history of being”—this radical denial of the primacy of the *ratio*—is even more radical than, for instance, Nietzsche’s emphasis and justification of the necessity of philosophy.

In the paragraph quoted above it says: “The necessity of philosophy consists in the fact that as mindfulness it does not have to eliminate that hardship but rather must persevere in it and ground it, i.e., make it the ground of man’s history.” Kantian philosophy as well came to the conclusion that man is no longer *able* to “eliminate” and elevate this hardship—in this context understood as the experience of human finiteness—by coming up with a true, rationally accessible reality. Kantian philosophy, however, searched for the answer through a practical approach towards the last questions—the “postulates of pure reason,” which it rated higher than the insights of theory-determined philosophy. Heidegger, on the other hand, says that hardship ought to be “endured” and “justified” through philosophy. It (hardship) ought to become “the reason for human history” and that implies the necessity of philosophy. That means first of all a radical affirmation of human finiteness. In the first instance, that means that philosophy cannot and should not be used to find an exit from “hell”—whether theoretically or practically. On the contrary, it rather ought to point out “hell” and to interpret “hell”: nothing more, but nothing less is demanded from philosophy. Finiteness does not seem to be the boundary anymore, but the proper human destiny.

But “enduring and justifying hardship” tells us even more. It is more than a radical affirmation of actual human finiteness. It names a hardship, which exceeds the individual, actual hardship of facing death and finiteness. It is the historical—history of being—hardship of our

times, which Heidegger tries to think through, through the concept of “abandonment of being.” On the other hand, abandonment of being is a hardship, which has a lot, if not everything, to do with classical metaphysics and the traditional human self-concept guided by ratio, which tried to eliminate the “hardship of finiteness” and to transcend it into a higher reality.

According to Heidegger, “abandonment of being” is not made by humans, just like the possible exit from this hardship. That is why no effort and no “voluntary return” to his “mortality,” as a lost item that was historically neglected by the human being, is demanded from him. On the other hand, neither abandonment of being nor the possible “alternate beginning,” which could establish a new essence of the human being and of being as such, are according to Heidegger, a blind faith that rules over the human being. Moreover the human being as being-there is the in-between, in which history takes place as an event between the occurring-enowning throw of being and the occurring design of the human being.⁸ From that point of view, nothing happens “without” the human being, even though nothing happens “through” the human being and solely through his free will.

The event occurs through everything that the human being stands for and that the human being executes through being-there. But Heidegger also sees philosophy as an *excellent* way to execute the event. Because philosophy has the task to “explicitly” elaborate on the essence of human being and of being as such. Philosophy *opens* the ways in which “history” takes place. The *necessity of philosophy* in the “history of being” focused manner of thought is not limited to enduring and debating human finiteness. It consists among other things in the fact that only philosophy is able to “destruct” the history of the classical human self-concept of being, in order to bring to light the hidden layers of and reasons for this self-concept, which are to be understood in terms of the history of being-like and epoch-making. The necessity to philosophize consists in the elaboration of the transition between the “first” metaphysical and the “other” beginning of human history: an elaboration which aims to be more than a pure “diagnostic” discussion about man and his his-

⁸ See Friedrich-Wilhelm v. Herrmann, *Wege ins Ereignis. Zu Heideggers “Beiträgen zur Philosophie”* (Frankfurt a. M., 1994).

tory, but—literary and more radical—an approach to the place where the essence of the human being and possibly his future destiny are decided.

V. Does Philosophy Save us from Hell?

Historically there exists broad understandings and interpretations of philosophy: in classical-metaphysical thought, as the highest execution of human *ratio*; in Kantian thought, as the division between theoretical and determining interpretation of reality; in Heideggerian thought, as practical-postulating accessing “last questions” in the “history of being,” which led Heidegger to interpret thinking as the transition from the abandonment of being to “other beginning”—just to name three positions, which were briefly discussed above. In all those positions, philosophy seems to be a “necessary” access to questions that worry the human being. In all positions that were discussed earlier lays the reason for this necessity and it is also evidenced in its initial setting.

“Nobody has ever written, painted, sculptured, made music or did anything else without the desire to actually ascent from hell,” says Mauro Corona referring to Antonin Artaud. We pointed out the possibility that this phrase, which may figure as an exemplary guideline for our questions, is not to be understood ontic-existentially but fundamentally. If hell is equal to life in the face of death (the experience of finiteness and perishability), classical metaphysics—and in a different way Kant’s primacy of practical reasoning—has found its own way out of hell. The traditional metaphysical way, which started with Plato, leads from “hell” to finiteness, to a dimension existing above all concrete reality, where finiteness, death and pain are fundamentally ontically overcome. With the doctrine of the soul’s immortality and the rational recognizability of god, but first and foremost in the general fulfillment of a demand for an absolute differentiation, the “hell” of finiteness (the hardship which worries man) seemed to be overcome and defeated. The necessity of philosophy finally was based on the (fulfilled) demand to overcome and defeat finiteness.

All “post-metaphysical” philosophies share a common ground in declining the rational-intellectual claim of this “way out of hell,” whether as an arrogation or as a misapprehension or as an epoch-making shape of withdrawal of being. Heidegger emphasizes that philosophy ought not to eliminate the hardship, but to endure it and to come up with a reason for it (to establish a common ground). Even though the hard-

ship Heidegger talks about is not the hardship of finiteness, but the *abandonment of being*. But the “endurability” and the “establishing of a common ground” of the abandonment of being has a lot to do with “adoption of infinity.” This is because the abandonment of being itself is not a “human construct.” Rather, the reason for the abandonment of being is found in the negation (seemingly, because it is not bearing anything) and the overcoming of this hell, which characterizes human nature through “thrownness” and “reason for nullity.” The metaphysical negation of the “abyss” of infinity evokes the epochal “abyss” of abandonment of being.

That is why in the way of thinking advocated by the “history of being,” the endurability and justification of epochal hardship (of the abyss) includes radical reflection upon human finiteness and human mortality: man should become “the mortal” again.

Is reflection upon the history of being than a return to “hell,” to finiteness? Yes and no.

Yes, because this reflection neglects all efforts to overcome finiteness, in order to neglect it and to transcend it through the design of a different truth, which is portrayed not only existentially or psychologically, but ontologically. This is how it refers back to concrete life experience and is therefore a weakening of the abyss of human existence. To endure and to justify the abyss (the “hell”) therefore means firstly that philosophy should consider the “abyss” from a phenomenological point of view without hastily neglecting it or ignoring it.

The question posed above could as well be answered with a “No,” because the way philosophy is understood within the history of being and its proper necessity, are not (and ought not to be) a pure glancing towards finiteness, towards the abyss, towards “hell” in the human character. The thinking coined by the history of being rather advocates for an openness of mind, which *endures* finiteness phenomenological *without giving it an absolute meaning*. The phenomenological era, which denies the escape from a “thing itself” towards far away and phenomenal realities, is not to be understood as a limitation, but as an *opening*, where finiteness does not “compose” itself as the ultimate truth, but where it *endures itself* and *thereby* opens itself for the *unavailable* of a devotion of the “rescuing” (in the language of the late Heidegger the rescuing could be thought of as the flashing of the four-fold in the middle of the “positionality”).

The rescuing factor in hardship does not serve as a possible *subject* of a philosophical interpretation. Neither the composition of the rescuing factor, nor the probability or improbability of its appearance may be researched philosophically. The “rescuing” factor seems rather to be a gift of a moment of “free sight,” which withdraws itself from all means of verification. The finiteness, the abyss doesn’t rescue itself, least of all through “argumentative” philosophical deliberation.

But philosophy still seems to be necessary in the history of being approach to thinking. It even seems, to a certain degree, to be the turn of hardship. That is because philosophy has the task to refrain from interpreting “the rescuing factor itself,” but to deliberate upon the *open*, in which the rescuing factor may appear. The task of philosophy is to take a step back to the point where the *way* “out of hell” could become visible. Philosophy, however, is deprived of treading that path, at least if “treading” is understood in a way as if philosophy was able to ever completely acquire the rescuing way and to make it available.

The setting free of the sight of “the rescuing” into one with the renunciation of the acquisition of the possible appearance of “the rescuing” constitutes the necessity of philosophy, but also its indispensability and dignity.

Translated from German by Tim Graewert (University of Sofia)

The Play between Prometheus and Epimetheus

Jean-Pierre Cléro (University of Rouen)

Prometheus: Sie [the gods] wollen mit mir teilen, und ich meine
Dass ich mit ihnen nichts zu teilen habe.
Das was ich habe können sie nicht rauben
Und was Sie haben mögen sie beschützen.
Hier mein und dein
Und so sind wir geschieden.
Epimetheus: Du stehst allein.
Dein Eigensinn verkennt di Wonne
Wenn die Götter, du,
Die deinigen und Welt und Himmel all
Sich all ein innig ganzes fühlten.
Pr.: Ich kenne das.
Ich bitte lieber Bruder
Treibs wie du kannst und lass mich
J. W. Goethe¹

Abstract

The sentence from Protrepticus makes us question the status of the unconscious in philosophy. Is the unconscious that which I already know but as something that I do not know that I know, so that I must uncover it? Must not philosophy, though a reflection, be seen also and more fundamentally as a construction, whereby it distinguishes itself from a Socratic function? In this last case, would not its “unconscious” be that which is hidden beneath consciousness or by the consciousness that reveals it, yet as a sort of characteristic of writing that, even as it produces propositions, necessarily gives rise to echoes of other phrases, as if the latter were more fundamental or better accomplished than the former? This paper is the discussion of this “seeming.”

¹ J. W. Goethe, *Prometheus*, in: *Der junge Goethe, neu bearbeitete Ausgabe in fünf Bänden*, Volume 3 (W. de Gruyter & Co, Berlin, 1966), 324-5.

I. Introduction

Does the sentence from the *Protrepticus* (Προτρεπτικόν)² apply to philosophy proper, or does it apply to it only because philosophy is a form of knowledge and because one could say of any kind of knowledge that it contains one part which we are conscious of knowing and another part in relation to which, the one who knows it remains unaware that he knows it? This other part was put in evidence by Plato in *Meno* where Socrates was put in a difficult position by a sophistic argument when he was asked: “How will you look for a thing of whose nature you know nothing at all?”³ One cannot escape philosophy any more than one can escape any other knowledge, on the pretext that one remains in a state of ignorance that is epistemologically neutral. Ignorance would always be an insufficient or badly begun state of knowledge; but it would not be a lack of knowledge: it would always be paid for by a false knowledge. Philosophy is no exception to the common lot. Of course we must distinguish one way of philosophizing from another. Admittedly, philosophy concerns those who are supposed to make of it their main occupation, who devote all their time to thinking, who read philosophers, argue with those who also think, read texts and weigh up reasons. Still, more or less distantly related to this technical philosophy, there is also a non-technical philosophy that is conveyed beneath or beside the other, and on which that other feeds, either to be set to work or to be led astray, and this second way of philosophizing is not necessarily consciously perceived, particularly by those who are unable to progress to the status of experts on proofs and argumentation. What is the reality of this knowledge or of this “beneath or beside” philosophy? Has it any consistency?

² The sentence is attributed by many authors (Alexander of Aphrodisia, Olympiodorus, Elias, David, Clement of Alexandria) to Aristotle: “If you ought to philosophize you ought to philosophize; and if you ought not to philosophize you ought to philosophize: therefore, in any case you ought to philosophize.” (*Exhortation à la philosophie. Le dossier grec*, Intr., trad. et Com. par S. Van der Meeren (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2011), 93-9.)

³ The whole passage of *Meno* 80 d is so worded: “How will you look, Socrates, for a thing of whose nature you know nothing at all? Pray, what sort of thing, amongst those that you know not, will you treat us to as the object of your search? Or even supposing, at the least, that you hit upon it, how will you know it is the thing you did not know?”

Or is it no more than “fantasy” knowledge or “fantasy” philosophy that true knowledge and technical philosophy may well recognize as pale imitations of themselves, or perhaps as sources of opinion that must be suspected? To this “fantasy” knowledge or “fantasy” philosophy, it would be wrong to give the names of *knowledge* and *philosophy*: *opinion* would be the best word for the former; *worldview* would be the best expression for the latter. What relation does knowledge have with these inevitable fantasies that it casts around or projects before itself, which is to say as having preceded itself? Or, more specifically, what is the relation that philosophy entertains with what it is difficult for it not to conceive of as constituting its own origins or its margins?

Philosophizing is not alone in giving itself non-technical pre-requisites, presuppositions, surroundings and frameworks. Believers in any religion often resort to the argument that those who do not believe as they do are nothing but believers who ignore themselves and, that if they made the effort to consider what they pretend not to believe in, they would come to believe exactly like the believers themselves. The argument relies on the following parallel: just as, when one believes something, it may happen that one does not know that one believes it, so, when one fancies that one disbelieves something, it may happen that one mistakenly believes oneself to disbelieve, because deep down, one unconsciously believes.⁴ Thus, the believer gives himself the advantage over you by identifying what you take to be disbelief with whatever it is that he himself believes, but ill-framed, ill-formed, ill-wrought, or still in progress toward realization. Sometimes, the philosopher may have such a feeling toward what he calls “common sense”. Nearly all the sciences may give rise to such a relation between scholars—at least, of those who think of themselves as such—and the vulgar. Many may pride themselves on their psychology, although they never formally studied the subject, because of a sort of refinement—Pascal’s *esprit de finesse*—they spontaneously ascribe to themselves. Nearly everybody has moral

⁴ Consider the famous sentence that Dostoievski attributes to Kirilov, one of the characters of *The Possessed*: “If Stavrogin believes (has faith), he does not believe that he believes (has faith); if Stavrogin does not believe (hasn’t faith), he does not believe that he does not believe (hasn’t faith).” (Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Possessed, A Novel in 3 Parts* (London: W. Heinemann, 1913), 579.

ideas, unable though they might be to justify themselves by reasons in front of anybody who would challenge them. Many have confidence in treating themselves or others when they are ill, although they do not have any notion of medicine, physiology or biology which they could lay before somebody who contradicts them. Everybody undertakes calculations in an effort to clarify his horizons and to make his life easier, though he does not know how to warrant them by mathematics. One conceives that racism, sexism or species-ism can blossom as so many “worldviews” just so long as the conception of the Other has not reached a sufficiently critical or technical level.

And so another idea appears that is not only the bare idea of the relative falsity of ideas that seem to precede the technical exposition of particular conceptions, but that seem to warn that the very possibility of an environment in which such technical exposition is conceivable or permissible is itself threatened by that falsity. To believe oneself a subtle psychologist, to practice a false medicine, to have no doubt of what one holds as good and just, to have no doubt of the superiority of one’s ethnic group over other groups, of one’s sex over the other, of one’s species over others, is not only false but is also practically dangerous.

What doubtlessly constitutes the specificity of philosophy derives from its singular situation compared with other fields of knowledge and perhaps also constitutes its own tragedy. When somebody has been persuaded that he has made a mistake in a calculation, seldom is it that, having made it, he still believes in the accuracy of his result against the mathematician that checks it off. Seldom also is it that one who is mistaken in regard to the date of an event when he utters some cut and dried historical judgement, goes on believing that he was not mistaken in front of the historian who has better knowledge of the events. However, as Hegel rightly pointed out and was followed by Stuart Mill in doing so,⁵ there are fields in which illusions and mistakes stubbornly persist long af-

⁵ In chapter 7 of Book VI, the last book of *A System of Logic* (whose title is *Of Logic of Moral Sciences*), Stuart Mill refers to “a subject which no one, however ignorant, thinks himself incompetent to discuss” (*Collected Works*, vol. VIII, *A System of Logic Ratiocinative and Inductive, Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation*, vol. II, Book IV-VI and Appendix (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, University of Toronto Press, 1974, 1996), 879.

ter their identification.⁶ Such is the case of philosophy: a specific fate that awaits it must be understood. The field of philosophy is larger than any other. The historian may rectify errors of common sense, but he cannot escape, at least *de jure*, submission to a philosophical judgment that is likely to rely on and exhibit a philosophy of history, more or less latent as a *leidfaden*. Of course, the historian may deny that he relies on a hidden philosophy, since his search for facts is independent of all ideologies; but he uses concepts that always have unexplored propositions or implicit under-propositions, which the philosopher will take as the starting points of his own work, asking himself what remains unexplained thereby.

In *La philosophie silencieuse* (*The Silent Philosophy*), Desanti may uphold the thesis that mathematics has developed, during a long period and continues to develop its proper epistemology, without relying on philosophy to do the work: Desanti's argument remains however the argument of a philosopher conscious of what happens in a mathematical treatise but not in quite the same way as the mathematician who writes it. Doubtless, the philosopher can see mathematics solving problems that he could not have resolved by means of the technical tools of philosophy, if it were possible to list them and consider them from all angles; but it is necessary to be a philosopher—maybe from the point of view of a “silent philosophy”—to perceive the supposed superiority of mathematics. If the mathematician is unaware of his own philosophical standpoint, he will fail

⁶ “This science [philosophy] frequently suffers contemptuous treatment even by those who have not taken the trouble to study it but fancy themselves capable of *understanding* without further ado what philosophy is about, and of philosophizing and passing judgments on philosophy, simply on the basis of an ordinary education...People admit that one must study the other sciences in order to be familiar with them, and that one is entitled to pass judgment on them only by virtue of such familiarity. People admit that in order to manufacture a shoe one must have learnt and practised shoemaking, despite the fact that everyone possesses the requisite model for it in his own feet, as well as the required aptitude for the task in his own hands. Only for philosophizing are such study, learning, and effort supposed not to be a requirement. – This convenient opinion has in recent times received confirmation through the doctrine of immediate knowing [*Wissen*], or knowledge through intuition.” (*The Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*, Part. I: *Science of Logic*, §5, transl. by K. Brinkmann & D. O. Dahlstrom (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 32.)

to discern the superiority of his science by which the philosopher pretends philosophy has been overtaken and left behind. Far from abolishing philosophy by this remark, Desanti re-creates it, or, if he does not fill it up himself, at least points it out as a void. One may recognize that it is better to write mathematics, and create new mathematical demonstrations than to know how to write, in a vernacular language, about requisites and consequences, in a sort of doubling of these texts. Be that as it may, the supremacy of a mathematical text appears to the man who writes of these requisites and consequences, and attempts to understand what happens in a mathematical discourse; for it is by no means certain that a man who knows how to write mathematics, and who even invents new mathematics knows how to create or establish the philosophy of his invention, even if it is better to invent new mathematics than to write the philosophy of that invention. So all discourses, including the more creative ones, call for a philosophical discourse, even if they first reduce it to silence and even paralysed stupefaction; but those who produce these discourses are not necessarily those who are able and willing to undertake the philosophical one. Now, the inability to hold a philosophical discourse is less obvious to common eyes than a lack of knowledge in almost any other fields. Thus one comes to the paradox that the philosopher who knows his field technically and who knows how to argue through it, may, when he gets down to work, be disbelieved—as if he were needlessly sophisticating all things—whereas nobody would ever think of discrediting a scholar in any other field when he is labouring in it. The philosophers may even be ridiculous in their own eyes and seem to display a vain pride when they claim some competence in the techniques of their own field. So every individual, even if he is not a philosopher, may be convinced that the reflective actions the philosopher typically performs are worthwhile, but he thinks that the enterprise would be better led by himself rather than by a technical philosopher whose work is disbelieved. How is this paradox possible? How may it appear to be true, when it is so evidently false to the eyes of the technical philosopher who faces the arduous task of convincing the man of prejudice of his own mistake?

II. A Socratic Conception of the Protrepticus's Sentence

The disagreement of Aristotle with Plato, and even Socrates, has often been exaggerated. If Aristotle is the author of the *Protrepticus*, it is not impossible to give a Socratic meaning to the sentence on which we

are commenting. On this view, learning would be fundamentally a recollection; it means that we already know, on a certain unconscious level what we shall know consciously, conceptually, technically, once we have performed the conscious work of struggle against oblivion. We never do otherwise than recognize ideas; we never invent them; we find them. Proof of this is that, whenever we are looking for them, it is necessary to have already a sort of anticipation of them, making us able to locate them, in order to follow the right way among all the possible ways of approaching them. It is as if consciousness, as it searches, is framing for itself an antecedent situation in which it imagines itself as already knowing what it did not yet know well enough to expound it conceptually. So consciousness, like searching, is relative to the ideas that it is looking for in a more embarrassed and handicapped way than at the time when it will conceive them plainly. There are degrees in knowledge and one cannot pass from a state of perfect ignorance to a state of perfect knowledge without any mediation. It remains to be determined whether it is knowledge that invents for itself an archaic situation that never happened otherwise than as a fantasy or whether we must admit the reality of this sleeping state from which knowledge is slowly roused. Can the little attendant of Meno find the length of the diagonal of one foot square only because, in a way, he already knows it? Does not Socrates, who leads him and who already knows the result, project onto the slave's consciousness, to explain his answers, the emerging new requirements that spring out from the set of corrections, as something which gives retrospective structure and purpose in the interplay of advances, setbacks and even temporary paralyses which characterize human problem solving? Does the soul that searches for truth about the diagonal give an answer of to its own thought or does it only fancy that it draws all pure knowledge from itself? Is the impression of recognizing knowledge an illusion, however fundamental—for it seems impossible to escape from it easily—or does it match with some reality?

It seems that Plato, through his character of Socrates, hesitated. In *Meno*, recollection is advanced mythically, as if the soul could enjoy an eternity in which it could describe cycles during which phases of contemplation would succeed phases of oblivion, which are themselves succeeded by phases of renewed contemplation. The temporality of knowledge that can precede itself would betoken the complicity of the soul with the eternity of the ideas. However this mythical version is preceded

by a short conceptual abstract of the argument mounted in opposition to the Sophists which is the reverse, or the sceptical version,⁷ of the *Protrepticus*'s sentence:

A man cannot inquire either about what he knows or about what he does not know. For he cannot inquire about what he knows, because he knows it, and in that case is in no need of inquiry; nor again can he inquire about what he does not know, since he does not know about what he is to inquire.⁸

If one deciphers this metaphorical plot, one discovers three things. The *first* is that truth is essentially *aletheia* for Plato, disclosure and unveiling: its "searching" must be taken seriously: it is not a construction. It follows and approaches more and more closely, more and more adequately, to the ideas. In other words, as Leibniz showed in his *Discourse on Metaphysics*, it is necessary to distinguish "ideas" from "conceptions."⁹ That the mind must conceive the ideas should not lead us to confound ideas with concepts: the concept is the act of conceiving and this act may be right or wrong, perfect or imperfect, clear or obscure. Ideas, on the contrary, are what they are; they cannot be wrong, imperfect or obscure; they can only be

⁷ I mean the sceptical version of the sentence of *Meno*. In *Meno*, the question is one less of knowing than of the impossibility of knowing, whereas in the *Protrepticus*, one knows what one knows, even if one does not know that one knows it. In *Meno*, one does not know what one knows, since if one knew it, one would not be able to recognize it as something that one knows.

⁸ *Meno*, 81 a.

⁹ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, § XXVI: "In view to conceive what is an idea, it is necessary to anticipate an equivocation, because many people take the idea for the form or for the difference of our thoughts, and in this way we have the idea in our mind only as we think of it; and every time we think of it anew, we have other ideas of the same thing, though similar to the previous ones. But it seems that others take the idea as an immediate object of the thought or as some permanent form everlasting even when we do not contemplate it. And indeed, our soul has always in itself and for itself the power to represent any nature or form, when it occurs to think of it. And I believe that this power of our soul, as it expresses some nature, form or essence, is properly the idea of the thing, that is in us and that is always in us, either we think of it or not." In *The Foundations of Arithmetic*, Frege is of the same mind with regard to this question.

conceived wrongly, imperfectly or obscurely, with knowledge being the behaviour which aims to seize on ideas, truly, perfectly and clearly. Ideas could exist in a perfect truth even though our mind cannot seize them; and this is what happens for the most part. This means that truths may exist even though no mind is able or willing to say them, think them or teach them. *Two and two are four*, even if nobody is able to think of it. Truths are not made by the mind. The mind is not a creator or fabricator of truth: it can only get hold of something which is outside it, although it is necessary that it should exist in order to have this sort of eternity revealed to itself, and to itself alone. There is a sort of fundamental passivity in the ideas; but this passivity must be actively wrought to be realised.

The *second discovery* is that the fields of knowledge are unequal for the recollection of ideas. Doubtless, philosophy and mathematics are in good place because the mind can, in these fields, draw propositions from itself and get to grips with itself, if we dare say. The same is not true of physics, biology, or history, that entail from the soul a dependence toward something that cannot be drawn from itself and that is more openly connected to an external experience. This is what induced Aristotle to say, very Socratically, that poetry, for instance, was more essential to mind than history.¹⁰ Let us leave aside the idea that an experience of ideas is possible in philosophy as in mathematics: for, even if the idea is well-founded,¹¹ such an experience is not of the same nature as the experience which is to be had in physics, biology or history. That is what made Nietzsche say, contrary to Socrates whose recollection and

¹⁰ "Poetry is something more philosophical and serious than history, because poetry tends to give general truths while history gives particular facts. By a "general truth" I mean the sort of thing that a certain type of man will do or say either probably or necessarily. That is what poetry aims at in giving names to the characters. A "particular fact" is what Alcibiades did or what was done to him." (Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1451 b 1-5).

¹¹ We consider it perfectly well founded.

its ideology he fought, that it was necessary to learn physics.¹² Hobbes, who no less than Nietzsche was an adversary of Socrates and Aristotle, performed the same cutting out, putting mathematics on the same side of the divide as politics, and arguing, in both cases, that the mind is entirely dependent on itself to settle and develop its knowledge.¹³ It is true that philosophy and mathematics seem to pit the soul against itself. It is not by chance that the *Meno*, like the *Republic*, gives a prominent place to these two sciences in the hierarchy of knowledge.

The *third discovery* is a paradox. It is the man who knows the most that seems the least sure of what he says, and the man who knows the least does not hesitate to speak of what he does not know with complete conviction, even in front of the man who knows the most. One knows the sally of W. Churchman: “Almost everyone knows what it means to say that an event is only probable—except those who have devoted their lives

¹² “Wir müssen *Physiker* sein, um, in jenem Sinne, *Schöpfer* sein zu können, - während bisher alle Werthschätzung und Ideale auf *Unkenntniss* der Physik oder im *Widerspruch* mit ihr aufgebaut waren. Und darum: Hoch die Physik!” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Viertes Buch, n. 335 in *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Fünfte Abteilung, Zweiter Band, (Berlin and New York: W. de Gruyter, 1973), 243-4.)

¹³ Thomas Hobbes, *Treatise of Man*, chap. X, § 5: “Since the causes of the properties that individual figures have belong to them because we ourselves draw the lines; and since the generation of the figures depends on our will, nothing more is required to know the phenomenon peculiar to any figure whatsoever, than that we consider everything that follows from the construction that we ourselves make in the figure to be described. Therefore, because of this fact (that is, that we ourselves create the figures), it happens that geometry has been and is demonstrable”. Certainly one may be overpassed by his own creation, but it remains that mathematics, unlike physics to which they are yet applied though we are not the cause of what to which they are applied, are of the same order than “politics and ethics (that is, the science of *just* and *unjust*, of *equity* and *inequity*) [that] can be demonstrable *a priori*; because we ourselves make the principles—that is the causes of justice (namely laws and covenants)—whereby it is known what *justice* and *equity* and their opposites *injustice* and *inequity* are. For before covenants and laws were drawn up, neither justice nor injustice, neither public good nor public evil, was natural among men any more than it was among beasts.”

to thinking about the matter".¹⁴ The one who has the richest and most intense contact with ideas knows the extent of his ignorance, whereas the other who is not conscious of the processes of knowledge believes himself to be very learned, and takes his conviction for knowledge. To this paradox one must add another which seems to carry us in the opposite direction: Socrates does not give priority to systematically questioning the specialist and the technician in his quest to begin to know about something, but begins precisely with the man who is not on his guard, who has a spontaneous conviction that he knows what he says and who may be easily brought to recognize he knows nothing and, certainly, that he knows no more than those who know that they know nothing of the matter. Oddly enough, Socrates is interested by this latter behaviour and he highlights it and thinks it worthy of investigation as if he wanted to know, in relation to any topic, how it is possible to tell that one knows what one ignores, and as if there was some focus of interest in what will prove to be illusory and false. Anyway it will be necessary to start from this non-knowledge, which takes itself to be an authentic knowledge in order to achieve a certain prudence in making assertions and developing some points truly resistant to criticism; Socrates does not deny all value to this pretended knowledge, however raw and false. This insufficient or twisted relation to ideas is perhaps more important, in order to begin an investigation, than technical knowledge, however much more solid and better established than the latter, not because it has fewer 'fantasies' of knowledge, but because those features are less interesting than those of the latter, more naïve, more spontaneous, when they emanate from the vulgar men. How is it that Socrates ascribes an increased value, at least to this degree, to a form of knowledge which is not to be taken as true, but which revels in its very primitiveness and archaism? Doubtless, Socrates does not want to deal with any individual as if he were a philosopher; the matter is rather, "giving birth" to his convictions, and raising everybody to a position to bridge the gap that separates him from philosophers or, more precisely, from the philosophy he might produce if he got that far, and consequently to begin to having a certain idea of it.

¹⁴ We loan this quotation from the article of Schoemaker, p. 556. The quoted book is: *Prediction and Optimal Decision; Philosophical Issues of a Science of Values* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1961).

III. Aspects of Non-Knowledge that Fascinate Socrates and, Through Him, Every Philosopher

We have just seen Socrates grappling with this strange non-knowledge that precedes any knowledge, and that must be detected, examined, spelled, and weighed before being rectified. Let us attempt to fathom the nature of this non-knowledge that is, in some way, a knowledge.

Every act, every motion of the mind, even if it is projected upon some external object, or if it looks to give birth to this latter, seems accompanied or reflected by another act that may be the determination of an object, of an action or of a passion. It accompanies it in the same direction, but not in the same sense. This opposed sense, which one could call generally a *reflection*, *ein Nachdenken*, tends strangely to present itself as the principle of the act, and to believe itself, or to pass itself off as, primary or original. An inversion takes place between the sense that causes or sets things moving and a contrary sense that stems the current of the other and drives movement backwards towards its origin. This counter-sense seems less controlled than the former, and, strangely, more fundamental, as if the foundation came afterwards; as if the Promethean break-out was always reversed by the Epimethean reassembly, the latter being no less valuable than the former. So two acts, felt with an equal immediacy, may be substituted for one another.

This is the reason why everybody who, in any circumstance, feels a sentiment, always also feels himself justified in experiencing it, and does not question the certainty of what he feels. The impression of reflection, which is a sentiment in regard to the other perceptions, believes itself very easily. This fact has been well known since Aristotle showed that some passions, such as anger, are such that I cannot help but experience them whenever I consider that I am not being treated as I ought to be.¹⁵ Malebranche, however, was right to extend the rule to every affec-

¹⁵ “Hence Achilles in his wrath exclaims: ‘He has dishonoured me, since he keeps the prize he has taken for himself, and [has treated me] like a dishonoured vagrant’, as if being wrath for these reasons. Now men think that they have a right to be highly esteemed by those who are inferior to them in birth, power, and virtue, and generally, in whatever similar respect a man is far superior to another; for example, the rich man to the poor in the matter of money, the eloquent to the incompetent speaker in the matter of oratory, the governor to the governed, and the man who thinks himself worthy to rule to one who is only fit

tion, as if it claims to be a well-founded judgment of circumstances.¹⁶ This assessment, neither thematized nor verbalized, is the preliminary knowledge that embraces and colours our entire existence in an unconscious way, with no possibility of immediately disentangling true from false, right from wrong, good from bad. The “tune” of our sentiments—their *Stimmung*—stands security for the judgments that are tied to it, as if it had hold upon existence itself, and as if captured that experience better than any discourse which takes the risk of being true or false. One understands that philosophy may start from here, and may find here its content and inspiration.

However this phenomenon is a function of language itself, whether or not tied to affections. Pascal, in a famous fragment of the *Pensées*, treats it judiciously as a sort of knowledge.¹⁷ True or false, language is a knowledge because of its central role in determining of the way in which we relate to the objects to which it seems to refer us. Before we are ever disposed to criticize this relation to objects—which critique will itself happen through language—we give our trust without having a rationale (although this lack of rationale does not appear to us) to the acts of language, whatever they are: those of semantic division, those of syntactical order, and sometimes those of an odd logic. We believe in language just as we believe in a well founded knowledge, until we discover with aston-

to be ruled. [...] Further, men are angry at slights from those by whom they think they have a right to expect to be well treated; such are those on whom they have conferred or are conferring benefits, either themselves, or some one else for them, or one of their friends; and all those whom they desire, or did desire, to benefit” (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, II, II, 1378b7–1379a9, cited in *The “Art” of Rhetoric*, trans. J. H. Freese (Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1991), 177-9.)

¹⁶ In the *Traité de morale*, Book I, Chap. XIII, § VIII, may be found what we have called the “law of Malebranche” in our *Essai sur les fictions*: “All the passions justify themselves in a way which, while they are acting on the mind, makes it impossible to reach solid judgments about the object exciting them, for their malignity is such that they are never satisfied when reason fails to yield judgments in their favour” (*Treatise on Ethics* (1648), trans. with introduction by Craig Walton (Dordrecht, Boston, and London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993) 137.)

¹⁷ *Pensées*, Laf. 720: “Universal. Ethics and language are particular, but also universal branches of knowledge”.

ishment that other languages arrange their semantics and syntax in other ways; which is certainly a prompt to philosophical insight, but a prompt which we tend to resist a long time—if indeed ever we ever fully embrace it—by relegating these languages to the status of mere foreign languages, clearly inferior to our own mother tongue which, of course, we suppose to hold the true divisions and the true articulations.¹⁸ Our being in the world, insofar as it is affective, speaks of itself in a language that is difficult for us to criticize because we do not have the heart to criticize the very tool we rely on for making sense of that world. We do not have the heart to criticize it because it is that which seems to be for us the inevitable backdrop and essential tool of all philosophical activity. Thus we simply put up with it when this activity does not begin or develop in a technical way, because it seems more fundamental than all that may be criticized. In order for there to be critics or criticism, there must be something, some “matter,” which is believed. It appears to us that no critical activity may be developed without this “matter,” which we must identify, by entering into its particularities, contesting them perhaps, and certainly correcting them where necessary, in order that some philosophy may emerge. In *Cratylus*, Socrates said: “Language is Pan which may rightly be called goat-herd”,¹⁹ *Pan*, because it covers an infinite number of aspects; *goat-herd* because language has *tragos* in it, which means that, in the midst of the flock, led by the herder, are many malicious beings or, if you prefer, because there is a principle of falsity in language.

However, if Plato was right, it is calculation, rather than speech, that

¹⁸ Diderot’s article on the French language must be read again (in: *Lettre sur les aveugles; Lettre sur les sourds et muets* (Paris: GF Flammarion, 2000), 113., for here we will find expressed by an author usually so subtle and refined in his criticisms, a lot of prejudices that everybody brings forth spontaneously in respect to their mother tongue and to the knowledge it involves.

¹⁹ “Socrates: Then Pan, who declares and always moves—*αει πολων*—all, is rightly called goat-herd—*αιπολος*—being the double-natured son of Hermes, smooth in his upper parts, rough and goat-like in his lower parts”. (Plato, *Cratyles*, 408 c-d)

makes us clever beings.²⁰ This does not mean that all our calculations are any more correct than our speeches' pretended truth. It simply means that in the human world, calculations are always done, must always be done, even if they are neither elucidated nor explained: sometimes it takes a long time before we learn how to elucidate them in a general or universal way, without abandoning the care of calculation exclusively to the passions. Not a calculation may be performed but, beneath it and taking shape from it, another calculation springs, seeming to tell the truth of the former. Pascal, when he expounded the calculation of probabilities in competitive games, reveals, under the surface scores, the real state of equilibrium among the players. A calculation may be the reflection of another; it may underlie it and be, in a manner, its philosophy. Every calculation is a sort of table that develops other calculations indefinitely. Another instance would develop these insights, at the intersection of mathematics and politics, as Condorcet (following Plato and Hobbes) was able to bring out: there is no ballot that has not, beneath it, its calculations, and that does not demonstrate the inadequacy of the thesis that the simple tallying of votes always designates the correct winner. If one pays attention to "majorities of refusal," whose value is at least equal to, though less obvious than, the value of "majorities of assent," the exclusive and persisting focus of most electoral systems on the latter is by no means self-evidently correct. Numbers give place to other numbers, and it is this giving way, or transformation into other numbers, that constitutes a sort of pre-philosophy. Do not be lulled into believing that this transformation is immediately right or effective: evaluations of probability are usually wrong when made by people who do not know how to do the calculations, and that do not practice them at all, but the suspicion that behind or under numbers lurk other numbers, as series behind series—even though one cannot articulate them in any explicit and determinate fashion—may be thought of as the sketch of a philosophical reflection.

Hence we return to language that, from the beginning and through an infinitely sophisticated system of levels, locates the speaker on points that

²⁰ *Epinomis*, 977c: "If we should deprive human nature of number we should never attain to any understanding. For...the creature that did not know two and three, or odd or even, and was completely ignorant of number, could never clearly tell of things about which it had only acquired sensations and memories."

are impossible to locate empirically or, if we prefer, “really.” Language may locate the speaker in a future or in a past such as he cannot have lived in, within points of view of beings from places he does not inhabit; it can make move all the frontiers: between life and death, I and the Other, I and myself at different moments of time, between I as a subject and I as an object. Language engraves symbolically imagined problems that, however impossible it may be to live them empirically, have yet a real effect that could not be real without them. Language introduces “unthinkability,” infinity, impossibility, from which philosophy may extend its points of view; but they may exist in the absence of a technical philosophy capable of taking them over in order to transform them into methods and to criticize them (though it is impossible to do without them). No discourse about death, soul, time, world, the Other, the I, “nothing,” or existence could take place without these “impossible” points of view, the interplay between which must produce rules to govern their use so that speech may simultaneously exploit their infinite potentiality and criticize the “impossibilities” of that exploitation. However, this latter task is neither to everybody’s taste, nor, perhaps, understandable to everybody. Nobody should believe what is spoken of as a lie by Plato: the Socratic assertion that there are different sorts of men whose nature is mixed of gold, or of silver, or of iron and bronze.²¹ But surely we are obliged to recognize that not everybody is a philosopher, that only a very few become philosophers to the extent of making philosophy their trade or main business, and that this state of affairs is by no means necessarily a bad thing. Besides, it is not impossible to think that not every language permits a philosophical extension. How many thoughts are intimated to us by the impossible difficulty we sometimes find in conceiving that which we are speaking? If, for instance, it is so easy for us to conceive of our thinking being as immortal, is it not because there is no internal point of view from which to think of death, because the mere thinking of it seems to exclude us from its power? The *I think* can absolutely not include his death, which, whatever else it does, precludes thought.

The sketch we have drawn of the priority of sentiment, language, number and calculation was made from an already somewhat sophisticated point of view, and indeed featured references to what we called a

²¹ Plato, *Republic*, 415a-d. Aristotle upheld in his *Politics* a similar thesis that is mocked by Hobbes in *Leviathan*, ch. XV.

technical point of view (without fully explaining its features). Without this critical point of view, sentient, speaking and calculating beings do not know where their certainty, or what Pascal called their “science”—their knowledge—come from. They passively put up with an unexamined ordering of precedence, in living by an ad hoc transcendence of things and objects, driven by convictions deeper than any criticism or any justification, without knowing from whence they come, and believing that there, in the sphere of language, they perceive accurately, and that there they can drink their fill of a principle of value according to which affects jostle to promote themselves without the slightest relativity to qualify this strange sort of prosopopeia.

What is still not still clear is the status of these orderings of precedence: are they phantasms with which our constructions are surrounded? Are they real priorities that require philosophical developments? Everybody knows the famous fragment of the *Pensées* in which Pascal opposes the opinion of the Duke de Roannez, who defended reminiscence when Pascal’s spokesman warned us against the idea of the retrogression of truth²² towards a supposed recollection, and argued that solving a problem neither means recalling its solution nor continually turning over its premises as if they contained the solution.²³ The illusion of recollection would be thus more an effect of the statement of the problem than the source of its solution. The desire for a solution in knowledge could no more be the demonstration of the possession of this knowledge than “want is its supply and hunger is the bread”,²⁴ while if this knowledge is a philosophical one, it could no longer demonstrate the necessity or inevitability of philosophy, as *Protrepticus* seems to claim.

²² Bergson had the expression, in French: “mouvement rétrograde du vrai.”

²³ “M. de Roannez used to say: ‘The reasons occur to me afterwards, but first of all the thing pleases or shocks me without my knowing why, and yet it shocks me for reasons I only discover later.’ But I do not think it shocks for reason we discover afterwards but that we only discover the reasons because it does shock.” (Laf. 983 in: Pascal, *Pensées*, Penguin Books, London, 1995, 327-8).

²⁴ Jeremy Bentham, “Nonsense upon Stilts or Pandora’s Box opened,” in: *Rights, Representation and Reform. Nonsense upon stilts and other writings on the French Revolution*, ed. P. Schofield, C. Pease-Watkin and C. Balmires (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 330.

In effect, for one to consider knowledge—and particularly philosophical knowledge—to be the cause of what appears, taking things back-to-front, as a sort of pre-knowledge, or to consider such pre-knowledge to be really the cause of the philosophical reflection, one has but to deal with a conjunction of two mental phenomena, or of two acts, or of an act and of its passive reversal, or of the contrary phenomenon. However, it must be admitted, with Bayes and Mill, that the *irresistibleness* of the bond between subsequent phenomena is not imperative.²⁵ Even if we had found the means to expurgate *irresistibleness* from the causation that is in matter, it we would still have to resolve the antinomy up against which we have come from the very beginning.

IV. Philosophy is a construction

As is well known, Kant distinguishes, even in *a priori* knowledge, *determination* from *reflection*, and, even though he ranks mathematics among the fields of knowledge that construct their concepts, he prefers define philosophy by *conceptual reflection*.²⁶ Now it appears that this opposition is only apparent: there is as much reflection²⁷ in mathematics

²⁵ *A System of Logic*, in: *Collected Works*, VIII, 839: “That world [necessity] involves much more than mere uniformity of sequence: it implies irresistibility. [But] the causes on which action depends, are never uncontrollable; and any given effect is only necessary provided that the causes tending to produce it are not controlled. That whatever happens, could not have happen otherwise unless something hard taken place which was capable of preventing it, no one surely needs hesitate to admit. But to call this by the name necessity is to use the term in a sense so different from its primitive and familiar meaning, from that which it bears in the common occasions of life, as to a mount almost to a play upon words.”

²⁶ “Philosophical knowledge is the knowledge of reason by means of concepts; mathematical knowledge is knowledge by means of the *construction* of concepts” (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Everyman, London; J. M. Dent; Vermont: C E. Tuttle, 1998), 470 [II, Transcendental Doctrine of Method, chap. I, sec. I]).

²⁷ Even when reflection is defined by Kant as “that state of the mind in which we set ourselves to discover the subjective conditions under which we obtain concepts. It is the consciousness of the relation of given representations to the different sources or faculties of knowledge, by which alone their relation to each other can be rightly determined.” (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 216)

as in philosophy, and as much determining knowledge in philosophy as in mathematics. The mathematical problems of probabilities, such as those solvable by the application of Bayes rule for instance, are intended to frame, between two degrees of belief, the reasons I have to think that such or such a situation has such or such chance to come to pass. One can see then that the act of projecting oneself towards a possible future situation in order to define it is bound to an impetus carrying one back towards an initial "*I guess*" that authorizes the act of projecting, in the name of reality, to make its guess while fixing limits to it. Conversely, what would might a philosophy that pretended to reflect upon its objects without having learned to fix them by the determination taught by the sciences look like? One cannot reflect upon nothing or from nothing.

But this point needs to be elaborated carefully. Nowadays there are many philosophers that feign to elaborate a sort of previous state, open only to intuition, which can only afterwards be developed by reasons. Philosophy would receive this state as a "given," and even as sciences were constructing their concepts upon the basis of this previous knowledge while ignoring it, philosophy would have the task of investigating it. Now this previous knowledge is nothing but the unconscious creation of acts by these so-called philosophies, that posit of a mode of non-reflective thinking that they claim to reflect afterwards. However is it not through what they have the desire to say, the desire to feel, the desire to think that these philosophies fill up what they settle as being before any knowledge, included theirs? Like Pascal, and contrary to M. de Roannez's recollection, we suggest that it is the work of reflection that gives to us the "non-reflected." Moreover, this "non-reflected" always takes the form of the reflection which insists that the "non-reflected" comes first. Like all other knowledge, philosophy solves problems by construing solutions, and it must be careful not to put forward as a solution the phantasms that this construction seems to project backwards as if they were its foundation.

Let us take an instance. When philosophy raises ethical problems, it seems always to assume pre-existing intuitive ethical positions by which we think ourselves already informed, and which determine the shape and style of the solutions. One may even fear that reason plays its part in so fine and sophisticated an interlacing web that it is impossible to imagine that it may be untangled, until reason takes over the problem, formulates and solves it. Or, if reason cannot solve it, it might at least

give the problem the shape and limits of a neat antinomy, whose clarity will benefit all those that will in future face the problem, and the challenge of solving it. The conceptualization of ethical problems—what, following R. M. Hare, we may call the critical level—not only spreads out and develops the intuitive level, but drives out the weaknesses, the inadequacies, the inabilities of intuition to raise up to some totality, or to treat some complicated situation otherwise than by calling upon sentiment, and elaborating that sentimental position in the hope that those who do not currently share it will do so once it is clearly enough stated. When philosophy claims only to elaborate an intuitive conviction, it ceases to be a philosophy, and becomes an uncritical laudation and endorsement of positions that it refuses to think out. In the field of ethics and politics, it is surprising to see how many pretended philosophies choose to adopt, when they begin to link different ethical principles, a so-called “lexical order” that consists developing from the first principle all the rules that is possible to derive from it, before passing to another principle which will be dealt in the same way, provided it does not oppose the first; and then repeating this filtering and linking many times. This surprise does not arise in response to the method that really succeeds in linking principles, but in response to the arbitrary choice of the ranking of the principles in first, second, third, or n^{th} position. Leaving to intuition the choice of personal liberty as the first principle, then, in second position, the equality principle—as Rawls does in his *Theory of Justice*—may qualify as an apology for a particular system of government, but it should not be mistaken for the product of philosophical method, because on the major point where one waits for the chance to catch the philosopher out—to know—at the very moment for proving that priority must be granted to individual freedom rather than to equality—this method remains silent. One cannot describe as philosophy the mere recapitulation, or even the clarification and elucidation, of prejudices. The coherent arrangement of the principles is a work for politicians, or perhaps rather for theoreticians of politics, and it is a useful work. But it is not a philosophical work, because such a work is limited to the managing of a precedent situation to which it wants, or imagines itself to be, the heir. We should rather adopt the standpoint of R. M. Hare, who distinguishes in ethics between an intuitive and a critical level, and who recognizes that the existence of a critical level is suggested by the contradictions commonly met with at the intuitive level,

but who also emphasizes that the intuitive level does not inspire the ideas of the critical level. Everything is always to be done over again when the task is to criticize. What a philosophical critique performs, upon what seems to precede it, is to bring out the multifarious and potentially contradictory aspects which intuition is unable to resolve.

Philosophy takes the side of critiques and proofs: it must not betray itself by working secretly for a side that it camouflages under the name of *intuition*. The position of the “non-reflected” cannot be the foundation of something from which a valid inference might be made, if only it can manage to make good on its promise to this “non-reflected” position. Philosophy does not proceed without effort or disagreement with regard to just which intuitive convictions it may legitimately fancy to precede it. It goes against the stream of intuition, or, if it is meant to be in the main stream of intuition—where Hume thinks it necessary to locate it in *A Treatise of Human Nature*—the onus is on the philosopher to show that it cannot be otherwise, that reason cannot solve the problem using only its own resources,²⁸ as, for instance, it is possible for the mathematician to demonstrate that it is not possible to square the circle.

What philosophy must do, instead of following in the wake of a non-knowledge, or of an intuition unable to establish its rights, is—for a given question—to investigate all the possible positions, and so to reverse the supposed priorities. Far from believing supposed data from which one expects to extract a philosophy, it is necessary, when a problem arises, to examine the plurality of its formulations and of its solutions, but also to take care not to leave unexamined the “imaginary” basis of these so listed formulations, an “imaginary” basis that some philosophies claim to have in front of them, as if they must draw their inspiration and even their content from it, even though this imaginary is all too likely to be simply a projection from these formulations themselves.

Imagine a confrontation between the author of *Les données immédiates de la conscience* and a utilitarian author—Bentham or Hare—about ethics. The former closes the door to any calculation of pleasures and pains—calculations which society needs—believing himself to have shown, through what he thinks to be an approach to the

²⁸ In the third Book, the author of *A Treatise* endeavours to give the solution of this problem. It can be rationally demonstrated that a problem does escape the grasp of reason, and no sin against reason is committed by the demonstration.

lived experience (*Erlebnis*) that sensations and sentiments are too heterogeneous to supply the commensurability that the calculations require. The latter try to think of sensations and passions in a way which makes possible the calculations wanted by society. Thus, the problem is reversed, but it is by no means clear that this latter utilitarian option is inferior to Bergson's, or that it should instead enter upon the configuration of all the possible formulations of the requisites of the calculation of pleasures and pains, in the way that has been sought after for several thousand years, but perhaps, in a more urgent manner, for two or three centuries. My purpose is not, through this reversal of Bergsonism, to prove that utilitarianism is right against Bergson: my goal rather is to establish that philosophy has no right to give its allegiance to some fundamental belief, whatever the nature of that allegiance and belief. Utilitarianism secrets within its compass a social and ontological "imaginary"; but it does not command belief in this "imaginary," calling it philosophy and denying the title of philosophy to all other positions. In all probability, philosophy, far from being faithful to any such imaginary construction, must draw up a table of the possible positions concerning a question, and proceed to a judicious logical inventory of their respective advantages and disadvantages, in order to make a rational choice. The only alternative is to build philosophy in the wake of beliefs which are, quite erroneously, described as philosophical, and either to be content with the consciousness of the error, or to pretend, consciously or unconsciously, that it does not exist.

If, on every question, philosophy succeeds in making such an inventory of possible positions, of principles that permit their calculation and resolution, without prejudice to the primary principle, but leaving all options open, if the selection criteria (of solutions) are no longer beliefs but reasons, then one might envisage an organization of philosophers similar to the contemporary medical community of Evidence Based Medicine, whose investigations and practices are adding to an immense stock of positions, to which anyone may contribute, and in which anyone may inspire himself in endeavouring to give his reasons, and to explain to the others their deviation from the ordinary rule. Why not consider the entire field of philosophy in this way, with everybody collaborating by contributing to one question or another, and submitting that contribution to examination by others, and to their discussions of its formulation and structure? No research is too singular to find a place in

some table of positions, though its accommodation therein might require a profound rearrangement. One can always locate a position in relation to another, all the more so since the point is not to regard the table as if it were complete, or even as if it ought to aim at completion no matter what the cost. Philosophy appears to exist in this unceasing interaction between positions, rather than in the derivation of a thesis or of a set of theses from positions which it imagines to be precedent to it. More precisely, because it is impossible for philosophy to prevent the interplay of priorities, philosophy is rendered recognizably philosophical only by a confrontation with other philosophies, without requiring any other belief than this one which, when all is said and done, is permitted, and thereafter that the articulations of their respective tables have been produced and reviewed. In the words of Leibniz, though far from Leibniz's conception (which was in a still Platonic mood, and which attacked Hobbes for making truths up as he needed them),²⁹ the ideas are the effects of the interplay of conceptions, but not their principles. More precisely still: what appear as ideas separate from conceptions result from a certain stabilization of the latter. The most dangerous point of the process concerns the forming of functions, because setting aside the simple confrontations taking place amidst the families of philosophers, it remains the case that, outside these families, confrontations are systematically avoided in order to negotiate academic advantage, political rewards or power, all themselves goods that have nothing to do with philosophical searching. However this difficulty affects not only the organization of the world of philosophers: it has been identified as a stumbling block since Rousseau, for instance, wanted to distinguish the will of all from

²⁹ Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, § XXIV: "Truths do not depend on names, and are not arbitrary, as some new philosophers have believed it". Leibniz goes against Hobbes who said in *De Corpore*, Chap. III, 8, that "veritas enim in dicto consistit". "Deductihincquoque potest, veritates omnium primas, ortasse ab arbitrio eorum qui nomina rebus primi imposuerunt, vela balliisposita acceperunt" (Thomas Hobbes, *Opera Philosophica Omnia* (Bristol, England, and Sterling, USA: Thoemmes Press, 1999), 31-2.)

the general will,³⁰ and cast light on this tricky point, without solving it.

The organization spoken of above is hard to settle in some fields, though it seems easier in others. Laplace showed examples of it with astronomy and physics. Paradoxically, it seems harder to settle on knowledge and actions that seem to depend on the mind itself, such as philosophy, mathematics, and politics. *Paradoxically*, one might say, for, if mind feels itself to be accompanied in its action by an experimental or experiential rectification, it yields more easily to such a performance, even though it seems more dependent on something external to it. There not space enough here to show that experience does not make the slightest difference, because it acquires sense only through being incorporated in theories, and because one would be wrong to imagine that theories depend on external experience.

V. The Temptation of Hypocrisy

The “discourse of the beneath,” like the discourse that precedes or skirts technical or critical discourse, is not only imaginary, but it can give rise to a symbolism which it cannot perform by itself: it begets and furthers hypocrisy. When a discourse is split, and when the speaker uses only one of its branches, and refuses to recognize the other branch, even though he knows of its existence and its efficiency, then both discourse and speaker enter the service of hypocrisy. One finds sometimes, in hospitals, people that use what is called “the doctrine of double effect.” For example, when the doctor wants to soothe a particularly violent and long-term pain, he may administer to the patient analgesic doses of which he knows the lethal danger, because of their depressing effects on the heart, without having the intention to kill the patient. Here, the intention is used as a pair of moral scissors that makes cuts in the act so that a part may be retained while the consequences of the other part are delib-

³⁰ “When factions, partial associations, are formed to the detriment of the whole society, the will of each of these associations become general with reference to its members, and particular with reference to the State; it may then be said that there are no larger as many voters as there are men, but only as many voters as there are associations. The differences become less numerous and yield a less general result” (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract or Principles of Political Right* (London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1924), 123).

erately ignored. So it can be said that law interdicting euthanasia—as is the case in France—was scrupulously obeyed, even though euthanasia is effectively practised; because by means of an act beneficial to the patient (pain-relief), another act is performed which is noxious to the patient (euthanasia), at least so long as the patient wishes to go on living.

Pascal showed, in opposition to some Jesuit moral philosophers of his time, how intention could be used, by its splitting of actions, to consider only what is presentable from a moral or legal point of view, while diverting attention from the depravities that may accompany it.³¹ The only skill required is that of choosing a convenient line of division, and to disregard completely the part of the action it would be dangerous to show because it would reveal too easily the immorality of those who, by a conjuring trick, display only the morally uncontroversial aspects of their action.

The case of philosophers who treat as philosophical what they posit as preceding or skirting their technical approach, in order to feign an experience that seems to found their approach is quite similar. To call upon experience is often an alibi intended to warrant a thesis that seems thereby to gain a new support, even though it only actually cuts what support it does have in half. Theoretical philosophy—is it even possible for a philosophy not to be theoretical?—makes itself appear as that which is lacking to experience and that to which experience aspires, as if presenting itself as desired, wanted or called forth could add to it any degree of truth. So there are philosophies that manage this cutting so that they seem to be called forth by the less philosophical part as revealing them to itself. Far from being laid upon an intuition, and upon an “intuited world” that precedes them, these philosophies beget this pretended intuition and “intuited world” precisely to give to themselves and to the reader the impression that they speak of something which is not merely their invention.

This hypocrisy takes all sorts of forms. To name just a few: the

³¹ Pascal, *Provincial Letters*, VIIIth Letter: “When we cannot prevent the action, we rectify the intention at least, and so correct the viciousness of the means by the purity of the end...Do you understand me now? -Perfectly well, said I, you allow men the outward and material action, and give to God the inward and spiritual intention; and by this equitable division, you connect the human laws with the laws of God” (in *The Life of Mr. Paschal with his Letters Relative to the Jesuits*, two volumes (London, Bettenham, 1744), 137-8).

form of the “already-there-world”—*le monde déjà-là*—in Merleau-Ponty, the form of intuitionist ethics, the form of the pretended “immediate data of consciousness” in Bergson, the form of an alleged “nature” upon which would be settled cultural constructions, the form of a naivety of sensation or feeling that would precede their transformation or sophistication.³² How could it be possible to seize what is *given, natural, immediate*, as if they were absolute commencements, as if mixture and heterogeneity were not present from the very beginning, without it being possible to attribute to them some end? The trick is for sophistication to gain an acceptance by passing itself off as something immediate and simple, though it is neither immediate nor simple. A long time ago, Pascal noticed that what is considered as memory and custom often presents itself as something natural and immediate, whereas what appears so is more usually a highly complex deposit of a sophistication that refuses to recognize itself as such in order to feign deep roots in existence. How is it possible in such a split purpose that one part could be historical, whereas the other is not only not historical, but (and even) anti-historical? One side of the knowledge is feigned, in order to have its matter echoed and imposed by the other.

This ideology is nearly always accompanied by a notion of *interpretation* that, in a paranoid way, insists that every text read or spoken, whether it be read or spoken by myself or by someone else, does not say what it seems to say, as if a part of its “sense” is concealing itself from anybody would try to grasp it. In such a conception, whether

³² So Merleau-Ponty ends the foreword of his *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945) in unveiling the phenomenological movement as if it was as “laborious” as “the work of Balzac, of Proust, of Valéry or of Cézanne—by the same style of attention and astonishment, by the same rigour of consciousness, by the same will of seizing the world’s sense or the history’s sense in a nascent state” (xvi). If, as it is undisputable, history exists in Balzac’s work or in Proust’s books, it is not in a “nascent state”—*à l’état naissant*—but in a whirling turbulence that has begun long ago, and that carries along all, sensations, affects, dialogues, the thoughts of the characters, and that leads us to seize, through the perceptions, sentiments, passions, the tune of post-revolution history that is the epoch of the Restoration; the impression of immediacy is really historicized. Affectivity reverberates in the history.

really or only tactically paranoid, no text can reveal, of itself, what it wants to say; another's text seems to wait for the philosopher's interpretation to become itself, and to wait for my hermeneutical achievement to achieve or acquire what it appears to include. The haughtiness of hermeneutics is to believe or to feign that it is the one who seizes the text who gives "sense" to the text. In consequence, as long as the text is not seized by the hermeneutist or by the interpreter, it is not what it is, or it is what it is not. It is not a matter of coincidence that the presumed author of the *ΠΡΟΤΡΕΪΤΙΚΟΝ* is also the author of *ΠΕΡΙ ΕΡΜΗΝΕΙΑΣ*. Thus from the splitting of texts, feelings, convictions, it may always be inferred that a "hidden thing" must be flushed out; and that knowledge is the unveiling of the "hidden thing." Even if we concede that somebody may naively or ingeniously think that there really is something "hidden," how could a philosopher who, day after day, is used to constructing his theories, fool himself or fool the others?

So conducted, philosophy would become a sort of casuistry in which the great "Jesuit" that is the philosopher—or rather the professor of philosophy—delivers and releases the sense that was present, but that nobody else could see. One can build a pedagogic system of philosophy on this scheme, in teaching everyone that he cannot understand by himself the texts he is asked to read; that the situation of the teacher is in some place that the student cannot understand; that the enigmatic questions which will be posed on examination day do nothing but conceal the answers expected from him, as if they had a concealed sense that the whole system of essay-writing—in French: *dissertation*—or commentary endeavours to lay bare. If a great number of students, and a number, in proportion no less great, of teachers believe in the merits of the system that has just been described, and lend themselves to it, as if it were self-evident, a few of them may yet suspect that the reality of exams and competitive examinations—in French: *concours*—rests on a "Laplace system" of EBM (Evidence Based Medicine) that requires a common language, and uses it to impose commensurability, in order to define the rankings, whether ordinal (as in selecting candidates) or cardinal (as in examinations).

Before moving toward the conclusion, I want to show that nobody is compelled to conform to such an ideology, and that its character is better fitted to a religious order than to a department of philosophy.

VI. Theoretical Knowledge and Practical Knowledge

If the system I have just described of a split discourse in which one part hides a secret sense which the other part endeavours to seize for itself, as if, in a fruit, we should want not only to detect the stone of the fruit but also the almond, if the system has some appearance of plausibility, it is because of the knowledge that, whether one wants it to or not, determines the shapes of questions—either plausible or not, either well asked or not, either solvable or not—and the answers endeavoured to be given to them. Indeed, during the whole endeavour, the problem seems to encrypt the solution one needs to decipher; the knowledge remains pending in the question until somebody either “cracks”³³ the problem or demonstrates that it has no solution.³⁴ Even if the problems posed do not contain the elements of their solutions, and do not limit the range of possible responses in any way, this conception of critical knowledge is almost irresistible. At the very most, those who more often solve the problem, and that go to a lot of trouble to give a solution, know that it troubles them, and are not so inclined to see the solution included in the question, as in these famous pictures we want turn around and around to see the hunter oddly hidden in one of its parts. But, once the problem is “cracked” (*craqué*) it will look, from the point of view of the possessor of its solution, like an empty pod from which any substance it once contained has escaped, or as the goods and the evils took their flight from Pandora’s box.

If theoretical problems suffer the double misrepresentation of “discovering” and of the transformation of what existed in embryo in the question, is it the same in practical questions? When the solution of a theoretical question has been constructed and has been settled as *an* answer, yea as *the* answer, recognized by the peers of the author who has constructed it, the solution seems to erase and to discredit all the past efforts at resolution. Everything else is dismissed, as if truth, or what is recognized as such at some moment, relegates to the status of error all the trials attempted while the problem was worked on with a view to

³³ We borrow the expression from C. Villani in the Franglais slang of the high level’s mathematicians. One can read the expression – *craquer un problème* – in: Cédric Villani, *Théorème vivant* (Paris: Grasset, 2012).

³⁴ That is a sort of solving as much strong as the presentation of one solution.

resolution. Does the same apply to practical questions?

Certainly not. If one wants to consider the question just raised, of the outcome of a problem that was stated, one must not bring the practical knowledge into line with theoretical knowledge. Indeed, if in given circumstances, and taking into account all the bits of information brought within my reach, I perform an action as if a consequence consonant with that information would result from the circumstances of tomorrow; and if, tomorrow becoming today, I notice that what I decided yesterday is at odds with the new situation, it will not be easy to detect an error as it would be in relation to a theoretical problem, especially if I used all the information that the present offered in making my decision for the future. It may happen, taking account of the bits of information at my disposal, that *I was in the right to believe* that things would turn out in a certain way, even though things actually turned out differently, so that my prediction was rendered inaccurate. In reality, even if they are contrary to my predictions, events do not show that I was wrong, and that I might have been accused of deciding irrationally if, when I took my decision, I took it in accordance with the situation as it then existed. One must not calculate the chances of being in the right as the properties of things themselves; things have their reasons but they are not the reasons to believe that a state of affairs will occur. This is the point where the seers are wrong, for they pretend to guess the future as one reads the present or as one remembers the past. Now the soothsayers cannot know the future any better than we do. The future is absolutely free, free from many determinations I recognize; and to believe that something will occur is nothing but a parameter of a situation, and not necessarily the happiest or the most welcome. Whoever believes the seers loses his freedom of action and is fooled by them into believing in an *aletheia*, or some unveiling. It is the notion of *aletheia* that is false (though good for seers). Some years ago, the purposes of the French Minister of Health, Georgina Dufoix were mocked at the time of the so-called affair “contaminated blood”. She said that she was “responsible but not guilty” in relation to the medical disaster that occurred under her eyes without her being able to foresee the catastrophe; but the articles of journalists who laughed at her phrasing should have been more restrained, because not a single piece of information at her disposal at the time could reasonably have led her to suppose that Aids was so dangerous an illness, and so easily transmitted through blood.

It would be wrong to interpret what I have just said as the proof there are two styles of knowledge: the *first* of which is an incomplete knowledge of what will be tomorrow, whereas the *second* is the fulfilment of the first in a complete, correct and true knowledge which it will be possible to enjoy tomorrow. This may be the case in theoretical questions; but it is not the case in practical matters: probabilities have their structure and autonomy that do not disappear in some discourse that would become true in the end, and which would annihilate the world of probabilities. Having recourse to probabilities implies that are used in a time when and a place where the information upon which they depend is intrinsically poor; and, of course, probability theory writes laws that transcend time and place, as does Bayes's rule, but that also allow the subject whoever he may be, to be reduced in circumstances of non-knowledge to making a *guess*, and to expect from the rule nothing but the measure of his chances of making a correct prediction when choosing one possible outcome rather than another.

No wonder that Plato, in the same *Meno* where he sets out reminiscence, takes practical knowledge into account, and gives instances of its not being inferior to theoretical knowledge, and even, in some cases, as being superior to it. This superiority must be understood. Socrates, in this dialogue, in order to make himself quite clear, takes the instance of somebody who knows the way to Larissa and would lead one infallibly to it, though without knowing how to explain the route. In other words, he would not know, as a geographer, the position of Larissa relative to Athens, but he would know how to get to Larissa, and how to lead anybody wanting to go there: does Socrates mean to imply that a man who has nothing but opinions on the situation of Larissa, which he knows how to reach, possesses a knowledge inferior to the geographer's science? No. On the contrary, it seems obvious that, when our goal is to reach Larissa, it is far better to take a guide that has every chance of leading us there successfully rather than to take a geographer who knows theoretically the situation of the city, but who is completely unfamiliar with the journey, and would be completely at a loss to tell us the best route from here to there. There is a specificity in practical knowledge which cannot be measured by theoretical knowledge, in spite of the ambitions of theoreticians; it would be wrong to believe that theoretical knowledge puts an end to the imperfections of practical knowledge, for the latter is perfect in its place and there is no need to confront

and oppose it with the former. One may theorize practical knowledge and show that it does not work in the same way as theoretical knowledge; but its originality must be retained, without trying to replace it with a theory that is not universally applicable.

If one wanted, at whatever cost, to replace practical knowledge with theoretical knowledge, considered as more perfect, one would have to make the sinister, inconsistent and dangerous choice to prefer the man who recites volumes of legislation to the man who capable of winning one's case for one; the man who pours out his medical knowledge to the doctor that cures and heals one; the man who conceptually explains how to make shoes to the shoemaker who actually supplies one with shoes. There is a huge gap between the knowledge of the specialist, who knows all the particularities of his field, and knows how to teach them—though this latter is of course a sort of practical knowledge of teaching—and that kind of knowledge which is sown and cultivated to solve practical problems. In the first case, it may be enough to deliver the knowledge and to arrange it if it lacks of order; the second case requires the judgment of the man who cannot derive all the rules of his actions from mere knowledge. When a man of action is required, it is not necessarily a professor, an expert or a counsellor that is wanted, all being men of understanding rather than of decision. That is why Plato, contrary to all expectations—because he is usually supposed to prefer high contemplation to mere *orthodoxa*, or the mere *pistis* necessary to action—dares say, against the keepers of the Platonic flame, that *orthodoxa* is, at least in certain conditions, superior to theoretical knowledge.³⁵ Plato was no

³⁵ In *Meno*, Socrates defends *right opinion* whose *rationale* is not inferior to the *rationale* of knowledge in practical matters: “right opinion is just as useful as knowledge” (97c); and, a little further on, without challenging the difference between epistemological knowledge and practical knowledge, he adds: “Soc. Am I not in the right in saying that true opinion leading the way renders the effect of each action as good as knowledge does? Men. There again, Socrates, I think you speak the truth. Soc. So that right opinion will be not whit inferior to knowledge in worth or usefulness as regards our actions, nor will the man who has right opinion be inferior to him who has knowledge.” (98b-c). Then, pointing out much more the rationale of which action needs: “Hence true opinion is as good a guide to rightness of action as knowledge; and this is a point we omitted just now in our consideration of the nature of virtue, when

more a Platonist than Marx was a Marxist or, to refer to a famous fragment of Pascal's *Pensées*, than Descartes was a Cartesian. And, far from wanting to make of men some daemons or demi-gods, Plato places humanity under the title of *elpis*, recalling without any doubt in *Laws* the account of Pandora in Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

VII. Further Information about Practical Knowledge

So, it would wrong to say that, in practical discourse, one part of the discourse is hiding the other, as if it was yet to be revealed. To speak in this way is to pass oneself off as a soothsayer, that is to say a perfect forger or counterfeiter of knowledge. Practical knowledge has, from this point of view, a perfect sufficiency compared to theoretical discourse. The practical discourse, that seems to hide what it cannot know, really tells, without any reserve or mystery, all that it knows. Plato and Aristotle knew this; I particularly made use of Plato: I could have used the practical syllogisms of Aristotle. Now I want to focus the point in a more modern way.

The "principle of Hume" is well known by specialists in ethics. The author of *A Treatise on Human Nature* warns the readers of ethics books against the secret slide from *to be* to *ought to be*, even though this slide is, in his eyes, banned, since it cannot but encourage the concealment of *is* by *ought to be*, and *ought to be* by *is*. Laws written in modern codes are expressed in the present or future indicative, very seldom in the prescriptive mood of *ought to be*, that itself might be better expressed in the imperative, as in the formulae of the Decalogue in the Bible. How can one tell whether the formulation of the law hides behind the present of *to be* an *ought to be* that constitutes the reality thus concealed? Doubtless, it is tempting to notice that the use of the present indicative gives no guarantee that the law does not include an implicit imperative, which would be the mark of a norm I must not infringe. However, things are not so simple and it should be noticed that if one wanted

we stated that knowledge is the only guide of right action; whereas we find there is also true opinion." (97b-c). This tenet is extraordinary in Platonism we always expect (by prejudice) to see on the side of the defence of knowledge against opinion; one can see how much this prejudice is ill founded, at least in practical questions.

to transcribe laws written in the indicative mood into imperative rules, even if those rules were regarded as merely implicit, it should be asked what prevents their becoming explicit. One may read laws as if they were “moral”—the will to detect the imperative mood beneath the indicative seems to lead to such a reading—but such a perusal is conducted from a subjective point of view that does not capture the specificity of laws: the main point is that laws cannot take the shape of morals. And, really, the utilitarian reading of law, though just as plausible as the moral, if not more plausible, does not require that one cares about duty for duty’s sake. From a utilitarian point of view, the general law charges the man who would be tempted to see his own interest in stealing, murdering, or any other infringement, to calculate. Taking the risk of such a breach would be a bad choice, because it would cause more pain than pleasure to the chooser. In this way, law may be perceived as a proposition containing a prediction that, in an institutional context, makes it contrary to the potential offender’s interest to commit an offence, and thereby bring upon himself a punishment. Thus it is possible to make a non-deontological reading of the law that is at least as accurate as the deontological or the moral reading.

The step we have just taken in a non-deontological direction and sense of law does not permit us to systematize the “mask-discourse,” as if the rule liked to disguise itself as a fact, and as if the fact may appear as a rule. Certainly what matters is not to deny that the play of masks occurs, for I think on the contrary that it frequently does occur. But it is impossible to hold it as the single relation between noun and fact. Breaking with this monoideic and paranoid way³⁶ of considering the relations between *norm* and *fact*, the one hiding the other indefinitely, even if they would be yet distinct, one could show, against Hume, that many actions take place that fall simultaneously and inextricably under the categories of both *fact* and *norm*, *description* and *prescription*, *is* and *ought to be*, and that their so doing is no evidence of an attempt to conceal the one under the name of the other or to pass off the one for the other. There are statements of facts that have the characteristic of instituting or establishing obligations, and thus of making law.

³⁶ We characterize on this way, as previously and without the psychiatric rigour, the delirium of suspicion.

Focusing the purpose of *L'erreur de Hume*—Hume's mistake—on *promises*, Gardies points out that promises would be wrongly analyzed if they were described as duties hidden beneath facts. It is right to assert that if John says to Janet that he promises her a sum of money, or pledges to marry her, if as he says the word he does not gesture expressively to show he is joking, if the matter of the promise is credible and if Janet does not mock the promise, John is obliged to keep it. The promise means that there will be a moment that John is envisaging before others, and which is the moment when John will give the sum of money to Janet, or will marry her. There is no duty hidden beneath the sentence "I promise," because the sentence is as much a formula of duty as the expression of a fact. To promise is to perform an action that, in itself, is not a duty; even if it is true that it announces a duty. It is the action to setting oneself a duty. But it would be wrong to believe that a general duty such as "*one must keep one's promises*" or "*everybody must keep his promises*" lies beneath a particular promise, because, on the one hand, it is no such rule that inclines us to keep our promises, rather the promises themselves, with their self-contained statement of duty; and, on the other hand, since broken laws remain laws, false promises remain promises that cost a lot to the man who does not perform them, at least in some circumstances. Through the promise, I change the world in which I live and in which nothing is forcing me to give money to Janet or to marry her, into a world in which I am obliged or forced to do it. By my promise, I introduce into the world an event that makes the world change its properties.³⁷

It is worth noting that promise is not the only act that includes at once the formula of a fact and the statement of a duty to which, in this case, I declare my submission; all the performative statements are similar. *I declare, I swear, I order, I affirm, I exhort, I advise, I beg, I ask, I invite, I announce, I appoint, I concede, I wish, I call, I permit, I indulge* (myself), etc. are comparable with *I promise*. For instance, if, before the courts, *I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth*, I perform the action of swearing, which cannot be performed otherwise than forming one body with its enunciation; so I tell the judge that, from now on, as soon as he invites me to give evidence, all that I

³⁷ Jean-Louis Gardies, *L'erreur de Hume* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1987), 88.

shall say in my evidence will be true or can be held as true, or turned back on me if I am caught in a lie; I make known to him—if he charges me to do it—that what I witness *is* not only true but that it *must* be true. The intricacy of *being* and *duty—ought to be*—is as complete a mixture in an oath as in a promise, and one could take any of the above performative formulae and analyze it as we have done for the promise.

One point deserves further attention: certain formulae of which we drew up an incomplete list seem to adopt or impose immediately the procedure of judicial rules. Such is the case of a promise, provided it be uttered in institutionalized circumstances. Others refer to mere politeness or to morals, and do not cause such real effects as promises do. One may wonder if some speeches do not accompany falsely, fallaciously, fraudulently, some acts leading them astray. This might be so, for instance, the case of an oath which, as Hobbes showed it in *De Cive*, may distort the act it accompanies. However, it is not my intention to enter too closely upon discussion of this issue here.³⁸ It is enough to draw, with Gardies, a conclusion that is important to save us from error:

Take care it is not because the performative statements are openly more than mere assertions, that you are right to conclude they are not at all assertions. It is dangerous to infer from the fact that those statements *are presented in the form of* assertions, that this precaution is nothing but an *external appearance*, under which would *hide* their *true nature* of psychosocial act. For it would remain to explain why the veil under which the corresponding act hides itself is precisely, in the case of performative turn of phrase, the indicative mood, the mood itself of the assertion. If you start, on the contrary from the things such as they give themselves, perhaps their *true nature* will be more easily lightened.³⁹

Then Gardies emphasizes, with the linguist Benoît de Cornulier, that “performative statements behave themselves grammatically, in minute details, as if they were *assertions*.”

³⁸ We began to sketch the work in a conference about *Normativity* given to the Centre Hospitalier Régional of Saint-Germain-en-Laye.

³⁹ *L'erreur de Hume*, 73.

VIII. Conclusions

The *first conclusion* regards the nature of the *unconscious* that is implied by the standpoint I adopted with regard to the famous issue of the *Protrepticus*. Denying the reality of the pre-knowledge in which the most technical philosophy would be rooted, and considering this pre-knowledge as one of its projected fabrications and nothing but an imaginary product, I would not deny that philosophical discourse implies a sort of unconscious. But the unconscious implied by this discourse is precisely not the part of the mind concealed from consciousness, and that consciousness attempts to appropriate: I mean instead *unconscious* in the style of Lacan; it is not obscure: it lies in the very play of “signifiers” that can burst to view without being decipherable as if they could be translated into signified units that could give them their “sense,” and could easily be substituted for them. The unconscious that the action of knowledge inclines to project in front of or beside itself must be interpreted as a production of the signified, hard to penetrate at first, but soon translucent.

Moreover, in attributing too much to what precedes philosophy, and from which it is supposed to grow up, the philosopher falls into the trap well defined by Diodorus Cronos: he behaves as if a situation could hide what it will be *in posse*; and that is never the case. At least, there is no more reason to expect such a sort of relations in the field of philosophical speculation than in other fields, strategic, economic or practical. The odds are that when a philosophy pretends to issue from a non-philosophical situation that precedes it, it has done nothing else than unconsciously beget the so-called beginnings on which it claims to rely. Integrity in philosophy, which requires a capacity possessed only by a very few, is, in a given situation that requires theoretical developments, to draw the map of the entire system of those developments and to discuss them following a knowledge that may be called “blind,” to use Leibniz’s word.

The *second conclusion* is that it is difficult for philosophy to be imagined as preceding its learning; it may well be lived as an awakening, as if it were “already” in being, but it is a construction. If one describes as philosophy what would be prior to philosophy, it would be in the same way as, in Molière, Monsieur Jourdain names his own discourse *prose* only after the teacher of rhetoric has taught him the difference between *verse* and *prose*. And doubtless, philosophy should be taught as many people as possible, precisely because it is impossible to count on some spontaneous philosophy that is incapable of doubting its

own convictions or problematizing its own methods. Surely, nobody dreams of building a nation, let alone the entire species, with philosophical technicians only; but a state in which the largest number of citizens have learned some philosophy, read some philosophical texts and written dissertations about philosophical questions, may give the expectation that citizens will be in the best situation to debate, and possess the best motives to agree on a range of fundamental points. Perhaps a little ingenuously, foreign philosophers, who do not have in their country the same system as the French—most of whom have been given philosophical lessons in grammar schools—are filled with wonder at the chance so given to a commonwealth to raise itself up. However, on the last point, the electoral ballots and industrial behaviours of the French people may sometimes perplex the observer.

Thirdly, it must not be thought that interdisciplinarity between researchers or between teachers is made easier by the teaching to nearly everybody of a didactic philosophy, even if not highly technical. Of course, possibilities are opened to define common objects, and to learn prudence in the formulation of problems and in solving them; but the practice strengthens the Hegelian anxiety I spoke of at the beginning of this article, and it shows that the discourses of the various fields of knowledge are more often added, one on top of the other, than linked together. The demand for accuracy in philosophical discourse is rarely understood and is soon considered as amphigoric to the eyes of the non-expert; and the philosopher may detect, in the purposes of his colleagues in other disciplines—even of the most technical ones—some pockets and moments of un-thought that remind him of the crossing of a distance à la Zeno, i.e. so that one can never know if it has been performed or not, and, once performed, how it was performed.

Finally, what was perhaps the most amazing for us in studying the so-called sentence of Aristotle's *Protrepticus* is its dialectic aspect that makes the authors who are the most quoted in commenting on it, such as Plato and Aristotle, equally available to be called upon as witnesses *pro* and *contra* he *thesis* or the *antithesis* included in the sentence. At one moment, Plato may be invoked for the reminiscence, and for a knowledge whose universalizability is open even to a slave; at the next he may be deployed against the universalizability, because he showers with sarcasm the

blacksmith who would marry philosophy!⁴⁰ When he is expected on the side of the celebration of *episteme*, he is found making an apology for practical knowledge, as being more valuable and more useful than the knowledge of teachers.⁴¹ As to Aristotle, he is as much the author of *Hermeneutics* as the writer of one of the most sophisticated reflections in the Antiquity on the *practical syllogism*. E. Anscombe is probably wrong when she suggested, in *Intention*, that the moderns have ceased to take care of practical knowledge; the probability theory that the moderns got started in the XVIIth century takes up the challenge. But I recognize, with her, that it is now high time the issue was widely reopened.

⁴⁰ Plato, *Republic*, 495e.

⁴¹ Kant will give the same speech when, in *Critique of Pure Reason*, he wants to highlight the judgement.

Socrates' Profession

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Abstract

The claim of the need to philosophize has within it the question of what philosophy is. Beginning from Aristotle's observation that philosophy stems from *thauma*, this question is pursued through Pythagoras' coining of *philosophos* to Socrates' assertion that philosophy is preparation for death to Montaigne's criticism of this Socratic view in his essay, "That to philosophize is to learn to die."

I. Before Philosophy

In the famous passage in the first book of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle asserts that "it is owing to their wonder [*thauma*] that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize" and "even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for myth is composed of wonders."¹ That whether to philosophize is an inescapable need in human existence, a necessity not a choice, presupposes that although we may be ignorant of the nature of things understood as the object of philosophizing, we are not ignorant of what philosophy and philosophizing is.

My purpose in the remarks that follow is to affirm the truth of the assertion that "even when one does not have to philosophize, one philosophizes"; to deny the need to philosophize is still to make a philosophical claim. We can no more eliminate the philosophical act, than we can deny the law of contradiction, because our attempt to deny it requires our employment of it. Implicit in the claim that we cannot escape philosophy's net is the question of why we philosophize at all. It is this question I wish to pursue and to do so guided by Vico's advice that "Doctrines must take their beginning from that of the matter of which

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2:1554 (982b).

they treat.”² To know what something is requires first of all a knowledge of its origin, from where and whence it comes in human experience.

Aristotle regards wonder as generated from the mind encountering an *aporia*—two conflicting arguments having no apparent resolution. As Aristotle puts this in the *Topics*: “an equality between contrary reasonings would seem to be a cause of perplexity; for it is when we reflect on both sides of a question and find everything alike to be in keeping with either course that we are perplexed which of the two we are to do.”³ The only way to surmount an *aporia* is dialectically to compare views. The exploration of various routes of reasoning or *diaporia* is required. Our ignorance places us in the position even of determining what the dimensions of the *aporia* are. For, as Aristotle says, “it is not possible to untie a knot which one does not know.” He says further, “But the difficulty of our thinking points to a knot in the object; for insofar as our thought is in difficulties, it is in like case with those who are tied up; for in either case it is impossible to go forward.”⁴ The *aporia* may not be a matter of our thought of the object that might be solved by a loosening up of our thought. The *aporia* may be entailed in the object itself. Thus, *thauma* persists and deepens in relation to our ignorance.

Aristotle regards the experience of philosophical wonder to have been directed first to obvious and limited difficulties in thought and from there those who so wondered “advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, e.g. about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and stars, and about the genesis of the universe.”⁵ Aristotle has in mind the so-called Pre-Socratics or early physicists whose wonder was directed not toward a knowledge of themselves or their own thought processes but toward nature. Their engagement in wonder led them to reformulate the accounts of nature that were established in the primal myths of the Greeks and Mid-Eastern religions. As the classicist F. M. Cornford puts it regarding the nature of Ionian physics, “for here the inward spirit and trend of this philosophy might be expected to emerge, as

² Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), para. 314.

³ Aristotle, *Topics*, in *Works*, 1:245 (145b)

⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *Works*, 2:1572 (995a).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:1554 (982b).

mythical representations came to be detected for what they are and discarded by advancing rationalism.”⁶ He says further: “Histories of philosophy and of natural science begin with this system, initiated by Thales, rounded out by Anaximander, and somewhat simplified by Anaximenes. Every reader is struck by the rationalism which distinguishes it from mythical cosmogonies. . . It was an extraordinary feat to dissipate the haze of myth from the origins of the world and of life.”⁷

Cornford's point is that philosophy does not emerge as a new way of approaching nature directly through empirical observation and experimentation; it emerges as a new way to formulate what myth had formulated as the actions of gods and images of light and dark, sky and earth as principles, ideas, and processes expressed by reason. The mythopoeic mind aims at intensifying objects through similes that magnify a particular object in its particularity. The rational mind proceeds by analogies toward a universal element, a *tertium comparationis*, toward a precise statement of what is being compared and thus what is held in common.⁸ In the development of Pre-Socratic philosophy, *logos* supersedes *mythos*.

If we return to the second half of the statement of Aristotle originally quoted, he holds that myth can also be claimed to be a kind of wisdom, “for myth is composed of wonders.” Myth is a kind of wisdom because mythical thinking takes us to a grasp of the whole. In a certain sense, it fits the Ciceronian definition of wisdom as a knowledge of things divine and human and of the cause of each. Myths have as constant themes god, man, and the world, the same themes as metaphysics. Myths are narratives of opposites. The opposites, when they involve *aporia*, are not clashes of arguments, of *logoi*, but of forces captured and felt in images. Myths do not resolve such oppositions; they narrate them. The stronger the oppositions and the more that opposites are layered with and upon other opposites, the more attractive they are to the mythopoeic mind. The more oppositions are brought to bear on a particular,

⁶ F. M. Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae: The Origins of Greek Philosophical Thought*, ed. W. K. C. Guthrie (New York: Harper, 1965), 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁸ See Bruno Snell, “From Myth to Logic: The Role of the Comparison,” chapter 9 of *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Dover, 1982).

the richer it is in its reality. The more causes that can be attributed to it, the greater its meaning. The narrative of the myth need only encompass these oppositions; it need not find a way to resolve them.

The Pre-Socratic philosophers break out of this mindset by seeking the one in the many. They attempt to explain all things in terms of one thing or a plurality of ultimate entities. This is the quest for a *tertium comparationis* for the world, a way to think of it as a whole that is held together as a consistent order, instead of a narration that is held together by the merging of one image with another. Myth comes before philosophy and remains as a way to think on the level of feeling. But philosophy allows the mind to hold the object at a distance, to transcend the immediacy of our mythic or purely expressive grasp of the object.⁹ The wonder that generates philosophy originates from an inability to achieve consistency of thought within itself, which motivates dialectic. The wonder that generates mythology originates from a conflict of feeling, an inability to capture things felt in a single image, thus going from wonder to wonder, unable to escape the immediacy of sensation.

II. Pythagoras' Answer to Leon

The Ionian Pre-Socratics not only discover a new form of wisdom (*sophia*); in so doing, they advance a new style of life—that of devotion solely to speculation or contemplation. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates explains this ideal of the philosopher's life by recounting a story about Thales, who while studying the stars and gazing at the sky "fell into a well; and a witty and amusing Thracian servant-girl made fun of him because, she said, he was wild to know about what was up in the sky but failed to see what was in front of him and under his feet." Socrates says: "The same joke applies to all who spend their lives in philosophy." He says the philosopher, unlike others, does not even notice his neighbor, what he is like or what he is doing. The philosopher is instead concerned with the question: "What is Man [*anthropos*]? What actions and passions properly belong to

⁹ For a full account of mythical thinking and the mythic object in these terms, see Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 2, *Mythical Thought*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), esp. pt. 1.

human nature and distinguish it from all other beings? This is what he wants to know and concerns himself to investigate.”¹⁰

In the *Politics*, Aristotle recounts another story of Thales. Aristotle says Thales “was reproached for his poverty, which was supposed to show that philosophy was of no use.” Because of his knowledge of the stars, Thales knew in winter that there would likely be a great olive harvest in the coming year. He leased all the available olive presses in the off season and then, when harvest time came, he leased them back to their original owners, making a great deal of money. Aristotle draws this conclusion: “Thus he showed the world that philosophers can easily be rich if they like, but that their ambition is of another sort.”¹¹ Thales not only invented meteorology, he discovered the economic principle of monopoly.

These two traditional stories perhaps tell us something true of Thales but they moreover support the conception of the ideal of the philosopher’s life at the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Athens. The coining of the word “philosopher” is attributed to Pythagoras in an episode of a medical dialogue by Heraclides of Pontus, originally a pupil in Plato’s Academy and who also attended Aristotle’s lectures. He was placed in charge of the Platonic Academy during Plato’s third visit to Sicily. This dialogue is known as *Peri tēs apnou*, meaning “about the woman whose breathing stopped.”¹²

In this dialogue, there appears a conversation in which Pythagoras is asked by Leon, the tyrant of Phlius, whether he is wise. On first sight, it appears to be a digression but placed in full context of the dialogue, it serves a purpose. The dialogue concerns a banquet at which the apotheosis of Empedocles is said to occur. The dialogue describes how Empedocles revived a woman whose breathing had stopped, who had apparently died and medical practitioners were unable to revive by any empirical means. Empedocles succeeded when the doctors failed, because he determined that her state was caused by the temporary absence of her soul from her body. He was able to resolve the condition because of his knowledge of human nature and the relationship of soul to body that constitutes it. What was required in this case was philosophic wis-

¹⁰ Plato, *Theaetetus*, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 193 (174a).

¹¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, in *Works*, 2:1998 (1259a).

¹² H. B. Gottschalk, *Heraclides of Pontus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980).

dom over ordinary medical wisdom. Connected to this use of philosophy is the exploration of the origin of the term “philosopher.”

As the text of Heraclides’ dialogue is lost and can only be reconstructed from fragments and reports of later thinkers, the fullest account of the conversation of Pythagoras and Leon is thought to be by Cicero in the *Tusculan Disputations*. Cicero begins his account: “And though we see that philosophy is a fact of great antiquity, yet its name is, we admit, of recent origin.” He cites as *sophoi* the Seven Sages of the Greeks (which include Thales), as well as Lycurgus, Ulysses and Nestor, and even figures of mythology, such as Atlas and Prometheus. He then attributes what he will relate regarding Pythagoras and Leon to what is now the lost text of Heraclides of Pontus.

Cicero says: “Leon [tyrant of Phlius] after wondering at his talent and eloquence asked him to name the art in which he put most reliance; but Pythagoras said that for his part he had no acquaintance with any art, but was a philosopher. Leon was astonished at the term and asked who philosophers were and in what they differed from the rest of the world.” Pythagoras coins the word *philosophos* by combining *philia* (friendly love) with *sophos*, thus excluding himself from the *sophoi* but also relating himself to them. He answers Leon’s question regarding the nature of the philosopher by reference to those who attend the Great Games at Olympia. There are those who go to compete for honor; those who go to engage in making a profit by buying and selling; and, those who go solely for the sake of watching what was done and how it was done. The persons of this third kind are then pure spectators.

Cicero says the Games are a metaphor for the types of lives available to us. Some seek honor and to fulfill ambition; some seek wealth; but, there are others whose only interest is to grasp the nature of things. He says: “these men gave themselves the name of lovers of wisdom (for that is the meaning of the word philosopher); and, just as at the games the men of truest breeding looked on without any self-seeking, so in life the contemplation and discovery of nature far surpassed all other pursuits.”¹³ The question arises as to whether Pythagoras intends to claim that the love of wisdom he practices also entails the possibility that he

¹³ Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library of Harvard University Press, 2001), 431-33 (5.3.7-9).

can thus become wise at least to some degree.

Diogenes Laertius, in his *Life of Pythagoras*, relates the above account of Pythagoras as the first to use the term “philosopher” and to compare the philosopher to the spectators at the Games. But he also claims that Pythagoras said that “no man is wise, but God alone.”¹⁴ H. B. Gottschalk, in his reconstruction of the dialogue of Heraclides, doubts that this claim goes back to Heraclides and that Pythagoras does not make a distinction between the wisdom of God and man, that in replying to Leon it is not Pythagoras’ purpose to make such a distinction.¹⁵ This view may well be correct but it does not fully bring out the political cleverness of Pythagoras’ reply. If Pythagoras claimed to Leon that he possessed wisdom, then he would have the same power as the God. Leon is an all-powerful tyrant but he does not possess this power of the God—divine wisdom. If Pythagoras claimed to be wise, he would have a power beyond that of Leon. Pythagoras would have placed himself in a dangerous position. Leon’s question is not one of innocent curiosity. It is an attempt to assess what this new kind of person is who is not motivated by ambition, money, or political concerns. By saying that he is only a lover of wisdom, Pythagoras makes himself appear harmless, like those at the Games who are only interested in being spectators. In so doing, Pythagoras establishes not only the name “philosopher” but the philosopher’s ambiguous relation to politics and the *polis*. Philosophizing is always a threat to the ideas upon which the *polis* rests (as we see in the case of Socrates) but it also, at the same time, appears to the *polis* as a harmless and irrelevant activity, having no goal but itself.

III. Phaedo’s Account to Echecrates

Plato’s *Phaedo* opens with Phaedo, one of the intimates of Socrates and present at Athens at his death, being asked by Echecrates on behalf of a group of Pythagoreans to relate the details of Socrates’ last days and conversation.¹⁶ The dialogue takes place in Phlius, in the

¹⁴ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R. D. Hicks, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library of Harvard University Press, 2000), 1:13 (1.12).

¹⁵ Gottschalk, Heraclides, 26.

¹⁶ Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Works*, 50 (57a-b).

Peloponnese, where Phaedo has stopped on his way back home to Elis. Phlius is the same place in which Pythagoras, approximately a century earlier, coined and defined the term “philosopher.” The Pythagorean connection is further incorporated in the dialogue in terms of Socrates’ discussants—Simmias and Cebes—who are from Thebes, a city along with Phlius where Pythagoreans had settled after their expulsion from Southern Italy. The Pythagoreans are noted for their belief in the immortality of the soul, the theme of much of the conversation. Plato places this dialogue in Phlius with Pythagoreans because it represents a redefinition of philosophy, a shift from the original definition of the philosopher as pure spectator of nature of Pythagoras to the new definition of Socrates as the gadfly of the *polis*. Socrates is the thinker of the *polis* who, as Cicero says, was the first to bring philosophy down from the heavens and into cities and homes.

In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates the city-dweller is shown as venturing into the countryside, conversing with Phaenias. As they walk along the Ilissus, they arrive at the probable spot where it is said by legend that Boreas, the north wind, carried Orithyia away. Phaenias asks Socrates if he believes the story. Socrates replies that the investigation of the correctness of this myth and its variant explanations “are a job for a man I cannot envy at all. He’d have to be far too ingenious and work too hard.” Because, Socrates says, to investigate such a story would require a science of mythology in which we seek to “give a rational account of the form of the Hippocentaurs, and then of the Chimera; and a whole flood of Gorgons and Pegasus and other monsters, in large numbers and absurd forms.” Socrates then says: “But I have no time for such things and the reason, my friend, is this. I am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself; and it really seems to me ridiculous to look into other things before I have understood that.”¹⁷

Socrates replaces the overcoming of myth by accounts of nature developed through reason with the problem of self-knowledge—the instruction of *gnōthi seauton* inscribed in the pronaos of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. Myth and its rational criticism and investigation offer us no access to self-knowledge. The philosophical problem of how to comprehend nature is well underway since the early natural philosophers took it up. The phi-

¹⁷ Plato, *Phaedrus*, in *Works*, 509-10 (229b-e).

losophical problem now is how to comprehend human nature: to grasp what it means to be a human being. This is the problem Socrates' philosophy delivers to us—the acquisition of human wisdom.

To return to the *Phaedo*, Socrates, who is at the threshold of his own death, says: “*hoi orthos philosophountes apothneskein meletosi* [those who rightly philosophize are practicing to die].”¹⁸ Socrates repeats this claim somewhat later when he is speaking of the *psyche*. He says that philosophy when pursued in the proper way is “*melete thanatou* [practice of death].”¹⁹ These sentiments are sometimes summarized in the assertion that Socrates says the profession of philosophers is learning to die. We philosophize because we are mortal and because we know we are mortal; we are neither simply animals who are without thought of their death, nor gods who are immortal and have no need to pursue the question of mortality.

Self-knowledge, the distinctively human problem, is tied to the thought of the certainty of our mortality—that our being is not immortal. Those who philosophize rightly are practicing to die in the sense that they are lovers of the mind over lovers of the body. The cultivation of the mind has above all the aim of preparing the embodied self for its death. There is no other form of thought than philosophy that can rationally provide this preparation. Socrates' claim of this purpose of philosophy puts aside any question of his identity with sophistic. To argue that Socrates is not a sophist because his arguments are not designed to make the worse appear the better case, or to point out that he never has accepted payment for his teaching, is not to provide the true refutation of the charge of sophism. The sophist speaks only of the means for being successful in politics and commerce. The sophist offers us nothing in regard to the fact of our mortality. Only the true philosopher can take us to this question as a condition of our humanity. The charge of sophistry of the *Apology* is only answered in the *Phaedo*.

The wisdom to which philosophy rightly leads us is that we are ignorant of what we will encounter after death. This ignorance leads us to the proto-Stoic assertion that no harm can come to a good man. As Socrates puts it at the end of the *Apology*, “a good man cannot be harmed either in

¹⁸ Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Works*, 59 (67e).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 71 (81a).

life or in death.”²⁰ This sense of good leads us to act such that no one is made the worse for knowing us. This sense of proper action entails proper speaking because, as Socrates says, “to express oneself badly is not only faulty as far as the language goes, but does some harm to the soul.”²¹

We may ask whether only philosophy can allow us to confront our mortality. The answer is no. Religion, understood anthropologically, is the original response to the phenomenon of death. Burial is one of the principles of humanity. Religion is given expression through myth and through rite. Death in human affairs is always connected to ceremony. When Crito asks Socrates, “how shall we bury you?”, Socrates replies, “in any way you like, if you can catch me and I do not escape you.” He adds, “You must be of good cheer, and say you are burying my body, and bury it in any way you like and think most customary.”²² Thus, Socrates insists that he has pursued philosophy properly because he has separated his psyche from his body. He has cultivated the wisdom necessary to pass into death in peace. The philosopher thus seeks a rational death without ceremony and, for such a death, philosophy is necessary. For those who do not actively engage in the love of wisdom, other arrangements await them, by religious rite and society. The philosopher, in death as in life, remains apart and only in the company of the friends of the forms.

IV. Montaigne’s Essay

Montaigne, in his famous statement that may be taken as a guide to his *Essais*, declares: “I study myself more than any other subject. That is my metaphysics, that is my physics.”²³ He says further: “Philosophical inquiries and meditations serve only as food for our curiosity. The philosophers with much reason refer us to the rules of Nature; but these have no concern with such sublime knowledge. The philosophers falsify them and show us the face of Nature painted in too high a color, and too sophisticated, where spring so many varied portraits of so uniform a subject.”²⁴

²⁰ Plato, *Apology*, in *Works*, 36 (41d).

²¹ Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Works*, 98 (115e).

²² Ibid.

²³ Michel Montaigne, “Of Experience,” in *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1948), 821.

²⁴ Ibid., 821-22.

Montaigne's essay, "That to Philosophize is to Learn to Die," accuses philosophers of compromising the pleasure we naturally seek in life by directing our best efforts to our own end, an end that is governed by nature and which is to be accepted as simply a part of life. In this essay, he calls mostly on Satirical lines from Horace's odes, such as "Simplicity" and "Spring's Lesson,"²⁵ regarding that all of us are destined for the same fate, whether rich or poor and whether of high or low position, from Lucretius, who sees the gods as the product of superstition and sees human life as governed by material causes, and from Seneca, who gives Stoic advice regarding the fact that every step of life is also a step toward the end of one's life.

Montaigne sets such Satirical, Epicurean, and Stoical views against the view that he states in the first sentence of his essay: "Cicero says that to philosophize is nothing else but to prepare for death."²⁶ Cicero is the great Latin transmitter of Greek philosophical views, which includes this one. Montaigne understands this claim that he attributes to Cicero precisely to reflect the Socratic view of the *Phaedo*. He states further: "This is because study and contemplation draw our soul out of us to some extent and keep it busy inside the body; which is a sort of apprenticeship and semblance of death." A second reason to claim that to philosophize is to prepare for death, Montaigne says, is: "Or else it is because all the wisdom and reasoning in the world boils down finally to this point: to teach us not to be afraid to die."

Philosophizing either allows us to become accustomed to the experience of death by cultivating the power of our thought as separate from our body or it simply is a means to tell us we should not be afraid to die. Montaigne says, however, "In truth, either reason is a mockery, or it must aim solely at our contentment, and the sum of its labors must tend to make us live well and at our ease, as Holy Scripture says." Instead of concentrating on our fear of death, Montaigne holds, philosophizing should aim to promote a pleasant life, a point he rhetorically emphasizes by his claim that this would bring philosophy in accord with

²⁵ Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, trans. Niall Rudd (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library of Harvard University Press, 2004), 33 and 141 (1.4 and 3.1)

²⁶ Michel Montaigne, "That to Philosophize is to Learn to Die," in *Works*, 56. A line in *Tusculan Disputations* that connects to Montaigne's claim is Cicero's comment that philosophy has "destroyed the dread of death" (429; 5.2.6).

scripture. He concludes: “All the opinions in the world agree on this—that pleasure is our goal—though they choose different means to it.”²⁷

Montaigne is not advocating simple hedonism in the sense of claiming that the good for human life is merely the pursuit of sensuous pleasure. But he is not excluding such pleasures. His view, at least in this essay, seems an endorsement of a version of Epicureanism that connects pleasure with virtue: “in virtue itself the ultimate goal we aim at is voluptuousness. . . . we should have given virtue the name of pleasure, a name more favorable, sweet, and natural.”²⁸ Montaigne would appear also to hold with Aristotle’s view that, very generally put, the aim of virtue is happiness and that happiness is pleasurable. Montaigne firmly asserts without saying how virtue and pleasure are specifically to be conceived: “Now among the principal benefits of virtue is disdain for death, a means that furnishes our life with a soft tranquility and gives us a pure and pleasant enjoyment of it, without which all other pleasures are extinguished.”²⁹

Our philosophizing should rightly be directed toward our happiness. The pursuit of pleasure is itself a pleasure on Montaigne’s view. He advocates happiness as a contentment that seems close to the ideal of *ataraxia* or peace of the psyche that the Epicureans sought. Montaigne interprets the constant focus of philosophy on death to mean that the philosopher thus must pass life by. His argument is that nature ordains that we will all meet death as the finality of life, so why should this fact of our existence dominate all others such that we put virtue, pleasure, and contentment aside. There is nothing to learn about dying. It is an act governed by nature that we should accept and we can readily accept it if we are happy. Our happiness will generate for us an imperturbability of the soul. We will accept without tension what we cannot change.

The remainder of Montaigne’s essay is a discourse on the ways we may eliminate the strangeness of death and become accustomed to its ever-presence by finding ways to think about it and by considering ancient customs that instruct us, such as that of the manner of Egyptian banquets. “As the Egyptians, after their feasts, had a large image of death shown to the guests by a man who called out to them: ‘Drink and be merry, for when you are dead you will be like this’; so I have formed

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 57.

the habit of having death continually present, not merely in my imagination, but in my mouth."³⁰ Pleasure lets us, with a certain ease, confront death, for I know in such a moment that I am and that death is not.

Montaigne, in attacking the view that those who philosophize rightly are practicing or preparing to die, proceeds to explain in a philosophical manner how we should learn to accept death. The aim of his account, and where he divides from what he takes as the ancient view, is to keep the mind in connection, not in separation, with the body and our natural inclination to pleasure and to happiness. He does not divorce philosophizing from death but he shifts philosophizing from a Stoical to an Epicurean mode and offers an alternative account of the acceptance of death. In emphasizing the Epicurean elements in his account, I do not mean to claim Epicureanism as a characterization of his philosophy overall, only to point to his use of such views in treating this issue.

What may we conclude? Philosophizing arises as a response to *aporiai* motivated by wonder. Wonder first produces myths through which nature is given form. The Pre-Socratics, through the power of reasoning to universalize the particular, transform the mythical images of nature into orders of the one and the many. Myth is the thought-form of rite and ceremony in contrast to contemplation practiced by the early philosophers of nature, who thus approach nature as pure spectators. Socrates shifts the object of contemplation from *aporiai* in nature to the *aporiai* in human nature, namely, that although we know we are human, we do not know in what the human fully consists. The human is mortal and to philosophize is to confront our mortality. Montaigne transforms the Socratic problem of philosophizing concerning the relation of life to death into the problem of philosophizing in terms of the relation of happiness and mortality, such that we can confront death not through the separation of the soul from the body but by attaining the fullness of life while acknowledging the ever-presence of death. But between the Socratic and the Montaignean approaches we are left with the *aporia* of whether they can be mutually resolved.

³⁰ Ibid., 62.

To Philosophize or Not to Philosophize?

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Surely the mere inspection of a subject can profit us but little.
Every act of seeing leads to consideration,
consideration to reflection,
reflection to combination, and thus it may be said
that in any attentive look on nature we already theorise
Johann Wolfgang Goethe¹

Abstract

This paper outlines an understanding of philosophy that is based on the argument that human beings are far more philosophical beings than they are usually aware of being. Philosophizing is not merely an activity of professional or academic philosophers but something most human beings do regularly to some extent or degree. The paper substantiates this thesis by a variety of observations and thoughts referring not only to the fields of theoretical and practical philosophy, but also to Aristotle's philosophical anthropology.

I. Introduction

Goethe's remarkable quote, from the preface to his *Theory of Colours*, expresses the insight that human beings are far more theoretical beings than they are usually aware of being. To theorize is not just an activity of professionals or scientists. If we observe the world in a mindful way, we are mentally active, we analyze and synthesize, and relate what we perceive to our concepts, experiences, and to what we believe is true about the world. Such beliefs might be prejudgments and prejudices or successful theories that allow for reliable predictions.

The claim of this paper is that what Goethe points out is not only

¹ Charles Lock Eastlack, trans. and ed., *Goethe's Theory of Colours* (London: John Murray, 1840), xx.

true for theorizing in general but also for philosophizing. Human beings are far more philosophical beings that they are usually aware of being. Philosophizing is not merely an activity of professional or academic philosophers but something most human beings do regularly to some extent or degree. This is true whether people are aware of it or not. Even when one does not have to philosophize, one still philosophizes. This phrase illustrates the concept of philosophy that will be outlined in this paper.

II. The Beginnings of Philosophy

According to Aristotle, philosophy began when the Greek city-states had developed to the point that sustinment was no longer a problem, and citizens enjoyed some comfort and leisure. In such a state they were puzzled and started wondering about the moon and the stars, and about how the universe came into being (Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 982b12–28; cf. Plato, *Theaetetus*, 115d). In the famous opening sentence of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle generalizes the intellectual curiosity of the Greeks and claims that “all men by nature desire to know” (980a22). From the perspective of contemporary research, it is unlikely that philosophy actually began in ancient Greece as Aristotle claims. Rather, the roots of philosophical thinking lie in the Orient.² But the problem of the historical beginnings of philosophy is not relevant for the main thesis of this paper: that to philosophize is not mainly an activity of professional or academic philosophers.

To be puzzled and to wonder about the riddles of existence or the universe has in all times been a key motivation for doing philosophy. Probably the greatest riddle of all is expressed by the basic question “Why is there anything at all rather than nothing?”³ To wonder about such questions presupposes ignorance about the subject one wonders

² Martin L. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

³ Cf. Martin Heidegger, “Was ist Metaphysik?” in *Wegmarken*, second edition, (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1978); Martin Heidegger, “Einleitung zu: *Was ist Metaphysik?*” in *Wegmarken*; Martin Heidegger, “Nachwort zu: *Was ist Metaphysik?*” in *Wegmarken*. Cf. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Principes de la Nature et de la Grace fondés en Raison*, 1714, § 7: “Ce principe posé, la première question qu’on a droit de faire sera: pourquoi il y a plutôt quelque chose que rien?”

about. To do philosophy is an attempt to escape this ignorance and to achieve knowledge. Almost every human being has the capacity to wonder and to desire to know. The original strength of this capacity is already seen by the questions almost all children keep repeating in all kinds of different contexts: Why? Why not? Children usually want to know the reasons for things and thereby express their natural ability for philosophy. To do philosophy means to ask questions and to think in a focused and rational way about the things one wonders about. In order to this, philosophers must create concepts and develop arguments.⁴

According to Aristotle, Greek philosophy starts with Thales (*Metaphysics*, 983a24–984a3). There are good reasons to question this view. The Swiss classicist Olof Gigon argues convincingly that Greek philosophy already began with Hesiod. He gives three reasons for this claim. First, Hesiod does not want to say “many false things similar to genuine ones” like Homer, but “proclaim true things” (*Theogony*, 27–28; cf. *Works and Days*, 10).⁵ Second, Hesiod wants to talk about the beginning or the first things that existed. In his *Theogony*, he gives a genealogy of the gods which is as well an account of the origins of the world. This is rather, as Gigon rightfully comments, a philosophical aim than a poetic one.⁶ Third, Hesiod does not only want to talk about the gods of his religion but about all the gods and the origin of the world as a whole.⁷

Especially the commitment to find out and to tell the truth is a central feature of philosophy. The search for knowledge and truth is as well an activity that most human beings do habitually and regularly. However, of course, not all subjects and issues people investigate are philosophical ones. There is a distinct difference between trying to find out the truth about what happens to us after our death and about the love life of our neighbors. However, almost all people strive to find out the truth about the majority of subjects and issues that count as philosophical ones.

⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari define philosophy mainly as the art and discipline that creates concepts (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Q'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991).

⁵ Olof Gigon, *Der Ursprung der griechischen Philosophie. Von Hesiod bis Parmenides*, second edition (Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co, 1968 [1945]), 14.

⁶ Ibid., 22–23.

⁷ Ibid., 25.

III. Religion and Philosophy

From a contemporary perspective, Hesiod's philosophical poetry has the flaw that it does not give rational justifications or demonstrations for its interpretations of the world. Rather, Hesiod relies on the authority and knowledge of the divine muses of the origins of the cosmos. However, studying Hesiod is not only interesting because it makes apparent some important features of philosophy. The study of his work and its influence on Greek culture also reveals one of the main reasons why the natural ability for philosophy in general gets reduced or almost lost in so many people. This is simply the case because Hesiod provides answers and explanations. Many of his contemporaries stopped wondering about the origins of the cosmos after Hesiod assured them—based on the authority and knowledge of the divine muses—that first chaos, and then the earth (*gaia*) and love (*eros*), were generated. Later there were Uranus, Cronos, Zeus, and the other Olympic gods. Together with the account of Homer's epics, Hesiod's later genealogy of the gods constituted Greek religion. Herodotus tells us about Hesiod and Homer that “these are they who taught the Greeks of the descent of the gods, and gave to all their several names, and honors, and arts, and declared their outward forms”.⁸ Homer's and Hesiod's explanations also allowed their contemporaries be to less afraid because the causes of their fear became identifiable and even capable of being influenced. Human fear of nature and the power of natural forces were main motivations to start the process of thinking and philosophizing.⁹

At this point, it is necessary to briefly address the relation of religion and philosophy that can take different forms. While Thomas Aquinas tried to substantiate his religion with philosophical arguments and proofs, Voltaire, the French materialists, Feuerbach, and Nietzsche used philosophy to criticize the truth content of religion. The relation of religion and philosophy is a highly disputed subject among professional philosophers. However, for the majority of people, religion provides a set

⁸ Herodotus, *The Persian Wars*, Vol. 1, Books I and II, trans. A. D. Godley, *Loeb Classical Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975 [1920]), II. 53, 440–41.

⁹ Cf. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 10–11.

of answers to the questions they wonder about. If they start truly believing in these answers, they often lose the habit of wondering and of being critical about the contents of their belief. To some extent religious beliefs are the enemy of philosophical thinking in the sense of being continuously inspired by the riddle of being. Often believers don't see any necessity to keep philosophizing because they suppose that they have already reached knowledge.¹⁰ However, belief is usually accompanied by doubt, and doubt is a strong motivation for doing philosophy. Religious systems are more or less the fruit of past philosophical activity. If such systems are adopted at an early age, people's natural capacity for philosophy and their ability for critical thinking often stop growing.

IV. Theoretical and Practical Philosophy

Aristotle's famous account of the beginnings of philosophy, and Gigon's interpretation of Hesiod's philosophical poems, equate philosophy with the effort to achieve knowledge and truth about the cosmos and the world, and about their beginnings. Since Aristotle, the subdivision of philosophy that investigates such subjects is called "theoretical philosophy." However, human beings, of course, do not only wonder about nature and the cosmos. People also wonder about how they should behave towards other people, how they can obtain a good and happy life, what a good political order looks like, and how it can be realized. Since Aristotle, the field of philosophy that deals with these questions is called "practical philosophy." While the knowledge that is specific to theoretical philosophy is, for Aristotle, mainly an end in itself, practical philosophy aims at realizing its knowledge through actions. Knowledge about the good life is not an end in itself, but a means to lead a good and happy life. We do not study the characteristics of a good and virtuous person merely for the sake of knowing them, but because we want to be-

¹⁰ On the contrary, Nietzsche declares: "'Faith' means not wanting to know the truth" (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ* in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, transl. Judith Norman, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 51 (n. 52)

come good and virtuous persons ourselves.¹¹

The questions subject to practical philosophy illustrate once more that philosophy is not merely an activity of a group of professionals or academics. Almost everyone wants to lead a good life and to be happy, and the question which path one has to take in order to reach this goal is of utmost importance. Though almost everyone wonders and philosophizes about this question to some extent, everyone usually has to make practical decisions about which way to take before he or she has finished theorizing. Furthermore, our natural capacity to philosophize about a good and happy life is often impeded by powerful enemies. One major enemy is the conventional morality that tells us what to do, where to go, and what desires to suppress. Usually a specific morality is an important part of a corresponding religious system and of the values it promotes. Such a morality gives orientation for making practical decisions, but claims a serious authority over our lives. It is one important merit of Friedrich Nietzsche that he questioned and criticized this authority. Nietzsche especially focused on Christian values and the Christian interpretation of this world that he called the “ascetic ideal.”¹² However, some of his criticism of religion and morality could be universalized.

Other enemies of our natural capacity to philosophize about a good and happy life are ideals about a specific form of life or type of career. Like moral ideals, these ideals hold us back from finding our own way, but tell us where to go and how to live. Such kinds of ideals change over history and from society to society. In the societies of the era of the Greek polis a prevailing ideal was to be respected as a citizen and to achieve honor in political life. In the European Middle Ages, one main ideal was to lead a pious life and a life of religious contemplation. Since the rise of capitalism and a protestant work ethics, the most valued human activities have become technical and economic ones.¹³ The capital-

¹¹ Cf. Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J.A.K. Thomason, revised H. Tredennick (London: Penguin, 2004), 6, 33; 1095a4–6, 1103b27ff.

¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Caro Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966).

¹³ Cf. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).

ist societies of today are societies that attach an enormous and unhealthy value to work and productivity. In such societies, of course, it is especially the ideal of the successful business man or woman that appeals to many young people. The promise that a successful career in the corporate world and a focus on making money will lead to a good and happy life prevents many young adults from using their natural capacity to philosophize about the path in life that is fit for them individually.

V. Professional and Lay Philosophers

In Chapter I.2 of his *Politics*, Aristotle claims that man is the only animal who possesses speech and reason (*logos*) (1253a9–10). Because men and women possess *logos*, they have a natural ability for philosophy. By nature they can wonder, ask questions, discuss with others, contemplate the riddle of existence and what to do with their lives. Obviously, as individuals people have different talents and skills, and therefore do not possess an equal capacity to philosophize. Evidently, how humans are able to develop their different potentials also depends on their individual education, on their social class, and on the education system of the country they live in etc.

Aristotle is right that a certain degree of leisure is required in order to cultivate the human capacity to philosophize. The early Greek philosophers who were wondering about the cosmos were usually privileged citizens who did not need to work all day. Most of them possessed slaves. Of course, also the citizens who needed to work had some leisure in which they could wonder about how this world came into being. However, looking at the social background of professional philosophers throughout history shows that most of them came from more or less privileged families. Such a family background, and the financial or material security that comes with it, are often a necessity for those who would like to pursue a professional career as a philosopher. Before philosophers could find jobs at universities, they had to be rich and privileged or find some other way to sustain themselves, such as becoming a member of a religious order, etc.

Though most human beings have a natural capability for philosophy, they don't all get the chance to develop and actively realize this capability. Though professional and lay philosophers often wonder about the same things and try to answer the same questions, one main difference between them is the time they can afford to devote to them. People

who become professional philosophers usually already spend years studying philosophy in College or University. Lay philosophers typically find time to discuss philosophical issues when they sit together with their friends in a moment of leisure. However, a full day at work hardly leaves enough time and energy to study the whole philosophical debate that has been going on in the different fields since the early Greeks. It rarely leaves enough time to say something new and original on a philosophical topic like free will or the epistemological problem of how much and what kind of knowledge humans can gain and where this knowledge comes from.

VI. Conclusion

To philosophize is not only an activity of professional philosophers but something most human beings do regularly to some degree. Human beings possess *logos* and therefore are philosophical beings who philosophize by nature, even when they don't have to philosophize. In his famous human function (*ergon*) argument, Aristotle claims that because the *logos* is specific to humans it is their preexisting goal (*telos*) in the natural order to develop and actively realize it. If they reach this goal, they achieve what is most essential for human flourishing (*eudaimonia*).¹⁴ Today it is hard or impossible to defend the teleological concept of nature that Aristotle links with his argument. However, the argument still works without teleology. If the *logos* is an essential part of human nature, it is obviously good for humans to develop and cultivate this part. In Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle investigates the intellectual virtues that should be interpreted as the virtues of the *logos*. In order to achieve their flourishing and to live a good and happy life, humans should develop and practice their intellectual virtues in two forms of life. As citizens, they should practice the intellectual virtue Aristotle calls prudence (*phronêsis*) in combination with ethical virtues like justice, temperance and courage in a political life. As scientists or

¹⁴ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 15–16, 1097b22–1098a20; cf. John L. Ackrill, *Aristotle on Eudaimonia* (London, Oxford University Press, 1975); and Manuel Knoll, *Aristokratische oder demokratische Gerechtigkeit? Die politische Philosophie des Aristoteles und Martha Nussbaums egalitaristische Rezeption* (München: Fink, 2009).

philosophers, they should practice their other main intellectual virtues—wisdom (*sophia*) as a combination of science (*epistēmē*) and intuition (*nous*)—in a life of contemplation.¹⁵

Aristotle's view of human flourishing is too narrow because he only acknowledges two forms of life and two types of activity. From a pluralist perspective, he fails to recognize the life of the artist, the art lover, or the sports professional, to mention only some other forms and activities. However, his praise of the life of contemplation and his claim that humans need to develop and actively realize their specific intellectual virtues is convincing. If Aristotle is right, all those people who have the intellectual capacity should try their best to realize their philosophical potential through learning and studying. In order to do this, several good books and some leisure could already be enough. Of course, it is better to have also good teachers and friends who share an interest in philosophical questions. However, for economic reasons most people, even if they are talented, will have to stay lay philosophers forever. Even if they will never be able to study all the past arguments of the philosophers and the whole history of the discipline, lay philosophers can still individually realize Kant's famous "motto of enlightenment": "Have courage to use your *own* understanding!" To use one's own understanding essentially means to use it "without the guidance of another".¹⁶

The powers that want to guide our understanding are manifold: parents, grandparents, educators, priests, esoterics, scientists, writers, politicians, and friends. And as Kant rightfully observed, human cowardice and laziness play in their hands.¹⁷ Probably there is also such a thing as a herd instinct that drives the vast majority of people to prefer to follow moral and religious leaders than to think for themselves. Even those who desire to reach their own individual conclusions through reflection and argument always have to struggle with the power of the moral and religious dogmas that proved to be successful in the culture

¹⁵ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, 8–9, 30, 147, 153; 1095b14–1096a5, 1103a1–7, 1139b16–17, 1141a19.

¹⁶ Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'" in Immanuel Kant, *Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, transl. H.B. Nisbet, second enlarged edition, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 54–60, 54.

¹⁷ Ibid.

and the part of the world in which they are living. In order to resist the power of these dogmas and the pressure their followers exercise on free spirits one needs strength, self-confidence, and a critical mind. However, people will never be entirely free from the prevailing dogmas and beliefs; but through philosophy and critical thinking they can achieve a higher degree of freedom.

In order to reach this goal, it also helps to be aware of the fact that until today in the world there have existed not only hundreds of irreconcilable religious systems, but also hundreds of incompatible moral and philosophical systems. Often the followers of these systems insist on the truth of their interpretation of the world and its value. However, in view of their irreconcilability and their contradicting claims it is highly probable that most of them and maybe even all of them are wrong. Likewise, most of the prescriptions and commands such systems offer and impose do not lead to a truly good and happy life of the individual. Therefore, it would be unwise and even dangerous to follow the intellectual leadership such systems claim. Rather, everyone capable should try to find her or his own conclusions about what to believe and how to live. In the light of the enormous threat that we fail to live our own individual lives, and that we do not achieve happiness, the question “To philosophize or not to philosophize?” reveals its existential significance.

Towards a Phenomenology of Religion Across the Limits of Reason Alone

Peter Costello (Providence College)

“Go near, you yourself, and hear all that the Lord our God will say.
Then tell us everything that the Lord our God tells you,
and we will listen and do it.”¹

“His mother said to the servant, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’”²
“‘Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.’

Pilate asked him, ‘What is truth?’”³

Abstract

This paper attempts a re-reading of the relationship between religion and philosophy. The first section attempts to show that philosophy is not clearly demarcated by means of a reading of Derrida’s work on the university. The second section examines, with Heidegger, how philosophy presents the opportunity for introducing a kind of “cross”-disciplinarity in its articulation of the structure of our being as temporality, particularly in our “stretching” and “retrieve.” And the final section shows how philosophy can help us to turn back from the “cross”-disciplinarity of our own structure to the experience of philosophy as love, as it is given within some passages from Julian of Norwich. The paper ultimately concludes that the work of phenomenological history allows us to think and to write in such a way that we as phenomenologists are able to remain open to tradition without being enslaved by it.

¹ *Deuteronomy* in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible: An Ecumenical Study Bible*, ed. Michael Coogan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 253, 5:27.

² *The Gospel According to John* in *Ibid.*, 150, 2:5.

³ *Ibid.*, 178, 18:37-38.

There might be many reasons to claim that philosophy ought not to spend its time investigating holy scripture and divine faith. One might claim that philosophy has more important things to do. Or one might claim that faith and scripture need to be protected from philosophy's pointed, awkward, or inappropriate questions. Or, finally, one might claim that philosophy could do its job better if it left questions of the divine to the theologians. However, like John Caputo, Merold Westphal, Julia Kristeva, Jean-Luc Marion, Richard Kearney, and a number of other scholars involved in what I would call the phenomenology of religion, I think differently.

For the purposes of this paper, what I want to argue here, and to argue in line with these other phenomenological scholars, is that we ought to resist accepting a strict demarcation of philosophy's limits. Instead, like Socrates in the *Euthyphro*, I contend that each of us as philosophers ought to "follow [the] beloved wherever it may lead [us]."⁴ We ought to do this not only, perhaps not even primarily, for the sake of faith. But we should 'follow the beloved' in order to create, or return to, a certain kind of hermeneutics,⁵ to a vision of philosophy and theology and other disciplinary approaches as moments of a unified "divine science" that investigates "divine things" both "as the principles of the subject" and "for their own sakes."⁶

⁴ Plato, *Euthyphro*, in *Five Dialogues*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2002), 22, 14c.

⁵ Richard Kearney claims that there is a type of hermeneutics that he calls "theological hermeneutics of incarnation inspired by the phenomenological retrieval of Christian mysticism." (Brian Treanor and Richard Kearney, *Carnal Hermeneutics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 121.

⁶ Thomas Aquinas, "Super Boethium De Trinitate," *Dominican House of Studies Priory*, accessed 10 April 2015, <http://www.dhspriority.org/thomas/BoethiusDeTr.htm#23>. From the Reply in Aquinas' *De Trinitate*, Question 5, Article 4. See also the Reply to Question 2, Article 3: "it is impossible that philosophical truths are contrary to those that are of faith: but they are deficient as compared to them. Nevertheless they incorporate some similitudes of those higher truths." Ibid.

My characterization of theology is therefore not really a disagreement with Aquinas. Rather, it is a defense against a certain kind of Thomism that I think unfairly declares the separation, subordination, and impotence of philosophy and reason.

More particularly, and in order to move toward this new (yet strangely familiar) hermeneutical, divine science, I have somewhat provisionally developed the argument of this paper into three sections. The first section attempts to show that philosophy is not clearly demarcated, by means of a reading of Derrida's work on the university. The second section examines, with Heidegger, how philosophy presents the opportunity to introduce a kind of "cross"-disciplinarity in its articulation of the structure of our being as temporality, particularly in our "stretching" and "retrieve." And the final section shows how philosophy can help us to turn back from the "cross"-disciplinarity of our own structure to the experience of philosophy as love, as it is given within some passages from Julian of Norwich.

1. Derrida on the Fear of (and Right to) Philosophy

Let us consider two of the times in Derrida's work where he describes a situation in which the lines between philosophy and faith, or between reason and its other, become blurred. One of these times, in *Truth in Painting*, is where Derrida notes that Kant, who was perhaps the clearest marker of reason's limits, describes reason as "conscious of its impotence" in the face of its attempts to inform the will and to act morally. This moral impotence brings reason to the point of seeking out "recourse to the *parergon*, to grace, to mystery, to miracles. It needs the supplementary work."⁷

This "recourse," which is articulated by Kant in his *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, arises out of reason's moral "need" to enact itself within history, within the temporal lives of those who embody it. However, the bridge between the a priori and the historical is not given to reason as a possible task for its own faculties. So reason seeks a "supplement," a healthy *pharmakon*, an affect that could serve as a bridge between reason and historicity.

But this divine "supplement" lies within an "inscrutable field,"⁸

⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Truth in Painting* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), 56.

⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, trans. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 72.

within a haunting area with divine traces of “mystery” and “miracles.” Reason thus enters this ‘field’ with trepidation: “This additive, to be sure, is threatening.”⁹ And Kant quickly acknowledges this threat by allowing for the “supplement” to be imported into reason “uncognized” by means of a faith that is “reflective” but not “dogmatic.”¹⁰

Reason then frames its project of approaching the divine parerga as a kind of trip into a haunted house. And as it runs through what does not “belong within it yet border on it,”¹¹ reason hopes not to be caught by its own desires, as if by a kind of vertigo or autoimmunity. For, by means of the possibility of incorporating faith within reason, Kant is keenly aware that reason might well initiate an autoimmune response and thereby lose its own method and efficacy.

However, adding ‘grace’ or ‘mystery’ to reason would be ‘threatening’ to philosophy only if philosophy is equated with a cleanly demarcated pure reason. And, with Derrida, I wonder if it is. Is philosophy simply a carefully delimited, and actively ergon-omic, reason?

A second time Derrida attests to the necessity and danger of blurring disciplinary lines comes in *Eyes of the University*, where Derrida again takes up Kant and the ideas of pure reason—this time in relation to the university. Here Derrida speaks not just of the ‘impotence’ of a cut-off reason (or cleanly demarcated philosophy) but of the impotence of the university as a matrix of disciplines.

For Derrida, when Kant speaks about the university, as opposed to when he speaks about religion, Kant seems more confident. For the institution of the university does not require for its institution a ‘supplementary work’ even if the university is itself a “supplementary body,”¹² to reason. Rather, reason is on surer ground with the university because there seems to be no experience of ‘impotence’ when reason sets itself the task of creating its own laboratory of self-development.

Instead, the only thing that is required of reason in order to set up the university as the ‘body’ of its faculties is the production of an idea,

⁹ Derrida, *Truth in Painting*, 56.

¹⁰ Kant, *Religion*, 72.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹² Jacques Derrida, *Eyes of the University: Right to Philosophy 2* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 154.

namely “the idea of the whole field of what is presently teachable.”¹³ And if this is all the university needs in order to be created and sustained, then there is good reason to be hopeful. For reason is good at forming or framing or recognizing such essential ideas.

However, according to Derrida, this idea “of the whole field of what is teachable,” like the ‘inscrutable field’ of religion and of parergon, is also threatening to reason. In fact this idea too appears to be inscrutable and seems to require that we blur the lines between the architectonic character of reason or philosophy and the other disciplines that would be situated by it. Thus, even when reason is *not* desiring to see God, but rather desiring only to embody itself, reason seems impotent and bothered. It seems not to be at home within its self-created system.

But why does reason feel not at home? Why is the idea of the teachable an inscrutable field? Reason feels this way, the field is inscrutable, because the idea of the teachable cannot—and yet it *must*—serve as reason’s own ground. Reason feels not at home because, in attempting to form the idea of the teachable, reason presents itself with the sublime¹⁴ task of forming and reforming its product into its own origin and end. It exchanges the inscrutability of the divine for the inscrutability of itself.

The idea of the field of teachability is therefore “sublime” in Kant’s sense of sublimity within the *Critique of Judgment*. It forces reason to answer specifically, by means of the imagination, for what it cannot yet answer for. It calls for a trip not through a haunted house but to the edges of knowability and teachability and then to a return to itself with living, imaginative proof of its possibility, before it has plumbed them within concrete disciplinary maneuvers. Reason is thus, in the institution of the university and the formation of its concept, simultaneously caught trying to imagine the total future of its historical development while trying to remove itself from imagination and from history in order to state the essential, a priori concept of teachability.

Reason as such, then, places us over an abyss in the formation of the idea of the university—an abyss of temporality, historicity, as somehow within the quest for essential, omnitemporal truth. And, Derrida argues, in

¹³ Ibid., 134.

¹⁴ Derrida on the university as sublime: “now you can better imagine with what shudders of awe I prepare myself to speak to you on the subject—quite properly sublime—of the essence of the university.” Ibid., 134.

our participation within the university that reason has fashioned, we find ourselves called to ‘answer for’ it before we could ever find the time to work out the relation of historicity to essentiality: “to answer for the principle of reason (and thus for the university), to answer *for* this call, to raise questions about the origin or ground of the principle of foundation...is not simply to obey it or to respond *in the face of* this principle.”¹⁵

We cannot simply obey reason or the university insofar as the very institution of the concept defers itself to its development. The inauguration of the a priori enlists our imagination, our meeting of students and colleagues, our concrete, historical work in order to bring it about. We cannot simply send our representative, our prophet, to go out to meet the idea of the teachable. To the contrary, in this idea we are stretched out by a demand that we cannot adequately answer—a demand that does not originate with us that we nevertheless agree to put *to* ourselves on behalf *of* ourselves. Instead, in the face of the unresolved mixture of a priori and historicity, we stand, like Pontius Pilate, and mingle responsibility and critique, loyalty and interrogation.

For there is yet, still now, nothing to meet, nowhere to send someone, even as parents send their children to us in our universities, even as we send our students forward to other university programs. To what, then, would we turn when we turn towards our own idea of the university as if to answer its call to fill in ‘teachability’? The best we can do is to notice that an attempt to answer “*for* this call” that reason, its university, puts to us is a call to “face” that which has no face. The best we can do is to see that reason, that the university, is a kind of ungrounded act of suspension, as in the case of the very beginning of the great European cathedrals, which would be completed after many generations of those who might continue to embody what we only thought of: “This very grounding, then, like the university, would have to hold itself suspended above a most peculiar void.”¹⁶

¹⁵ Derrida, *Eyes of the University*, 137. See also John Caputo on the role of the abyss in the hermeneutics of knowing and of the divine: “Whether one is a Dominican friar or not, there is a fine point in the mind where one is brought up short, a moment of midnight reckoning where the ground gives way and one also has the distinct sense of falling into an abyss,” John Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics: Repetition, Deconstruction and the Hermeneutic Project* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 269.

¹⁶ Derrida, *Eyes of the University*, 137.

If we are to answer for the institution of the university as the body of reason, as the embodiment of our faculties within the teaching faculties, then we must ourselves pattern our response after the manner of a 'suspension.' We must enact an *epoche*. If we are to answer to reason, then we have to suspend what we have taken reason and the university to be. And we must wait for what comes from beneath—we must wait for the idea of the teachable to show itself *simultaneously* in its historical and a priori character.

This suspension, this void, this having to wait, is something we each can experience. Working within the university, teaching and researching, we are at times (I would say always) uneasy. What is this thing, the university? Surely the university is not the executives, not the trustees, not the students in front of us, or the texts behind us. It is not we the professors either, insofar as we are replaceable and insofar as what we do is to perform disciplinary tasks. Even our disciplines shift, come and go, and live out a tension between methodology and results. No, the university is none of these, but it is that which situates all of these.

And yet, in being the thing that organizes and situates, the university is also shaped, developing, by means of the practices of teaching, researching, and governing. The university is not like other institutions, which also carry a kind of uneasy, super-structural position. For the university is the institution that contemplates, reproduces, and shifts all other institutions. And so there is always a kind of experience of unreality or void that encompasses the experience of the university. The center holds—but how? And for how long?

In light of this experience of the void within the idea, it seems strange and even problematic that we live within a world that has a university 'system.' How can we live within a system that escapes our critical account of it? Often we live in it by denying the experience of unease. But if we take up that experience, then this strange, problematic character of our life within the university can provide us with a clue to follow, an opportunity to realize, that we are working within that which is sublime.

As sublime, the university is a range of disciplinary mountains that often appear indissociable from the clouds, which shift their borders in order to hide the voids between them. As sublime, the university evokes mystery. And if we are to unpack the mystery of the university, then we must question it directly, and we wait for an answer, even an echo. In waiting, there is urgent need. We need to hear; and after hearing, we

need to answer. We need to listen in order to answer *for* that which would we demand answer *to* us. We, especially we, the philosophers need continuously to reconnoiter where we are as we teach and study.

And, indeed, within this ‘most peculiar void’ of the sublime concept (whether of the teachable or of reason or of the university) some entirely appropriate, difficult question can form itself to be taken up by us. A question that comes, childlike, out of the void in order to be addressed back to it. And those of us who stand within the world of the university, who can see and perform the suspension necessary to match its own suspension-structure, can ask such a question with Pontius Pilate: ‘what is truth?’

Perhaps we philosophers should value Pilate more. For poor, philosophical Pilate actually pursues, in fear and trembling, the origin of the idea of the divine among the human. And in so doing he gives us an example of how to interrogate the mixture of the a priori and the historical. But perhaps we are afraid of valuing Pilate. For we know what he gets for his virtuous act. He gets nothing. He is simply relegated to the historical shadows, judged to be a figure of non-trinitarian totalitarianism. He is cast aside. And that seems most unfair.

Shouldn’t we all be more like him, Derrida seems to ask: “Who is more faithful to reason’s call, who hears it with a keener ear, who better sees the difference, the one who questions in return and tries to think through the possibility of that summons, or the one who does not want to hear any question about the reason of reason.”¹⁷ Pilate responds to Jesus’ ‘summons’ by questioning the very ground of His utterance—namely the being of truth as the function of our ‘belonging’ to the divine. And thereby Pilate shows how well he listens. He might have asked, in another time, as a kind of precursor to the whole problematical suspension-structure of the university, whether virtue could be taught.¹⁸

Reason liberated on and confined to its paths, without a kind of ques-

¹⁷ Ibid., 138.

¹⁸ As Plato does in the *Meno*. Notice there that Socrates refers Meno’s initial question back to the meaning of virtue itself. And this makes the very institution of the university problematic, if the university requires a kind of transcendental idea of what is teachable prior to the discovery of the being and meaning of that which would be taught.

tioning after its ground, allows reason's principle to "install its empire"¹⁹ in a university that fosters "research that is programmed, focused, organized in an authoritarian fashion *in view of* its utilization."²⁰ Now perhaps that is what Pilate's question was. Perhaps it was a question that arose out of an installed empire, in view of what would be a utilitarian calculus—namely, not upsetting the Jewish people whose bodies and lives were being 'programmed' and 'organized' as clearly as those of university students. But perhaps, also, in Pilate's question, a question being asked from within the walls of the Roman empirical 'university,' there is something more being asked. Perhaps there is something more to hear.

Perhaps Pilate's question is an opportunity for the phenomenon of the divine to show itself. And, in Jesus' non-answer to Pilate, especially in Jesus' silence, not in a storm or a hurricane but in a whisper—perhaps in Jesus the thinking that is the divine can show itself. But this would mean that we would have to look beyond Pilate's interlocutor right in that moment to see what and how something else responds to the question about the being of truth.

Perhaps lurking in some other preparatory or consummating work of faith would lie another member of a "community of thinking, for which the border between basic and end-oriented research would no longer be secured, or in any event not under the same conditions as before."²¹ We can hope that such a "community" of insecure borders would be the definition of a university, of its disciplines. Because, if such a community were not the university, then, perhaps a certain theology in declaring itself rigidly demarcated, and perhaps a philosophy that accepted those demarcations, would do the very opposite of faith—namely, ensure the death of community, the death of a thinking that was "not reducible to technique, nor to science, nor to philosophy."²² And if the university did that, then perhaps there would be no "Passover" toward liberation but instead the university would simply be branded a

¹⁹ Derrida, *Eyes of the University*, 139.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 148. See also Edith Stein's description of "a thinking together arises that no longer is experienced as an experience of one or the other but as *our* common thinking." (Edith Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000), 170.)

²² Derrida, *Eyes of the University*, 148.

thief or a rabble-rouser and crossed out accordingly.

What I see within Derrida's work then is the "free play" of a kind of thinking that sees the university as a problem, as something set upon the future and the tradition but as depending on a hermeneutics of the divine to help it answer to the present. Derrida thus re-inaugurates a thinking, inherited from the *Euthyphro*, that allows the pursuit of what is loved, or what might be loved, or what was once loved, while confronting the beloved with what could only be difficult, perhaps painful, certainly life-affirming questions. I take from Derrida, finally, this notion of thinking: "'Thinking' requires *both* the principle of reason *and* what is beyond the principle of reason, the *arche* and the an-archy."²³ And from this kind of thinking I see philosophy as having always already been *required* to embrace the par-ergon of theology, the "threatening additive" of grace and mystery and miracles.

II. Heidegger on Suffering and Forgiveness

One way to begin to move into the thinking that is communal, to the insecurely bordered university, is to turn sympathetically, with and from Derrida, to Heidegger. For certainly Heidegger is at least with Derrida at the beginning of Derrida's movement toward a community of thinking: "the principle of reason installs its empire only to the extent that the abyssal question of the being that is hiding within it remains hidden, and with it the very question of the ground...especially as *stiften* (to erect or institute, a meaning to which Heidegger accords a certain pre-eminence)."²⁴ The university, and the disciplines within it, become solely 'technological' or utilitarian, solely uncritical of their borders and limits, insofar as "the abyssal question of the being that is hiding" remains unasked. So let us attempt to ask this 'abyssal question' by looking into Heidegger's hermeneutics. What hides in the principle of reason? What hides in the clear demarcations of disciplines? What hides in the university?

For Heidegger, Dasein hides, certainly. At least Dasein is hiding in reason and in reason's university. Perhaps more than Dasein is hiding. But let us stick with Dasein for the moment.

The project of the university, of reason constituting itself along its

²³ Ibid., 153.

²⁴ Ibid., 139.

own paths, forming a system of what is teachable, creates a concealment, a detour. This detour, as Husserl noted in the *Crisis of the European Sciences*, is the very covering over or forgetting of the life-world and of the subjectivity that actualizes itself in teaching itself (and others) the meaning of its involvement in the world. The university, and the disciplines within it, as they have developed over the course of centuries, is thus the detour away from the structure of Dasein who created it and who could find itself within.

A return to the being of Dasein is then the recognition, at least in part, that Dasein, as temporal, creates the university insofar as Dasein “stretches [*erstreckt*] itself along in such a way that its own being is constituted beforehand as this stretching [*Erstreckung*] along.”²⁵ In the act of stretching ourselves along, we push the very structure of stretching, of laying ourselves out, backwards. We achieve the a priori, the being “constituted beforehand,” that is, by means of our practice. We stretch “in such a way” that we have, in the very act, the very moment of our stretch, made a backwards reference to our being. We are always creating the possibility for the a priori that has been within the historicity that we are now.²⁶

This means that reason, the university, like all acts and productions of Dasein, will be the announcement in a particular way of the structure of what we are—namely, this stretching that gives itself a prehistory. Reason, the university, like all acts of Dasein, is rooted in the stretching, the care, that Dasein shows to its world and to its being-in-the-world. And what Dasein does in general, namely, giving itself to itself beforehand as the very act of stretching, it does in particular within the university and within reason.

For, along with *itself* as stretching itself out in steps, Dasein also pushes back the stretched out *methods* of analysis. With its own being, and with more fanfare than its own being, Dasein stretches out and pushes

²⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein und Zeit*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 343.

²⁶ Derrida examines Heidegger’s ‘dangerous’ use of *Erstreckung* as “the movement of suspense by which [Dasein] is tended out and extended of itself between birth and death, these two receiving meaning only from that intervallic movement.” (Jacques Derrida “Geschlecht: Sexual Difference, Ontological Difference,” in *Feminist Interpretations of Heidegger*, eds. Nancy J. Holland and Patricia Huntington (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2001), 66.

back the methods and results of its sciences. For as they arise as meaningful, as methods and truths, disciplines, emerge, they do so as always already having been relevant and truthful in the act of taking them up.

As a system of acts of care, then, the university is simply another way in which Dasein takes up its temporality and lays itself out for itself to see (or to cover over in order to see something else). As acts of care, the university is the self-stretching act of the self-stretching actors. And so well does the university embody the structure of care that we can turn from the one who cares toward the fields of research and never know what we cover over by doing that. We can turn from the being whose very being enabled the project of the university to the beings that the university discloses.

But there is something else to the fact that all care has this structure of “self-stretching.” And this ‘something else’ is the whisper, the suggestion, of torture, or at least of suffering. For stretching need not only be preparation for real exercise to come. Stretching can also be done simply in order to put ourselves on the rack, to exhaust our body, our limbs, our very selves for reasons that are not immediately clear and that may well be harmful. If so, then the most whispered part of this torture, if it exists, would be that we might do it to ourselves in the name of ourselves.²⁷

To secure this point: we say that learning something difficult can ‘stretch’ the mind, or, more particularly, that coming up with a model for quantum physics must ‘stretch’ the imagination. And by this we mean that we are relying on our ability first to ‘constitute beforehand’ the understanding that we will become and then to live into the newly grasped concepts as our own. And this seems good or right. After all, we expect students to stretch to meet us as they study what we represent.

But just as in stretching before a run or a game we can lose ourselves in the preparation, the anticipation of the exercise to come, so too in reason or in the university we can lose sight of ourselves as the very structure, the very being of what we teach and learn. We can, by forgetting to secure the meaning of being, simply harm. We can stretch ourselves, our students, out of shape. We can shut down their appropriation

²⁷ See John Caputo’s argument about these sections in Heidegger: “the ‘violence’ of hermeneutics is ‘natural,’ for it is dictated by the structure of self-withdrawing Being. Hermeneutics is able to ‘retrieve’ the primordial only insofar as it dismantles the overlaid accretions and derivative understandings of the world.” (Caputo, *Radical Hermeneutics*, 63.)

of tradition by claiming to have stretched ourselves out and to have found it (already) to be complete, static.

In such a university setting, in our stretching ourselves and torturing our students, we can lose sight of the fact, by our false imitation of it, that “as care, Dasein is the ‘Between.’”²⁸ We can forget that we are the stretching that ought to be for itself and for others and not simply for the origin or for the goal.²⁹ We, our students, the disciplines we represent—we are between end and means together. And this ‘between together’ is where the university lies—or ought to lie—and how it ought to be brought into being anew by our participation in it.

What Pilate prepared for, namely the entire history of a certain Rome that was to-come and the interest in Jesus that would follow his interrogation, is an authentic act of stretching. In Pilate’s question is the European, catholic university. And, by means of Pilate’s interrogation, the discipline of the crucifix, the cross on which a God died, is a singular act of stretching that became an event that demands to be interpreted. The crucifix too, so close to Pilate, is a stretching that “stretches itself along,” that puts itself backwards in time toward the beginning.

If we take Pilate and Jesus to constitute a university in their relation, then surely Jesus’ silent answer on the cross is that he embodies, takes himself to be, and teaches—teaches the very image, the life, of the “between” of Dasein and the divine, whatever else the divine might be. And surely, this professor Jesus, his sublime arms open in both torture and embrace, enacts the very figure of “the specific movement of the stretched out stretching itself along” that Heidegger calls the “*occurrence* [*Geschehen*] of Dasein.”³⁰ Without this act of the professor stretching himself out, without the moment of enactment that he himself resolutely accepted, Jesus could not have disclosed (both forwards and backwards in time) the relationship of Dasein to the divine as calling for hermeneutics, for interpretation.

²⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 343.

²⁹ See Michael Lewis’ discussion of *Erstreckung*: “What must be emphasized again and again is the fact that any process of stretching always tends towards *at least* two asymptotic points, two ends towards which it reaches out.” (Michael Lewis, *Heidegger and the Place of Ethics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), 38.)

³⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 344.

If we take Pilate and Jesus to offer a dialogue, a passion play, that resonates with the university, then perhaps we can see that there would thus be no event of faith without a certain suffering, a certain stretching or suspension over a void. Perhaps we can see, too, that *by participating* resolutely in his torture as a teachable moment, Jesus redirects what might have been torture and allows for us to see in a particularly divine way that “disclosure and interpretation belong essentially to the occurrence of Dasein.”³¹

To live the between, the stretching, and to do so authentically, resolutely, is to give space to the student, to one’s colleagues, to the process of attending to meaning that comes by way of witnessing the professor’s following of the beloved, wherever he might lead. To participate in the stretching that is learning, to separate teaching from torture, in the face of a God who seems to vanish into the void, of a God abandons us to the void we ourselves create in our institutions—perhaps we ought to think more about that.

Certainly a discipline of philosophy that stuck to reason’s university in Kant’s sense, as it covered over the being of Dasein, as it concealed the being of the self-stretching stretching itself along—this would be an impoverished philosophy. It would be impoverished because the event and the very *need* and *possibility* for meaningful “disclosure and interpretation,” for philosophy, lies in the way in which Dasein is always making itself anew, living in “between” disciplines, between ends and means.

But if we move beyond Kant’s university within our own, we can take up the disclosure of the “cross” philosophically. And that is what I see as our task, namely, to take up “cross”-disciplinarity, to take on self-stretching.³² Philosophy that was “cross”-disciplinary would therefore be rooted less in a border separating itself from theology than in the transcendence of proposed limits within a resolute act of listening and witnessing.

But the cross too, Jesus’ act, is easily concealed in favor of belief,

³¹ Ibid., 345.

³² Obviously, I am indebted to Jean-Luc Marion’s discussion of “crossing”: “Christ offers to the gaze only an icon, while showing a face, that is a gaze, itself invisible. It is thus a matter, in a first instance, of a crossing of gazes [*une croisée des regards*], conforming to the schema in love.” (Jean-Luc Marion, *The Crossing of the Visible* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 57.)

of “destiny,” to use Heidegger’s language. We too easily turn faith into religion, and we too often depend on another to have approached the whispers of the divine. We allow, we demand that designated person, or prophet, to “go near” and to “hear all that our Lord God will say.” And we too often see ourselves, professors, as having been granted that authority a priori, without projecting ourselves and our students into a future in which we approach the divine together.

For certainly there have been those, who claim to have drawn near, who say that the cross just means salvation—believe and live; fail to believe and perish. And so, like the wealthy, we philosophers—who might have seen something integral in the passion—turn away saddened. We turn away because, if doctrine is all there is within that event, if there is nothing more to disclose, then we ought not to give up the wealth that led us to take halting steps back to the divine, to relation between the divine and the human. The university, our disciplines, are too much to cede to faith, if that faith does not allow for a “cross”-disciplinarity.

But such people are wrong. And the wealthy should pursue the divine, with Heidegger, a bit further. Heidegger would remind us of the being that hides in the university. As Dasein, as this stretched out being that pushes itself and its products backwards and forwards into its history and future, we are not simply annihilating ourselves by our involvement of the university. We are also embracing our participation on the rack of knowing, on the rack of our occurrence. We embrace and stretch in order to see and, by seeing, transcend.

If we see the university and reason as the self-articulating of our being, then, we can also see that, in our participation in the university, in the projects of thinking and writing that go on there, each of us acts by “*handing oneself over* [*Sichuberliefern*] to traditional [*überkommener*] possibilities, although not necessarily *as* traditional ones.”³³ A crowd comes to a lecture, to a paper, a crowd that may or may not hear what we say. And we stand with colleagues, students, foundational texts, and, in standing together, we hand ourselves over to what is to-come within our new readings. We hand ourselves over without swords, or with just a few, to those who uphold tradition. But in handing ourselves over we also remain resolute within our new vision.

³³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 351.

We do not, then, just hand ourselves over to the university or to reason or even to faith, as a kind of submersion of ourselves into what is present-at-hand. Rather, as we ‘hand ourselves over’ we also enact “retrieve [*Wiederholung*]” of the acts of care of the university, of the insights and methods, and thereby enact “explicit handing down [*ausdrückliche Überlieferung*]”³⁴ of those possibilities and contents by means of a hermeneutics of interstitial creativity. Or we could. And that is the urgency here. Derrida and Heidegger are posing what could be if we were to take up the university authentically as our own attempt to concretize our stretching and retrieve. If we resolutely, carefully, handed *ourselves* over to a discomforting set of insecure disciplinary borders, then we *could* hand down or hand ‘over’ the university to itself and to each other. Our hands could hand over. We could be ready to hand them over.

If we were to accomplish Derrida’s and Heidegger’s exhortation to turn the university more authentically, more self-critically, toward Dasein, then, we would see that the kind of “retrieve” that we enact would be one that “neither abandons itself to the past, nor does it aim at progress.”³⁵ This retrieve would be the between, the critical taking up of what is handed down in order to listen to what is “unthought” within it, as Merleau-Ponty says in “The Philosopher and His Shadow.”³⁶

To put this in dialogue with tradition a bit more explicitly: if we follow Heidegger’s descriptions, we might just be able to claim that Aquinas’ identification of the three theological virtues—faith, hope, and love—were possible because of the structure of Dasein.³⁷ That is, it is only as the “stretched out stretching itself along” that we could become committed to faith (as the past), to hope (as the future), and to love (as the present) as three ecstatic possibilities that arise within the unified to-

³⁴ Ibid., 352.

³⁵ Ibid., 353.

³⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 160ff.

³⁷ See Aquinas’ Reply in *Summa Theologica*, Question 62, Article 1: “it is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he is directed to supernatural happiness, even as he is directed to his connatural end, by means of his natural principles, though not without divine assistance.” From Thomas Aquinas, “*Summa Theologica*,” New Advent, accessed 10 April 2015. <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/2062.htm>

tality of Dasein's response to its own ground.

Whatever role grace might play as benefactor, then, in giving to us the 'supplementary body' of the theological virtues, or of the university, or of philosophy itself, it might still be the case that the possibility of their echo, their projection, and their enactment would be rooted in what it meant to be the being for whom time (and therefore givenness) is an issue. It might be that we can love because we are already stretching, showing ourselves toward the divine as echoing the passion of the cross.

III. Julian of Norwich and the Pursuit of Care-ful Love

If the university, if philosophy, makes room for the pursuit of knowledge of the divine, for the pursuit of "cross"-disciplinarity, then in what *way* ought it to make room? In the past, the university has made room by creating a hierarchy of disciplines under the guidance of one divine science, by subordinating all thought and insight to a direct interrogation and explication of the divine presence (and absence) in all things. Later, the university made room by creating a border for the pursuit of the divine, as if to say that the divine science and its centrality were 'overcome' for the sake of reason. And perhaps that was because reason had grown, had revolted and had demanded to study all things for *its* own sake. But what now?

Well, if we take our cues from Derrida and Heidegger, we might see the turn toward reason's other, toward Dasein as the being that hides within reason, as an opportunity to wait for the divine to show itself within Dasein. We might see the structural isomorphism between stretching and grace as the opportunity for epiphany as presenting itself in the space between tradition and progress.

And, as I prefer that possibility, I will demonstrate here that this 'between,' this renewed hermeneutics, is precisely where I think that Julian of Norwich brings us. Ironically, in examining her work, we return to a medieval time, a time of a certain university, a time of divine science. But we return to her in order to remain faithful and yet apart,

immersed and yet detached,³⁸ from the university of the past. We return to the “shewings” of God to Julian, a woman, in a time when the only students were men and the only teachers were priests. And we do so in order to approach the divine anew.³⁹ We return to listen to a voice that speaks to Julian “ere God shewed any words,” to a voice in which “He suffered me for a convenient time to give heed unto Him, and all that I had seen, and all intellect that was therein.”⁴⁰

In Julian’s descriptions of the “shewings,” we return to being, to the question of the meaning of being, to a time before words show themselves.⁴¹ We return to the one who, like Moses, draws “near” to God and listens on our behalf. We return out of a certainty that we have the interpretations of the past correct to a disconcerting time of being “suffered” to listen. To listen to the divine in order to approach anew “all intellect” that is within the perceptions of the occurrence, of the ‘showing.’

As Julian listens and sees, she makes a strange claim: “And from that time that it was shewed I desired oftentimes to learn what was our Lord’s meaning.”⁴² From the time of the showing, of the occurrence, Julian says, there is desire to know meaning. Wrapped up in the moment

³⁸ See John Russon’s *Bearing Witness to Epiphany* for an excellent discussion of our status as immersed and detached within the world. In that book, Russon makes a compelling case, albeit implicitly, for the relevance of faith within phenomenology.

³⁹ See Pope Benedict XVI’s General Audience: “‘all manner of things shall be well’: this is the final message that Julian of Norwich transmits to us and that I am also proposing to you today.” Pope Benedict XVI, “General Audience 1 December 2010,” the Vatican, accessed 10 April 2015. http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2010/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20101201.html.

⁴⁰ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love* (Waxkeep Publishing, Kindle Edition, 2013), Chapter XIII.

⁴¹ Diane Antonio argues that Julian clears women to be freer in their disclosures: “with her epistemology of sensual ‘showings,’ Julian of Norwich positioned Western women to be able to refigure their embodiment and speech acts, to be freer of defining and delimiting conventional perceptions about the body than before she dared to speak her lived body’s experience.” Diane Antonio, “The Flesh of All That Is: Merleau-Ponty, Irigaray, and Julian’s ‘Showings’” *Sophia* 40.2 (December 2001): 48.

⁴² Julian of Norwich, *Revelations*, Chapter LXXXVI.

of being, then, is the inclination toward meaning. The question of the meaning of being is the question of being's production of desire.

Reason, or rather thinking, then follows being, pursues it by means of the desire to learn, by a desire that seems to be akin and yet the other to being. Thinking in a desiring way, pursuing the beloved wherever it may lead us, we turn with Julian to education. And we do that because the divine shows itself *before* words, in a way that overflows the boundaries of our intellect, and we must return to what we perceive and what we know in order to learn from those.⁴³ To perceive and to know is to have to return to perception and intellect. To perceive is to desire to learn. Or it could be. It ought to be. For not everyone is like Julian.

But philosophy ought to cultivate Julian as much as Pilate. So that the meaning within the showing can be generated, apprehended, handed down, made explicit, created. For the meaning that Julian sees is not given before, not given except *through*, a process of making explicit that must take its cue from the showing and from our desire to be faithful to the showing.⁴⁴

And so the question of the meaning of being becomes a question of the love of wisdom: "Would you learn our Lord's meaning in this thing? Learn it well: love was his meaning. Who showed it to you? Love. What did he show you? Only love. And for what reason did he show you? For love. Hold onto this and you will learn more of the same."⁴⁵ The meaning that matters, the meaning that binds 'meaning' to 'this thing,' is love. It is the desire to connect the meaning, the thing, and the one who

⁴³ See Julia Kristeva's characterization of Orthodox anthropology for a compelling parallel: "Didn't Heidegger himself in contemplation in an Orthodox monastery at Kaysariani, become aware of the unique presence of a *truth* that does not deny the difficulty of the blossoming forth of Being? A *truth* that would still remain perceptible within the rush toward that factitious independence in which a technical civilization producing 'goods' takes pleasure?" (Julia Kristeva, "Bulgaria, my suffering" in *Crisis of the European Subject* (New York: Other Press, 2000), 150.)

⁴⁴ See Merold Westphal's argument about knowledge within his inauguration of a phenomenology of religion: "We seek to understand our effective involvement with the world, not to fill the storehouse of knowledge, but in order to prevail over the facticity of our existence, to *preside over our lives*," Merold Westphal, *God, Guilt and Death: An Existential Phenomenology of Religion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 23.

⁴⁵ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations*, Chapter LXXXVI.

is shown. Love is the meaning, the ground, the showing of the ground, and the end. Reason, intellect, if it exists, is the 'between' of meaning, ground, showing, and end. And as this 'between' it moves back and forth to what is already connected in order to "learn more of the same."

What discipline could be best suited to follow up the link between the showing and the one who shows, between the showing and the one who occurs more fully in the face of the showing? What discipline except the one that orients itself on the desire to follow the beloved, to draw near to the truth and to interrogate it with others?

If this discipline is philosophy, as I think it is, then philosophy is not a game. Nor is it a production in which 'progress' is made by means of erecting an edifice. It ought not get caught up in that sort of production.

If philosophy is a production, an *ergon*, it is akin to a theatrical production, to a dramatic dialogue. It is an *ergon* that looks for a *parergon*, an intellect that looks toward what shows itself before words, in a showing that demands words, calls for desire. Philosophy is the uncovering of the void within oneself, of the void within being that hides within the university of thinking. And it is the concealment of the quest for mastery and utility in order to listen to the beloved and to do what the beloved demands.

Philosophy ought not to do more than approach the quiet that is the divine by means of its own care. Not simply by treasuring what it finds in its own heart, in its own language. For we have, as did Mary, a duty to speak about what is revealed within a divine showing. Indeed, philosophy ought to speak, as did Julian, so that others can hear, even when they tell philosophy that it ought not to speak. She, we, must help them to find the ears within which the resounding sounds can grip their hearts. And, yes, we must interrupt the divine, the university, our own disciplines, so that the divine can resound even in silence.

Philosophy ought not to be bound by a certain kind of demarcation that does not arise from the things that show themselves. It ought to set other disciplines, especially theology, free by means of doing whatever the showing demands. And sometimes that demand is challenge, interrogation, discomfort, rupture, interruption, correction. But if it is done philosophically, for the sake of the showing, philosophy is not absent from the divine even in interruption and correction. Pilate, like Socrates, is a philosopher who would speak for the sake of listening, listen for the sake of speaking—Pilate is a philosopher.

If philosophy does anything else than generate the explicit from the implicit, anything other than phenomenology, then it loses sight of the fact that the ground of philosophy is the love, the care, that it bears. If it does anything other than make explicit what the meaning of that love, that care, is, then philosophy turns into sophistry. But if it takes up the space ‘between,’ then philosophy, Dasein, thinking, the university—it can save theology, can save the divine, from being relegated to the museum of the university.

So, if philosophy is told to be quiet and stay apart from faith, then I say with Moses and Julian that it ought to “draw near,” to listen, and to speak. Philosophy is not *in service* to religion; rather, it *serves* those who would bind themselves together to approach the divine in faith and hope and love.⁴⁶ And philosophy ought to continue to speak directly, interrogatively, interrupting and correcting where it must, in such a way that it is letting the divine declare the path of desire in whatever ways (Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Catholic, Orthodox, etc.) it is “shewn.”

⁴⁶ See Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez’s claim about the role of evolution in revelation: “Recalling the evolution of the revelation regarding the presence of God in the midst of his people will aid us in clarifying the form this encounter in history takes.” Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1973), 189.

Philosophy as Science and Philosophy as Philosophizing in Heidegger

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Als Mensch da sein, heißt philosophieren.
Martin Heidegger, GA 27, 3.

Abstract.

The author of the article notes that Heidegger, in the period of the development of his project of fundamental ontology, understood philosophy as a science. In this context, he posed the question of the compatibility of philosophy as science and as personal philosophizing. This problem is interpreted here in the context of Heidegger's distinction between the logical and the existential concepts of science. The article's author believes that the switch from latent philosophizing to an explicit philosophizing and then to the scientific character of philosophy is connected to the resoluteness to objectivation of being in its difference from that-which-is.

I. Introduction

Though one takes Heidegger very often as an opponent of science, as well as of any kind of scientific philosophy, the philosopher himself (at least when elaborating his project of so-called fundamental ontology) stated that philosophy is a science. For example, in *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1927), he states:

For the future we shall mean by 'philosophy' scientific philosophy and nothing else.¹

¹ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 13.

Heidegger titles this philosophy as *ontology*, *de facto* identifying both philosophy and ontology on account of their object. According to him, the proper object of scientific philosophy (understood as ontology) is *being*. In his own words: “Philosophy is the science of being.”² Thus, scientific philosophy is distinguished from any other sciences by the peculiarity of its object. If all the rest of the sciences deal, in each instance, with a certain region of that-which-is (with nature, history, language, mathematical entities and so on), then, philosophy deals only with the being of that-which-is. Being as such does not exist in any sense; it could only *be given* in the human *understanding* of that which it means “to be” in very different senses. Moreover, being not only could be given but also should be given within the human understanding of any kind of human experience of that-which-is, in terms of what *is* and how it *is* could be possible at all. The principle, which grounds Heidegger’s division, between the science of being and science of that-which-is, is termed by him the *ontological difference*, i.e. the difference between that-which-is and the being itself of that-which-is.

Only by making this distinction – *krinein* in Greek – not between one being and another being but between being and beings do we first enter the field of philosophical research.³

Reflecting the ontological difference, Heidegger divides the sciences into two different kinds; namely, there is, on the one hand, *ontological* science as the transcendental-critical science of being and, on the other hand, *ontical* sciences, which are defined also by Heidegger as the *positive* sciences. The philosopher describes the positivity of the ontical sciences in the following way:

all non-philosophical sciences have as their theme some being or beings, and indeed in such a way that they are in every case antecedently given as beings to those sciences. They are posited by them in advance; they are a positum for them. All the propositions of the non-philosophical sciences, including those of mathematics, are positive propositions. Hence, to distinguish them from philosophy, we shall call all non-philosophical sciences positive sciences.⁴

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 17.

⁴ Ibid., 13.

Correspondingly, philosophy as ontological science is *non-positive* science. As such, it may be defined more concretely by the definition:

Philosophy is the theoretical conceptual interpretation of being, of being's structure and its possibilities.⁵

This brings up the question: what belongs to such a notion of scientific philosophy as the "theoretical conceptual interpretation of being" at all? Two points have to be emphasized in this regard. On the one hand, as with any science, philosophical ontology should correspond to the so-called *logical concept* of science, i.e. it should be presentable as the whole of the true propositions. Heidegger says in *Being and Time*, that the logical concept of science "understands science with regard to its results and defines it as a 'context of casual relations of true, that is, valid propositions.'"⁶ Thus, if philosophy claims to be a science, it has to formulate unambiguous sentences, which have the character of generality and necessity, and thus, can require an intersubjective consent.

Therewith, on the other hand, any science—including philosophy—should be ontologically understood on the base of so-called *existential concept* of science. This notion treats science as a way for the entity to be, which is in its own being always being-in-the-world. In other words, science understood existentially is *one of the possibilities of human being*.

In attempting to explicate knowing, and particularly science as a possibility of the existence of Dasein, we are inquiring into the existential concept of science. What is the science when it is taken as the possibility of human Dasein?...we will consider only two essential determinants which belong to the existence of Dasein: being-in-the-world and freedom. These are sufficient for a preliminary designation of the essence of science.⁷

Thus, in this case, science is understood as a kind of activity of

⁵ Ibid., 11.

⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Stambaugh (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 327.

⁷ Martin Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of "Kant's Critique of Pure Reason"*, trans. P. Emad and K. Maly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 13.

human Dasein. It is of great importance that both concepts, the logical and the existential, do not exclude each other, as if the science were either only a set of propositions or a kind of human activity. C.F. Gethmann is absolutely right saying:

the both, logical and existential understandings of science are not alternatives in the philosophy of science, but they relate to each other in the systematical relation of foundation in accordance with Heidegger.⁸

To be more exact, the logical concept of science is the derivate of its existential one. Conversely, the existential concept of science ontologically grounds science as a set of true propositions—making it possible in general.

It seems to be that one could abstract the logical concept of science from its existential origin in the case of ontic, i.e. positive, sciences, which deal with their objects without thinking of the principles and ways of being of such objects. Any positive science is presentable as the pure result of scientific cognition. In such form, it is possible to transfer it from one generation of scholars to the net.

The question arises, whether both the mentioned concepts of science in Heidegger could be separated from each other with regard to philosophy as non-positive science. Philosophy is the inquiry into principles as such, i.e. into being itself, which is given only in the existential understanding of it. As transcendental science, it goes back always to human existence as its origin and, thus, cannot abstract itself from its existential condition of possibility, and therefore, from the existential concept of science.

This brings up the new question: if philosophy—being science—cannot reduce its existential origin; and at the same time the existence of human Dasein is always something individual and factual, can philosophy claim to be science in the sense of its logical concept. Is philosophy able to formulate propositions, which would have generality and necessity? May it claim any kind of common consent in general? Is philosophy only a private occupation of a private person and, therefore, does it

⁸ Carl Friedrich Gethmann, *Dasein: Erkennen und Handeln: Heidegger im phänomenologischen Kontext* (Berlin, New York, Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 176.

have any objective and common status, or it can be a general scientific cognition in the rigorous sense?

To answer these questions, one ought to actualize a two-fold inquiry. On the one hand, this is the question of the deep-rooted habit of philosophy in human existence, (i.e. into Heidegger's understanding of philosophizing). On the other hand, one ought to inquire into his treatment of the possible modification of philosophizing (i.e. of the existential notion of philosophy) into philosophy as science in the sense of its logical concept.

II. Philosophy as a Proper Possibility of Dasein's Being in the World

In his book *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger states:

authentic philosophizing will only then be able to come upon the Question of Being if this question belongs to the innermost essence of Philosophy, which itself is only as a decisive possibility of human Dasein.⁹

Thus, one can define philosophy as a *possibility* of Dasein. Such a possibility accomplishes itself in the action of philosophizing. The last is thereby a definite mode of being of the human being, namely, the mode of being-in-the-world. Certainly, human Dasein—being always already in the world—can also philosophize in addition to everything else. Philosophy belongs to the possible activities of the human being, alongside with positive-scientific research, political practice, artistry, trade, religion and so on. There is no doubt, that there are philosophers as well as scientists, politicians, artists, tradesmen.

Nevertheless, the truth is that philosophy is not an ordinary possibility of being of human Dasein besides the others. As Heidegger said, it is the *decisive* possibility. What does this mean? Why does philosophy, and not, for example, science or art, have the advantage over any other ways of being-in-the-world? To explain matters, one ought to inquire into Heidegger's treatment of the ontological structure of Dasein.

⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. R. Taft (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 158.

First of all, Heidegger treats human Dasein as the “kind” (not in the logical sense of species) of that-which-is, as the very special type of entity. The peculiarity of such that-which-is is in the fact that only it has the direct relation to its own being. In *Being and Time*, the philosopher defines Dasein in the following way:

Da-sein is a being that does not simply occur among other beings. Rather it is optically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned *about* its very being.¹⁰

At the same time, having the relation to its very being, Dasein *relates to being as such*, including the being of the regions of that-which-is, which are not Dasein itself. Thereby, namely being as such or in general is the proper subject matter of philosophy understood as scientific ontology in Heidegger’s view:

We assert now that *being is the proper and sole theme of ontology*.¹¹

Therefore, human Dasein—one and only one among the totality of that-which-is—not only has direct access to the proper theme of philosophy, but also—because of its own concernedness about its very being—is dependent upon it, cares about it. Inversely, being as the subject matter of philosophy—insofar as being in its difference to that-which-is does not exist in Heidegger’s opinion—can only *be given* exclusively within Dasein’s *understanding* of being.

In Heidegger’s own words:

Understanding of being is itself a determination of being of Da-sein. The ontic distinction of Da-sein lies in the fact that it *is* ontological.¹²

In other words, human Dasein—having the exclusive relation to the proper theme of philosophy as well as being in its very being dependent of it—stays always already in the *philosophical situation* of the care about being, not even developing any kind of scientific philosophy. On this ground, one can say that *each Dasein as such is a philosopher potentially*.

¹⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 10.

¹¹ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 11.

¹² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 10.

The advantage of the notion of philosophy as mode of the being-in-the-world follows from this statement. It presupposes that Dasein can choose in which way it will be ontically, for example, in the ways of scientific research or religious obeisance, but it is unable to choose to be or not to in the direct relation to being, i.e. in the philosophical situation. The main ontic characteristic of Dasein is that it is ontologically. This ontological peculiarity of Dasein has the character of *existential necessity*:

We philosophize not from time to time but permanently and necessarily insofar as we exist as human being.¹³

In this regard, Heidegger points to three priorities of Dasein for any ontological investigation including development of a scientific ontology.

Firstly, he says about the *ontical* priority of Dasein: “This being is defined in its being by existence.”¹⁴ Secondly, the philosopher mentions the *ontological* priority; namely,

on the basis of its determination as existence Da-sein is in itself ‘ontological’ But just as originally Dasein possesses—in a manner constitutive of its understanding of existence—an understanding of the being of all beings unlike itself.”¹⁵

The third priority appears from the first two: “Dasein therefore has its third priority as the ontic-ontological condition of the possibility of all ontologies.”¹⁶

Standard interpretations treat the last priority—namely, the *ontic-ontological*—in the sense that any ontological investigation should begin its path from the analysis of the existential-ontological structure of such an entity, i.e. of a certain ontical region. In other words, any ontological research should find a corresponding ontical foundation by the analyzing of the existential structures of Dasein, which make possible

¹³ Martin Heidegger, *Einleitung in die Philosophie*. Gesamtausgabe, Bd. 27. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann Verlag, 1996), 3.

¹⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 12.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

the understanding of being *as such* for the mentioned entity. Nevertheless, Heidegger's sentence could be understood also in another way. That is, *Dasein is the condition of possibility of any ontological investigation* not only as the departure point of ontological science, *but also as the one and only agent of development of any ontological investigation*. Only the human being needs to develop an ontology and only it is able to do so. Correspondingly, any development of an ontology is the kind of activity characteristic of Dasein, its mode of being in the world.

Yet, the initial stay of Dasein in the original philosophical situation is only latent philosophizing, but not actual philosophizing as such, though the latter is deep rooted ontologically in it.

By contrast, the natural tendency of Dasein's treatment of its very being lies in the reduction of the peculiarity of its way of being, i.e. of existence to the common understanding of being as being in presence. Originally, Dasein understands "to be" with regard to itself in the same way as "to be" with regard to the things which are present within the world. It leaves out of account the existentiality, which constitutes its own being as distinct from the ways of being of other "that-which-is."

And perhaps, an authentic ontological inquiry—the path of which always proceeds *via* existential analysis of Dasein—will be needed for human Dasein to discover its own way of being, i.e. existence. In this case, could philosophy be treated as the peculiar and primary mode of being in the world just because all distinctive features of Dasein's ownmost way of being can be disclosed through it—because this way in its features can be identified and spoken through philosophy? With regard to this, Heidegger gives the following definition of philosophy:

Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, taking its departure from the hermeneutic of Da-sein, which, as analysis of *existence*, has fastened the end of the guideline of all philosophical inquiry at the point from which it *arises* and to which it *returns*.¹⁷

However, the question arises: what can force Dasein to break its natural tendency to reduce its own being to being-in-presence and start to philosophize on the ground of its original philosophical situation, i.e.

¹⁷ Ibid., 34.

original and direct relatedness to philosophy's subject matter modifying at the same time this situation as such.

III. The Beginning of Philosophizing and its Modification into Philosophy as Science in its Logical Concept

To clarify the problem of the correlation of the initial philosophical situation of Dasein and philosophizing as free action of human being as well as of the one the modification of philosophizing into philosophy as "rigorous science," one ought to notice two basic features by which Dasein is characterized in the formal aspect of its existential structure. Heidegger emphasizes them in Section 9 of *Being and Time*.

Firstly, human Dasein has not any substantial essence, any "whatness." Thus, a human being cannot be treated as exemplifying a more general kind of living entity, for example, *homo sapiens*. (It ought to be noted that human Dasein cannot be understood as a kind of living entity at all because its own way of being is very far different from the life of living entities in Heidegger's view). The philosopher expresses this in the following formulas: "The 'essence' of this being lies in its to be."¹⁸ Or: "*The 'essence' of Dasein lies in its existence.*"¹⁹ Critical in these theses, and that which is of very great importance for our present investigation, is that the being of Dasein, being without any general essence, is every time singular.

This can be verified by the Heidegger's second thesis on human Dasein: its being is always mine for each Dasein. Heidegger states: "The being which this being is concerned is always my own."²⁰ However, the very being of Dasein—being "in each case mine"—*can be understood either in a mode of inauthenticity or authenticity*. In the first case, human Dasein understands its very being, and its own possibilities to be, from the possibilities to be of the that-which-is, which is not this individual Dasein itself. For example, each Dasein can understand its very being, i.e. existence, on the pattern of the being-in-presence as the way of being of the things presenting within the world. The other example of the inauthentic mode of understanding of its very being by human

¹⁸ Ibid., 39.

¹⁹ Ibid., 40

²⁰ Ibid.

Dasein can be the neutralized publicity of das Man, which refers to everybody and nobody at the same time and prescribes to each Dasein how it has to be in its concrete modes and shapes. In opposition to it, in its authentic mode of being, human Dasein understands its very being from, and only from, its possibilities to be. Heidegger summarizes:

Da-sein *is* always its possibility. It does not 'have' that possibility only as mere attribute of something objectively present. And because Da-sein is always essentially its possibility, it can 'choose' itself in its being it can win itself, it can lose itself, or it can never and only 'apparently' win itself.²¹

It was said that the philosophy is one of the most decisive and proper possibilities of human Dasein. Thus, it should be treated as a principal way of Dasein's being in the world, which is accomplished in the mode of authenticity. Since philosophizing as the development of the existential analytics of Dasein is the certain possibility of Dasein itself discovering existence as its own way of being, one could say that it is also one of the paths to get to the authenticity of Dasein's being itself.

Thereby, we can put the question: what gives a jump to start to the transition from the mode of inauthenticity, in which Dasein ordinarily exists, to being in the authentic mode of philosophizing? It was said that each Dasein is a philosopher potentially; but *very few Daseins actually philosophize*. In opposition, the natural tendency of Dasein's being is the escape from philosophizing as a modification of its more general tendency to escape from being in the mode of authenticity to the mode of inauthenticity. (Although this escape from patent philosophizing could be also treated as the possible mode of latent philosophizing.)

Therefore, our former question can be transformed: what motivates the transition from inauthenticity as initial mode of human Dasein, in which it "initially and for the most part" is, to the authenticity of its very being at all?

Heidegger's answer is: anxiety (*die Angst*). Anxiety draws out Dasein from its being lost in the middle of the inner-world of things present-at-hand, as well as anonymous publicity of *das Man* and bring it back to itself in its peculiar way of being (existence).

²¹ Ibid.

Angst reveals in Da-sein its *being toward* its ownmost potentiality of being, that is, *being free* for the freedom of choosing and grasping itself. *Angst* brings Da-sein *before its being free for...* (prospensio in), the authenticity of its being as possibility which it always already is. But at the same time, it is this being to which Da-sein as being-in-the-world is entrusted.²²

Sure, we would not state thereby that the anxiety is the *initio* as well as *sine qua non* of actual philosophizing. Nevertheless, it is obvious that anxiety has the same function as philosophizing, namely that of bringing-back Dasein to its existentiality as its proper way of being. Analogous to philosophizing, anxiety discovers for human Dasein its existence as its proper being, that is in each case mine—but without developing any explicit conceptual ontology. *Anxiety forces the turn of Dasein from its inauthentic mode of being to the authentic one.* Philosophizing actualizes the same switch. On this ground, we could presuppose that anxiety might be treated as one of the possible fundamental attitudes-of-mind, against the background of which philosophizing can start up to actualize at all. (Other attitudes-of-mind are also possible in this regard – for example, *thaumazein* in Ancient Greek).

It ought to be noted that the attitude of anxiety can take place only with respect to the *imminent* death of each Dasein, which itself is in its existential-ontological structure *being-towards-death*. The philosopher describes the phenomenon of death in the following way:

Death is a possibility of being that Da-sein always has to take upon itself. With death, Da-sein stands before itself in its ownmost potentiality-of-being. In this possibility, Da-sein is concerned about its being-in-the-world absolutely. Its death is the possibility of no-longer-being-able-to-be-there. When Da-sein is imminent to itself as this possibility, it is *completely* thrown back upon its ownmost potentiality-of-being...As a potentiality of being, Da-sein is unable to bypass the possibility of death. Thus Death is the possibility of absolute impossibility of Da-sein.²³

Any authentic philosophizing can also be actualized only in this imminence of death as “the possibility of absolute impossibility of Dasein”, i.e. only under the condition of its ontological *finitude*. Only

²² Ibid., 168.

²³ Ibid., 232.

Dasein as ontological finite entity is able to philosophize and partly is forced to do it in its finitude and the imminence of its death. One can even say that Heidegger thereby gives an existential-ontological reinterpretation of Plato's ancient view of philosophizing as a kind of preparation for *apothneskeintekaitetethnainai*,²⁴ dying and being dead. Anyway, philosophy as proper possibility of Dasein, by which it is able to disclose its own way of being, can be actualized in philosophizing only in the frameworks of that which is primarily unthematically (pre-philosophically) disclosed by anxiety, namely by the imminence of the "possibility of being that Da-sein always has to take upon itself." Being in the mode of philosophizing requests the *resoluteness* to be in this mode on account of imminent death, i.e. to clarify its own ontological structure (existentiality), which correlates with being in general as proper subject matter of philosophy. *This resoluteness constitutes the basis of the mentioned existential notion of science with regard to philosophy.*

The question is now, how can this individual resoluteness of always individual Dasein, which philosophizes, be transformed in philosophy as science with regard to its logical concept, i.e. in philosophy as a set of true propositions about being as such?

We can presuppose that it realizes by the action of the *objectivation (die Vergegenständlichung) of being*. Heidegger thinks that objectivation constitutes the existential-ontological *genesis* of any science:

The genesis of a science originates in the objectification of a *realm* of beings, that is, in the development of the understanding of the constitution of the *being* of the respective beings. In the development of this understanding of being, those concepts emerge which circumscribe what is...the *basic concepts* of the respective science.²⁵

Then again, Heidegger distinguishes two kinds of objectivation. On the one hand, there is *the objectivation of a definite region of that-which-is*. This kind of objectivation constitutes the ontological genesis

²⁴ Plato, *Phaed.*, 64a.

²⁵ Heidegger, *Phenomenological Interpretations of "Kant's Critique of Pure Reason"*, 20.

of non-philosophical, i.e. positive, sciences. He describes it as projection, namely as “the projection, in each case, of the ontological constitution of the beings which are to become the objects.”²⁶

On the other hand, the second kind of objectivation, which underlies the philosophical science, is *the objectivation of being as such*:

Even the basic act of the constitution of ontology, of philosophy, the objectivation of being, *the projection of being upon the horizon of its understandability...*²⁷

This “basic act” requires the *resoluteness to objectivate* being, to which Dasein relates always already without any objectivation. By the way, this projection is based in the resoluteness explicitly to differentiate the both, being and that-which-is, which is inexplicitly and unthematic always already distinguished by Dasein in its initial philosophical situation, in its ontic relation to the ontological sphere, i.e. to being as such.

IV. Conclusion

To summarize, one ought to repeat our crucial questions in renewed formulas. How is philosophy, taken as grounded in the in-each-case-mine resoluteness to philosophize, i.e. in its existential concept, consistent with philosophy as science in its logical dimension? Does the existential basis as well as existential genesis of philosophy not make the results of any philosophical investigation relative to the individual position of the one, who accomplishes the actual philosophizing in each case? Is it possible to find the same universal “horizon of understandability” and its concrete ontological structure for each philosophizing individual (in Heidegger’s case, this structure is temporality and its ecstatic-horizontal structure)? Is it possible to achieve common consent among philosophizing Daseins with regard to the essence of matter? Finally, is philosophy, with regard to the existential concept of science, able to act as a real ontological basis of philosophy as science with regard to its logical notion?

The answers to these questions cannot be given directly here. The fact that Heidegger finally denied his project of grounding philosophy as a science indicates that the concrete relation between the existential

²⁶ Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 321.

²⁷ Ibid., 322.

genesis of science and its pure logical structure is very problematic.

Based on Heidegger's own many statements, one can presuppose that he did not see scientific philosophy, with respect to the logical concept of science, as finally locked out of the system of true propositions, which could be transmitted from the ancestral generation of philosophers to the next one in a selfless way. The systems of philosophical-ontological propositions is neither an axiomatic-deductive system (as it was for example in Spinoza) nor a dialectically explicated and locked-up circle of philosophical sciences (as in Hegel, though philosophical science in Heidegger's project also had a circular structure in the sense of hermeneutical circle).

Based on the foregoing, we presuppose that Heidegger's treatment of philosophy with regard to the logical concept of science lies in the notion of a "theoretic conceptual interpretation" (of being)—with emphasis on the term "interpretation." The last—being based on the existential ground of philosophical science—can be only in the mode of the *retrieve*. In this mode, ontological interpretation is each time a handing down of the possibilities of thinking developed by earlier philosophizing Daseins to an actually philosophizing Dasein.

Resoluteness that comes back to itself and hands itself down then becomes the retrieve of a possibility of existence that has been handed down. *Retrieve is explicit handing down*, that is, going back to the possibilities of Da-sein that has been there. The authentic retrieve of a possibility of existence that has been—the possibility that Da-sein may choose its heroes – is existentially grounded in anticipatory resoluteness...²⁸

Perhaps, Heidegger wanted to abolish the conceptual opposition between the logical (systematic) and the historical (existential), by which the structure of philosophical science was described at his time, through the above-mentioned notion of the retrieve. It is obvious, that the retrieve is deeply rooted also in the anticipatory resoluteness of philosophizing Dasein to be itself in its proper mode.

The resoluteness in which Da-sein comes back to itself discloses the actual factual possibilities of authentic existing *in terms of the heritage* which that resoluteness *takes over* as thrown. Resolute coming back to thrownness involves *handing oneself over* to traditional possibilities, al-

²⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 352.

though not necessarily *as* traditional ones.²⁹

In the final count, the death toward which Dasein always exists and which constitutes the condition of possibility of authentic philosophizing—intimately connected with the Dasein's resoluteness—is also ultimate measure of the truth of the retrieve of the possibilities to think of other Daseins.

The more authentically Da-sein resolves itself, that is, understands itself unambiguously in terms of its ownmost eminent possibility in anticipating death, the more unequivocal and inevitable is the choice in finding the possibility of its existence. Only the anticipation of death drives every chance and 'preliminary' possibility out.³⁰

The phenomenon of the death as existential condition of philosophizing becomes thereby the *methodological* criterion of the validity and adequacy of ontological cognition in its logical sense understood as retrieval interpretation, on the basis of the handing down of the possibilities of thinking of other Daseins. Here is the point where the existential condition of the philosophy explicitly turns to the logical structures of philosophy as science. Heidegger says:

If our analytic takes anticipatory resoluteness as its basis, as an existentially authentic potentiality-of-being, and if Da-sein itself summons to this possibility right out of the ground of its existence, is this possibility then an *arbitrary* one? Is the mode of being in accordance with which the potentiality-of-being and if Da-sein relates to its eminent possibility, death, picked up by chance? *Has the being-in-the-world a higher instance of its potentiality-of-being than its own death?*³¹

Therefore, the existential condition of ontological knowledge modifies itself in the pure logical condition of unarbitrariness of rigorous philosophical cognition. Thus, in the words by C.F. Gethmann, philosophical science in its Heideggerian sense (including also philosophy as mode of being) is relativized only ontologically, not ontically.

²⁹ Ibid., 351.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 289.

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