

Jan Hartman

Philosophical Heuristics

Polish Contemporary Philosophy and Philosophical Humanities

Edited by Jan Hartman

Volume 7



PETER LANG
EDITION

"Philosophical Heuristics" aims to translate philosophical issues into metaphilosophical issues examined from a unique perspective. The analytical and interpretive practice of heuristics seeks to grasp synchronously all the processes leading to the formation of philosophical discourse, its language, form and content. The book takes hermeneutics and pragmatism as a starting point for a multifaceted and systematic examination of philosophical heuresis and promotes a style of philosophising "in the suspense of heuristic reflection", something more than ordinary theoretical self-awareness.

Jan Hartman is Professor at the Department of Philosophy and Bioethics at the Medical School of Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Poland. He is interested in metaphilosophy, political philosophy, ethics and bioethics.

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Introduction to the Second Edition

I am delighted, fourteen years after the first edition of *Philosophical Heuristics*, to see the publication of a corrected electronic version. It is not only the prospect of new readers that gives me pleasure, but also the fact that working on the new edition has allowed me to correct many instances of linguistic clumsiness and a number of other mistakes. When I first wrote this book, I was not short of philosophical invention and self-belief, but my writing skills were slightly lacking. In spite of the many corrections, my *Heuristics* remains far from perfect. And yet I am satisfied. As I had imagined, this book did usher in many years of efforts, still far from complete, to reformulate philosophical issues as metaphilosophical questions and examine them in the light of systematic knowledge of the analytical and argument-based possibilities at play. Although I do not adhere strictly to the research programme outlined and signalled by *Philosophical Heuristics*, I am slowly fulfilling what is discussed in the book, albeit with other names and often in different ways. This is what makes *Philosophical Heuristics*, even as the early work of a twenty-something, one of my most important books. Moreover, it has become something of a sign of the times. Entirely without my involvement, matters have developed, and will probably continue to do so, in the way I delineated. Ever more younger philosophers are aspiring to what we might call “philosophology” – meaning such analytical independence that without the aid of “quotations from the greats of philosophy” they can reconstruct the entire theoretical field in which a given problem is found and then inspect it with unprecedented flexibility, comprehensiveness and intelligence. I can congratulate myself for “sensing a trend”. Yet still no one sees it as appropriate in the search for this higher intellectual philosophical competence to take the trouble to develop new methods or techniques and to transform their swaggering forecasts into a serious contribution to human thinking. I, on the other hand, devote my books to this. Who knows, perhaps there will come a time when somebody will join me in pursuing “philosophical heuristics” or the “theory of neutrum”, in some way pitching in to search for the “techniques of metaphilosophy”. Time may be short, though, as philosophy as a kind of cultural project is certainly, like everything human, nearing its end.

Krakow, July 2011

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Introduction

In this book I present the programme of metaphilosophical research which I have called “philosophical heuristics”. This derives from, and at the same time refers critically to many topics from philosophical tradition, which I discuss and comment upon synthetically. Methodological, pragmatic, rhetorical, hermeneutic and structuralist tradition are thus all covered.

Anything that benefits and advances cognition, especially discursive, can in the broadest sense of the word be called “heuristic”. All factors forming science, classified as intellectual means (questions, hypotheses, methods) and helping us to attain cognitive objectives, are part of so-called heuresis, and can be considered in terms of their heuristic value. By heuristics I am particularly thinking of its methodological meaning, in which cognition of heuresis serves as a means to refine subjective cognition (of some science). Yet heuristics, when it has followed the dream of the great art of *inventionis*, taking in hand the practical directives and methods of the elusive, the irrational moment of pure discovery, has conceived itself as something more than just methodology. The desire to exceed the framework of methodological thinking toward some greater generality was what (at least since the time of Bolzano) led to the use of the word “heuristics”, in order not to speak simply of methodology. This is also why I use the word “heuristics” in this book. With this meaning in mind, though, from the outset I would like to expand its scope considerably. I intend to go beyond the methodological perspective in a radical style, as I am not interested in efficiency and novelty of findings.

Heuristics, in the sense of the word adopted in this book, is not supposed to serve some other cognitive process or discourse, but rather to constitute unity with them: I do not wish to separate the result of the cognition from the discourse that leads to it. Every element of a discourse is a kind of result that is heuristically conditioned in some way, as well as a stage, and therefore a moment of heuresis advancing towards the next ideas and propositions. What is therefore important for us is not that a proposition or expression constitute the “official”, declared results of a discourse, but rather that they are the result of complex – theoretical and non-theoretical – conditions, a complex heuresis. As a result, a view seeing the heuristic process as “cognising something” or “solving a problem” would place too much emphasis on the relationship of goal and means; let us say, therefore, that heuristics will deal with thinking, especially philosophical, at the same time being a certain form of it. I conceive heuresis itself here in the broadest terms: as not just the intellectual factors forming the shape of philosophical

ideas or expression (presuppositions, logical forms, linguistic determinants, methods), but rather all factors at play, including “naturalistic” (psychological and social) ones.

In philosophy, we contemplate various aspects and conditions of philosophising, pinning our hopes on this reflection broadening or correcting our views. Sometimes, as with Aristotelian logic or Cartesian considerations on method, this form of reflection takes the form of a philosophical programme based on the conviction that studying the subject should be complemented (or preceded) by knowledge of the formal conditions for doing so. This gives us the heuristic projects that grow out of some form of heuristic reflection. The kind of heuristics proposed here is supposed to deal with various such projects, i.e. every thinking that, in concerning thinking and all a philosopher’s actions, affects the course and results of this thinking and these actions. In this way, it itself becomes a certain heuristic project. Moreover, in testing various forms of heuresis – such as that based on the idea that first you have to create a method and then pursue philosophy, or that philosophy should be undogmatic and therefore start from a premiseless theory of cognition – the heuristics itself must become part of the relevant train of thought, in a sense accepting the conditions of these forms. As a result, it is not always able to have the coherence of science – with a clearly defined subject and method. The idea of such science is also a heuristic project based on the belief that unity of subject, method and criteria of acceptance of results will ensure concreteness, efficiency and scientific accuracy. Heuristics accepts this conviction and the resultant postulates when it comes to philosophy pursued in the style of science. Yet if it seeks to understand and enrich the type of heuresis used in the sciences that are formed, then it should yield to them to the appropriate extent. However, at the same time it must be ready to make contact with other forms of philosophical thought which require that discourse be carried out in a specific way (such as critique of reason or speculation), and which lay a claim to exclusivity, unwilling to be associated with anything else, for example with a programme assuming something like a methodical review of various forms of doing philosophy made with the intention of achieving a synthetic insight and comprehensive theoretical tools. This is not to say that heuristics should abandon such intentions, but rather that it must find a heuristic context for its theoretical goals – ascertain the extent of their validity and what they can achieve.

Heuristics, as one heuristic project, is based on heuristic directives that are variable and depend on the topic in question, in which certain heuristic directives will be of constitutive significance and may not be ignored by some “meta-objective”

discourse guided by their own heuristic preferences. In a certain sense, then, heuristics must be placed “in between” – in a kind of suspension and dependent on diverse forms of heuristic reflection. In other words, heuristics must have various faces, none of which can lay claim to any special position – of “trueness”, “originality” etc.

To an extent, what has been said so far exposes the heuristic face of heuristics itself, making a general explanation of what heuristics actually is necessary.

In describing itself as a certain field, heuristics turns out not to be a uniform one. It therefore falls into a multilateral heuristic dependence on the form of philosophy that it is dealing with at a given time, to some degree growing to resemble it. This peculiar heuristic mimicry, so to speak, results from heuristics describing itself as one of many heuristic projects, which leads to the postulate that philosophical cognition is always “mediated” (or prepared) by the best knowledge of “how” – of all the circumstances on which its course and fate depends. But we cannot separate the contemplation of a philosophical question from the contemplation of its heuristic circumstances – this takes place within one discourse. For example, the critique of pure reason, based on testing all kinds of “how” thinking, also delivers a certain “what”, i.e. theses, solutions and beliefs concerning epistemological issues. Critique of pure reason is thus a certain heuristic project. We call the universal but at the same time individual heuristic form that identifies “something” as a heuristic project a “how/what” heuresis for short because of its dependence on the dialectic of the objective (contemplating “what is given” as the “object of study” or “problem to solve” etc.) and reflective position (consideration of the method, logical structure, forms of argumentation etc. – all the heuristic conditions of the dialectically opposed “objective side” of the same contemplation). Let us say, then, that in its self-knowledge as a “scientific field”, heuristics is the philosophical study of the formal circumstances of philosophical thinking – the conditions, determinants, forms, structures (i.e. all kinds of “how”) with the intention of exploiting the knowledge gained in this way for its “objective” issues (all kinds of “what”), with full awareness that the formal (how) cannot be extricated from the material (what) perspective. It is also conscious that philosophy, conducting various forms of such heuristic reflection, is the sole theoretical source of any possible progress in the kind of research foreseen by heuristics, and that as a result the identity of heuristics as something distinct from heuristic projects in philosophy will often prove impossible. Does this mean that the fate of heuristics to be a declaration of doing something which philosophy in fact does anyway, without a moment’s thought for “heuristics”? Is it

doomed to be a kind of parasite? This is the question of the possible advantage of heuristics over other heuristic projects, and – despite everything – of its identity.

The first thing that we should note is that, interested as it is in all the conditions of philosophical thinking, heuristics is guided by a heuristic idea of universality – overcoming limitations and biases. This results in opposition to displays of naivety, intellectual insularity, dogmatism and illusion. There is nothing original in this, as the same “sensitivity” is shown by most heuristic projects, for example programmes aiming to make the concept of rationality broader and more flexible. Heuristics, however, although it is to be merged with already existing heuristic projects (as a critique, development or complement to them), must be interested above all in those determinants of the work of philosophy which are not sufficiently addressed in existing projects. It must raise to the rank of object of theoretical interests things which have previously not been perceived or have been deemed to belong to “another order”: that of psychology, sociology, literary studies etc. These subjects include practising the scientific life of philosophy (and the way in which it determines a philosophical result), questions related to the mental conditions and motivations for pursuing philosophy, matters of literary style, use of metaphors and the like, which are of some bearing to the material side of the discourse, and factors of writing work. In the various specific theories belonging to heuristics, such as the theory of philosophical discourse, theory of questions and argumentations or pragmatics of doing philosophy, we should develop a synthetic and critical conceptual scheme that is richer than the one used in studies of individual subjects in isolation. The fundamental objective of heuristics – to philosophise in the heuristically broadest terms – forms the heuristic basis of a comparative unity of research, which in philosophy – in spite of the obviously similar intentions – do not form such unity. The same effect should also be sought in studies on historical projects based on a group of historical ideas, like philosophical logic, general methodology, rhetoric, hermeneutics and many more. Each of these projects contains a certain illusion of universality (including utter theoretical self-knowledge), or at least self-sufficiency, which makes it hard to discern and take into account the claims of other, equally universalist propositions. But this is the intention of heuristics, which assumes that various discourses, like the pragmatics of pursuing science or rhetorical discourse analysis, fall under the same “how/what” model of heuresis, and are thus motivated by a similar drive to develop heuristic reflection on all sorts of determinants of doing philosophy, treating them as part of the task of philosophy itself and a heuristic means serving to develop its various questions.

Despite the shared intentions of the disparate heuristic projects, a number of factors inhibit the natural forging of links between them. The most important of these is the fact that almost all of them stake a claim for supremacy over the others. For instance, if somebody is carrying out a logical study of the arguments applied in philosophy, he or she prefers to ignore (despite the similarity of the heuristic motivation) the claims of the hermeneutic approach or perspective of the phenomenology of spirit. The reason for this is generally known, but this knowledge does not have an effect on results in philosophy. Worse still, a more profound understanding of these phenomena is hampered by the practices (or heuristic habits, as we call them here) which remove difficult questions from the field of view using intuitive phrases that are lacking an argument and often false, such as “the two approaches concern different orders, so they are autonomous of each other”. Research in mutual mediation aiming to combine various heuristic projects should be a problem area, the individual aspects of which can certainly be found in various segments of philosophical tradition and which has never been treated as a whole and in a heuristically (conceptually, terminologically) uniform manner.

The next field of interests of heuristics is an obvious one: the philosophical issues directly linked to the phenomena which it seeks to study and with its own status. And it is here that the question of the scope of dialectical heuristics’s validity (and the how/what model) arises, as well as the problem of universalistic claims of philosophical notions and conceptions and the rivalry that forms between them, with no evident common adjudicating authority apart from theories that are similar or their equal. Other examples of heuristics’ own, “parent” issues are those of rationality, methodical pursuit of philosophy or the limits of philosophical cognition. These have so far been appropriated by particularistic so-called “philosophical conceptions”, which are lacking not so much in self-satisfied self-knowledge as the awareness that they are particularistic. To contemplate these questions in heuristics we require the ability to move *between* various universalistic discourses – the discourses of self-knowledge of reason, ultimate validation etc. – and at the same time to *submit* to their logic. Ultimately, the task of heuristics is to form itself as a way of doing philosophy, as “one more philosophy”. And this means that heuristics is not just to become philosophical study, delivering its own results for the questions connected with various forms of heuristics and the theoretical situation of heuristics, but also that its experience should entail a broad understanding of the possible perspectives a given question offers and the consequences of possible ways of studying it.

Readers are no doubt already tired of the repeated use of the words “heuristics”, “heuristic”, “heuresis” etc. Perhaps, though, the reason for this unattractive means of expression is already clear: the idea is, by using more concrete and traditional concepts in various cases, not to lose sight of the unity of heuristic intentions manifested in different theoretical situations. The (heuristic) principle of this step can be compared (but not equated) with the establishment of a formal and regulative key concept to be filled by content as the theory is developed, with introduction of a so-called analogous concept, as well as with the position of the concept specified by the contexts and ways of use. In addition, it often happens that we search for a word like “heuristics”, instead using some expression which is supposed to be sufficiently general and thus not very binding. For example, we speak of somebody’s “style (type, paradigm) of thinking”, the “logic (method) of deduction”, “meaning” or “character” of a conception, about “approaches” or “intellectual atmosphere”. Heuristics aims to undertake a systematic study of this kind of concepts, inasmuch as they are linked by a particular similarity or unity of the intuitions they contain. Assuming the existence of this hardly perceptible unity, we also establish the concept of it, which is why we shall use the word “heuresis”. In looking for “the right word”, we frequently content ourselves with such terms as “theoretical” (e.g. character), “cognitive” (status), “epistemological” (dimension), “rhetorical” (aspect), “methodological” (order), “hermeneutic” (value), and “reflexive” (style). We use them then not so much in a technical sense, but rather in a fuzzier, more general one, which might be encompassed by the term “heuristic” (e.g. character, status, or dimension). These concepts are in fact all closely linked – as yet, though, these connections have not been systematically studied to ensure that the notions are used in an organised fashion. In order to begin doing this, we need to employ concepts that are sufficiently wide-ranging but at the same time not too entangled in philosophical tradition. This is what led me to choose the concept of heuristicity. I might instead have opted for, say, method. But then it would be difficult to “believe” that heuresis often goes beyond what can be described in the categories of method. It is similarly difficult to avoid the charm of the universality of the concept of methodological reflection or that of speculative self-knowledge. Rather than generalising these notions, therefore, I speak of “heuristic reflection”.

I would like to express my gratitude to Prof. Władysław Stróżowski for all his kindness and help, and also to thank Professors Karol Bał, Marek Siemiek and Fr. Józef Tischner, who were the first readers of this book and whose valuable comments helped the whole to become considerably shorter and more consistent. It is of course a great honour to me that the Foundation for Polish Science

decided to publish this book. My sincere gratitude also goes to the Institute for Human Sciences in Vienna, which “invested” in the project of this treatise by awarding me a half-year scholarship in 1993. It was during this stay that I wrote most of the book. However, its current form is considerably different from the original version, largely thanks to the editor, Małgorzata Grochocka. I am indebted to her expertise – philosophical and otherwise – and profoundly grateful for her work.

1. Philosophy's Self-Image – Towards A Heuristics of Philosophical Life

1.1 Introductory comments to some important concepts for heuristics

We shall understand the concept of philosophical life as the *actions* that take place in philosophy, as well as those who *act*. Philosophical life therefore consists of the people and communities that create, as well as institutions, statements, texts and ideas. When we speak of philosophical life, we want to leave aside the contents of philosophical statements, instead encompassing everything that belongs to philosophy. We also want to free the concept of philosophical life from the explicitly objective and objectivist meaning of many notions of naturalistic humanities, which must then restore their subjectivity. Philosophical life is formed in the minds of philosophers, at universities and conferences and in books and offices; it is a subjective, intersubjective, but also objective entity – a correlate of doing philosophy. We shall also refrain from determining the place of this concept in the dialectical discourse removing the opposition of subject and object, instead accepting its indeterminate nature.

To talking about heuresis efficiently in the most general terms, we can employ the word “habit”. A habit is something that is habitual, what one has become habituated to thinking, doing or saying – a custom. Heuristic habits are therefore the statements, judgments, principles, arguments, ways of thinking and customs that express the knowledge and convictions of philosophers on the subject of philosophical life and work. For example, it is the requirement to specify the terms that one uses or the observation that great philosophies demonstrate a high level of self-knowledge. Such statements are habitual – and this is all we have in mind when we call them habits, rather than any scepticism as to their content. However, addition of the adjective “heuristic” serves to underline the fact that a habit plays a role in formation of the opinions, views and statements of philosophers (as their premise, their objective content or the background of popular opinion against which a position is assumed).

Heuristic habits may be unconscious, but they may also be the result of the reflection that reveals a habit and leads to its acceptance, giving it the significance of a scientific result (such as saying that every reference to a text is only an interpretation). Heuristic habituality extends to what is philosophical from the side of what is not strictly philosophical – as heuristic habits concern matters

of interhuman coexistence in the philosopher community, organisational affairs, research methods, teaching, and not just philosophy's theoretical self-knowledge. As they belong to the sphere of social behaviours closely linked to talking and writing, heuristic habits are distinguished by what makes all social and linguistic acts different: to greater or lesser extents they can be conventional, apodictic, open or suitable, and take the form of discourse (argument) or otherwise. Depending on the social character of their functions, heuristic habits also occupy the appropriate places in the semiotically perceived structure of philosophical life. The linguistic expressions of heuristic habits, with their regulative and identifying functions, are often located on the fringes of the mainstream of philosophical narrative – in introductions and conclusions, commentaries on one's one work, memoirs, interviews, occasional speeches, and digressions to lectures. But the effort of reflection that the verbalisation of heuristic habits is, as well as the need for universalisation that comes from their functions, mean that it is to a great extent philosophy that the conscious part of heuristic habituality concerns, influencing what is said about it. After all, it is a heuristic habit that leads us to speak of the futility and aporeticity of philosophical contemplation or of the need to continually mull over new fundamental questions.

If heuristics is also to be formed as the heuristics of philosophical life, it should at the same time be its pragmatics and dialectics. This means that we must refer to philosophy as the sum of what happens in philosophy. When we think in the most general terms of “happening”, we accept a universal and simultaneously dynamic point of view which characterises the heuresis of the dialectical approach. But in the abstract formula of dialectic thinking, abstract “happening”, becoming completed, is the concept of its effect, which is what results from philosophical life. From the point of view of the abstract heuristic model of dialectic thinking, heuristics means studying “how” philosophy becomes and “what” results from it, of course in mutual mediation. That is to say: to explain the way in which this “how” determines the “why”, but at the same time for this research to play a positive role in this dialectical process, i.e. for it to itself deliver the valuable “what”, meaning some philosophically valuable results. We call any “what” of philosophy, presented as its result, “philosophical matter”. Philosophical life means philosophical matter together with the dynamism of philosophy in the most general terms – its “how”. It therefore emphasises the dialectical and pragmatic whole of philosophy as a manifestation of social and intellectual life. It is impossible here to delineate the boundary between the actual philosophical matter, meaning what really belongs to philosophy, and what is “in front of it” or “next to it”. In other words, we do not define what actually is philosophy in philosophical

life and philosophical matter, and what is non-philosophical determinants and external effects. Failing to adopt a particular idea of the essence of the art of philosophy, and especially its noble ethos, often stirs the opposition of the adherents of this ethos. The reason for this is a misunderstanding whereby this circumspection, characteristic of positivist thought, is taken for triumphal exposure and reductionism. Hegel was one whose position towards these questions was very emotional: the "(...) psychological approach contrives to trace all actions to the heart and to interpret them subjectively, with the result that their authors appear to have done everything because of some greater or lesser passion or lust, and on account of such passions and lusts, cannot have been moral men".¹ Yet this is not to say that if we include in the sphere of interests of philosophy the active psychological and social factors that influence their result, i.e. philosophical matter, then naive psychologism is to blame. Rather, we should say that we are proceeding in accordance with a heuristic model linking the abstract with dialectics. In the abstract research conception, we are interested in everything of significance for philosophical life, including what comes before philosophy, in the expectation that the logic of the dialectical procedure will itself reveal the hierarchised autonomous spheres of meanings – psychological and purely theoretical. The naturalistic or meta-objective approach can therefore be applied correctly and unnaively as a look back of the dialectical process or as the revelation of the polemical content of one of its stages. We should remember, though, that certain forms of philosophical matter constitute its own matter, meaning the right result, which philosophers present as the effect of their work. These might be ideas, propositions, views, conceptions, arguments, traditions or texts.

When we use the concept of philosophical matter, it is important to remember that its heuristic role is limited to a dialectical-pragmatic mode of thinking within heuristics, and that in no way is it a key concept of some specific conception of philosophical life. Just as we do not say, for example, that philosophy is limited to a collection of mental experiences or texts and theses, we will also not suggest that every philosophical meaning should be conceived in terms of the dialectics of philosophical life and referred to the entirety of philosophical life and philosophical matter. Similarly, the claims to universality contained in the abstract idea of heuristics as the study of the links and mediations between the "how" and "what" in philosophy – factors and results – with the idea of exploiting this knowledge in order to do philosophy better, should not lead us astray and give

1 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1984), p. 87.

the impression that this is the extent of heuristics or its most general description. Otherwise, the phenomenon of claims to universality of abstract concepts fulfilling regulatory, emphatically heuristic functions, must be an object of particular attention to heuristics; but let us rather make it an object of particular caution. After all, as Hegel warned, nothing is as threatening to dialectics as the power of abstraction and the appearance contained in an abstract concept, which keeps us from being sufficiently diligent in tracing the dialectical details.

For heuristics of philosophical life, and for heuristics in general, an important idea is that of philosophy's self-image.

The self-image (self-portrait) was originally a psychological concept, whose basic meaning addresses the sum of a person's vision of him/herself. The critical concept of a self-image is attained in two stages. First, it proves to be inseparable from – and even constituting – the subject. Therefore it cannot be conceived objectivistically as a set of beliefs about oneself which as a certain kind of knowledge influences a person's behaviour. The concept of the image is then subject to transcendental criticism. Since it belongs to a naively objectivist order, it assumes that cognition involves reproduction or depiction of reality, i.e. that somebody paints a picture of him/herself as something given like an object. Yet a self-image as knowledge of an object is impossible. However, this criticism cannot change the fact that not everybody submits to it – in fact, nobody does: all people, even philosophers, surrender to the reflexive action that is creating their own self-image. In this sense it is legitimate to speak of a self-image, even if the fact that this concept is subject to the dialectic of subjectification and objectification, muddying the distinction between a true, honest self-image and a declared or conventional one, forces us to use it dialectically. But this does not mean that it is not present or valid.

If we are to speak of philosophical life and wish to respect the categories in which philosophers present it as well as to give heuristics the quality of pragmatics (as opposed to schematic theory), we must recognise that in heuristic habits the self-image of philosophical life is formed, and that heuristics of philosophical life must surrender to its laws. Only on this condition can it contribute to the development of philosophical life.²

The self-image of philosophical life is always linked to somebody's story about philosophy – the life of philosophy, the work of a philosopher, the concept of

2 Cf. Stephen Toulmin, *Human Understanding. The Collective Use and Evolution of Concepts* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 1–3, and also Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press), Chapter 3.1.

philosophy, the issues that seem constitutive of philosophy to the storyteller. Yet the credibility of this story cannot be confined to how it is confirmed in facts on philosophical life. Rather, it depends on the experience of the listener or reader, who must recognise him/herself in the narrative. The access to heuristic studies as examination of heuristic habituality and philosophical life sketched in the following paragraphs can only be effective to the extent to which it offers a successful contribution to the self-image of philosophical life. This means a story about philosophy in which philosophers recognise their experiences and reflections, and which will as a certain idea invoke the self-image of specific readers, irrespective of how the self-image is a dialectically complex concept.

1.2 The Novice's Experiences

Students starting out on a degree on philosophy generally recognise at least one thing, even if their ideas of the subject are somewhat hazy. What they do know is that philosophy is a field in which everyone has the right to their own opinion, or rather the right to speak in the name of logos and the name of truth. The ethos of discussion and debate that is characteristic of philosophy is instilled by almost every type of education in Western civilisation. At the same time, though, the public right to participate in discussion is juxtaposed with the personal expectation that there will be some link between philosophy and one's internal mental life, manifested in questions – sometimes called existential issues – and postulates. However, conscious psychological needs do not require free discussion as a means of realisation, but only an intellectually and mentally satisfactory authority. For those who wish to learn about philosophy, it appears first as a domain of free discussion, yet one which is overseen by authorities adjudicating on the existential problems of humankind. It is the first philosophical belief, with which people tend to come to the discipline and which to some extent lingers on, irrespective of the criticism the philosopher levels at it, that these problems (as intellectualists might call our cares, anxieties and doubts) can be converted into philosophical questions (or problems) and solved (and removed) by philosophy. Similarly, the dialectic of free discussion and authority in which they got caught up at the beginning of their philosophical journey does not go away. A degree in philosophy consolidates these fundamental elements of heuristic habituality. But students soon discover that discussion and authority occupy a different place in the structure of philosophical student life than they had expected. Authority in philosophy proves to be not so much authority of truth and who tells the truth, as the authority of a professor relating the history of philosophy and that of the history of philosophy as a field of knowledge and thus of competences. As for

the free discussion to which the material transmitted in this way is exposed, it becomes more of a common proposal, a regulative idea of philosophical life. If it does take place, this is solely to confirm that free discussion is the philosopher's right, and therefore also that of the philosophical novice.

The fact that the motivation to do philosophy is rooted in mental needs, sometimes closely related to religious needs associated with the search for transcendence, is what makes the philosophical venture unwaveringly personal. It is to this too that philosophy owes what I see as its chronic unrealisability. This unbridgeable distance of the realisation of philosophy has a social manifestation. A heuristic habit is formed whereby we perceive a gap in philosophical life between true philosophy, pursued by those about whom we learn, and philosophy as a sort of vestibule in which the closest to the entrance to the chambers are those who talk about the proclamations of the true philosophers and furthest away are the students. And yet the model of free discussion encompasses everyone, makes us all equal, which is why what the true philosophers say appears in the form of a heuristic view or argument (and not one of truth), with which we can always compare our view or argument. Of course, this structure is always more intricate, if only because the participants of philosophical life have some idea or other of its complexities. Yet heuristic habits still have a captivating effect on us. The gap between true philosophy and our way of dealing with it, which novice philosophers recognise right at the beginning of their philosophical journey, is an indication of the general heuristic form imposed on the whole philosophical life: the form of deferral. Philosophy is not here and not now, and the true philosopher is not you or I;³ philosophy is always being formed, prepared; it is never finished and accomplished. This sense of philosophy being deferred, absent, corresponds to the heuristic habits entailing its customary conceptualisations in statements like "truth has a horizontal character", or "philosophy is never finished" – it is "a path", continually rethinking the same questions, the love of wisdom and not wisdom per se, etc. Many philosophies exploit this personal moment in pursuing philosophy and the fact that many people have particular expectations of it to express these phenomena in an existentialist-epistemological conceptual form that is sometimes marked by a certain pathos. The most significant examples would be existentialism, philosophy of dialogue, as well as the philosophy of Heidegger and hermeneutics. In countries where the heuristic form of deferred philosophy

3 In Poland it is even "the done thing" to restrain ourselves when describing ourselves as philosophers, and we are embarrassed to call our profession by its name, expecting equivocal reactions.

is much less distinct (or has been forgotten) than in German or Polish philosophy, such as the United States, this kind of philosophical narratives and the customary phrases that go with them are much more seldom used.

In Poland at least, once the novice philosopher finds herself at university, which was supposed to be the antechamber for philosophy, she soon discovers that everybody there is waiting in the same room and nobody is given much hope of being allowed in. What's more, it is not in good taste to openly seek admission. What she is introduced to is the very diverse – depending on the school – symbolism of deferred philosophy. A tremendous symbolic role is played by the very meaning of the word “philosophy”, conceived as the collective endeavour and wisdom of generations of philosophers, embodied in the history of the culture of Reason, and finally the source of great splendour that is our being here – at a university philosophy department. As a symbol of our objective and the unity of reason, the word “philosophy” appears in philosophical statements and texts in complicated and opaque heuristic and logical (semiotic) functions that derive from socio-linguistic functions.⁴ The lofty symbolism of philosophical life has its counterparts in the concepts that refer to its everyday character. The dignity of the actions of the university philosopher, sanctioned by his connection to the noble tradition and grand objectives of philosophy, is expressed in their academic nature. This is the feature of doing philosophy that can make up for the employee of the philosophy department's acceptance of the status of not really being a philosopher (and a distant echo of the lover of wisdom who is not yet a sage). His worth as a philosopher is not described using terms that render his position on the path to wisdom, or even that ascribe some knowledge or wisdom to him, but by a particular code that refers both to the quality of his academic

4 The possibility of transferring the symbolic notion of philosophy to scientific statements and texts is assured by the literature of the essence of philosophy and philosophising. This tradition, dating back to Aristotle's *Protrepticus*, uses philosophical concepts in an essentially unchanging (at least at the level of the most general declarations), albeit continually updated fashion. Yet the symbolic-regulative notion of philosophy is always threatened by others also with claims to define the noble objective of cognitive endeavours. In philosophy, though, the idea has always been for these concepts to complement each other rather than compete. In Plato's works, the notion of philosophy and that of wisdom were reconciled in this way. Much more dramatic was the history of resolving the relations between philosophy and *scientia divina*, and then science. Yet the ideals of the goal of cognition as a certain field expounded in philosophy were never a threat to the concept of philosophy, even if they exhibited cognition's internal antagonism: as a concept referring to the whole of philosophical matter and at the same time to what is true, finally correct philosophy.

work and his position in the community. We therefore say that someone is good, has a decent knowledge of a particular topic or philosophy, wrote a good book, received early tenure, etc., and are far less likely to speak in the same terms as Diogenes Laërtius: “teaches that...”

The novice philosopher therefore learns that, rather than becoming a philosopher, she has the chance to become “good at something”; she may not gain wisdom, but at least she will learn a little philosophical expertise. Essentially she will have to subordinate her life as a philosopher to serving those who embody true philosophy and have been placed in the pantheon of philosophical greats (as well as serving their works and so-called arguments). This situation, in which the social forms of religious and scientific life somehow merge, is in a certain sense dangerous for the novice, if only because in philosophy the ideal of free discussion is something that is almost ritualised – for example by observance of forms of statements assuming the equal rights and competences of all the participants in a seminar – rather than being a genuine tenet that is actually practised. This ushers in philosophical insincerity, which is where the problems begin.

1.3 Philosophy as Profession

For the novice philosopher, the deferral of philosophy has the extra practical dimension of philosophy being presented to her for a long time through textbooks and lectures, of which there are usually so many that there is not enough time to read classic works and source literature in their entirety. The breakthrough in the neophyte’s studies (which sometimes never occurs), marking the beginning of participation in philosophy as professional life, comes when she takes up a particular interest – a field, issue, or author. This is the way one gains access to a certain specialisation and begins to know something that others do not know. The result is a certain sense of security – not everybody can test us, and since the expert community is generally rather small and dispersed, we do not have to occupy a particular position in it – a low one, for example.

Our first publications usually put us into the social role of someone with a particular research interest. This is where we begin our professional lives in the community of philosophers who are anonymous specialists on something or someone – a field, author or professor. At the same time, we must submit to the prevailing heuristic idea of the structure of philosophical matter. In general, texts written by philosophers are classified according to subject and school, to an admittedly vague but still binding nomenclature. This consists to a great extent of philosophical terms of rather limited content (meaning, for example, philosophical disciplines and movements). There is no knowledge common to all, or

even an extensive description of the various fields, in which philosophical works might be unambiguously classified, for examples as dealing with hermeneutics or the philosophical problems of the natural sciences, or aesthetics or ontology. What does exist formally, however, is the firmly rooted heuristic habit that is the supposition, deriving from the positivist ideology of scientificity, that specialists know what the elements of the nomenclature that classify philosophical works mean; furthermore, that this nomenclature corresponds to the similarly supposed objective theoretical reality (and is not just a historical product of philosophical life burdened by numerous premises and theoretical consequences), or even is theoretically neutral. This supposition does not fit the contemporary state of heuristic consciousness, which is often guided by the ideas of hermeneutics, and which we may usually only contest in very moderate forms. Most of all, it involves using the customary law that is fundamental to the ethos of philosophy – the law of contemplating things from the beginning. The philosophical works regarded as expert literature begin and often end with musings that boil down to defining basic terms which belong to this academic nomenclature of the division of philosophy, and often taking a form that would suggest that ontology and ethics are some kind of novelty that requires an introduction. This is just one of many examples when the heuristic habituality borrowed from the positivist ideology of science and adapted to the form of university life has an effect on the philosophical work and philosophical matter. Positivist practices favour the historicism and privileging of the history of philosophy compared to other parts of it. This also leads to the belief that it is a fundamental heuristic requirement for a philosophical text to belong to a field specified in a certain nomenclature, which is easiest for a text on the history of philosophy to fulfil. Moreover, the demands of academic heuristic habituality mean that works from this area, if only because they refer to source literature, naturally assume a safer form similar to that of historical texts.

As a result, when we embark on the profession of philosopher we face the strong temptation to become historians of philosophy, or at least the authors of commentaries on past or contemporary philosophers. In this way, philosophy itself is further deferred for us – we are isolated from it by the wall of philosophical texts which we are to deal with professionally.

Certain external forms of scientificity accepted as heuristic habits, and applying particularly to young scholars, often act as a shelter from the difficulties of creative philosophical life (which, to be honest, prove too much for many of us). Yet escaping to our methods or to a detailed historical specialisation will not free

us from the struggle of writing, which – even when naive and irresponsible – is an extraordinary effort.

Writing is the foremost, most private sphere of philosophical life and of the philosopher's practice of his profession. Restrictions of a physical nature stipulate that, unlike the thinking process, a text must have a beginning and an end. In fact it is just books that require a beginning and an end, but the material, finite essence of the writing itself, forming the ethereal matter of ink to make sense, in keeping with the logic of layers within a whole, requires the physical form of this layer, which contains the remaining layers, to have analogies in them – i.e. for them (from the structure of sentences to the pure meaning of the text) to be complete. This is why in the heuristic habit our ontology of matter (which is fragmented) is transferred to writing, symbols, meanings, right up to the final layer of the work – the conceptions and theories. The curse of the philosopher is the fragmentation, dissection of pieces of meanings, cutting ideas to fit the form of a books divided into chapters and subject to a formal structure – beginning, middle, end – contrary to the psychological and semiotic nature of thinking, which is fluid, multifaceted, and sometimes incoherent.⁵ Often to blame for this is the heuristic habit of thinking of writing as encapsulating ideas in a form and of a book as a record of these ideas. As yet, the now possible theoretical awareness that a written work has a certain autonomy is not translated into specific stylistic models or pointers, let alone any significant changes in heuristic habituality. Texts intended not just as a medium of ideas, but rather to carry the meaning created by the laws of the matter of writing, are for now regarded as too pretentious and difficult to spawn many copies. We must all therefore struggle with writing matter as something alien, and even hostile. Our experience as speaking and thinking beings is incomparably greater than as writers, which is why we

5 The influence of our perception of matter in various forms of thinking is a Bergsonian theme that continues to await wider attention from philosophers; the autonomy of writing and raising its level to that of a philosophical notion is a theme for which Derrida is responsible. Like other postmodernists, he also experiments with the literary form of philosophy, expressing his insight into the properties of writing and semiotics. In these experiments, the motif of a work's lack of a beginning and ending expresses the interest in incompleteness and indeterminacy, manifested much more by the great figures of philosophy; cf. e.g. Otto Friedrich Bollnow, "Vom Unvollendeten, Nicht-zu-Vollendenden", *Kant-Studien* 67 (1–4): 480–491 (1976). Of course, academic expectations concerning the formal properties of philosophical texts by no means coincide with those of readers, and the works regarded as the most outstanding seldom fulfil academic standards. We should bear in mind, however, that the main function of academic norms is to guarantee a certain minimum philosophical level.

invariably experience disappointment in our toils with writing. What we write ends up being vapid and superficial in comparison with what we think, and even not to be what we wanted to say. Without doubt, grammatical and stylistic forms, and not only the heuristic demands of the academic text, have an effect on what we suppose to exceed them, constituting the positive content of what we write. But we believe that, when we are experienced authors, we will control this, just as a sculptor controls his chisel to the extent that you can hardly tell that he used a chisel to make the sculpture.

Writing is a very private sphere of philosophical life, but at the same time the most public one. It is private to such an extent that we often view making it public (by publishing) as an unnecessary complement to the action of writing. Although this approach makes it easier to reconcile ourselves to the fact that in general little of what we write will be read by a great number of people, at the same time it is harder to remember that a text is by nature addressed to a reader, which imposes obligations regarding its form and style and even limits its volume. The privacy of writing, disproportionate to the communicative function of the text, also comes from the fact that the text is produced in one home and arrives at another; it is something from me delivered to you. As for the public character of writing, it is based on the fact that its result – the book – becomes the most official and objectivised form of philosophical matter. Who we are publicly as philosophers depends on our books. A book's physical constancy and the possibility of reproduction makes it the most convenient object of public and objectivised (repeatable, documentable and verifiable) operations, such as summary, assessment and criticism. It is therefore public inasmuch as it is finite, our last word, after which we can only wait for the verdict of the public. Our work is sent out into the world, to fend for itself among people for whom it is something alien, worthy at best of fleeting interest. In a way it is also betrayed by us, convinced as we are that our ideas are infinitely richer and truer than their shadow – the book. With time, we stand on the side of the public, as the vivid mental source of our writing dries up and we transform from the authors into the readers of our own work; it is at this point that we tend to stop liking our books.

Partial compensation for the failure of writing is the possibility of public speaking, which is far better than a book at rendering the dialectical, digressive and emotional nature of thinking, while the grammatical form of lively speech can also be freer. The experience of talking about philosophy also reveals to us the great degree to which the message contained in our statements – the most vivid form of philosophical matter – is that which is extra to pure logical discourse and argument: style and form. In truth, the dichotomy of the logical-conceptual

(and at the same time the material content of a philosophical statement) and what is part of style has been discredited in contemporary philosophy, along with the other manifestations of dualist thinking, but this has had no significant effect on heuristic habituality. Meanwhile, as speakers standing before our audience, we participate in the rather spectacular display of these habits. All the ideals of discussion, popularised long ago and described by hermeneutics and the pragmatics of communication, demonstrate their weakness compared to the logic of minor, local discourses, or rather short trains of thought which are in general everything that the listener is able to respond to the speaker on an ad hoc basis. If a logical condition of continuation of the discussion must be disagreement (otherwise there would be nothing to discuss), then the discussion must take the form of counter-statements and defence from them. The wealth of the theoretical context of discursive concepts and links (even regardless of the quality of what the speaker says) hugely outweighs the random or contingent counter-statements that must inevitably dominate in a discussion, almost always ad hoc and short-term. This contingency and alienation of the discussion is counterbalanced by the only chance for generating order and making it effective – invoking the topoi of criticism established in heuristic habituality as well as heuristic postulates. These are rooted in a simplified but binding idea of the heuristic structure formed under the influence of logic and comprising concepts/terms (which should be unambiguous for all the participants in the discussion) along with the basic logical form: premise – reasoning according to the laws of logic – conclusion. Any attempt to convince the listener of the need to add to this structure (as a condition of effective communication), even with rhetorical forms, requires (meta-objective or methodological) considerations that depart from the fundamental topic, and is in general unsuccessful. Ultimately, then, the philosopher's experience as a speaker is also one of failure.

It would seem that our chances of mastering the situation – and this is surely the primal desire that releases our rationality – are greater when our work does not have to fit into autonomous structures – speech, writing, communicative practices. In other words, when it just involves reading and thinking. Reading, though, is not one of mankind's natural activities, and it also has its difficulties. Furthermore, it is a struggle with matter that is always alien, something from far away and sometimes the distant past, and that is to become internalised deep within us. This rarely succeeds. In psychological terms, reading is a process which results in a small number of minor assets of the mind, a verbal and conceptual currency. A book, meanwhile, is generally forgotten or reduced to a few lines of

narrative which mainly pick up on its elements that are easiest to summarise, as their function is to shape its logical and discursive form.

When reading, unfortunately, we are not spared the difficulties of grappling with the structures of writing and speech. Reading is also using language, and the minor or unspecified pieces of discourses that arise from reading as we think about what we are reading resemble the early forms of statements (not yet differentiated into speech or writing). They are more imperfect than mature statements, but it is in them – at least partially – that our understanding of the text arises. And our reading it by no means that we are trying to get closer to the truth, or opening ourselves to everything that the text can give us – rather, the reading is almost always functional. Even if we read the whole text, it tends to be so that we can learn about the author's views, find out what he thought about a given subject. But how often do we read purely for research purposes – looking for something that we can use in our work or simply for a confirmation of our own thoughts? Moreover, there is so much we could read that as professional readers of philosophy books we are necessarily forced to impose a policy of selection and skimming. We therefore end up skimming many a book, rather than actually reading it. The result of this ought to be a heuristic pointer for writing, to face the realities of reading and write books specifically for the skim-reader. This would mean repeating the contents that are especially important for us a suitable number of times as well as including summaries and indices. In reality, though, in Europe particularly, few philosophers take the realities of reading into account. This is a paradoxical consequence of the persistent – albeit dying in the most developed countries – cult of the book, part of which is the illusory wait for the true reader capable of cognising and appreciating our work. But this divine reader does not appear.

1.4 The General Point of View and The History of Philosophy

Our reading ideals are expressed by hermeneutics, which considers the involvement of the phenomenon of reading both in the individual psyche – finiteness, and in the linguistic, cultural and historical factors that determine the meaning and content of interpretation. According to the generalised concept of interpretation applying in hermeneutics, hermeneutic theory is itself an interpretation of the practice of reading. It is based on the idea of the idealised reading situation.⁶ But the hermeneutic idealisation is a far cry from the everyday practice

6 By no means does this mean to attribute a naively normative orientation to hermeneutics. Gadamer's declaration that his concern is "not what we do or what we ought to do, but what happens to us over and above our wanting and doing" (Hans-Georg Gadamer,

of reading, which is apparently more faithfully described by pragmatics of the *Erkenntnis und Interesse* type and the psychology cursed by philosophers. The charge levelled at the pragmatic-communicative and psychological approach is of the same nature as every criticism of naturalism. It is reckoned that motivations and other mental factors that go with reading do not have a theoretical significance, as they cannot be applied to the intellectual content of the work, which is the proper object of interpretation. The first thing to note, however, is that when within a unifying paradigm of rationality we strive to form a uniform theory on the whole of experience, layers appear (such as that of the psychological, phenomenal or phenomenological), meaning that we need to find a procedure to allow us to join them in a uniform meaning. This is the heuristic logic in this case, and Husserl too had to define a path to transcendental phenomenology leading through psychology.⁷ Secondly, the lack of contact between the various constitutive layers, especially that of mental experiences and that of conceptual meanings, is of heuristic significance for us when we are speaking of specific meanings, such as a specific text and its theoretical content. However, if we adopt a general point of view, for example if we want to develop a general opinion on the phenomenon of reading, it is by no means a legitimate postulate for our conclusions to be applicable to the methodical practice of material reference to particular texts. In any case, hermeneutic theory, and even theory of deconstruction, are expounded and can be understood without contact with a specific text. It therefore seems that heuresis based on the cult of direct contact with “the thing itself” and respecting the peculiar rules of various spheres of experience, which was taken on by Gadamerian hermeneutics, is postulative and wrongly levelled at the heuresis of the general point of view, which refer to the conceptualisation of practical experience, in which we have many cases to call upon. Such

Truth and Method, trans. revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, London: Continuum, 2006, p. xxvi), even if it may sound somewhat pre-hermeneutic, seems to be fulfilled. It is fulfilled, however, within the limits of philosophy of reflection, as conceiving “a reality that limits and exceeds the omnipotence of reflection” (cf. *ibidem*, p. 351). Hermeneutics seems to require two radicalisations resulting from it, which are speculative and reflexive in spite of everything, but at the same time phenomenological: in the form of analysis of being... and that of deconstruction, in which it is not the work that is dispersed in the reality of reflection (cf. *ibidem*), but the reflection together with the author that is dispersed in the space between textual codes (Barthes) or writing (Derrida).

7 For the position of Husserl’s phenomenology towards positive (natural) knowledge see e.g. Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s essay “The Philosopher and Sociology”, trans. Richard C. McCleary, [in:] *Signs* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1964), pp. 159–181.

heuresis is natural. Yet from the point of view of the equally natural, albeit often excessively orthodoxly and theoretically conceived heuresis of the thing in itself, characterised by the tendency to distinguish layers and aspects and differentiate between an immediate and a reflexive approach, it is meta-objective and objectifying, a naive simplification, and its naturalness becomes naturalism.

The general point of view – this is the heuristic intention directing talking about philosophical life and philosophical matter and deciding on the acceptance of general concepts. They encompass wholes whose form of totality is just generality – extensional inclusion of everything that might be at play, and not – as those prejudiced against naturalism might think – just meta-objective unmasking of the true basis of motivation and the objectifying quantification of what has a spiritual nature. If such arguments are to a certain extent justified, it is because the habits of a modern philosophical education are inclined to contrast the general point of view with an insight into the thing itself, equating it with sceptical distance or reductionism. Yet the result of the philosopher's general point of view on philosophical life is inevitably the form of philosophy's self-image. And this self-image, deprecated by forms of heuresis characterised by pathos and ideological involvement, necessarily contrasts with them and appears sceptical, critical and lacking in pathos. This was especially the case in the past. But the sophistic pragmatics of intellectual life, certainly not as scornful and cynical as we are taught to perceive it, has already been pushed out of philosophy by the ideological and principled Platonic philosophy. It was the same story with rhetoric, and the few attempts to describe philosophical life from the social and historic perspective remained (with the possible exception of Vico) on the periphery of the philosophical mainstream. In more recent times, this form of philosophical thinking, reconciled with the dissent attributed to it, found a marginal-aphoristic means of expression, becoming something of an existentialist moral philosophy on creative work, without any scientific pretences. Perhaps the most distinct examples of this kind of philosophical literature (because there is also a long tradition of non-philosophers mocking philosophers, starting with Aristophanes' *The Clouds*) are the relevant passages from Schopenhauer's *Parerga and Paralipomena* and the works and notes of Nietzsche. This literature is of an entirely different heuristic character, although its social role is certainly close to literature involved in heuresis and the tradition of overcoming (idealism, metaphysics, foundationalism) and dealing with the crisis of philosophy. Its marginal and unsystematic nature is so compelling that one eminent English professor, wanting to write a book on philosophy as practice, decided on the

form of a popular narrative about philosophy and philosophers.⁸ Meanwhile, the academic history of philosophy retains a unique, ambiguous position towards its self-image shaped by the general point of view.

The history of philosophy often attains the status of the main discipline at philosophy departments, and this also has its negatives. This is because the heuristic forms of the history of philosophy are transferred mechanically to other forms of philosophical thought, restricting its development. The great authority of the history of philosophy, confirmed by the competences and erudition of many philosophers, was reflected in the binding (in continental philosophy) heuristic habits, which tend towards a historical treatment of philosophical thought. Such a custom is, for example, emphasising that the history of philosophy is an integral part of philosophy, or assertions like: philosophising entails constant exploration of the heritage of tradition, it is constant intellectual contact with the philosophers of the past. These statements display a combination of the heuristic habits supporting the authority of the history of philosophy and hermeneutics. We will deal with what the hermeneutic approach brings to the heuristic image of philosophy later on. As for the aspects of historical-philosophical heuresis imposed on philosophical thought, though, most significant seems the custom of organising philosophy according to authors whose views are illustrated by synthetic, schoolish studies passed from generation to generation. These elaborations are becoming widespread interpretations and popular historical-philosophical knowledge. Their components are those elements of the thought of a given author which, owing to the type of heuresis characteristic of the history of philosophy, play a merging role, i.e. they adopt the methodological form of the basis, principle, or method, or the semiotic form of the leitmotif, the rhetorical form of the objective or the grand idea crowning the system. If even the history of philosophy

8 D. W. Hamlyn, *Being a Philosopher. The History of a Practice*, London: Routledge, 1992. At this point it is worth mentioning one of the most ruthless attacks on mediocrity and tepidity, the irreverent address made to all artistic (and philosophical too) imitators and followers in Witold Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke*, trans. Danuta Borhardt (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press; Polish original version, Paris 1969, pp. 74–86). Interestingly, it was this very passage that was reworked by the author in the second edition. There is much non-academic literature which boldly presents the practical pursuit of science, without using the scientific forms that sit rather uncomfortably in such applications. Somewhat shameful for the philosopher is the endocrinologist Hans Selye's *From Dream to Discovery: On Being a Scientist*, which shows the scale of scientific life in the field of medicine. The particular refinement and level of concrete, measurable expertise of a mathematician's creative scientific life also makes quite an impression – the literary image of this is given in Leon Rappaport's *Determinanta*.

has already undergone the evolution described by Foucault in reference to history in general in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, then it still has the effect on philosophical heuresis of ensuring that the attention of philosophers remains fixed to those elements of the work – logical, rhetorical, stylistic – which give meaning to the whole (the system). In the classical history of philosophy, philosophical (theoretical) structures are perceived – where possible – as systems, and their distinguishing features as their structural principles. It is in this way that the official image of philosophy is shaped, in the form of a series of narratives, expressing the classical interpretations of philosophical works.⁹ These systems themselves demand to be perceived in broader structures, and this is how the new task for philosophical thinking is formed: to formulate metanarratives, telling the history of philosophy as a history of the motifs joining it together: the history of concepts, ideas, philosophical forms of thinking etc. Of course, many such metanarratives are formed, each seeing the others as one-sided and incomplete. However, the object that they create – the field of historical research – undergoes a constant process of alienation, turning into *the classics*. In this way, philosophy pursued in a historical way is given the new task of lifting the spell of the past and doing away with the distance that it itself created. Hermeneutic trails come to the aid here, justifying this process as mediated understanding, circles of understanding and self-understanding, understanding and assimilation, wholes and parts. The structure produced in philosophy by the form of the philosophy book and by historical thinking about philosophy – of systems, historical processes or logical structure of discourses – imposes a completely different image of philosophy to that which we adopt when we think about the irregular and random human practice of writing books and participating in philosophical life. But it is this history of philosophy that gives us the fundamental building blocks for our individual self-images of philosophy. It cannot be adopted directly,

9 This is why the favourite form of heuristic philosophical history discourse is overcoming classical interpretations or naive criticism. It happens that this can almost always be done, precisely because of the style of work of traditional history of philosophy, which, in exhibiting the structural rules of systems, provokes us to search in the texts of one author or another passages that do not fit the classical interpretation, or are even faithful to what could be regarded as defeat of any naivety of the idea system attributed this author. It is obvious that a good philosopher sometimes tries in the details of his work to repair what appears to be a general deficiency, an unfavourable tendency of the whole. We can therefore argue long and hard over whether Hegel's system values human individuality and personal identity. But it is worth mustering the heuristic reflection which has us assume the fundamental inconclusiveness of this type of dispute.

though – precisely because it is alien to our own personal scientific experience. Maturing of the philosophical education, it seems, involves slowly breaking down for our own use the ossified structures of the historical-philosophical image of philosophy and adapting the ensuing rubble to the self-image of it we already possess. And this is why a form of philosophical education common to all philosophers is impossible. Common knowledge – or let’s say, to avoid the naively objectivist term “knowledge”, generally known expressions concerning philosophy – are fragmentary, and boil down to concise descriptions of the main figures from the history of philosophy, vague descriptions of a few fields of philosophy or trends significant today, or the best-known concepts and problems. Two erudite people might therefore know and say different things, and moreover there might be a very important work with which they are not familiar. A philosophical education can be compared to Swiss cheese – it may constitute a dense structure (if it is solid), but it also full of holes scattered at random. It is an entirely different matter in mathematics, for instance: the common knowledge which all maths professors have is several hundred definitions, theorems and proofs and knowledge of the fundamentals of mathematical theories. Yet this lack of a uniform education in philosophy is not a flaw, but rather part of its nature. The heuristic habits which to a large extent philosophy takes from sciences, thus limiting the possibilities of its own heuresis (continually rediscovered in rhetoric, dialectics and other fields) make it more difficult to address the topic of philosophy as a type of education. Nevertheless, it seems important to do so.

1.5 Institutions of Philosophical Life

The institutionalisation of philosophical life shows signs of being rather ill-suited and inappropriate to the nature of philosophy itself. The institutional forms that are present are not a good fit for the sphere of philosophical life in which it means output and personal writing. Institutions, or at least classical bureaucratic ones, are fundamentally not helpful to the personal nature of writing, and philosophers eludes the expert-technical mode of work demanded by these institutions when they write “I think...”, “It seems to me...”, and go on asking themselves questions that are not only utterly alien to the clerical mentality and language of officialise, but also often critical of social contrivances. Therefore, the main element of the institution apart from the lecture room – that is the philosopher’s office – is isolated within it, from the inside a zone of privacy, and potentially even a site of conspiracy against institutions.

This strange situation is less marked in the case of a university philosophy department. At a modern university, this traditionally plays a specific role closely

related to the speculative and critical calling of philosophy, in whose name it sometimes opposes institutions. Among the reasons for establishing a philosophy department is articulation of the formal (and self-justifying, as befits philosophical heuresis) idea of the university as an institution with a special and eminent public (political) role. This modern idea of the university features in the discourse on civil society and the *Rechtstaat*, in which authority and its beginning should have a basis in the law determined by the parliament, just as everything proclaimed in science is to have a basis in scientific laws discovered as a result of free research caused only by the desire to know the truth. The pro-state character of the university is therefore presented as a logical consequence of the principle of serving the public good, and not an ideology. Everything the university says (also as politically right) is validated in autonomous research, which also confirms the principle of freedom as a principle of coexistence in a modern state. By maintaining the discourse of the university's autonomy and of civil society, philosophy earns the title of provider of legitimisation to the whole university and to its department, while the philosopher's work attains institutional significance. Because teaching philosophy is generally viewed as necessary, the state sees philosophers in the role of teachers as useful workers. A pro-state aspect is also attributed to their teaching function, since according to the civil society discourse there is the idea that a condition for it to function is appropriate education of citizens in matters such as the idea of the democratic state – which lies within the competences of philosophy.¹⁰

In recent times, however, the significance of the discourse of the university's autonomy, as well as all Enlightenment discourses, has diminished. Philosophical institutions are therefore forced to search for new areas of activity that are more unambiguously “pro-public” in order to support the none-too socialised philosophers who work for them and are not engaged in current social and political problems. The opposition which the philosophy community and its institutional aspirations encounter when dealing solely with pure philosophy therefore seems justified. Not only can the results of philosophers' work not be measured, but what can be said from the position of the ethos of philosophy in defence of this immeasurability is often dubious.

The professional career of the average philosopher – an employee and member of the philosophical community – usually starts, and frequently finishes, with

10 An interesting discussion of the links between the issue of legitimisation of knowledge and freedom and the significance of the idea of the university can be found in Jean-François Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 47–52.

acquiring academic degrees. Academic titles and degrees fulfil a complicated social function, in which it is in fact state control and that of the scientific community over its younger members that are dominant. This function traditionally concerns the question of whether future teachers will teach in the spirit of the school, i.e. what the school, possibly also the state, and formerly church institutions deem it to be. Today, orthodoxy is in general replaced by the positivistic notion of academic level. However, academic degrees are in fact a rather imperfect means of checking scholars' competences, and the system of employment plays a greater role. In general, then, controlling institutions and functions have become less important, and increasingly scientific prestige depends on popularity, measured by numbers of students and books sold, as well as the system of social rewards. Academic degrees are therefore less important. This is particularly the case in the United States, albeit to a lesser degree in philosophy than in other fields.¹¹

However, academic degrees are still a peculiar area of heuristic habituality. They reflect idealised heuristic demands associated with the ideas about scientificity predominant at the time. This is why the requirements set for a doctoral candidate or lecturer have varied so much over the centuries. The positivism that dominated at the turn of the 20th century (or neo-Kantism in the positivistic version) grew partly from irritation at the dilettantism of the familiar Enlightenment and at the freedom and individualism accepted in many communities under the influence of Romantic ideology. The demands that started to be made of philosophical dissertations reflected a sensitivity to this. They were expected to be a diligent contribution to research, documented in the relevant sources. This corresponds to the idea of science meaning assiduous, expert and documentary research providing an input into the collective effort of systematic accumulation of knowledge on a given subject. At the same time, the formal requirements made of dissertations are based on the classical heuristic model drawn from rhetoric according to which a statement (in this case the research work) should contain a specific thesis and a defence of it (which certainly does not mean that all rhetorical means must be accepted). Both heuristic conceptions – the positivistic idea of scientificity as expertise and the rhetorical construction of the statement – have little in common with the actual heuristic structures of many philosophical works otherwise regarded as classic and outstanding examples by

11 Which is not to say that the social situation of philosophy in the USA is generally good. Some articles, for example in *Metaphilosophy*, give another impression; cf. Alison Jagger's sarcastic text "Philosophy as a Profession", *Metaphilosophy* 1975, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 100–116.

the proponents of these ideas. For a philosophical text to be able to acquire the external heuristic form of thesis and arguments and be summarised according to this model, it must be bent into this form. This is often artificial, and limits the heuristic means and the possibility of discussing them. Cast aside are not only rhetorical tropes and means of persuasion (which may have good results), but also elementary forms of heuresis like dialectical thinking and speculation. On the other hand, historical discourse has a privileged position, and although conservative heuristic habituality continues to be present in many communities it remains safest and in keeping with the spirit of official scientificity to deal with the history of philosophy. That these habits are more expected than practised is another matter entirely. Official formal requirements and the procedure of awarding academic degrees are slightly exaggerated, and frequently disproportionate to the practice of philosophical life, and therefore only do their job to a slight extent. Because they (fortunately) do not result in practical criteria for assessment and classification of dissertations, everything is essentially based on opinions. And the fact that in philosophy there might be various opinions on the same paper is a characteristic of the discipline.

1.6 Pathos and Nihilism in Talking about Philosophy

There is one more sphere of philosophical life that is so essential to it that to treat it as just an aspect of the philosopher's professional life would be artificial: discussing philosophy and professional matters. It is here that the self-image of the community of philosophers is forged, and heuristic habits are subject to social verification and agreement as well as transformations.

Discussion among philosophers is by no means always philosophical debate. Due to the difficulty of debate, and the resultant imperfection of it as a means of social coexistence, it tends to give way to other, easier and more socially satisfactory forms of discussion, such as conversation about professional affairs, gossip, or talking about what people's academic interests are. In the discussions of philosophers, philosophy itself is once again deferred – set aside for another occasion, for a more suitable time, such as a seminar or lecture. The desired proximity of contact with philosophy, frequently replaced in professional life by the demand for expertise, is replaced here by the familiarity of social conversation. In such discussions, we speak about ourselves and others: he's dealing with, wrote, is publishing, received, is going to, I read his... – not bad etc. When we are tired of the futility and repetitiveness of such sentences and wish to say something more important, the situation does not put metaphysical questions or specific philosophical issues before us, but rather a vacuum. We ask ourselves: so what?,

what's the point of all this?, so what if I read this, you published that, and he's working on something else...? And we can hardly afford to conceptualise this doubt according to our philosophical knowledge and skills – as the existential problem of being a philosopher, the collapse of belief in truth, the crisis of philosophy or similar. Our protest encompasses all that is academic, can be included in the landscape of the philosopher's professional life, and also what we propose as a conceptualisation of our nihilistic mental state. We are therefore left with such behaviours whose essence is giving expression to our understanding of the situation and the sense of community that still forms within this. We therefore tell ourselves that all is not well with philosophy, that it results in disappointment, that nothing can be changed, because even if something new appears, it will just be a new point on the map. Yet this is not just an expression of doubt (we lost faith long ago) or sorrow, or even satisfaction at possession of a certain negative wisdom – philosophers cut themselves off from philosophy with an indifference bordering with nihilism.

This way of talking – conspiring against philosophy – is part of the unofficial heuristic habituality, reflecting like a distorting mirror the predominant discourse on philosophy as being noble and profoundly sensible, albeit difficult and always endangered by failure and doubt. We do not refer to this discourse as idle chatter. On the contrary – it seems that without the exalted ethos of philosophy this community would fall apart. The two approaches – the nihilistic and the bombastic – are complementary in philosophy's self-image, participating in the dialectical interplay of its legitimisation and delegitimisation, which must end satisfactorily for philosophy, at least in the minds of those who chose this profession and are sticking with it.

The semiotic and rhetorical role of the word “philosophy” is essentially regulative, performing a uniting and normative function. This normativity means, firstly, that the concept of philosophy is assumed as an object of affirmation and continual specification. Secondly, it means that in this concept there is an implicit distinction between the true form worthy of the name and constituting the objective of continual striving and that which only aspires to the status of philosophy. In the communicative practice of philosophy, this normative factor is supported by special linguistic devices, as is the notion of truth, which also plays a normative-regulative role. This is why true philosophy means something different from philosophy telling the truth, and does not necessarily have to be connected to the idea of the *quantum* of the ultimate truth. An example of how the connection between the notion of philosophy and that of truth is manifested is that a programme for gaining cognition is presented as a conception of

philosophy, or more precisely as a proposal for what true philosophy actually should be. This usage of the concept of philosophy, this appropriation if it by a particularistic theory, contradicts another elementary way of using it, i.e. as a uniting concept, encompassing everything that is included within philosophy (good and bad philosophy). The very notion of philosophy alone projects the dialectical drama of deferred and elite philosophy – it makes us compare true philosophy (recognised from a historical and critical position as a particularistic conception of philosophy) with philosophy as the history of trials and errors. At the same time, though, the notion of philosophy has the character of synthesis above this dialectic, and philosophers generally recognise its dialectical function and try not to overuse the associated rhetoric. Hence also the efforts to keep the amount of particularism in everything that is said about the concept of philosophy to a minimum, in order to avoid one-sidedness (understood for example as reductionism or metaphysical assumptions) in philosophical theory. If we therefore in the traditional narrative on true philosophy accept the idea of objective truth and universal rationality, then the closer to the present, the more historical and systematic reflection there is leading to a compromise position of openness to plurality. Various forms of philosophy are taken into account in conceptions of philosophy today, with the act of talking about it being recognised in its reflexive (meta-objective) character. The result of it is also therefore styled reflexively – self-knowledge is accentuated as an attribute of philosophy, understanding as its task and reflection as its manner of intellectual existence. This does not mean any antagonism between the former and current narrative about philosophy. The dominant notion is the principle of unity, understood as historical unity and unity of the intellectual effort of generations of philosophers, and essentially any narrative on philosophy must be adapted to tradition. What has become more of an object of demystification is the concept of metaphysics and other more detailed philosophical concepts. Despite certain attempts at dissent, the affirmation of philosophy and semiotic functions of the concept do not seem to be under threat. The game of delegitimation is played out (or perhaps has already finished) using philosophical notions, but rather not the concept of philosophy itself, and the pathos-filled – or even emotional – feeling at its base is a constant boon to philosophers. Deconstructive and post-philosophical theory pose no danger to the concept – its true opponent is nihilism. As we saw, it too evades one-sided theoretical forms – for example the sceptical discourse, and the way in which we express it, is increasingly reflexive and guarded. This brings the two positions – pathos and nihilism – closer together, providing hope that the still evident splits in the self-image of philosophy will heal.

We mentioned before that the notion of philosophy plays a symbolic role – it is a symbol of the power of reason displayed in the history of humankind and a focus for all forms of the spirit.¹² This symbolic function is certainly primal in relation to the normative function, which appears to be the logical (semiotic) expression of it. As a symbol, however, philosophy is not only a lofty pursuit, but also a very personal one, just as for believers religious symbols have a personal meaning, independent of all theoretical discourse. Philosophy therefore has the chance to act as an ideal, essentially not threatened in the global dimension by discourses that challenge the metaphysical and epistemological foundations of specific articulations of it. It is also possible to speak of philosophy which respects caution against one-sided involvement and old-fashioned pathos and at the same time does not fall into the dialectical procession of liberating itself from metaphysics, instead simply trying to be faithful to the experience and ideal that is to be expressed. It does this using words understood by philosophers – where necessary even metaphysical ones. Marcel, for example, for whom true philosophy is the philosophy of freedom, writes in this way: “it makes freedom with its content and is thought that thinks itself and thus becomes free [...] the method of philosophy is reflexive *par excellence*, the most authentic philosophy is situated at the juncture of the self and others, and metaphysics is participation in being.”¹³ Yet these very traditional and, it would seem, anachronous elements of grandiloquent narratives on philosophy appear here in the context of talking about philosophising as something deeply personal and with the intention of restoring the symbolic meaning to the notion. This is therefore not a dead narrative of Enlightenment humanism or foundationalism, but rather a living, emotionally involved, counterproposal to the philosopher’s nihilistic state (Marcel’s text is such an attempt at lofty philosophy with a human face). However, a balanced self-image of philosophy, even if stability of feelings comes as a condition, must be based on a uniform discourse on the topic of philosophy that does justice to its magnitude as well as expressing its essential weakness. In order to be convincing, it cannot ignore the results of criticism of persuasive modernist discourses.

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- 12 Ernst Cassirer expressed himself in this way in the introduction to *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms (Volume 1: Language)* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press 1955, pp. 80–81) – “the critique of reason becomes the critique of culture”. The whole of this passage is particularly worthy of attention as an example of philosophical discourse imbued with multilateral heuristic reflection.
- 13 Gabriel Marcel, “Filozofia i komunikacja międzyludzka”, [in:] *Filozofia egzystencjalna. Wybór tekstów*, ed. M. Kostyszak (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo UW, 1989), pp. 89–102 (translation from the Polish edition).

Therefore, if a process of standardisation of the self-image is really taking place, theoretical support must come in the guise of rapprochement of narratives on philosophy deriving from the sense of the pathos of philosophy and the opposing nihilistic feeling. Let us make a brief comparison of the history of the two types of narratives.

Since Plato's time, apologetic talking about philosophy has been done in two ways: styled in a particular logical-moral way, as well as a metaphysical one. A model example of both aspects is Plato's *Symposium*. It was therefore said that the lofty aim of philosophy is wisdom, truth (the most general, eternal and unchanging), cognition of what is important, attaining ultimate reasons, and finally improving humankind. The object of philosophy is also described – also as that which is eternal, fundamental and universal. The postulates made of philosophical cognition were translated into the properties of the objects of metaphysics: the idea, being, God and the soul. The rivalry of sorts that existed between the two stylisations also triggered competition between the notion of philosophy and that of metaphysics (“primal philosophy”) as foundations of human cognition. The period of domination of theology and popularity of philosophical mysticism also weakened the apology of the notion of philosophy (particularly in comparison to what such authors as Plotinus and Boethius wrote). Essentially, though, the ideal of philosophy remained unchanged right up till the end of scholasticism. The sceptical criticism of philosophy was a nihilistic – to use a sometimes rather unsatisfactory simplification – counterpart of these narratives. But this criticism was more about the cognitive possibilities of philosophy than the ideal of it – as was the case with the accompanying relativism, with its sophistic origins. Dissent against academic pathos in talking about philosophy was also encountered in philosophical schools (including the Academy), but no doubt mostly derived from less intellectually geared circles, such as the literary community of ancient Rome or the conservative clergy in the Middle Ages. These circles, devoid of feelings of loyalty towards philosophy, were a breeding ground for general criticism of its cognitive aspirations (for instance as a new Tower of Babel erected by dialecticians) that was of theoretically major significance for philosophy. In medieval times, philosophy's primacy was transformed institutionally into precedence in the teaching order: *artium*, or possibly *disciplina*, became indicators of the social position of philosophy, which was too low not to lead to frustration and a certain tension in relations with theology. With its predominance taken away by theology, philosophy was forced to at least seek autonomy.

Much was to change thanks to Bacon, and then Descartes. His style of philosophy, rather like writing a reflective intellectual autobiography, and his theoretical

exposition of the subject, had a significant influence on the shape of philosophical apology. In the 17th century, the role of philosophy was described more in logical and epistemological concepts than in metaphysical ones. The place of truth and wisdom was occupied by categories referring rather to the subject: rationality (identified more with methodical research progress than with the cognitive function of *ratio*) as well as scientific knowledge about the world. Philosophy is thus presented as rational and general knowledge about the world, preceding studies of the exact sciences. In this type of narrative, the normative function of the notion of philosophy is not so much manifested in the ideal of absolute knowledge (the truth to which philosophy strives), as recognised as a formal function, expressed in terms of method and form of cognition. This heuristic change in ways of talking about philosophy (common to post-Cartesian rationalism and empiricism) brought about a characteristic phenomenon that could still be observed in the 20th century, whereby the various currents of apology for philosophy competed with each other in the methodological programmes which they offered. As a result, there were numerous radical critiques of previous philosophies as well as revival projects (instead of the moderate medieval *sed contra*). An example might be the first book of aphorisms of Bacon's *Novum Organum*.

In these conditions, the philosopher's nihilistic state was forced to find other forms of expression. These came mostly in the form of the critical works of the philosophy of this time, aimed at the traditional notions of metaphysics and its now too meagre (compared to the state of knowledge of scientific heuresis) logic. Since both these conceptual sources produced the traditional apologies of philosophy, scepticism took the form of criticism not of cognitive possibilities, but of the aspirations of philosophy, at least from the traditional metaphysical point of view. At the same time, the natural sciences, which had indeed taken on some of philosophy's authority, began to make their own claims.¹⁴ Yet this did not mean that the concept of philosophy itself was rejected; in the sceptical context, it was rather philosophers that were spoken of, in keeping with the custom of juxtaposing good philosophy with bad philosophy. Pascal's saying "To ridicule philosophy is really to philosophise" testifies to the will to preserve the notion of philosophy, even the reservations expressed in it towards Cartesian optimism. Post-Cartesian scepticism, however, was essentially targeted at the claims of philosophy understood as equating the highest human goals with using reason.

14 In the 17th and 18th centuries, with the possible exception of 18th-century Germany, the process of change in the style of writing about philosophy affected only small elites (albeit those that defined the future of science) – generally, philosophy in the scholastic spirit was dominant.

Traditional scepticism, valued by Pascal and other anti-rationalistic authors of the 17th and 18th centuries, was complemented with a new discourse and language, which juxtaposed with the discourses expressing the claims of philosophy and legitimising it attempts to conceptualise forms of experience of the world that it had neglected. This gave rise to conceptions of feeling, contemplation, conscience, instinct, that were in accordance with the heuresis of addressing the “thing itself” and heuresis of direct experience that were developing at the time, but referring to other experiences than those which interested Bacon and later empiricists.

Some Enlightenment thinkers (e.g. Shaftesbury and Rousseau) and then Romantics created an intellectual opposition which presented philosophy with a new fact. It turned out that the most general and fundamental questions concerning humankind and the world, previously the preserve of philosophy, could be considered effectively by non-philosophers, even those averse to the discipline. This forced philosophy to reaffirm its sovereign rule over the domain of using the mind. The model for new discourses legitimising philosophy was provided by Kant. For him, true philosophy takes the form of transcendental philosophy, meaning among other things that it is aware that “that very concept which puts us in a position to ask the question must also qualify us to answer it, since, as in the case of right and wrong, the object is not to be met with outside the concept”.¹⁵ Philosophy was therefore no longer so much fundamental, rationally justified and methodically compiled knowledge about the world as a constant source of validation of all possible knowledge; the adjective “transcendental” began to play a new role, restoring to the concept of philosophy the regulative function that had been under strain throughout history. In heuristic habituality, the association of being philosophical with reflectiveness and self-justification was reinforced, and the positivist worldview adopted for good the Kantian conception of philosophy and some of Kant’s views. Thus began the tradition of philosophy stretching to neopositivism. Even though it had its own autonomous field, it remained attached to science. To a large extent, 19th-century academic philosophy developed under the influence of positivistic ideology, together with it becoming the subject of criticism from the anti-positivist and anti-naturalist current which, though essentially philosophical, was not always identified with philosophy.

15 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1929, 1965), A477/B505.

The development of science also brought with it a new form of nihilistic ideas about philosophy. Philosophy itself entirely appropriated the criticism of its own cognitive aspirations as a certain type of discourse (in the form of the critique of reason), and this criticism was thus no longer able to play its rebellious role. Above all, though, other forms of cognition proved to be more effective and interesting than philosophy. The natural sciences were not only more demonstrably scientific, but gave results whose magnificence eclipsed the greatness of philosophy. Questions began to be asked about philosophy: why do we need it? what does it actually do for us? The notorious lack of agreement among philosophers and absence of clear progress in the field were stressed, as well as the great distance to experience that it has in comparison with sciences. This way of talking became common, and continues to operate today; philosophers too have learnt to use it to express their doubts. Furthermore, the naturalistic discourse which explains the spiritual through the natural and material provided means for depreciation of philosophy, relativising its results to the social circumstances and the associated motivations. This coincided with Marxism, and later in critical theory with the exposure of the totalising claims of philosophy based on criticism of the idealistic conception of the subject, which appeared to be of key importance for the discourses expressing and validating these claims.

The last grandiloquent apology of philosophy is the work of Hegel. In it, the regulative function of the concept of philosophy is expressed in the totalisation of the notion of philosophy equated with thinking and its history. The sovereignty of philosophy is no longer just transcendently assured as the unity of the source of all questions and answers, also about philosophy. It is now the sovereignty of the whole (totality), beyond which there is nothing, and which can therefore not be threatened by anything from outside. The self-knowledge of totality of thought (idea and concept) is not abstract methodological knowledge or formal knowledge about the structures which govern thinking and the result of it, but absolute knowledge gained by going through the whole of the dialectical process of thinking, knowledge that is entirely transparent to itself and uniform, the return of the notion to itself. In this grand narrative, philosophy becomes the truth and whole, the beginning and the end, logic and the phenomenology of the spirit, a response to all its expectations and claims. At the same time, the programme previously developed by Kant to justify philosophy, religion and morality (as necessary on the basis of the transcendental conditions of their possibilities) could now be applied to the individual forms of the soul identified by Hegel. Therefore, the Hegelian legitimisation of philosophy is simultaneously a

legitimation of science, ethicality, religion, the state, and even art. And Hegelianism is accompanied in this by neo-Kantism.

After the deep breath brought to philosophy by German idealism, distrust in the discipline came to the fore. This was linked to the general awareness of a crisis of culture, which only now is beginning to seem an outdated form of modernistic heuresis. Apart from naturalistic reductionism, historicism, political delegitimation and the comparison with sciences that deprecated philosophy, there were also more expressions of philosophers' nihilistic feelings towards their own field that occurred as a reaction to Hegelianism. Kierkegaard's critique of idealism on the basis of the authenticity of the existence of the subject became a protest against philosophy appropriating humans and the world for its systemic objectives. Yet this was still only a critique of bad philosophy, not one that renounced the concept itself. The framers of the philosophy of existence, who disavowed the regulative power of the idealistic notion of philosophy as a form of intellectual obligation, nonetheless sought to preserve its symbolic and regulative function, treating it as a moral ideal. This was the basis of the view of true philosophy being that of freedom and rather of the path and contemplation than the goal and knowledge (especially Jaspers). Yet anti-philosophical heuristic habituality are insensitive to the existential apology of philosophy, which following the fall of the great systems speaks in a mild and uncertain voice. Meanwhile, the anti-philosophical complaints are aggressive: a hundred systems from which it is tough to make a choice, opaqueness and arbitrariness of ideas not based on experience, plays on words, concepts and feelings, pseudo-scientific intellectual literature written by incapable writers, narcissistic agonising that is of no use to the world, futile conceptual fantasies etc. For the other side, the heuresis of authenticity and fervour over the human fate and truth of being (against the ossified and dogmatic philosophy of systems) proposed by self-doubting philosophy is an unconvincing declaration (we really want the best), which once again exposes the sentimentality, weakness and egotism of philosophy.

The regulative and persuasive application of the notion of philosophy was renounced by Nietzsche: his writing does not need to call itself philosophy to sustain its unity and validity. Moreover, this nihilistic discourse created by philosophy and non-philosophy against the notion of philosophy and its claims was to a great extent its own discourse. Everything in history that has been anti-philosophical was essentially of use to the Nietzschean project, even if it was a form of the nihilism of the sick will to power. This allowed the will to power to look at itself and recognise its actual form in activity and affirmation. In Nietzsche's ideas, therefore, there is room for nihilism if it is complete nihilism that has been liberated in affirmation.

Philosophy has the upper hand here, albeit not as reflection, self-knowledge, method, dialectic, or system, but as radical and constructive criticism, shattering nihilistic criticism if this cannot find its form of affirmation. This kind of philosophy is mistrustful, appraising, but also sensitive and respecting diversity and difference per se, and not as degrees of dialectics, yet from everybody it requires affirmative approaches. The malcontent philosopher – disheartened or apathetic towards philosophy – is thus not left to his own devices (your business, no one forces you into philosophy), but rather ridiculed as well as called to action. For the first time, though, the sheer multitude that weighs down on him and puts him off (the multitude and lack of order in philosophy) is shown as something good. This challenge laid down to nihilism, including that which entails passivity and boredom with philosophy, but also agreement with much of what appears as criticism of the discipline, offers a new opportunity for the self-image of philosophy and for balancing the contradictory feelings that it arouses.¹⁶

In the 19th century, in part independently of the drama of the end of metaphysics, and with a major contribution from positivistic ideas, came a new (if essentially similar to that developed from philosophy as critique of the claims of metaphysics) notion of the importance of philosophy. Circles that were less involved in the discourse of idealism and criticism thereof were also characterised by a belief in philosophy's privileged position in comparison to science, stemming from its ability to criticise and provide a critical insight into numerous diverse ideas. An eclectic type of pursuing philosophy developed, along with an increasingly self-aware history of ideas. At the same time, this pro-philosophical side of the intellectual scene was supported by the developing field of the humanities.

A further contribution to the understanding of philosophy as having a knowledge of the world of ideas was provided by the 19th-century tradition of criticism of ingrained forms of scholarship and thinking instituted in Germany by Schopenhauer and also undertaken by Nietzsche. This was, though, a fragile compromise between the ideal of philosophy and the naturalistic depreciation of it. With the linguistic turn, as the entire mental oeuvre of philosophy was conceived as a form of use of language, it was inevitably ridiculed as hopeless efforts to reach beyond the limits of language. This type of nihilistic discourse became popular thanks to the positivists and Wittgenstein.¹⁷ But it created two

16 In writing about Nietzsche, I owe much to Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2006).

17 Wittgenstein was perhaps the first philosopher to point to the semiotic role of the word “philosophy”; to which he attributed the function of introducing a second order.

possibilities: either philosophy could be depreciated as nonsense, or to it could be attributed the meaning of exploration of language as part of linguistic discourse games. With time, this idea of a game shed the meaning of exposé that it had in Wittgenstein's imitators, becoming a second path – alongside the Nietzschean one – to affirmation of diversification and multitude, and thus vindicating philosophy. Also in a sense responsible for this change were modern pragmatism, as philosophy took on the function of an intermediary authority organising intellectual life, and structuralism.

If, like philosophy itself, its self-image needs a narrative referring to the notion of it, then ultimately this narrative today has the chance to be a balanced one, respecting both the lofty sense of the pathos contained in philosophising, and the nihilistic feeling of the impotence and transient value of the philosopher's activities. The two lines of discourse – the nihilistic and the exalted – seem to be converging: the historical process has transformed philosophy from the dominion of eternal truth on Earth firstly into philosophy as reflection and method, then into self-knowledge, and finally into an insight into diversity and mediation. The most common ways of talking about philosophy nowadays refrain from exalting the discipline above other areas of thinking and culture and bestowing upon it heuristic primacy as a source of foundations, answers and self-knowledge. Philosophy now is certainly not seen as bearing the wisdom of the owl of Minerva spreading its wings at dusk. Even the autonomist discourse, attached to positivist ideals and rationalist philosophy and designating at least a narrow sphere of indivisible rule to philosophy, serves rather to protect it from the destructive influences of scepticism, relativism and irrationalism than to place it on a pedestal. However, it is hermeneutic narratives that are the most popular (and at the same time conservative): philosophy as an exercise of authentic thought, guided by the desire to understand the world, tradition, humankind, the Other, to uncover what is hidden and pose questions in places where everything appears to be obvious. Yet this does not mean making radical cognitive claims or disseminating the ideas of a metaphysical and humanist ideology, but rather simply attachment to philosophy as a symbol.

The academic forms of talking about philosophy and the contents of philosophical discourse have come closer to what philosophers have to say to each

And this is the same as the fact that the concept of philosophy constitutes the sphere of what is philosophical, which, as we saw, is used in the discourse of legitimisation of philosophy or the discourse of the system (as a sovereign and autocratic domain). Cf. e.g. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), p. cxxxix.

other in private conversations in which they discuss the practice and everyday aspects of their work. And yet it is this distancing of the self-image of philosophy as an image of practice (one reads, writes articles, gives lessons, earns degrees, publishes, goes to conferences...) from the contents and claims of philosophical discourses that is the basis of the nihilistic "so what?". Today, the life of concepts and internal dynamics of philosophical discourses no longer preoccupies and enslaves the philosopher as it once did, no longer consumes her in the detail of conceptual relationships that need to be brought together in a synthetic theory or bent to fit a favourite thesis. It seems that today's philosopher is more independent and in more control of her text and craft. She can therefore perceive her actions as an experience with diverse goals and various connections to other types of experience, including literature and politics. If our work sometimes gives the impression of being non-stop reading, writing and waffling, we can extend this sense to the whole of human experience. Since the self-image of philosophy is no longer marked by the sense of superiority and simultaneously inferiority – i.e. ambivalence – then surely we can say that we have made progress, and as philosophers are more at home, and philosophy for us is now to a lesser degree deferred philosophy.

Philosophy's self-image becomes more tangible in the ideas and narratives of individual philosophers regarding philosophical life, their own work, philosophy itself, its key issues and figures: philosophy is our writing and reading, it is Plato and Hegel, it is our department, it is metaphysics and ethics, the question of the subject and lessons with students. Inherent in the concept of the self-image is the idea expressing the need to obtain unity of meaning – bring together everything that is said about the various manifestations of philosophical life.

The philosophy of reflection, and great idealistic discourses, sought to attain full theoretical self-knowledge in philosophy. Heuristics, meanwhile, would like to raise the self-image of philosophy to the level of a series of statements of theoretical significance that are of direct interest to philosophy. If this is achievable, the only reason is that it is already almost done – at least in terms of philosophy as a whole. Contemporary heuristic habituality is now so flexible, and the theoretical means, knowledge and philosophical movement so rich, that we can find everything somewhere – each topic and aspect, practically every configuration of associated elements from the full gamut of philosophical discourses. We can also read a book about anything – this is a new quality in science, but also a new heuristic situation in philosophy. It is hard to see it as anything other than progress. But it is also a philosophical macrocosmos and an abstract quality of a whole that we cannot possibly experience, but only conjecture. By conceptualising heuristic

habituality and the flexibility it has gained, heuristics could help to reflect this global success of philosophy in the microcosmoses of philosophical movements, schools and minds.

1.7 The Possibility of a Heuristics of Philosophical Life

The question of the extent to which all that we have been discussing can be systematised in a way that would have a theoretical and practical influence on philosophy is one about the possibility of heuristics as study of philosophical life, heuristic habits, and philosophy's self-image.

To a greater degree than other forms of experience, philosophical life conceptualises itself, and it is more about theorising. Its theoretical object is views and theses to which it must assume a position and which it must discuss. Anything that is natural, for example psychological, should, one would assume, be studied psychologically, and anything theoretical should be studied purely theoretically. Yet the heuristic maxim of selecting the research tools for the subject is insufficient, as it does not permit us to conceive the unity of what appears or seeks to appear as one thing, that is philosophical life. Respect for the theoretical nature of what is simply philosophy in philosophical life prevents us from using genealogical or constitutional studies of the processes and motivations linking more base and natural things and the meanings constructed on top of them, including philosophical theories. It is true that constitutional studies, which seek to infer a theoretical sphere from philosophical daily lives and the philosopher's social and communicative competencies, would probably be able to consider the autonomy of such theories, but this would have to be either a phenomenologically described outline of this autonomy, or a transcendently guaranteed importance of something theoretical. However, the theoretical sphere would not be reached on the appropriate path – that of conceptual argument – and therefore it would be separated from the sum of such constitutional studies of philosophical life. It might seem, meanwhile, that the fundamental task of a philosopher facing the question of the position of philosophical life towards philosophical results (matter) is to describe the diversity and multi-faceted character of the factors at play. Naive naturalism and totalising on-sidedness, subjecting philosophical life to the pattern of the theory imposed on it (genealogical, for instance) would be juxtaposed with study of local structures and relationships locally involved in specific conceptual and discursive resources undertaken unintentionally, and actually contrary to the intention of constructing a uniform hierarchy and establishing a total structure – a counterpart to the metanarrative of the history of philosophy as history of the soul. This would give us a set of structuralist or

pragmatic research and analyses of some inconsistency, yet one that (in terms of object and style) would be methodically differentiated.

This possible type of heuresis in studies of philosophical life comes close to approximating our expectations of heuristics. Firstly, it goes beyond the simple heuristic model of a uniform theory or conception, and as such could fulfil that aspiration of heuristics that is the possibility of igniting interest and proving useful for everyone, and not solely for philosophers involved in the conceptual sphere and the type of heuresis that a particular theory uses. Secondly, the heuristic idea of pragmatic and structural research corresponds to what seems important – and increasingly so – in philosophy’s self-knowledge – it is based on affirmation of diversity. This means that philosophical life in practice would be harmonised with its object, helping philosophy’s self-knowledge to develop in the direction in which it is itself aiming. Touching on theoretical matter, such as views on the essence of philosophy, this practice would be discourse analysis, the science of philosophical epistemes, as Foucault says; regarding more natural spheres such as that of social behaviours, acts of speech, psychological motivations, it might for example take the form of pragmatic studies of heuristic habituality. Thirdly and lastly, if the heuresis of the affirmation of plurality (difference) were to develop to become radically structuralist, studies on philosophical life could proceed in accordance with the Derridean project of “continuing the parallel line”. That is to say that everything in philosophical life – in philosophical self-knowledge, philosophy’s self-image, discourses about the essence of philosophy – is problematic and incoherent and would be reflected or experienced within structuralist research as its own incoherence. This would make it remarkably visual without all-consuming reflection – a valuable quality in heuristic thought.

It would be equally worthwhile to understand the courses of the dialectics of philosophical self-knowledge (since philosophy’s self-image is indeed characterised by a dialectical dynamic), and also to make a hermeneutical enquiry as to how philosophers understand themselves. Can the heuristics of philosophical life be something other than the sum of these, and perhaps also other approaches?

Let us note that the idea of the plurality of approaches and their potential sum consisting of multifaceted knowledge is a heuristic idea, which heuristics makes its object. The forms of heuresis we have mentioned (heuresis of the constitution and hermeneutic heuresis) are also based on the idea of the thing itself, to which a theory should refer, and to the idea of an anticipated result of theoretical work in the form of a uniform theory. We may enquire as to the relations between various approaches, the limits of their applicability and the communicative possibilities between them. This would be a question about their configurations and

relationships, and therefore one asked from the position of one of the heuristic ideas which the task of theory sees in delivering a certain configuration and order. We may also ask which factors decide on the fact that in a given case we deal with a separate type of heuristics. Is the given discourse connected to some prominent type of argument, element of a method, an *idée fixe* or a particular thesis or premise?

We can go on asking such questions, creating a theoretical sphere of a heuristic character of reflection, self-thematisation, dialectics and discourse analysis. But we should not assume that the most general description of this theoretical field might be a syncretic combination of several views. The same role could be played equally well by dialecticality or heuristic self-knowledge. It is a similar case if we look at heuristics from the point of view of its interest in philosophical life – the fact that various perspectives are vying to appear simultaneously does not mean that everything it can be is the sum of them. In fact, this would be impossible, as “appearing at the same time” in the case of mutually connected theoretical approaches does not mean appearing “alongside each other”. We should therefore say, assuming the position of the general point of view, that like no other form of philosophical study, heuristics intends to make use of the accomplishments of many theoretical approaches, each of which is characterised by its own conceptual scheme and universalistic claims.

Does this mean a desire for heuristics to be the alpha and omega, meta-wisdom and a universal philosophical understanding? Such an aspiration would be inordinately naive, although at the same time it would afford respect to such heuristic maxims as “various aspects of the issue must be considered” or “it is good to have an idea of various approaches to the problem”. We can go as far as to say that heuristics grows out of the fear of naivety (like many old and contemporary philosophical projects – from the critique of reason to the archaeology of knowledge). Yet is it not the case that everything that the position of general heuristic habits allows us to say to refer to the naivety of dreaming about universality is maxims like “absolute meta-theory is impossible” and “an absolute and premiseless position is impossible”? These, surely, are just echoes of hermeneutic thought, which in our time creates the self-image of philosophy and the heuristic consciousness of philosophers. Heuristics does not assume the idea of premiselessness or the “absolute position” (at least as its objective – it must consider it as a heuristic idea), but to date there has been no examination of the question of the possibility of a multifaceted insight into the theoretical and linguistic means of discursive dealing with the multitude of conceptual trails as a philosophical problem. This is because it clearly does not occupy a theoretically

privileged position with regard to the philosophical discourses to which it refers, and studies of this problem must themselves refer to the issues which these discourses present. Therefore, if heuristics undertakes such a venture, it is with the prior assumption that it will not be solely or especially a project of examining the possibility of multifaceted exploitation of the resources of philosophy for its own use, but that it must accept other philosophical problems as its own. One of these is already visible: how does it occur that various conceptualisations – for example questions about the method of philosophy, starting point, or nature of being compete with each other, and what is the origin of the claims they each exert to dominate the others? However, if heuristics is to provide theoretical tools for harnessing plurality in philosophy, some kind of meta-method, then we must accept that it fits the rationalistic model of heuristics of control, enveloped in the dialectic of knowledge and power. Incidentally, it is from these interests that we derive the name “philosophical heuristics”, which renders the rationalistic idea of conceptualisation (in the form of norms and regulations) of creative processes with the objective of controlling, reproducing and reconstructing them in the form of application of a method.

A universal insight into philosophy in order to pursue it better – this objective is somewhat different, but certainly similar to that which appears to guide heuristics as the heuristics of philosophical life. The latter is also about gaining an insight, but its matter is not only that which is theoretical and what special processes can render thus (as traditional heuristics aimed to turn psychological laws into methodology), but also everything that our knowledge says is related to philosophy. We call this philosophical life. This includes the way in which it takes place and what constitutes a result in it – the philosophical matter. Philosophical life as reflective life delivers theories, but only part of this theory refers to it thematically, such as knowledge about the concept of philosophy. Meanwhile, only part of what constitutes (at least relatively and temporarily) the result of philosophical life (the philosophical matter) aspires to the role of theory or actually plays this role. Philosophy as self-knowledge strives to accord a theoretical status to everything that can be important for it, which is why if various heuristic habits are manifested in the form of statements and maxims that do not yet qualify to be deemed a philosophical position, the role of heuristics – elevating these customs to the status of philosophy – is a normal objective of philosophical self-knowledge. But it is not the whole of the philosophical matter that results from philosophical life when it refers to itself. Self-knowledge is a concept of the philosophy of reflection that in many cases distorts the description of the practice of philosophy.

The notion of philosophy's self-image seeks to avoid yielding exclusively to the heuristic model of speculatively attaining self-knowledge of reason.

Of course, along with what philosophy has to say theoretically about itself, its self-image also contains what philosophers say about philosophy as their own practice – not necessarily in a theoretical fashion and not necessarily specifically on the subject of philosophy itself – as well as what they do *not* say (because they do not want to or cannot).

It might seem that the notion of self-image is a sociological one, although its roots are in everyday experience. In this case, we would discover the self-image by studying initial theorising on philosophy in everyday philosophical life, such as the constitutive processes developing from the heuristic habits as “what everybody knows” to a systematic theory of philosophy. Such research would no doubt be interesting for heuristics, but it would be insufficient. Not only does a constitutive reconstruction assume a rather special phenomenological heuristic perspective, but it is also heuristically dependent on the division into the theoretical and that which is its source, its constitutive basis, and more profoundly, the division between the natural (or naturalistic) and the special, resulting from the assumption of a certain cognitive position. In philosophy's self-image, its theoretical or atheoretical nature by no means must be evident, and in its expressions philosophy does not have to appear explicitly as a topic. Theoretical nature and thematisation are domains of reflection, while the practice in which the self-image arises is not just a practice of reflection, but also one of expression, including that of the nihilistic type. Aspects in the self-image of philosophy that are theoretical and those that are thematic (on the theme of philosophy) are integral parts of it. Yet this is not because they are arrived at through speculation or constituted in the philosophical *Lebenswelt*, but rather because nothing in the concept of the self-image divides the theoretical from the pre- or atheoretical and “natural”.

What, then, is heuristics to do with its self-image – describe its various forms and their links phenomenologically, or propose its own image of philosophy? Both are no doubt useful tasks. An important heuristic feature that we would like to give to heuristics as the heuristics of philosophical life dealing with philosophy's self-image is “reconstructing the co-experiencing” of philosophical life that produces the self-image. If it is so important in philosophical practice to talk about philosophy, then when we talk about the self-image we must also undertake the topic and concept of philosophy. In discovering the role of this concept in shaping the self-image as a regulative role, we should analogously conceive the function of the notion of heuristics – as a regulative function in

studies intended to be heuristic. Meanwhile, since we perceive a tendency to affirmation of plurality and pragmatic inclinations in philosophy's self-image, in heuristics we should also take up the topic of its possibly satisfying pragmatic demands. If the self-image is formed dialectically, we should ask in what sense heuristics should be dialectical thinking. Co-experiencing therefore entails not simple objective reference to philosophical life, but adopting it as "property" – as something directly significant for the self-image of heuristics. The heuristics of philosophical life as the heuristics of philosophy's self-image must become the self-image of heuristics, while in heuristics the notion of heuristics should fulfil a similar regulative function to the notion of philosophy in philosophy, i.e. also gaining content in the practice of its use. For this reason, in introducing the heuristics of philosophical life in this chapter – everything conceptually and terminologically characteristic of heuristics – we were merely trying to append everything that is conceptually and terminologically characteristic of heuristics as a commentary or digression to discourses which do not yet need anything other than their own conceptual resources. In fact, studies of the heuristics of philosophical life are always pragmatic, hermeneutic, structuralist studies etc.; what is "added" in them (not necessarily as additional reflection) is reproduction of the self-image of philosophy in that of heuristics. It is this, in a preliminary and imperfect way, that is taking place in this discourse. It contains philosophy creating its self-image, searching for unity and self-knowledge through reflection, making regulative use of its own concept, but also accepting its plurality; philosophy engaging in self-apology and self-destruction at once. At the same time, it contains heuristics seeking its identity and meaning, presented as a uniform theoretical enterprise but at the same time hoping to preserve what is valuable in various forms of heuresis. This kind of heuristics can be of use to philosophy, even though it is not entirely safe from getting caught up in self-thematisation and a certain distraction resulting from boarding trains of philosophical thought directed by different heuristic rules.

The heuristics of philosophical life must make its "how" from the whole of philosophical matter, and itself be the new "what" – the altered form which philosophers will be able to use as a new "how". This is how the dialectical theme appears in the self-knowledge of heuristics as heuristics of philosophical life, in which it is the "how" and "what" of philosophy. As in any dialectic, here too some form of consciousness is to attain a higher level of self-knowledge. In this case, this is a heuristic consciousness appearing in the social form of a custom and in marginal and aphoristic philosophical statements, and the self-image of philosophy, still split into official narratives and private talking about philosophy.

It is probably easiest to recognise the dialectical nature of heuristics, as the heuristic project of self-knowledge which the dialectic comes under is, so to speak, philosophy's daily bread. Dialectical heuristics means studying all mediations of philosophical matter, the dialectic of the "how" and "what" of philosophy. It must give those elements of philosophy's self-image that have previously faced discrimination or been concealed in the private sphere the rights due to philosophical thinking. The dialectical model of heuristic studies should also – like pragmatic thinking or the general point of view – guarantee the connection between what is natural (psychological or sociological), and therefore deprecated, and what is purely theoretical, and already recognised as philosophy's own matter.

Heuristics as a dialectic must comprehend itself dialectically, i.e. as processing and self-knowledge, output for thinking and for the ability to think, rather than as knowledge contained in statements that can have validity outside of the discourses (contexts) to which they belong. Co-experience of philosophy's self-image, which is incoherent and replete with tensions and differences in the state of self-knowledge, must be dialectical. It cannot, therefore, have a conclusion, in the sense of the last word. And all the more this chapter of the book cannot have a conclusion, as it is only a small step towards the specificity of the heuristics of philosophical life. Where, then, might we expect the researcher to make a declaration, venture a thesis? A declaration or thesis is the *modus* given to a statement within a certain structure: where a certain subject is studied, there is also a thesis. It would be a heuristic error stemming from rebellion (rather than criticism) against heuristic habits if we were to deny heuristics the right to its own research aiming for declarations and theses.

Above all, heuristics must make use of what already exists: the various forms of heuresis, and especially those in which the way discourse goes on is subject to reflection. For this reason too, heuristic studies will naturally connect to various philosophical studies, leaving an imprint of belonging to heuristics on them only in the form of their mutual references, heuristic commentary, and repetition of certain concepts. As we saw, such studies with a heuristic stamp are the pragmatics of philosophical life, its phenomenology and hermeneutics (as a philosophical *Lebenswelt*), the socio-psychology of the philosophical community, ethnomethodology referring to heuristic habits as the "common knowledge of philosophers", the history of the notion of philosophy, and the theory of legitimising and delegitimising (critical) discourses. We are entitled to place these fields together and recognise the similarity of their theoretical objectives. But we also obtain something more from the constant work of the mutual connections

between them all: their shared development, which occurs in a mediation of which heuristics is to be the medium or an element – to use a Hegelian term. In this way, the obstacle posed in the heuristic maxim that legitimises a detailed area of research, i.e. in saying that it is (should be) “autonomous” or “has its area of competence” can be overcome, and the autonomisation involved in appropriating some research area can be replaced by a consciously developed ability to work together and discuss with various fields of philosophical thinking.

Only by understanding that the heuresis of “research within a certain field” means for heuristics above all mediation, and that these fields always have their names under which they should remain, do we also understand an important fact. Heuristics’ own matter can only be an elaboration and orientation owing to the synthetic and mediatory objectives of the heuristics of what appears in the living course of various philosophical discourses as the imprint of heuristic reflection, and subsequently as heuristic discourse intentionally attached to it.

In the heuristics of philosophical life, however, based on our deliberations here, we can conclude (perhaps wrongly) that uniquely heuristic studies should be considered as the theory of philosophy’s self-image and criticism of heuristic habits. These concepts are uniquely heuristic in two ways. Firstly, they allow both naturalistic (sociological or psychological) connotations and purely theoretical ones (for example in the sense of the conception of philosophy or statements about its methods), without making claims at synthesis or “encompassing everything”. Secondly, they make it easier to study philosophical life from the angle of how it conceptualises itself. Yet the theory of philosophy’s self-image is only a heuristic framework, a way of organising studies, which after all retain their own character. These might include research on the way in which the self-image of philosophy is established and transformed into philosophical theory, studies on the history and differentiation of the self-image, the function of the notion of philosophy and the word “philosophy” in the self-image, examination of various forms of “deferral” of philosophy and the history of the quest for “true philosophy”, tracing the process and discourses which have produced the spheres of what is theoretical, what constitutes philosophy’s own matter and the processes in which it is regained for philosophy, assimilated into its interests and discourses and concepts previously rejected by philosophy are made available to it. Above all, though, criticism of heuristic habits brings them into the open, and subsequently testing the limits of their validity and the influence that they – often entirely unnoticed by us – exert on philosophical discourse. This does not mean just criticism of the idols of the mind or studying philosophical statements as acts of speech and communicative practices, although of

course both these would be useful procedures. First, we would probably have to describe heuristic habituality – after all a diverse and inconsistent area: what “is known”, “is said”, “is thought” about philosophers’ methods and professional lives, the rules and criteria for evaluation of philosophical research, the principles of debate and criticism; what is open and official here and what is concealed and private; what occurs in the form of expression of professional experience and what takes the form of a philosophical (methodological, hermeneutic) thesis; what is trivial and repeated out of habit, and what is theoretically original and has its own academic value; what is controversial and what is natural and accepted without criticism; what is an authentic belief and what just a cliché, means of persuasion and eristic tool. Only this kind of description permits us to pose the question of the degree to which philosophical statements make use of heuristic habits and reflection on heuristic habituality becomes philosophical matter (theory), contributing to philosophy’s self-knowledge. Studies of this sort would no doubt enrich the rhetoric and theory of the arguments, and give them more of the heuristic self-knowledge that by their very nature they are searching for; they would help to create heuristics conceived as a theoretical commentary both on what has in heuristic habituality been raised to the level of theory, and on what has not previously been taken into account by this theory. However, it is in heuristic habits that the self-image of philosophy is largely expressed, and this is why studying them can only be separated from the heuristics of philosophical life in an abstract and typological fashion.

If we have obtained some tentative clarity as to the way in which heuristics divides into a range of philosophical studies, albeit without being exhausted by them and without projecting for itself the role of an ordinary meta-discourse aiming at synthesis, then it will also be evident why the next stage of this introduction to the question of philosophical heuristics will not be an exposition of its own matter. Instead, it will expose the various forms of heuristic sensitivity and advanced heuristic reflection in the general projects and types of philosophical thinking which heuristics must accept as its source and which it is to serve, pointing to their mutual links, as well perhaps as the possibilities of transgressing some of their limitations.

2. Methodological Thinking

Fundamental to thinking about method is the pragmatic situational presentation which we shall designate as a certain heuristic idea. A person (researcher, scholar, philosopher) equipped with senses, some knowledge and skills, designates a certain cognitive objective (or cognising as an objective) and deliberates how to attain it. The answer to this question remains at the level of abstract reflection, i.e. a metatheoretical one, and designates the direction of thought, which we call methodological.

The situation envisaged in this way has a practical side – as a situation of a cognising subject facing a certain task – and a theoretical one – as a situation demanding a theoretical solution. There are therefore two aspects to methodological thinking: reflexive, meaning that in reflection on cognition we try to conceive it and organise it according to its possible forms; and pragmatic, which gives reflection the task of providing an applicable result in cognitive practice. Furthermore, this starting situation is circular in nature (goals of cognition – new truths and explanations – become part of the scholar's intellectual toolkit, to be used in his further work), and from it there must be inevitable consequences for methodological thinking, like the participation of dialectical themes in the discourse and the tendency to shift to forms of pragmatic and even hermeneutic thinking.

2.1 The Idea of Logic

Before Aristotle, there was probably no clear distinction between the skill (technique or art) of carrying out a discourse and a conversation as a certain personal competence, and methods of acquiring cognition that could be applied to various cases. The concepts of cognition, speech, discourse and reasoning were not differentiated, as they were encompassed by one concept – logos. Indeed, first came the method, and only later the concept. Initially, the method was constituted by certain forms and tracks of the discourse recognised and practised by sophists. The knowledge on them that accumulated with time was the first form of logical, rhetorical and pedagogical knowledge, and thus the first form of heuristic reflection. Only later would it branch into rhetoric and the forms of methodological thinking. The process in which this took place was one of criticism and differentiation, specifically between good and bad (sophistic) forms of discourse. Thanks to Socrates, and later Plato, philosophy appropriated the brilliant invention of geometry – the concept of proof. At the same time, the first

concept that can be regarded as one of a certain method – i.e. that of dialectics – was formed. And it is this attempt to develop dialectics as a well-ordered method making it possible to obtain cognition in an effective and error-proof manner (or to understand the truth expressible in propositions) that can be viewed as the first great programme of methodological thinking. This was no doubt the idea behind Aristotle's teaching on syllogisms.¹⁸

The observation that some forms of reasoning are erroneous and others correct, and that this is connected to the relationship of the semantic ranges of the terms used in them, was a great discovery for ancient Greek philosophy. It was probably Aristotle himself who was responsible for the idea of framing deductions in the reliable divisions based on the principle of contradiction (in strict terms, and contrary to the tradition of dialectical ideas). This led to logic, which in fact, despite the best attempts of logicians, has in the history of philosophy not always served as a heuristic tool for eking out new truths on the basis of accepted premises, or as a criterion for assessment of the value of reasoning. It has, though, been of much importance as a certain heuristic idea directing various theoretical projects in philosophy, and even as the idea of a certain totality (for example of the space of logical propositions) capable of assuming the function of the element of philosophical thinking per se.

Logical thinking is a form of methodological thinking, although if we understand these terms differently the relationship is reversed. But let us note that what appears first is the heuristic notion of putting cognition in some sort of order and squeezing it into reproducible models, and only after this comes the study of these that is logic in the broadest terms. The formalism of methodological thinking is evident here: in the attempt to make discursive cognition simpler, and perhaps even to find something akin to a philosopher's stone changing everything into the truth, we lose touch with concrete contents (reducing them to a few categories which in formal logic with time take on a purely syntactic sense) in the search for forms of discourse alone. However, using them in in any way in the form of deduction or proof applying specific substitute terms or propositions appears in the light of this heuristic idea as a rather unnecessary addition, pure craft. Its result also seems insignificant, rather like a craftsman's copies of original

18 Here I am following the opinion of Kazimierz Leśniak expressed in his introduction to Aristotle's *Analytics* from his translation of the complete works of Aristotle (*Dzieła wszystkie*, Warszawa 1990, vol. 1, pp. 90–126). On the subject of the connection of the idea of logic to dialectics in the Platonic sense see also Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Idea of Hegel's Logic", in Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 75–99.

works of art. This is the source in science of the juxtaposition of reflexive and formal knowledge, the latter being equipped with formal tools permitting new truths to be attained as well as something like a processed form of ancient wisdom – purely positive knowledge.

The development of the idea of logic was a long process, and not all intuitions were expressed immediately. The idea of pure formalism as the essence of logic, today present in particular in the concept of formal logic, was alien to Aristotle, and he no doubt would not have agreed with it. The history of this idea is usually presented as being the evaluation of the concept of the axiom. This, it is asserted with some satisfaction, was conceived in the history of logic in increasingly less metaphysical and more formal-syntactic terms. The most significant idea, though, is the increasingly established one of logic as a machine – an automatic system manufacturing one thesis after another. Replacing the invention and ingenuity of reason with the automatism of formal logic and deduction is a heuristic notion which gives rise to more detailed ideas of the formalisation of logic: the idea of logical calculus and transformations as symbolic transformations. For philosophers attached to the heuristic notion that a logic system can be applied as a method for obtaining positive truths (by replacing logical variables – as we might say today – with empirical terms), the idea of formalism culminated in the notion of *mathesis universalis*. A related idea is that of complete determination in the world. Although the paradoxes to which these concepts lead ensured that they both played a major role in philosophy, most philosophers treated them as a kind of exaggeration or fantasy; what was in fact believed in was the active and positive (in contrast to the mechanical-logical) nature of changes in the world based on the will of God, the self and spirit. It was Gödel's discovery that separated the competences of mathematical logic from its presumed ontological applications. In philosophy it is self-evident, and something which few in history would dispute, that not every truth can be deduced from axioms – either in mathematics, or even more in the logical systems with claims to provide a structural description of certain aspects of the world. Yet this would not be so obvious for the philosophers and mathematicians who in spite of everything believed (this is after all a question of belief) in a certain evocative heuristic idea: the former in some form of *mathesis universalis*, and the latter in some kind of formalisation of mathematics. After the breakthrough of Gödel's claim about the completeness of systems, logic had at last found its own identity as a science, essentially ridding itself of its ontological dreamers awaiting new products of formal logic “applicable” in philosophy. Traces of thinking in categories of “applicability”

remained in logical terminology with the use of terms like “semantics” and “semantic model”, but today they are only formal expressions.¹⁹

This does not mean, however, that there is and can be no such thing as philosophical logic, understood as the science of sentences and propositions, predicates and reasoning, categories, errors in reasoning and in the meaning of grammatical forms for the correctness of discourse. And this is what Aristotle must have had in mind. Yet the heuristic idea behind logic viewed in this way, although it also derives from formalist reflection, is much less radical, and simply entails providing the tools to facilitate correct discourse. Neither Aristotle nor most later logicians were seeking to replace creative philosophical discourse with some instrument with which they could automatically produce truths – a philosophical algorithm. However, the idea of the *organon* is not entirely neutral for research work, in which it could be used when needed, as a craftsman uses a tool. It is, after all, a form of methodological thinking which requires a methodical approach, and logic as *organon* together with application of logic as this methodical approach introduce a pragmatic situation in which the philosopher becomes a processor of previous knowledge who expands it with new truths; for wherever we imagine tools we also imagine processing and production. If the formalist way of thinking introduced by logic leads to an opposition of positive knowledge and true philosophical knowledge, then the form taken by the ordered research process demanded in the ideal of the *organon* must be one not of simple, positive deduction, but of reflection, in which that which is methodically worked on provides not so much new information and premises for further reasoning

19 In addition to this, though, there are attempts at creating logical calculations which are supposed to correspond to various forms of statements on the state of affairs, such as deontic logic or temporal logic (as well as in a way vice versa: attempts at using formal tools to conduct precise analysis of philosophical statements). Although there is a metaphysical intention behind this, which, as we say, logic has rid itself of, its meaning weakens in favour of the technical-formal aspect of these calculations, which is the actual object of logicians' interest. In any case, philosophy has inspired the development of various non-classical systems in logic, which partly illustrates the division in the logician community, surprising given the perfection of this field. There is a fairly clear split between those logicians who came from philosophy and those who came from mathematics. The latter feel an association with various narrative forms of doing logic, such as practical or informal logic, or issues linking logic and philosophy. The latter, meanwhile, are generally disinclined to informal ways of talking about logic, and essentially view themselves as mathematicians – researchers of the foundations of mathematics. Regulation of the relations between these groups is insufficient, which to some extent harms the discipline's self-knowledge.

as more profound understanding and wisdom. Therefore, when methodological thinking guided by the idea of application of logical tools (*organon*) to concrete starting knowledge and premises seeks to take a position on this pragmatic cycle (subject equipped with certain knowledge – methodical cognition – broadening knowledge), it postulates reducing the course of philosophical discourse to the first principles, in contrast to unending deduction (or dialectics) or *regressus in infinitum*. Aristotle emphasised this opposition of futile formalism, which does not find ultimate support for knowledge and is therefore heuristically useless (contrary to the actual intention of establishing correct forms of reasoning as tools facilitating cognition) with scientific cognition, which always returns to the first principles. The huge significance of this form of methodological thinking for the way in which philosophy is done in general is illustrated by some of the first words of Thomas Aquinas' *Truth (De Veritate)*: "When investigating the nature of anything, one should make the same kind of analysis as he makes when he reduces a proposition to certain self-evident principles. Otherwise, both types of knowledge will become involved in an infinite regress, and science and our knowledge of things will perish."²⁰

The heuristic device of reduction to the first principles²¹ and the scholastic notion of research progression as delivering theses and proof for them are probably the clearest results that logical thought brought to philosophy. They confirmed the Platonic conception of absolute truth (with correct reasoning according to logical models there can be no doubt), in which many once believed unreservedly. This also resulted in the canonisation of philosophical thinking characteristic of scholasticism, given a form that ossified the typical dialectical process of discourse and discussion and containing a justified thesis, flawed counterarguments, correct proof and explanation of the errors in the counterarguments. In

20 Thomas Aquinas, *Truth* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2008).

21 According to the modern concept of a principle, it must be what is at the basis, something initial, which is why it seems that returning to the principles is in a way an inconclusive act. In ancient Greek philosophy, on the other hand, and partly in scholasticism too, the emphasis in the concept of principle was more on its momentousness and importance. A principle – *arche* – could therefore occur both as a beginning and as an end and goal; the linear notion of discourse and the related principle as basis was formed over a long time, and became dominant only in the modern era. A good allusion to understand the meaning of the Greek concept of *arche* might be the semantic family of the word "issue", meaning both a question and problem (beginning) and the result and effect (end). An instructive and erudite aid in understanding the various meanings of *arche* is Władysław Stróżewski's article "Pytania o Arche" ("Questions about Arche"), *Res Facta* 1977, no. 8, pp. 21–44.

fact, the form of the Aquinian question, which could also seem neutral to the content of the discourse, proved to be too narrow and rigorous for philosophers. Yet methodological thinking as recognition of logic as a tool for mastering an unrestrained dialectic shaped the heuristic habituality and provided heuristic postulates for many centuries. The most universal of these habits, doggedly sustained despite its incongruity with the practice of philosophical discourse, is the custom of presenting philosophical ideas and discourses as having Platonic truthness and scholastic correctness, or at least being reducible to this state.

2.2 Philosophical Logic

Methodological thinking taking the form of philosophical logic has its metaphysical consequences, which mostly result from the tendency to attribute an ontological structure to the world corresponding to grammatical categories developed as logical categories in formal and philosophical logic. The latter sometimes even appears as ontology (or at least the division is unclear). Doing philosophy as logic suggest that we should deem to be fundamental such ontological structures as the subject of a characteristic – characteristic, individual and set, part – whole, described in the logic of sets and names. Philosophical logic also makes a major contribution to the epic of philosophy of reflection, which made various types of conversions of the “object of philosophy” (e.g. “being”) to that in which it mediates (e.g. “acts of consciousness” or “language”). In its logical version, methodological reflection placed between the subject and the world a world of formal signs and rules, thus contributing on the one hand to mediating the category of being in categories of proposition and on the other to the contemporary linguistic turn.

Nonetheless, the idea of philosophical logic does not contain any metaphysical orientation. In fact, it arises from the hope that anything formal that derives from reflection on the form of cognition will serve solely as a tool and means of ordering, and thus be heuristically neutral regarding the content of the cognition. This hope is rooted in a deeper heuristic idea, namely that of discourse unencumbered by what goes before it and is external, i.e. the idea of isolation of the discourse, which is thus able to be formed as a complete, perfect and reflexive whole. In the history of logical thinking, this idea appears as that of premiselessness, and generally in philosophy as the idea of non-dogmatism. But the heuristic ideals that lead to this kind of postulate are much simpler and more natural: since we think and cognise, then it is better to do so in a systematic way and to master this process; since we make mistakes, then it is better to learn to avoid them; since we discuss things and assume a position in various

questions, it is better to learn the general principles of forming a proposition. These might be the elementary forms of heuristic reflection that are at the basis of methodological thinking, which has taken forms including that of logic. Confirmation of this is given by the reformers of philosophical logic, Arnauld and Nicole, who begin their work by writing, “Nothing is more praiseworthy than good sense and mental accuracy in discerning the true and the false. All the other mental qualities have limited uses [...] mental accuracy is infinitely more important than all the speculative knowledge to be attained by the truest and most reliable sciences. This should move wise persons to engage in speculation only to the extent that it serves this purpose, to make it merely the test and not the main use of their mental powers.”²² “(...) People are not born to spend their time measuring lines, examining the relations between angles, or contemplating different motions of matter. (...) But they are obligated to be just, fair, and judicious in all their speech, their actions, and the business they conduct.”²³ “(...) we thought it would be generally useful to take from [logic] what is most helpful for educating our judgment. This is properly speaking the plan proposed in this work, along with several new reflections that came to mind while we were writing, which make up the largest and perhaps the most valuable part.”²⁴ What the logicians have to say here is very characteristic, and demonstrates the simplicity of the heuristic idea of methodological thinking: to learn to think, and as a result possess potential knowledge. However, this heuristic reflection also detaches us from the concreteness of learning, reducing it to technical performance of specific procedures, and leads to a notion of purely positive knowledge that is not worth the effort. But does logic really fulfil the hopes invested in it, and result in a programme of heuristic reflection? Like the reformers of logic at the end of the Middle Ages, Arnauld and Nicole believed this was a matter of reform, of finding more useful systems than Aristotle’s syllogisms – a beautiful system, but a limited one. Yet their hope proved to be a vain one, and the heuristic idea to be realised in fact had to be fulfilled ad hoc: they added, as they write, “several new reflections”. These reflections are in fact various comments and observations on the practice of philosophising, the practice of discourse, heuristic habits – in short, heuristic comments that did not fit into the logical discourse. The obstacle was the formalism of logic, which made it difficult to come close to the living course of cognition and gain practice in the “art of thinking”; the idea of mastering one’s tool is

22 Antoine Arnauld and Pierre Nicole, *Logic Or the Art of Thinking* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), p. 5.

23 Ibidem.

24 Ibidem, p. 9.

joined with that of facilitating creative cognitive work. Methodological thinking that puts forward the formalist maxim “Find out which method you can use to reach the truth fastest and most effectively, and then use that method” always finds itself eluded by the practical sense and objective of cognition.

2.3 The Heuristic Ideal of Method

Thinking about method is historically hard to separate from thinking about logic. They have almost always occurred together in philosophy, driven by the same heuristic idea to support and facilitate cognition by reflecting on it. What in general differentiates thinking about method from thinking about logic is the emphasis placed on the pragmatic aspect of cognition – interest in the actual course of research and the possibilities of accelerating acquisition of new knowledge, anticipating results, promoting invention, which logic could not give, as it was unable to go beyond the sphere of logical consequences as the only form of heuresis available to its means of description. Aristotle, whose entire oeuvre is imbued with heuristic reflection, opted for the path of logic and rhetoric (and *topoi*). But he did have his say on method, and this in a way that anticipated the process of pragmatism in the later history of thinking about method and foreseeing the danger of futile formalism and the illusion of the “metatheoretical perspective” from which one might expect cognition to be facilitated and made more critical.²⁵ He distinguished method as the use of syllogisms from possessing a method, which is the question of the practical ability to use the available means.²⁶ In this way, he initiated two lines of thinking about method: one, closely linked to and a complement to logic; and another, which connected method to the pragmatic subject of the “appropriate approach to the thing”, dependent on the object and essential involving a practical skill and research experience, something that can only partly be expressed in rules and supported by methodological directives. Incidentally, both these lines became intertwined in the history of philosophy, therefore leaning towards pragmatic thinking. The main difference

25 The words of Aristotle from Book 2 of the *Metaphysics* (<http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/metaphysics.2.ii.html>) were prophetic: “Hence one must be already trained to know how to take each sort of argument, since it is absurd to seek at the same time knowledge and the way of attaining knowledge; and it is not easy to get even one of the two.” These words, though, famous, did not succeed in stopping many.

26 Cf. Aristotle, “Topics”, [in:] *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, digital edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014).

between them is their varying heuristic intuitions and differing direction of reflection on the initial pragmatic situation of methodological thinking in general.

In a practical cognitive situation, logical-procedural thinking about method distinguishes two formal elements: the objective and the means leading to it. These are encapsulated reflexively as the task-issue (expressed in the question) and the procedure of execution, whose general form (for some types of cases) is to be revealed as the correct method.

The method-procedure may take a purely logical form, as in the case of the canons of Mill and the logistical methodology of Carnap, or it can also be expressed descriptively, like the conception of analysis and synthesis in Port-Royal methodology. In any case, though, it must be of practical use for science, describe how science arrives at new truths, and at the same time make it possible to reveal them methodically and repeatedly, being sure to “leave little to the acuteness and strength of wit, and indeed rather to level wit and intellect”, as Bacon put it. The repeatable and impersonal nature of method became one of the key elements constituting the positivist ideal of scientificity, but at the same time the element of thinking about method that distanced this ideal from the living practice of cognition, tending to ossify it in the canonical form of the logical model, or at best as a logicised discursive device. And this is what the history of logical-procedural thinking about method is: one of the attempts to “capture” (and thus canonise) the “pragmatic *residuum*” and “creative moment” present in every authentic cognition. A historical breakthrough was made by Descartes, who juxtaposed proof with discovering new truths, something in which we were to be instructed by science about method. Such divisions, which aim to separate what in heuresis is formal, structural, and visible *post factum* (for example in the order of a lecture) from what is authentically cognitive and represents novelty and progress, arrived in the history of thinking about method. It became clear that it is one matter to describe the actual methods which we follow in cognition, and another entirely to formulate methodological recommendations. It was expected that using material gathered from science and philosophy as a basis for critical conclusions would ensure that methodological thinking had the required instructiveness. As a consequence, the logical model of reasoning in science or philosophy and research practice, the order of reaching the cognitive objective (or truth, knowledge, discovery) was contrasted with the order of the lecture, explanation with discovery, science as activity with science as product etc. The development of this reflection was accompanied by various attempts at making the cognitive objective more “pragmatic” and by various conversions: of truth to proposition or true sentence, doctrine to theory, trueness to “satisfiability”.

Despite the number of conceptions, one fundamental heuristic feature remains: the drive for theoretical “removal” of the creative moments and canonisation (to a certain extent) of the real practice. This is present both in strictly philosophical tradition of thinking about method, which draws from logic and rhetoric and refers to philosophical and “humanist” “discourses”, and in the increasingly independent methodology of sciences. Only in modern times has meta-science become reconciled with the fact that its conclusions cannot have a great influence on scholars’ research practices. Meanwhile, the once rich tradition of logical-procedural thinking about method for the purposes of philosophy²⁷ is today in the doldrums as well as very much geared towards pragmatism. It includes “practical logic” – more of a didactic discipline than a scientific one, revived on many occasions throughout the centuries and up to now – and so-called informal logic – a developing (especially in Canada) type of pragmatic theory of discourse and argumentation. Incidentally, it is not easy to delineate a precise boundary and at the same time classify specific fields as “thinking about logic” or “logical-procedural thinking about method”. Such classification is also difficult for other studies within the methodology of sciences, on the possibilities of description, partly in the language of logic, of the rational procedures leading to formulation of hypotheses and even to new discoveries. These studies often take place under the name of heuristics, which illustrates the dominance of the heuristic notion of knowledge about research processes leading to new cognitive results – knowledge that could be exploited to make science more efficient.²⁸

27 This tradition was composed of projects undertaken repeatedly, supposed to lend a more synthetic form to the rather unorganised heuristic knowledge, which takes the shape of collections of diverse heuristic instructions, mostly in rhetoric textbooks and in *topoi* (called *ars inveniendi* even by Cicero). Bozano recalls some of these projects in § 3 of his *Wissenschaftslehre*: canonics, dialectics, topics, logics, heuristics, organon, di-aniology, ideology, science of the mind, science of thinking, science of reason, the path to the truth, the path to certainty, therapy of the mind. To this we can add, for example, Pascal’s art of persuasion and Baumgarten’s *logicam inventionis*. Bolzano’s programme also fits these ranks, although it was his intention to use in *Wissenschaftslehre* various previous attempts of this kind and combine them into a synthetic whole of detailed competences of various fields which, despite the desire to appear as a complete science of sciences, could in fact only be part of it: iatrics, the art of discovery, heuristics.

28 Cf. e.g. Elie Zahar, “Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Invention?”, *British Journal for the Philosophy of Sciences* [no date], no. 34, pp. 243–261; A. Musgrave, “Deductive Heuristics”, [in:] *Imre Lakatos and Theories of Scientific Change*, ed. Kostas Gavroglu (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishing, 1989), pp. 15–32. Above all, though, the concept of heuristics is of crucial significance in Lakatos’s philosophy of science.

At the same time, heuristics was developed as the science of research processes leading to the development of knowledge and techniques of a (creative) solution to scientific problems in the USSR, Bulgaria and Poland (e.g. Andrzej Góralński's work). These conceptions were served well by the Marxist atmosphere, full of belief in the possibility of multilateral rationalisation of life. Structural-strategic analyses (e.g. of cybernetics and systems theory), also fashionable until recently, were favourable to the belief in *ars inveniendi*.

2.4 The Cartesian Spirit

There is also another, more philosophical alternative to logical-procedural thinking about method. This is based on the form of heuristic reflection encapsulating the pragmatic starting situation of the “person intending to learn” in another way. In very general terms, the peculiarity of this thinking about method results from the fact that the benefit seen in it is not about discovering logical forms, procedures or strategies that can then be applied more or less automatically, but rather about understanding what the task the person is taking on essentially is in this unclear, open situation of the “will to learn”. The following maxim is decisive in this form of heuristic reflection: if you want to learn, you must become aware of what it is you expect from this cognition and learn to speak about it. In other words, the thinking here does not so much follow the course of the directive of “learn how to learn and apply this knowledge for better learning” so much as that of “find yourself in the learning/cognitive situation, understand it and start learning”. What we are looking for in this thinking is therefore not the procedure, but the initial cognitive situation, admittedly characterised by a certain self-knowledge (as a “cognitive starting point” and the most general “method” of this), but particularly about taking a certain stance, “finding oneself” in the cognitive situation and preparing for the task of learning.

Understanding method as something that one “possesses” like a skill or art, rather than as a tool, was the introduction to this way of thinking about method. And although we encounter this concept of method even in Aristotle, only with Descartes was the idea developed. This is connected to Descartes' introverted philosophical temperament and autobiographical style. *Discourse on the Method* is based on the heuristic reflection that it is good in cognition for order to reign, and for nothing that might be important to escape our attention.²⁹ Descartes'

29 “(...) adherence to the true order, and an exact enumeration of all the conditions of the things sought (...)” (Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, trans. John Veitch (New York: Cosimo, 2008), p. 23).

efforts involved producing a universal cognitive position to make it possible to realise these directives and avoid errors. His method is rather a “heuristic enlightenment”, the appropriate cognitive disposition (which is practical in character, and hard to attain), and not a procedure. Canonised methods take the weaker form of general heuristic directives, referring to scientific cognition: if awareness of something is always to an extent clarity about something, then obviousness must be a general criterion of the value of cognition; if cognition is always connected to analysis, then it should be pursued to the end.³⁰ Method as the result of reflection on a cognitive situation cannot permit any *primum* not presented in the reflection. Freeing oneself from all prejudices and dogmas then ascends to the level of fundamental directive. Conceived in radical terms, this leads to the postulate of finding and adopting the absolute starting point in cognition – an idea alien to earlier forms of heuristics and traditional thinking about method, based on the notion of cognition as a cycle finishing with the return to the first premises. There is essentially one cognitive process here, which leads to uniform and comprehensive knowledge.

The Cartesian reflection on the cognitive situation as a uniform task starting from a neutral (radically unbiased) and absolute starting point leads to three heuristic ideas of the beginning. In the discourse projecting the ideal form for the objective discourse to proceed, this is the self-justifying “primal statement” *cogito ergo sum*; in the discourse reflecting on the situation of learning it is designation of formal heuristic rules resulting from the essence of cognitivity; and finally in the reflection distinguishing the postulated cognitive ideal from the real cognitive situation it is the set of epochistic rules of “temporary morality”. We therefore have three complementary points of view on the possibility of undogmatic pursuit of science: the point of view of science itself, which demands the “first premises”; the epistemological view, from which the postulates are formed that science must accept if it is to be cognition; and the point of view of the scholar seeking to implement a programme of undogmatic science. The last of these, this “temporary morality”, exposes most fully the specific details of pragmatic Cartesian rationalism. For this is not, as it is sometimes interpreted, a rationalism of unrelenting consistency in not accepting anything without proof, or a rationalism of consistent doubt. These are only “discursive enclaves”, specific procedures implemented temporarily into the philosophical construction to ultimately yield to the fundamental pragmatic course of thinking. In this, meanwhile, rationality involves adopting a position of restraint and neutrality where proof-based

30 Cf. e.g. *ibidem*, p. 20 ff.

solutions cannot immediately be expected, and yet practical considerations mean that some kind of solutions are needed. As a result, assuming that it is more cautious and restrained to accept both that which is generally recognised and against which there are no clear arguments, and that which constitutes our “mental equipment” (as “innate ideas” – such as that of God) than to reject it “for lack of proof”, Cartesian rationalism is conservative.³¹

In Husserl, Cartesian thinking about method as reflection on cognitivity and thinking about the beginning are radicalised to the extent that in the “method” there is essentially no longer anything canonical or anything from a procedural regulation. Method means solely taking a cognitive position from the point of view of which it is understood that the only and final source of the sequence of our propositions might be material (“motivational”) links perceived in direct conceivability, appearing as constituent noematic meanings regarding consciousness; and the only source of validity of cognition is direct conceivability. Everything that will “happen” in cognition depends solely on the object, and nothing remains from the method conceived as a tool which could be used to interfere with the cognition. The method is only assuming reflexive knowledge on the nature of the cognitive situation and at the same time assuming the appropriate cognitive approach applying in all cognition and giving unity to understanding, and thus to all sciences (which will only then be able to develop their own particularistic methods as procedures). The phenomenological method is therefore the “method of methods”, and entails above all establishing a “principle of principles”, i.e. that of legitimisation of cognition in direct conceivability. In a secondary sense it is also an action, but a negative one – as it is a reduction, and also a “procedure”, albeit only in the sense of a “consciousness process” cleansed and exposed by the appropriate phenomenological orientation, a procedure lacking a form determined by anything other than the object of cognition and structure of consciousness – by the “method” of constitution.³²

In Husserl’s project, the principle of which is raising to the level of absolute directive the possible valid heuristic cognition of “the principle of the thing itself”, everything that belongs to the course of cognition remains outside of the influence of method, which in no respect brings premises and cannot even be a tool leaving its mark on the result of cognition. Cognition “goes about its life” as an eidetic and constitutional process that is only initiated by “method”, which is

31 Cf. Jan Hartman, “Cogito – metafizyczność – konserwatyzm” (in Polish), *Principia*, 1995, vol. 13/14.

32 Cf. e.g. Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. Lee Hardy (New York: Springer, 1999).

formal, albeit in a different sense from method perceived as logic or a canonised procedure. In phenomenology we encounter positively expounded (and applied) procedures and techniques. These, and in particular the so-called variation of constants method (imaginative variation), which is supposed to guide us to capture the essence of something, as well as techniques of precise description of what is given, are even particularly characteristic of phenomenology. Yet these procedures and techniques always have the objective of directing the cognitive intention (of the author or the reader) in the requisite way, without interfering in the noematic content of the act. And it is thanks to this cleansing, in a sense negative effect of the phenomenological procedures that the eidicity to which the pureness of meaning belongs is after all possible. The charges that phenomenology can level at classical positivism essentially boils down to a thesis about its hasty and incautious application of positive methods which result in positivist philosophy, and under its influence science, distorting and limiting the possibility to conceive what is given. We can therefore say that for Descartes and Husserl method refers to a heuristic directive derived from reflection on cognition, while in the logical-procedural tradition of thinking about method it means the procedure or canons that derive from reflection on the regularities of successful cognitive processes and are based on the fundamental heuristic directive: abide by the rules of logic.

The picture of the types of formalism in methodological thinking is complemented by the case of the method appearing in the form of an argument. This concerns the following discourse. The success of cognition is conditioned by the properties and predispositions of the cognising subject. What could be useful for the good of understanding in general, if it is to be made more effective through self-reflection, and thus it should be proposed as a method of truly philosophical thinking, is recognition of the subjective conditions of effective (or true and valid) cognition. Reflection on the conditions of the possibilities of cognition therefore becomes the source of valid (critical) discursive cognition, and therefore also its “method”, at the same time being the justification of this validity, i.e. the argument. This therefore means method as a (transcendental) argument, which nonetheless remains something abstract and formal because it is separated from concrete cases of “application of the transcendental method”. Apt here is the acute heuristic observation of Lyotard, that philosophical discourse is determined not by the rule but by the search for the rule”.

In forms of thinking about method as a reflection on the practical cognitive situation and cognitivity in general – in Cartesianism and transcendentalism – this situation is understood in isolation, i.e. as if realising the objective of cognition

depended solely on its course and on the subject. This objective, or rather what fulfils a teleological function in the pragmatic structure of the “starting situation”, is therefore formally founded (in the Hegelian sense of the word) or established as a regulative concept: cognition or the truth. Good scientific conduct is that which leads to cognition (or the truth); cognition (or the truth) is that which good scientific conduct leads to. What essentially takes place, we might say, is the idealistic conversion of success, the objective or the desired result of the cognitive situation into the formal and regulative concept of truth as the objective of the process called cognition. The person participating in this process appears correlatively as the “cognising subject”. And the idea of the form of the process as resulting in success, i.e. “cognition of the truth”, is the general idea of method. Method (or being methodical, application of a method) as a formal criterion of success thus becomes a formal criterion of the truth, added to the objective proof (or justification) as a validation. From here, it is just one more step to go from thinking about method and its heuristic intuitions to the heuristic maxim that lies at the root of the idea of the premiseless theory of cognition: if you learn the ultimate conditions of validity of cognition, and therefore cognitivity, and gain the cognition that is directly based on them, you will get the first statement and basis of the validity of all knowledge that is really knowledge, i.e. valid, true and impossible to query without at once questioning the possibility of cognising in general. Therefore, epistemological heuristics is in essence a continuation or variant of methodological thinking in the broad sense we have adopted.

2.5 Heuristics and the Issue of Idealism

The debate over idealism and realism cannot be effective if it is only to consist of declarations that the reality, authenticity of the being of a being, transcendence etc. are respected. Based on the history of this debate, however, we can state that “being a realist” and “being an idealist” basically do not change anything in the content of objective propositions; we can treat the problem as most of all concerning the ways of speaking in which positions are expressed and also constituted – for example transcendental arguments and those narratives that exhibit the “authenticity of being”.³³ Indeed, it is well known – at least thanks to

33 Berkeley, for example, writes, “If therefore you agree with me that we eat and drink and are clad with the immediate objects of sense, which cannot exist unperceived or without the mind, I shall readily grant it is more proper or conformable to custom that they should be called things rather than ideas” (George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004, p. 50).

Wittgenstein, and in any case to contemporary anti-metaphysical philosophy – that no transcendental narrative expressing absolute claims to validity, and attributing to itself the heuristic role of the foundation of the discussion as a whole, can defeat others. This does not mean, however, that the whole issue should be abandoned in line with the heuristic maxim “if you can’t talk about it say nothing”.³⁴ Much can be said about the logic of the competing forms of totality, absolute problematisations that do not allow for “neutral” or “meta-objective” fields of choice, and the peculiar “circular” logic of self-justifying discourses serving the proclamation of new systems. Indeed, today’s debates on the realism–idealism (or anti-realism) controversy are going in this semiotic direction. This in itself means taking a heuristic point of view. But this can also be done more consciously, and perhaps heuristics could contribute to the progress of this issue. We would probably need to analyse both positions as deriving from two different heuristic notions. In one of them the source of “critical philosophical thinking” would be the reflection encapsulating the whole of the cognitive situation – including the subject, object and what mediates between them – and in the other the source of decent cognition is careful and methodical examination of the world. Other such differences in the source heuristic notions could also be given. Since heuristic aspirations and heuristic notions (intuitions) reconcile and unite

Husserl, meanwhile, in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, used the phrase “the true ontic meaning of the objective world – precisely as a transcendental-subjective meaning” (Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr, Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1970, p. 100). It is somewhat surprising that Husserl dissociates himself from the naivety of Berkeley’s subjective idealism. In §55 of *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, he writes that in contrast to Berkeley’s idealism, in his phenomenology nothing in the slightest is taken away from the fully valid being of the world as a sum of real objects; he thereby makes the reservation aimed at potential opponents that is characteristic of idealism as a whole, including that of Berkeley. An invariable reason for such reservations is the fear of a naive or malicious accusation of fantasy and indeed naivety too. The very same Husserl who had defended Descartes from the condescending and forgiving attitude of contemporary philosophers towards him after all still rather naive and ingenuous idealistic arguments (which Husserl admitted), joined in the fashion for treating his own precursor – Berkeley – as a whipping boy. After all, there had never been such a figure among the greats of philosophy; wrote was very much a prodigy, writing his famous work at a very young age.

34 We should bear in mind the fact that the transcendental narrative that validates objectivist language essentially then instructs to forget about itself (as a disruption, albeit temporary, in this only valid way of talking about the world), which makes its heuristic status ambiguous.

people almost as strongly as so-called reason, there is no contradiction between the heuristic approaches of “idealism” and “realism”, and the controversy only arises with the conceptualisation that goes on, finally leading to the formation of these two “positions”. Heuristics could take on the role of tracking these conceptualisations and developing a moderate tone in speaking about these matters. It could also help to defuse the tension that characterises the issue by analysing the semiotic and structural meaning that can be attached to the concept of “position” from the point of view of the pragmatics of discourse. After all, it is not the case that some people (somehow unaware of the theoretical character of the issue) simply (or rather “naively”) “thought” that “the world exists independently of the cognising subject”, and others believed the opposite. Yet the matter is discussed as if there really were in this case such things as “positions”, in this simplest sense of the word, and as if the fact that this is not the case (and these “positions” are certain theoretical constructs or hypostases) were of no theoretical significance. We should avoid the common but excessively simplified incentives for so-called mental experiment and saying, for example: let us suppose that there is a realist and idealist, or let’s imagine how a realist might respond. The counterfactual heuristic notion of two parties defending “theses” is by no means an exhaustive (and in this case is an inadequate) description of the actual “communicative situation”. And yet the analytical “argumentology” that is dominant today rather dogmatically uses this kind of rhetorical idea of the heuresis of theoretical debate. Many words must be said in order to overcome this limitation and have an influence on the state of the question. For heuristics, this is a typical task, as it essentially involves criticism of certain heuristic habits.

So what could be the task of heuristics concerning methodological thinking? First of all, certainly, what we are doing here – cognition distinguished as a certain form of philosophical thinking with specific heuristic sources in heuristic ideas and postulates, for example in the notion of method as applicable canon, as something that must be begun from a well-chosen “beginning”, the notion of being fully aware of the possible sources of acknowledging propositions (criticism), or the postulate of non-prejudice of non-dogmatism. If heuristics is to “commune” in the various forms of philosophical thinking, it must submit to their general heuristic tendency. In the case of methodological thinking, this means a return to formalistic thinking, seeking widely binding forms and canons (logic, repeatable method). Therefore, the activity (and heuristic form) that we might call “detecting the heuristic notions lying at the root of methodological thinking” seems to concur with this field of interests of heuristics.

In terms of the perspective of heuristic research on methodological thinking, we should ask whether philosophical heuristics can or should also act as the “methodology of philosophy”. In response, heuristic reflection on methodological thinking should probably dissuade us from such a project. After all, in such methodology we would not be able to rely on the naive logical-procedural concept of method that is a feature of every methodology if it also says something about methods. As we have seen, philosophy has its “own methods” to displace and exceed these ones. If in philosophy the concept of method has undergone such an evolution that it has become something of a “validating formula” proclaiming a new path of philosophical thinking, then what might the methodology of philosophy be – a register of such formulas? No, it would inevitably be a naive project for canonising philosophical thinking, and all it could achieve would be first to remove all canonical sense from the concept of method and then reject this concept entirely, i.e. de facto abandon the methodology of philosophy project. In other words, it would have to travel the same path of reflection on method as did philosophy itself.³⁵

This is not to say that there would be no use for such a methodology if it were something along the lines of the contemporary methodology of the sciences. However, this is a combination of logical, epistemological and sociological research on science demonstrating a tendency to transform into pragmatics, and

35 To some extent, the dialectical drama of a similar project is depicted by Eric Weil’s essay in *Logique de la philosophie* (Paris, 1950). The heuristic limitations in the concept of method also mean that heuristics is not a method. Traditional philosophical thinking, which evades delivering any doctrines, may call itself method, but this notion does not satisfy this intention, as it leads the philosopher towards devising the formal canon and methodological doctrine. Another danger that appears in return, succumbing to an unconnected metanarrative, is remedied by the commitment to the studied text often declared in philosophy, by practice, cognition of the other and by similar “things themselves”. The discourse in which this declaration emerges is reflexive, though dissuading from an excess of reflection, and has an ambiguous heuristic status (which is no longer methodological). Perhaps it is safest to say that it proclaims a certain research disposition. For now, though, this description does not say much. In any case, for heuristics it represents a significant issue concerning the heuristic status of strongly reflexive discourses. If it is to have anything important to say on this subject, this is only because it is its *own* problem concerning itself. We will continue to look at these matters later, but important for now is clarity as to the fact that heuristics cannot be only method (or only methodology), and that for the same reasons one cannot ask about its methodological status or method, similarly to hermeneutics, deconstruction and some other forms of contemporary philosophical thought.

the name “methodology” used in some languages to describe this research has the value of tradition, and not of classifying their object or heuristic character. As a type of pragmatic “methodology” of philosophy, heuristics would also have to imitate the “methodology of sciences” followed in this way.

Heuristics, as a critique of methodological thinking, considers it as its object only because it is involved in heuristic reflection; this is why methodological thinking is also an inspiration for heuristics. Ultimately, heuristics itself, when it will strive for “insight in heuristic forms”, ideas, notions, postulates and maxims providing philosophical thinking with a direction, will itself also become a certain form of methodological thinking, and even a certain method (or set of methods) for doing philosophy. But it is compelled to abide by its own conclusions. If the perspective of methodological thinking leads us onto the path of pragmatic thinking, then this is a topic that we must examine in heuristics too.

3. Pragmatic Thinking

The concept of pragmatism appeared as the result of a concrete, individual philosophical programme (and thus as another definition of a new, and finally true philosophy), therefore demonstrating characteristic ambiguity. On the one hand it means something concrete, as it refers to several authors whose works are now classics of philosophy. On the other, though, its claims and the hopes of its first users refers to a general type of philosophical thinking. This type of thinking cannot be the sole property of a few people or even one single era, as it is defined by general heuristic ideas on how philosophy should be done and what directives adhered to. The result is a characteristic rhetorical phenomenon that is hard to control and which requires a certain heuristic criticism. Amid all the numerous notions, ideas, discourse tracks and concepts we chart all kinds of lines and chains of associations, in each case having good reasons for doing so³⁶ (the general idea and name that we want to give to this historical-philosophical narrative, e.g. “pragmatism”, may then happen to be the same as one used by somebody else in a different narrative). Yet the concept intended as the general idea of the universal philosophical project (e.g. “pragmatism”) can then easily lose its specific meaning, and thus its usefulness as well. This unfavourable co-occurrence of a meaning that is too vague and one that is too technical applies to both the concept of pragmatism and those of hermeneutics or phenomenology. But this does not mean that they are no good to us. The general nature of the concept of pragmatism is more of an indication that it is spontaneously accepted as a description of an area of heuresis appearing in clear and broad terms. It is in this tendency that it should be studied by heuristics.

The word “pragmatic” entered philosophical language in the 18th century, essentially meaning the practical applicability of some knowledge (ethics, psychology, historiosophy), both in “practice” (e.g. political) and in another area of knowledge. The distinction with the word “practical” lies in its additional reflexivity – in emphasising the cognitive and theoretical nature of the thing that is pragmatic. It therefore contains the postulate for pragmatic science to remain science,

36 In order to understand the power with which the network of historical and eidetic links between philosophical ideas resists any linear orders, simply look at the huge differences between the presentations of the history of the idea made by the greatest scholars, who are able to document them in the most detailed way, e.g. Arthur O. Lovejoy, Isaiah Berlin or Michel Foucault.

i.e. to have its rational merits (and still be *theoretical*) but at the same time be free from the speculative excess that would detach it from reality. However, this juxtaposition also encompasses the theoretical: although the pragmatic wishes to belong to the order of science and theory, it is itself distinct from what is *purely* theoretical. Here we have the heuristic mechanism of pragmatic thinking about science, philosophy and cognising in general, which entails associating the ideal of immediate contact with the thing itself with the heuristic notion of cognising as a form of practice (by cognising I “do something”). Reflection here is good and bad, at once desirable and undesirable: good as the theoretical nature that is an attribute of cognitivity, and bad because it separates us from practice, life, *praxis*, or any other understanding of the sphere of authenticity and the thing itself.³⁷ The theoretical effort therefore goes in the direction designated by the heuresis of dialectical thinking – towards removing the theoretical–practical opposition. Cognitivity is involved in objectivity as a form in which the world happens – a kind of experience. Yet what is objective appears as a correlate of cognising/acting, as what the world can be for us, since it is what it is only in cognitive experience. The speculative or dialectical overcoming of simple objectivism evident in contemporary pragmatism, for example in Goodman, does not yet distinguish this type of thinking from others that also perform such overcoming. In fact, it even seems to be something secondary, which results not from a pragmatic attitude but from the scientific need to form a certain epistemological position.

The reason for starting from this topic was that in the history of self-reflection there are distinctive concepts in each type of philosophical thinking that refer to its various stages. The term “pragmatistic thinking” that we shall use will also need some explanation. This term is supposed to refer to the phase of reflexive involvement in which removing simple objectivism appears to be the main theoretical premise of pragmatically oriented philosophy. This is in a way true in Mead and in radical constructivism, which blends a person and his cognitive-communicative actions fully with the biological and social environment. It is certainly the case for Quine, Dummett and other contemporary American philosophers, who try to extirpate the results of formalistic-reflexive thinking, creating a gap between cognition and action. Therefore, in reference to the discourses that abandon such conceptual oppositions and follow pragmatic ideals, we use

37 “The pragmatist turns away from abstraction and insufficiency, from verbal solutions, from bad *a priori* ones, from fixed principles, closed systems, and pretended absolutes and origins. He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards facts, towards action and towards power.” (William James, *Pragmatism in Focus*, London: Routledge, 1992, p. 41).

the term “pragmatistic”, reserving “pragmatic” for other ones. This is not a crucial distinction, but it may make it easier to find our way in the complicated structure of heuristic ideas shaping this tradition.

It is relatively easy to identify the original ideals and ideas from which this tradition derived. The germ was the ancient division between cognising and acting. Cognition capable of modifying human action in some way, and thus useful and instructive, was perceived as practical cognition, and specifically practical philosophy. This philosophy was driven by the same ideal of rational and deliberate cognitive work that motivated rational and deliberate practice; these qualifications therefore appeared as consciously accepted heuristic ideals. These confirm the idea of a good basis of cognition: reliable sources which should give rise to cognition if it is to have some application, but above all a conception of the ultimate objective at which the cognition is supposed to aim. This objective could not be literally practical or mundane, but it was rather an objective in the sense that the importance of philosophising was supposed to make it exceed what might be called making use of information or satisfying curiosity. The ideal of practical philosophy was therefore in accordance with the teleological heuristic structure adopted by scholastic philosophy, the 17th-century systems of Spinoza and Malebranche, and finally that of Kant. The idea of theology as a science rising above philosophy, the idea of the science of God (in the sense of theodicy and even ethics) as the crowning of philosophy, the philosophical apology for religiosity and certain intellectual-religious experiences, and Kantian practical reason as an instance validating metaphysical postulates on account of the moral goal, are all manifestations of the impact of the heuristic ideal of philosophy as intentional knowledge, useful and important in life and valuable in practical terms. Since objectives serve as ideals, postulates, and also sources of validity (within metaphysical explanations), as a result teleologically organised philosophies demonstrate tendencies towards reductive discourse searching for the conditions for realisation of their assumed goals. It is in this way that pragmatic heuresis contributed to the development of idealism.

In spite of this, owing to the meaning (and heuristic role) of the metaphysical and religious terms (God, salvation, moral order, good) employed by traditional pragmatic thinking, they go beyond this function of objective. They also increase the status and confirm the validity of philosophy, which was meant to be more than just speculation. Speaking of pragmatic thinking in this context is therefore in a way artificial and one-sided; if we do so, it is to emphasise the connection between this tradition and pragmatic thinking in a narrower and more specific sense.

In order to make philosophy valid and useful in life, the concept of intention, present in teleologically oriented philosophy (in Plato and Plotinus, and in modern philosophy, for example, in Marx), is expressed directly as a heuristic postulate, as in Marx's final thesis on Feuerbach. This postulate is expressed theoretically not as theological metaphysics, but in treating cognition as a certain kind of experience driven by specific rules and objectives and connected to other forms of human experience. This heuristic notion of cognising contains the ideal of effectiveness and efficiency and the idea of means and their application, and is thus close to methodological thinking. In fact, the distinction between them is a fluid one.

3.1 Practice and Method

William James employs the concept of pragmatism as method in a reflective and non-canonical sense – as method not supported by a concrete doctrine and dogmas. We may, and indeed must, also say about Charles Sanders Peirce, the nominal “father of pragmatism”, that he was a methodologist of science. In following this discipline, he was among the first, maintaining the classic ideals of objectivity and disinterestedness of scientific cognition, to attempt to treat science as research practice in which the norms and criteria of success (the values of the scientific result, truths) must coincide with their socio-practical correlates, like the consensus of the members of the research community. Simultaneously, Peirce tried to demonstrate the relationship of the mind and the world, making an epistemological conversion of the world into that which is the object of possible cognition. This transcendental process of the elimination of objectivism – the heuristic notion encompassing the autonomous object standing opposite the subject – takes place within heuristically (because pragmatically) marked reflection, in the concept of abduction. This means the creative operations of the mind that lead to hypotheses which are themselves the conditions of the possibilities of their trueness – if they are true, they generate the truth. The process of validation in science here is understood in a circular fashion, and the medium in which it occurs is the practice or experience – our convictions are essentially the rules which we follow in our actions in daily life and in scientific practice.

Scientific practice as the “happening” of the processes of research and validation (with its logical expression in theories, methods and justifications) builds the pragmatic philosophy of research of Nicholas Rescher, author of *Methodological Pragmatism* (the main subject of which is analysis of the heuristic category of applicability). Another figure who placed himself between methodological and pragmatic thinking was Michael Polanyi, who strives to overcome the formalistic

(playing down the importance of the personal nature of cognitive processes) tendency of epistemology and methodology, even when it occurs in the form of the pragmatic logic of a scientific discovery. He underlines the personal nature of knowledge, attempting to show that it is possible to take this fact into consideration in rationalistic theory of knowledge, for example postulating the “epistemology of personal knowledge”, the “logic of contriving”, and the conception of research maxims which we use to help ourselves to understand the world.³⁸

Pragmatic methodology and the theory of knowledge are based on the heuristic notion of concrete reality, the only way in which one can authentically understand phenomena. This is a version of the heuresis of the thing itself, in which the field of source reference – that to which we are to return – is conceived dynamically and in connection with daily life – as experience. The pragmatic interest in the diversity of *praxis*, which stretches from the mental sphere through social practices and science-forming activities to linguistic behaviours, leads to this kind of research that is continually accused of naturalism. At the same time, the diversity of practice unearthed in such research: the number of rules and conventions to which cognitive and scientific practice is subject, undermines the belief in the possibility and even the value of its methodological canonisation. The response to these doubts, meanwhile, is often counteraccusations of relativism. These come with the hunt for “sceptics”, “irrationalists” and “relativists” threatening the rationality of science and the scientificity of philosophy, initiated by those who, often unjustly, attribute destructive and thoughtlessly exposing intentions to various discourses, including the pragmatistic one. Yet the role of pragmatistic thinking is different – it is about describing and understanding in the widest possible context cognition and rational behaviours. Social and linguistic practice per se is interesting here, not just as a possible source of arguments against the

38 Michael Polanyi's book *Personal Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974) is an excellent example of heuristic reflection on science in the framework of methodological and pragmatistic thinking. Incidentally, it also explicitly offers a certain conception of mathematical heuresis and contains a number of specifically heuristic themes (such as the concept of scientific maxim or heuristic passion) that distinguish it from typical philosophy of science. However, the heuristic programme of this book is generally similar to the intention of critical rationalism, as well as rhetoric: anything that we, as scientists or philosophers, have not yet considered in our self-knowledge with benefit for rational driving of our cognition, for example historical, social and personal factors, should finally receive theoretical examination, in keeping with the rationalist credo: “I believe that in spite of the hazards involved, I am called upon to search for the truth and state my findings” (ibidem, p. 299).

rational claims of science. The reaction to the somewhat hysterical struggle with “irrationalism”, the “pragmatic concept of truth as usefulness” etc. was twofold. First, pragmatically oriented philosophers undertook a programme for broadening the conception of rationality to make it a better fit for our knowledge about the complex practice of using the mind and the actual objectives that we follow in this practice. Second, it brought about a discussion on relativism.³⁹

Apart from pragmatic philosophy of science, pragmatic thinking is also expressed in such areas – some more organised than others – as argumentation theory, theory of authority, eristics, praxeology, as well as those that do not directly refer to science, such as conversation theory, sociolinguistics, the philosophical theory of communicative action, and in a way even Michel Foucault’s “discourse analysis”, distinguished from the history of ideas by its pragmatic-structuralist approach. Present in these fields in various configurations are ideas that comprise various forms of pragmatic conversion performed in connection with the idea of the situation of a person cognising his or her environment – and more broadly, one acting and with a mutual influence on his/her environment. The types of totality within which pragmatic thinking is placed also vary – from the biological and social environment, via linguistic behaviours, to life and *praxis*. Each of these, though, has the meaning of the authentic “thing itself” to which one must return and on which cognition may be based, since it is the

39 Regarding the first issue, a good summary to portray how the concept of rationality has broadened is Hans Lenk and Helmut F. Spinner’s enumeration of 22 types of rationality, five conceptions and five theories of rationality in their article “Rationalitätstypen, Rationalitätskonzepte, Rationalitätstheorien”, [in:] Herbert Stachowiak (ed.), *Pragmatik. Handbuch pragmatischen Denkens*, B. III (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1989), pp. 2–16. As for the debate on relativism, one might call it a good example of the dialectical fate of a heuristic concept/phenomenon, which in philosophy we ought to learn to foresee, extracting the theoretical consequences from its occurrence in particular cases. Relativistic scepticism (e.g. of Nelson) and various forms of pragmatic thinking (mostly in the philosophy of science) met with concerted opposition from rationalists and defenders of classical conceptions of philosophy. A reaction to this was provocative relativism, in which this category began to be used contrarily in a positive sense, despite the common custom of stressing that what one is proclaiming is not relativism (but rather, for example, sociology of knowledge aware of its competences and limits). Dispatching with the unequivocally pejorative connotation of the word “relativism” led some pragmatic philosophers who were also attached to rationalistic rigorism, such as firstly Mead and Mannheim, and then Toulmin and Goodman, to begin to use it in a positive sense. This gave rise to relativistic anti-irrationalism, and, as Goodman described his own philosophy, “a radical relativism under rigorous restraints”.

ultimate source of validation – of human cognising in general and reflective theory (pragmatic and pragmatistic) in particular. However, the specific nature of pragmatic thinking frees it from the idealistic obsession of validation. This thinking does not make a conversion of a practical cognitive situation into a subject cognising an object whereby the cognition is really cognition when it attains ultimate validation – made possible by the object being perceived as “what the object of cognition is”, and thus as a correlate of cognitive acts. If even pragmatism makes an idealistic or transcendental conversion, it does so into a different totality, in which it wishes to set its discourse – the totality of practice, not thinking. The way in which the subject is connected to the thing itself (e.g. with “life”) does not entail passive reference, but participation – ontic connection or belonging. This is a very important distinction compared with idealism. Firstly, in the pragmatic and realistic perspective, the relationship of the subject to the world need not be reconstructed or proven (as in the phenomenology of the soul or theory of construction), but is assumed in advance as a heuristic premise specifying the pragmatist’s research interest. Secondly, the idea of the subject as the centre and sources of acts plays a lesser role here than the intuitionistic concept of consciousness as a stream of experiences, and does not appear as a problem or source of doubt, which is inevitable in the idealistic discourse.⁴⁰ This is not necessarily a virtue of pragmatic thinking, yet we must realise that what idealism

40 Precisely because the ideal of the thing itself, authentic reality to which one must refer or return, does not always involve the display of the idea of the substantial subject, I suspect that the heuresis of the “thing itself” is more primal than the heuristic notion of representing the world in the mind. The “thing itself” is what is important, the source and objective of cognition, what brings the intellect to life and gives meaning to its effort. The “thing itself” is meaning and truth in a heuristic sense, i.e. in that of motivation and value, and not that given to it by some philosophical discourse. Various ideas come into play here: from the contents of the heuristic maxim *rem tene, verba sequuntur* through Mystery, the thing in itself, pure fact, direct conceivability and living presence, to Heideggerian being, which separates the thing itself from the intuition of something that can be comprehended and made manifest by which it is always accompanied. The thing itself is the *activitas* of the object of cognition as allowing itself to be cognised, the *activitas* of ontic truth and intelligibility. In general, though, the motif of representation is regarded as being the most important. This is the case in Adorno’s critique of Enlightenment Reason, Heidegger’s conception of metaphysics of the present, Quine’s critique of the representationistic concept of the symbol and relation of representation, Rorty’s conception of philosophy of reflection (and earlier pragmatists’ critique of the idea of cognition as a reflection), as well as in Derrida.

and the criticism thereof live on – the question of the subject – is heterogeneous for pragmatic thinking.

In fact, pragmatism is above all a form of heuristic reflection. The main thing that it ascribes to itself as a contribution to philosophy is establishing a way of thinking that takes into account the relationship between the meaning of theoretical statements and tasks (involved in the theoretical and practical context) that they are to fulfil (such as solving a problem or explaining new facts) as well as the ways in which they affect the further research practice. Pragmatism is not a doctrine here, as every theory can only be confirmed in practice. However, it constitutes a space in which we can carry out the multifaceted type of philosophy, practised since time immemorial, in which in spite of abstract discourses we aim for a prejudice-free view of the course of our research work – the criteria that guide it, the interests it serves, the satisfactory results it produces (and why), and the aspects that are lost, become incomprehensible or invalid. In other words, pragmatism materialised as a programme of heuristic reflection, an approach (previously known as a method) without claims to be a doctrine. James called it a new name for old ways of thinking, while Dewey saw it as a method of orientation. Unfortunately, pragmatists were unable to develop a heuristic way of speaking not directly connected to metaphysical theses and epistemological positions. But this should not mask the essentially heuristic intention of pragmatic thinking, which happens when we are tempted to level easy accusations at pragmatism, like saying that it does not distinguish truth from coherence, agreement from usefulness, or cognitive goals from practical ones.

In the pragmatic heuristic notion, a person is subject to the influence of the environment by influencing it him/herself. However, one has the chance to dictate the course of one's action if one understands the practical essence of one's situation in the world. It is in this sense that we should understand pragmatic speaking about usefulness as a criterion of truth, and likewise "reductionist" statements. This is not naive reduction of cognitive values to utilitarian ones, or falsification of the essence of cognitivity, but rather a way of speaking (not always finding the right concepts and terminology) from the perspective of heuristic reflection, attaching to the situation of the person cognising the world the meaning of a task, which can be fulfilled all the better the more clearly it is perceived as such, and thus also as an objective to be attained. It is a similar case with other pragmatic discourses that can sometimes seem naturalistic, such as the concept of satisfying needs, which is one of the fundamental heuristic models of explanation in psychology. Many of these initially general concepts are encumbered by a particularistic meaning. This causes pragmatic and pragmatistic thinking to have

the same difficulties as any metaphysical thinking, succumbing to the illusion of the transcendental importance and pre-eminence of its key concepts, particularly that of totality, and thereafter experiencing its limitations. This is the case with a conversion of fundamental significance for the development of pragmatic and hermeneutic thinking – conversion⁴¹ (of the world, being) into life.

The philosophical category of life frequently plays the role of an unjustified metaphysical extrapolation of our biological notions, for instance that of the organism or evolution via the struggle for survival. It is a similar case with the

41 The word “conversion” (or “turn”, *Wende*, in more historical contexts) which has come to be used in contemporary criticism of metaphysics, is misleading since it requires a subject of the conversion. Therefore, if we say that this is the conversion of the world or being into something or other (language, cognition, apparent consciousnesses, a concept, thought, phenomena, facts etc.), the main reasons are grammatical requirements or the heuristic habit of defining what philosophy is to occupy itself with, almost in isolation from concrete engagement in any metaphysical notions, when we use the general words “being” or “the world”. Of course, both these concepts also express something that we call conversion, and, as in other cases, their privilege is solely internal, and visible from the point of view of their affirmative usage. In fact, therefore, there is no conversion in the sense of transformation of something previously given, and this word is used in order to accentuate the moment when the particularly theoretical position is taken and the certain mental procedure that accompanies every conversion takes place. We could instead use such words as metaphysical “notion”, or “position” (e.g. linguistic, epistemological, phenomenalist), or “reduction”, but there are drawbacks to such terms. It is also impossible to avoid particularity, which is incidentally the heuristic core, a problem from which every conversion results, by using the term “totality” or the concept of totality, not least because they emphasise the moment of all-encompassing that is not exhibited in every metaphysical thinking. Furthermore the concept of metaphysicality that occurs in the context of anti-metaphysical discourses places too much emphasis on the moment of stability, passivity and objectivity of that which is to be metaphysical as a correlate of metaphysical thinking. Finally, metaphysicality too proves to be a kind of particularistic conversion (this time one might call it heuristic) and shares the fate of a series of definitions of metaphysical evil, such as scholastics, Cartesianism, idealism, objectivism, representationism etc. The last term of this kind is the metaphysics of presence. The lesson that we might learn from the history of conversions and concepts of totality, followed (in the critical context) by a succession of descriptions of metaphysical evil with claims to universality, is that the whole issue (i.e. the question of metaphysics) should not be treated as one of incorrect and correct thinking about the world (thus again a metaphysical question), but rather of speaking as such, as a set of semiotic – or more generally heuristic – issues. And indeed, such a change in perspective is starting to take shape, largely thanks to Lyotard and Habermas’s theories of metanarrative.

related concept of process. The naturalistic and pragmatistic orientation gives rise to so-called evolutionary epistemology. Pragmatistic sociology and anthropology convert the human world into diverse communicative practices, mostly linguistic, speaking of various kinds of acts of speech and linguistic games. Indeed, these are all very pragmatic concepts. Every communication event has its own pragmatic autonomy, meaning that its regularity justifies its own course and connection with the specific situational (practical) context. It may well be, however, that the essence of the communication event or of a certain game is sometimes authentic cognition or scientific discussion or something. These pragmatic concepts are therefore not consigned to the heuristic status of naturalistic exposure, which certainly the pragmatism of Peirce and his successors aims to avoid. Furthermore, the concepts of communication and a game contain the idea of an objective, or rather a teleological moment, and are correlated with the concepts of efficiency, usefulness and practical satisfiability. As for scientific practice, pragmatic thinking, which makes the success of the practice (for example scientific) a goal in itself, describes it from the point of view of its internal success, and thus in heuristic terms. We can then speak about such heuristic qualities of theory as explanatory power or fertility (as mentioned when analysing methodological thinking). As in communication theory, therefore, the dominant motif in pragmatic talking about scientific practice will be the teleological one. This must be defined in the most general terms – a regulative idea that might be satisfiability or instrumental trueness, or more broadly validity (*Geltung*) and rightness.⁴² By accepting a regulative idea, we seek to steer clear of the particularity into which we are drawn by such concepts as usefulness or consensus, which cannot withstand attempts at absolutisation. The reason we do this is to avoid the pitfall of relativising the precious idea of the truth. But what we cannot avoid is converting it in a certain way that can always be accused of relativism or reductionism: manipulating the truth for the purposes of cognitive practice or satisfying a cognitive need, or as a response to a question or solution to a problem. It is important to remember, however, that the concept of truth also contains a moment of reflection. It is the result of the conversion of the truth into the truth, so to speak. Its superiority over the concept of truth (trueness) as satisfiability or the transcendental concept of consensus as a regulative idea substituting for the truth is a superiority that results from terminological preference in heuristic habituality.

42 Habermas distinguishes as many as four forms of universal claims to validity – intelligibility, truth, rightness and sincerity – that belong to general communicational competences.

It is therefore of the same ilk as the superiority of the concept of being and the world over other concepts of totality, like what is apparent, objective meanings or the concept. Owing to this heuristic situation of the problem of unintentional reductionism and naturalism appearing in pragmatic thinking, and particularly that of the pragmatic conception of truth, being involved in the heuresis of conversion and reflection, the history of the debate with pragmatism, and especially the pragmatistic conception of truth, is one of accusations resulting from mutual incomprehension. As Hegel demonstrated, however, the confrontation of various concepts of totality with claims for supremacy can never result in a lasting advantage to one of them. What is so hard to understand in these only apparently easy, and even trivial-sounding, formulations of the fundamental conceptions of truth, comes when we connect to the question of the heuristic (mainly semiotic) functions of philosophical concepts that of the forms of heuresis of philosophical discourses dominated by an accumulation of reflection (and making conversions). These are problems that philosophers appear as yet unable to discuss effectively.

When we understand that pragmatic thinking is thinking within the heuresis of conversion, and at the same time are guided by teleological reflection, we will understand the teleological essence of pragmatic conversion. This means conversion of the world into experience or practice. Practice, which pragmatic thinking makes its concept of totality (in so doing giving it various names), becoming this concept of totality and a regulative idea, balances out what one's own fortune (own good, one might say) makes its goal. This form of conversion is similar to that which in classical metaphysics turns being into the transcendental good, i.e. being as subordinate to the objective.

3.2 Practical Legitimation and Reflexive Legitimation

The analogy of the concept of practice with that of transcendental good might help us to understand why practice is only legitimised in itself. We understand this idea with reference to the phenomenological conception of direct experience as the only source of validity of a proposition, as well as in reference to the metaphysical concept of good, about which it makes no sense to ask if it is good. The case of self-legitimation of practice, or rather the type of political argument characteristic of pragmatic thinking, combine both intuitions: every practice is linked with experience, and it is we, as we are involved in it, who know best what is happening around us; no outsider is fully able of teaching us what to do, and since our practice is our own business, no outsider is entirely able to understand its meaning for us, as something good and right for us. "Fully" and "entirely" are

the operative words here. Of course, it is possible to assess a practice, just as it is possible to speak about someone else's direct experience and the relative evil of something that transcendentally is necessarily good. Ultimately, though, the source of this assessment lies in the course of practice, and in this sense it is the source of its own validity. Basically at the root of this is the simple intuition popularly expressed when people say, "What do you know, you haven't done that, you've never experienced that situation", which displays this fundamental heuristic notion of the thing itself.

Owing to the concrete nature of every practice, pragmatic thinking, which infers the right to determine what is true and correct from the practice itself, eludes reflection, theory, doctrine, as well as every metanarrative that is supposed to validate pragmatism as a position. The moment at which pragmatic thinking proclaims its anti-doctrinal character is one of the critical points that distinguish it from pragmatistic thinking. As we saw, in James and Dewey this takes place by defining pragmatism as a method. However, the concept of method contains an element of formalism which pragmatistic thinking aims to avoid, seeing in practice a trace of the concrete character of its happening every time. For this reason too, pragmatistic thinking opposes methodological thinking. Here it aims to reconcile the theoretical and reflexive nature of philosophical cognition with full respect for the rights of practice to decide on its course and carry out self-assessment, with praise for concreteness and aversion to detached (from concrete practice) theories, doctrines (including methodological ones), procedure and metanarratives expressing philosophy's self-satisfaction. This is a difficult task, perhaps an impossible one. But the attempts that have been made to fulfil it have reaped important results for philosophy.

The essence of this kind of theoretical enterprise is validation of the large number and variety of (social and discursive) practices in need of protection from the claims of absolute narratives seeking to subordinate them in abstract terms to some whole and objectives that are incompatible with their meaning. This is a much broader intellectual current, going well beyond what we might call the tradition of pragmatistic thinking. It is the direction in fact of the theoretical endeavours of both critical theory and critique of ideology (the Frankfurt School) and contemporary liberalism (e.g. of Robert Nozick), which avoids any meta-narrative and doctrine (even to sustain freedom). Both movements of social philosophy are motivated by the ideal of freedom and also encompass the notion of practice unhindered from outside and legitimised in itself. It seems that pragmatistic thinking related to philosophy and cognition is connected

to thinking about issues of the social system, especially in the most eminent authors – Habermas and Rorty.

The tradition of basing practice on an authority verifying claims of reason, initiated in modern times by Kant and continued by Hegel and Marx, reached its perhaps final consequences on several different paths of pragmatistic thinking. Decisive in each case is the question of the relationship of the concrete practice as a material source of legitimation with the general reflexive formula of legitimation through practice, one in which the practice must be presented as totality.

3.2.1 Adorno – The Dialectical Path

For Theodor W. Adorno – who admittedly is not described as a pragmatist – the relationship between practice and theory is one of the fundamental heuristic trails marking out the path of philosophy as a whole. As he sees it, philosophy is a dialectical struggle for the contact of reason with the concreteness of things and practice, one waged against reflexive conceptualisation, contemplative rationality, the abstraction of the concept, and identifying thinking. The conceptualising nature of reason leads to totalising ideas and systems proclaiming the absolute power of the reason-subject and contributing to the development of social and political totalitarianisms. Enlightenment reason enacts a programme of complete socialisation, leading to technocracy, violence and political repressions. Yet to the thing itself, and to practice that continually escapes final conceptualisation, the only access we can have is through reason. We must realise, however, that this is a dialectical discourse in which the concreteness of being constitutes a certain excess. It can be assimilated and reconciled with reason by the truth of art, which joins looking with the concept, the detailed with the general, and the mimetic moment with the rational. Philosophy is supposed to know this – know its place, its fate and the threats that it can bring to the world. And this determines its task, which is that of criticism. The philosopher – or the intellectual in general – as a critic defends practice, and particularly the natural practices of communication, ordinary talking and life, as well as life and freedom, from the designs of restrictive rationality and various forms of alienation. The philosopher's role, we might say, is to heal unhappy consciousness. In order to play this role, philosophy must accept the fact that by tackling matters of authentic life and practice its dialectical and situational involvement will work against its unity, leading to chronic fragmentation and incompleteness. What we have here is the affirmation of freedom and plurality made via a dialectical path. The theoretical conversion of real practice into the concept of practice and establishment of the totality of

practice affects philosophy too, which so often functions as the totality of meaning; philosophy, though, can avoid the bad outcomes of its idealistic inclinations.

If an attribute of pragmatistic thinking is removing the conceptual oppositions and formalistic models that are the result of abstract conceptualisations, then among those who to some degree belong to this stream are Quine, who seeks to do away with the analytic–synthetic distinction, and Davidson, who criticises the notion of the conceptual model.

3.2.2 Apel – The Path of Transcendental Moralism

A different programme of pragmatistic thinking is proposed by Karl-Otto Apel. In his philosophy, it is the conceptualising competences offered by reason that make it a guarantor of freedom. It provides discursive, transcendental validation to various communicative practices if they are not supposed to involve violence and have claims for rational legitimacy. The conditions of the possibility of free and rational discourse such as ultimate truth as a regulative idea constituting an argument for struggling for correctness, and the possibility of a rational consensus established by the participants of the communicative practice, do not require justification, as they are the transcendental conditions of all justification, and in this sense become the ultimate validation of all discursiveness. Nonetheless, though, they are often rejected. Accepting these conditions – that is to say readiness to make arguments – is tantamount to accepting certain norms, and has a moral dimension. Apel stresses that the foundations of communicative rationality, which has both a normative-practical and a theoretical-discursive meaning, are in this duality consistent with one another and unanimous. One might say that decency and rationality have one common source – the transcendental conditions of argumentative discourse. This is the a priori of communication, containing a reference to values. The transcendental game pursued in a communicative community, based on referring to the conditions of possibility and the meaning of exchange of opinions, at the same time means referring to ethical norms. Therefore, the principle of aiming for consensus in a conversation corresponds to the ethical principle – striving for agreement. The common transcendental conditions/norms of communicative practice are conditions of sense in general. As a result, the transcendental discourse validating human practice as rational has the heuristic form of critique of sense, and constitutes pragmatic linguistics or transcendental semiotics. Only normative logic, normative hermeneutics and of course normative ethics should be based on these. In fact, though, this inspiration led to the rationalistic ethics of discourse, and in Apel's Kantian

thinking the moment of good will remains the starting impulse of the transcendental game.

In his pragmatistic theory, Apel of course wishes to give the concreteness of practice the competences which it is due. The totalising transcendental discourse overseeing the sense of every communicative practice and communicative community that it proclaims is not an active power interfering in the course of the practice, but rather something of an appeal authority that can help in complicated situations of argumentative discourse, especially when concealed bad will might come into play. A philosopher may also warn of ideological forms of discourse, again basically playing the role of critic. Yet what makes Apel different from other philosophers thinking in pragmatistic categories is his lack of aversion to totalising and foundationalist discourses, the authority of the concept and metanarratives; even using the concept of transcendentalism in a positive sense became something of a rarity in the 20th century. While for Adorno negative dialectics is a form of self-control of philosophy with a tendency to succumb to thinking of identity and alienated conceptuality, for Apel transcendental pragmatics has an unambiguously positive meaning – its function is to serve the world, and not protect philosophy from itself. As a result, Apel's programme is heuristic, fitting the "how/what" heuresis: if we recognise the conditions and rules of good discussion, we will acquire tools that will let us conduct it more efficiently and attain our assumed cognitive goals more efficiently. This formal knowledge will be a valuable cognitive result, and, owing to its broad range, even a philosophical form. Here we see the same heuristic notion at play that propels thinking about method when it aims to formulate a universal method which can be applied, automatically or otherwise, in order to acquire various types of knowledge.⁴³

43 The formalism of this heuresis has its own negative practical consequences which resemble the effects of ideology and which the whole of critical modernism is so afraid of. The formalistic understanding of democracy and equality led to a kind of democratic meta-ideology which in defence of the equal rights of all groups and of formal democratic principles imposes manifold limitations and restrictions, aspiring even to interfere in natural language. This extraordinary social experience, particularly of 1980s America, became one of the main issues and the source of arguments of recent political philosophy, in which formalistic-liberal avoidance of evaluation also seems to have lost out to more conservative conceptions. One variant of the repression of democratic ideology is the common phenomenon of formalistic deformation of the debate loaded with the idea of community of inquiry, for whose popularisation Peirce and Dewey, but also Apel are responsible. A rule of this discussion is that it is prohibited to oppose any statements. In other words, everybody is right, and introduces ever more

Apel's contribution to philosophy was to combine the German issues of validity of knowledge with the Anglo-American linguistic tradition. One might say that he connected the claim to validity at the level of the whole of discourse as a principle of transcendental philosophy with the claim to validity (or trueness) at the level of the statement as act of speech. A similar heuristic principle organises the philosophy of Davidson and Dummett, and especially Habermas.

3.2.3 Habermas – The Path of Entrusting Science

Stronger elements in Habermas than in Apel are the affirmation of diversity and autonomy of communicative practices, as well as diversity in terms of ways to satisfy claims for validity. Practice – both everyday and scientific – has the final word, and cannot be subjected to any foundationalist discourse or first philosophy. Universal philosophical discourses are necessary on account of their legitimising function, albeit understood in a non-autotelic manner – they are to serve the validation of other fields, especially in the humanities. Pragmatic theory concerning the foundations of all science, or one in particular as a certain communicative practice regulated by its claims to validity, determines the conditions of its legitimacy (the extent to which its claims can be fulfilled) and describes the communicative competences within it and pragmatic conditions by which it proceeds. However, its validity depends only on these practices and is constituted in them, and thus in a certain sense it is descriptive, dependent on empirical material, and as a result fallible and not absolute. Philosophy therefore does not seek a special position in the sphere of domination-free communication, but it can support its intersubjective value, communicative rationality (opposed to the rationality of the sovereign *cogito*), and “unity of reason in the plurality of its voices”. This may perhaps be a slightly higher position for philosophy than the one accorded by the classical Frankfurt School or Marxism, a little more than the philosophical humanities or a general insight into science. Still, though, it is a position of mediator and moderator, providing abstract conceptual and discursive means (mostly in the form of theories of communication) and enabling consensus in growing diversity. And this is, incidentally, also the perception of philosophy that is dominant today – as mediator and moderator, to some degree upholder of rationality but also upholder of freedom (of discursive and social practices). Habermas would like to preserve that which is positive in foundationalist philosophical thinking – its validating power. He also tries to avoid its

apt observations. It is not even necessary to reach a consensus – it is accepted at the outset.

dangers, but he does this not through the dialectical self-criticism of reason, like Adorno, nor via the radical (transcendental) formalism of fundamental discourse meant to safeguard scientific and social practices from limitations, like Apel, but by closely linking philosophical research to concrete scientific practices perceived as authentic research. Habermas is therefore among those who, in giving to discursive practices their due rights to independent justification of their claims to the truth, see the role of philosophy as upholding rationality rather than freedom. It is a different matter with Rorty, who no doubt would have been reluctant to be an upholder of anything – even freedom.

3.2.4 Rorty – The Personal Path

For Richard Rorty too, the philosopher's task is to support free communication, endangered by ideologies and predatory philosophies and necessary for protecting freedom and the creative possibilities of each of us. Yet no foundationalist totalisations can be helpful or safe here. This goes for both the ideal communication community and the idea of *Lebenswelt*, hypostasising that which is impervious to theoretical thematisation. After criticising epistemological philosophy, Rorty seeks to withdraw from the tiresome discourse of critique of the claims of epistemology, metaphysics and modernism – criticism that delivers its own narratives which are supposed to avoid attempts at totalisation and conceptual one-sidedness and yet ultimately are subject to similar criticism. Although in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty in fact proposes a critical narrative, in the conclusion he opposes this style of philosophy. Systemic, epistemologically oriented philosophy, searching for the ultimate foundations and validation for itself and other forms of culture – the object of Rorty's criticism – is a very typical description of a philosophical evil. Two forms of criticism of this have developed: an argumentative one, based on a detailed analysis of such concepts as the mind, knowing and meaning; and an ideological one, discerning in various forms of philosophy unjustified claims and usurpations – the actions of the will to power, aspirations to authority and domination etc. Rorty seems to have combined both styles, being both an American “philosopher of argument” and, later on, a postmodernist critic of the usurpation of philosophy. Any act of philosophy or philosophical argument are legitimised, can be discussed and acquire sense only within a specific, local discourse and philosophical discussion. There is no philosophical identity or criteria of the philosophical art that constitutes an overriding classification, and, indirectly, a solution to philosophical debates. After all, these are an exchange of arguments made by people who have read similar things and share similar interests and are capable of using a discursive

style. What the philosopher can get out of the pan-philosophical discourse, however, is not so much the formal directives of rational communication as a certain personal approach – knowing one's place, one might say. This is an inevitably local and contingent place – what we have to say, regardless of any universal or absolute claims to validity it might have, is always a moment of a communicative situation that takes place in the framework of the local language, concepts and discourses. If as philosophers we understand the inevitability of the contingency of what we say, this is useful comprehension which we can then share with others. Not, of course, in the sense of imposing a doctrine, objectives or values, but only disseminating our prudently critical approach with full awareness of our modest possibilities. This approach also entails keeping a certain ironic distance to ourselves and other participants in the discussion. This in turn means not some form of epistemologically oriented criticism or scepticism, but rather a certain disposition and defence instinct against the excessive pathos and usurpations that certain discourses carry. This ironic approach that a philosopher who “knows his place” should prescribe for himself and others might be complemented by a favourable disposition in discussion and an inclination to facilitate it with the sense that people are brought together and solidarity is built between them both by common questions and problems and by the belief that they have some kind of calling to join forces and by reasonable discussion find solutions to them.

In Rorty, essentially all totalisation of practice vanishes in the discourse establishing the right of practice to self-legitimation, and thus in the discourse legitimising practice. The final act of the meta-narrative, and at the same time of departure from it, is the proclamation of this position as radical pragmatism. Pragmatistic thinking coincides here with the structuralist and postmodernist deposition of reflection, now fully at the mercy of the practice itself, in which we can cope better or worse – and always according to its own criteria.

3.3 Between Scientific Solemnity and Scholarly Irony

Apel's transcendentalism and Habermas's rationalism are separated from Rorty's radical pragmatism by the dialectical mental process. This leads from the idea of the thing itself as a real authority legitimising scientific and political action, via the idea of the unthematizable, absent thing itself of the *Lebenswelt*, to absolute extinction of universalistic, rationalistic claims, as sought by the philosophy of Rorty.

In pragmatistic thinking, the idea of the thing itself, present in all forms of realism and idealism with intentions of validating themselves as science by confirming the naturally realistic idea of science as cognising how the world is (for

example using the concept of the thing in itself in Kant), is subjected to a dialectical transformation. On the one hand, the thing itself to which pragmatistic thinking refers is conceived as being defined immanently – being identical to itself and at the same time constituting the ultimate source of its cognition. On the other, though, pragmatistic thinking starts from an intuition of its object as being the space in which rational will acts and is realised, as the practice for which the model is communicative practice, which is the most discursive form of *praxis*. From this point of view, appointing for cognition the task of faithfully “holding on” to the thing itself does not quite work in the sense that the thing itself as a rational practice is the subject of the cognition, not the object, itself being the source of its validity. In other words, the intelligibility of the thing comes from its being cognisable, and the intelligibility of the practice from its explaining itself, allowing itself (from within) to be understood and providing itself with justification of its own meaning. The thing itself, which we must reach cognitively (possibly returning after rejecting old errors) now becomes participation – a communicative practice, discussion or argumentation. This is an evolution from the notion of being as nature – “concrete reality” – to the notion of being (the thing itself) as “human reality”. The dialectical escape from theories aspiring to an exhaustive description of the world and in fact ossifying living practice heads towards formalism – formalism of talking about method, and also formalism of specifying the conditions of unimpeded, correct practice, and particularly successful debate. However, any reflexive discourse, even if it is entirely formalistic and non-ideological, that gets to practice from the outside, must ultimately be criticised as delivering passive cognition on it, betraying the principle of respect for the self-legitimising power of practice and participation; furthermore, it always becomes a form of interference and a manifestation of the will to rule. As it turns out, it is not through abstract discourse that we can reach the thing itself of pragmatistic thinking. Rather, we should “enter” it, becoming a participant in the area of life we wish to comprehend.

The consequence is that the final result of pragmatic and pragmatistic thinking is one that resembles the philosophy of rejection and cleansing. Picking its way through to its thing itself past ever newer forms of reflection and validating discourses, and dismissing earlier efforts as idealism, metaphysics, metaphysics of presence etc., it begins to view its task as to break free from this vicious circle (leaving metaphysics to its own fate, as Heidegger said), and so also from dialectics, bringing a peculiar reassurance tinged with scepticism.

The vicious circle of rejection and getting sucked in again (to metaphysics, or whatever we wish to call philosophical evil) is a total dialectic, a hermeneutic

spiral, something so captivating that rejecting it seems an impossibility. And it cannot be said to have been fully accomplished – in Rorty, Derrida or Deleuze – but rather that at least a new way of thinking has been discovered, along with new concepts that are not susceptible to dialectical abolition and not serving as a synthesis. This way of thinking verges on pragmatistic thinking, as best seen in Rorty, who is known as a pragmatist with as rightly as he is called a postmodernist. Studying these fringes of pragmatistic thinking is difficult in the sense that the result of this tradition is not yet fully formed. For Rorty, the achievement of pragmatism is the significant part it played in detranscendentalising philosophy and in closing its epistemological chapter. Yet the other side of the fringes derives from many traditions – we owe it to philosophers of satirical and aphoristic tendencies, theoretician-ironists like Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer or Nietzsche who destroy the clams of absolutist discourses, seeking the differences and inconsistencies that proliferate in philosophies of the “final word”. According to Rorty, we should preserve certain features of this way of doing philosophy, which after all freed us from the illusions of the past. The fringes of pragmatistic thinking as rejection of (not overcoming) the dialectic of one totalisation (one foundationalism) by the next totalisation (the next foundationalism) seems to blend into the broader picture of the fringes, which is at the same time the limit of phenomenology and hermeneutics. Often cited in this tradition is the concept of *Lebenswelt*.

Lebenswelt is a particular concept of the thing itself – the source and reference – which philosophical thinking pinned hopes on in the search for a non-dialectical path. This concept derives from the idea of nature addressing the human world, appearing as the environment of daily human life, our own space. The concept of *Lebenswelt* assumes that the space of the human world is as we see it. As a philosophical concept, though – that is resulting from reflection – the *Lebenswelt* cannot refer to the everyday as spontaneously expressed by humans with the directness to which it aspires. The directness of reference in the concept of *Lebenswelt* thus becomes a theoretical postulate designated as a regulative idea. Embodying this postulate is the most important heuristic function of the concept of *Lebenswelt*, rather like the concept of life. In its most abstract meaning, exhibiting the heuristic postulative function, *Lebenswelt* is the formal concept of the object of reference, the pure thing itself, yet interpreted in such a way that it cannot directly constitute the object of science, since it is itself the background of this and the condition of meaning. It is therefore a paradoxical concept – that of the non-thematic object of reference. It combines within itself the heuristic value

of the concepts of life and of the thing in itself.⁴⁴ The *Lebenswelt* understood in the light of the heuristic role its concept is to play in philosophy is the division between presence and absence – thematically, it is not there, but we also know that we should not try to manifest it. Yet it is not nothing, as it is a positive reference; it is therefore not a dialectical reflection of being in non-being, dialectical negativity. *Lebenswelt* in radical terms is no longer a concept of dialectics (the dialectic of being and of the concept as referring to something, or the dialectic of being and nothing as non-presence), but a concept of difference. “Difference and repetition” is a heuristic principle of philosophical thinking that competes with the dialectical principle. The shortest path to it is via structuralist thinking, but of course there are others too – perhaps including one that will take us from pragmatistic thinking via conversion of thinking to the *Lebenswelt* and affirmation of plurality as plurality of self-legitimising practices, which cannot be encompassed by one discourse.

A concept that also leads pragmatistic thinking from affirmation of plurality towards thinking of difference is that of irony – the result of heuristic reflection that makes us aware of the inevitable accidental nature of our choices – positive and negative (critical) – but at the same time the inevitability of favouring something at all. Irony is quasi-scepticism that in fact protects us both from serious scepticism and from naivety and dangerous claims of reason.⁴⁵

This ironic approach to which radically pragmatistic thinking such as that of Rorty seems to incline is a particular state of reassurance, a philosophical cease-fire, an equivalent of stoic calm that does not forbid admiration or impose a rigid distance to the world. This is what Rorty’s irony looks like. Rorty’s “ironists” sought freedom from the illusions of metaphysical philosophy, from dreams about a final language and final word, by seeing through the unity of such projects (based on the unity of the metaphysical claims that they contain) and abandoning them. For Rorty himself, though, irony is a form of optimism, a relaxing of the atmosphere after the storms of philosophy of opposition, crusades against metaphysics, a philosophy of reflection, philosophy of the subject and optimism, albeit tainted by a certain sadness and sense of the void left by belief in truth, authenticity of beliefs and taking sides. The new quality of “rejection” through irony comes from it not meaning rejection of one theory by another, but a departure from theorising as practising “private perfection” – and evident in this

44 Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, op. cit.

45 An excellent presentation of this kind of philosophical countenance is Odo Marquard’s *In Defence of the Accidental. Philosophical Studies*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1991).

is the instinctive aversion of pragmatistic thinking to unbridled theoreticality.⁴⁶ However, ironic theorising (not on itself) preserves the reliability of thinking and argumentation (within concrete discourses, with no aspirations to universal rationality). It no longer fears relativism, but this also means a lack of pathos – the traditional ideological spirit that sustained philosophy and gave it the impulse for hard work. Instead, we have an atmosphere of solidarity. This is no doubt a post-crisis phenomenon – a relaxation of philosophy after a period of collapse: from that of Hegelianism to that of Heideggerianism – and therefore a transitory one. Today, though, it is rather something arriving than something that is and dominates, and this is why we do not yet have the theoretical tools to speak about it other than as a certain sceptical-ironic disposition or approach.

3.4 Foundations of the Pragmatistic approach to Heuristics

Should heuristics share this mood, and be an ironic philosophy, and even a thinking of difference? Can heuristic reflection serve as an aid in debate and mediation and help philosophical communication? Since this is the path of heuristic reflection, and these are the forms it takes in pragmatistic thinking, the task of heuristics that results from this way of thinking is to adopt it.

The simplest pragmatic forms of heuristic thinking, when it goes beyond the concept of method, are based on such heuristic ideas and postulates as: if we understand what making an argument means we'll learn to argue better; if we understand what rationality is we'll be more rational; if we study the conditions of a debate we'll be more effective debaters. With these comes the heuresis of thinking about method, as well as rhetorical thinking that looks for models of

46 As a result, “the last thing the ironist theorist wants or needs is a theory of ironism” (Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989, p. 97). This sentence, admittedly, is an introduction to a theory of irony, and one may dispute to what degree it is a theory free from the totalising claims of theorising reason at which it is aimed. What seems most important, however, is the fact that it is a heuristic declaration that stands reflexively higher (despite being directed against excessive reflexivity) than its previous forms. Rejection of theoreticality means cutting oneself off from the tradition of rejection of “bad” naive, uncritical, and in more recent versions metaphysical, idealistic, Enlightenment, totalising philosophy by reflexively “exceeding” it. This process no longer proposes either remaining silent or returning to the thing itself, such as participating in practice, but draws its strength from remaining a fundamentally heuristic postulate. However, in a psychological sense, in a simple sense irony means adopting a certain attitude – a critical one yet at the same time one marked by solidarity – and it is in this way that we are talking about it.

arguments. These forms of heuristic thinking belong to “how/what” heuresis – the question “how to think”, posed in order to think better. Of course, heuristics deals with this question, but its focus is also the question of the influence that the form of heuresis exerts on the fate of philosophy. We discover that from this side it is threatened by succumbing to formalism (thinking about the “how”) as well as the dialectic of reflection and returning to the thing itself (the “what”). These consequences are both visible in the traditions associated with methodological and pragmatic thinking, and their result is the rejection of formalism and dialectics. From this we can draw conclusions on the degree to which heuristics should be inspired by the pragmatistic path of thinking.

Our awareness of the mechanism of affirmation of self-validating communicative practice, linked to rejection of its external validation in reflexive discourse, provides the following insight: the fate of the theory of argumentation, debate, rationality, and especially of more detailed theories of questions, criticism and authority, must be in accordance with pragmatic thinking. This means that they will either become formal theories and philosophical logic, or – in getting closer to the thing itself and discursive practice – they will become involved in its “what” and part of a particularistic discussion. Authentic thinking in “how/what” heuresis always ends in immersion in the “what” – in material involvement. Incidentally, it is generally accepted that we use meta-arguments in which we invoke certain rules of making arguments and having a debate. Between pure formalism of this kind of metaphilosophical theories and the extremely reflexive and critical form of doing philosophy there is also rhetorical practice, but this is spread between the canon of tracks and topoi and rhetorical practical skill. This does not preclude heuristics being a theory of discussion, argumentation, discourse analysis or even rhetoric. However, when engaging in such heuristic studies we would need to bear in mind their roots in the indeed dialectical “how/what” heuristic mode of thinking as well as the resultant consequences for the heuristic status of any such theory. The same applies to heuristic studies following the track of methodological and rhetorical thinking: they too depend on the maxim of knowing how to do something in order to do it better.

We can therefore say that the ultimate goal of pragmatistic research in heuristics concerning argumentation, discussion and communicative practices in philosophy cannot be to make a typology of arguments – to study their formal aspect, analyse the scope of their applicability and determine the conditions of good philosophical debate or the philosopher’s communicative competences. Rather, it should aim to recognise the heuristic processes in which reflection on the means of philosophical discourse occurs as a philosophical result, shaping

the final theoretical declaration. By undertaking this task, we engage directly with philosophy's actual matter and its objective questions, avoiding formalism and creation of a reflexive distance which we would later have to eliminate dialectically, ultimately without success.⁴⁷ The role of the thing itself is then played by the philosophical problem.⁴⁸

Heuristics engaged in the dialectic of the thing itself must grasp the key question of this, the Hegelian problem of conversion and "competing" concepts of totality. This is an issue that we have already touched upon, and will continue to do so, and we must therefore explain the unique heuristic situation created by talking about it. This explanation may also be treated as a heuristic introduction to the question, as well as being vital for the foundations of heuristics.

Essentially, this is about the relationship of general concepts and terms of heuristics to various concepts of totality. For example, the opposition we make between the thing itself and the discourse has no more logical power than other oppositions: subjectivity–objectivity, subject–object, or transcendental I–world, which are supposed to fall under this first one. The same goes for preferences in such matters as assuming an objectivistic stylisation (talking about reality), a logical one (talking about concepts), a semiotic-linguistic one (talking about expressions of language), or an epistemological one (talking about what is given). In the discourse of heuristics, our selection of certain terms is dictated by the fact that they are not in universal usage. If "the thing itself" were a common term, like "objective reality", perhaps in heuristic analysis rather than the term "the thing itself" we would have to use the term "objective reality". The heuristic status of analyses distancing themselves from the concepts that they refer to is misunderstood in general, as we ascribe to them a naive heuristic form seeking an absolute perspective and absolute meta-language. The rather trite fact that it is impossible to find an absolute meta-language is then pointed to, leading to the conclusion that these analyses are objectiveless. In other words, they are said to be an attempt at construction of an absolute theory similar to those at which they were looking.

47 For now, we will leave aside the subject of the practice of irony as a way of pursuing heuristics, until it comes to analysing other ways of ceasing all overcoming and ways to discovering thinking of difference.

48 At this point I will mention my own such analysis, "A heuristic analysis of transcendental discourse", on the correlation between the transcendental motif occurring in the form of a certain kind of reductive argumentation and the transcendental motif as a thesis of subjective establishment of every objectivity (Jan Hartman, "Analiza heurystyczna dyskursu transcendentalnego", *Sztuka i Filozofia* 1994, no. 9, pp. 99–108).

If, however, we wish to understand the particular phenomenon whereby it is impossible to make a conceptual and linguistic distinction between that which is only assumed in a concept (for example in the concepts of objective, authentic, transcendent existence) and that which is in the thing itself (for example authentic, transcendent existence), we must surrender to its influence. Yet this again means that we must try to make a linguistic distinction between the two orders, just as in the discourse shaping the self-knowledge of heuristics we search for the most general form (indicating, for instance, the “how/what” form) to define the heuresis of philosophy and heuristics, although we know in advance that there is no such heuristic absolute. The expressions that can be used for this – concrete being (as opposed to the concept of it), effective transcendence, and even the most radical such attempt, Heideggerian being, have more detailed meanings that are hastily adapted for purely heuristic issues. Incidentally, none of these are equally forceful as the colloquial “really”, which philosophers reject as being too overtly persuasive. For our needs, however, the stipulation that in a given case we are talking about being really or true objectivity produces the desired effect, and we therefore use this linguistic method. Similarly, the expression “the thing itself”, which means the true objectivity that is elusive in language, seems apt, as it is expressive.⁴⁹ Surrendering to the effects of this mode of heuresis does not necessarily mean – and in our case does not mean – absolute reliance on it. Heuristic studies do not have to deal with the same thing as the discourses that they refer to, but there is no basis in the argument that often lies behind this type of criticism – that talking about the concepts of totality is an attempt to exceed the limits of language, talking about something that cannot be talked about clearly. A heuristic study that initially adopts concepts and expressions, including the concept of totality, given with the area to be studied must at first be a reconstruction following the course dictated by a structuralist heuristic form that might, following Derrida, be called “following a parallel line”. This only provides the material for something more conclusive – for example for structuralist (recontextualising, searching for analogies between discourses, and finally deconstructing), hermeneutic (striving to understand the naturalness of the process of succession of different forms of totalisation) or pragmatic research.

It is the duty of pragmatic heuristics studying forms of argument in philosophy to answer the question of what good and what bad for the progress of philosophical thought can result from specific discourses, i.e. the question of their

49 Expressiveness is not its only virtue. The word “thing” refers not only to metaphysical being, but equally to the authenticity and truth of a concept, as in the phrase *rem tene, verba sequentur*.

heuristic value. It is particularly important to study how theoretical declaration, a layer of philosophical discourse, can be a correlate of the heuristic reflection carried out within it. Heuristics, as it is supposed to organise the results of various heuristic reflections, should provide means to facilitate the development of discourses of this kind and make it possible to overcome the difficulties in which they get caught up. For example, the critique of transcendentalism based on the charge that it concentrates on its own form of self-justifying argument, assigned it to the more general form of discourses expressing the claims to control of reason, thereby including it in the history of the dialectic of knowledge and power. Since this Nietzschean critical theme has been explored on a number of occasions by the most eminent authors – Adorno, Horkheimer, Foucault, Habermas, and Lyotard – it seems that there has been something of an exaggeration in the consciousness of contemporary philosophers of the question of the claims made by reason or the will to power. It is therefore a natural task of heuristics to seek an insight into the various forms of the critique of transcendentalism, possibly to develop them, but mostly to gain some positive heuristic knowledge and surrender to the cautionary influence of transcendental discourses and the criticism that accompanies them. Facing the epic of the philosophy of rejection, struggling with philosophical evil and its ever-changing definitions, we cannot be satisfied with the simple detachment done by radicalised pragmatistic thinking. The area that we would be cutting ourselves off from (for example establishing heuristics as something like philosophical mediation) is overfilled with heuristic reflection. Regarding transcendentalism, for instance, heuristics should be more of a critical continuation than a radical split, even if heuristics were able to explain the heuristic conception of transcendentalism better than itself, and compare it with others.

Transcendental discourses tell us much about the essence of justification, making it possible to understand the consequences of heuresis based on the postulate of legitimacy as the first postulate. In this way of thinking, the concept of justification develops – from the simple concept of proof, via the concept of legitimacy as validation in epistemological criticism, to the concept of final consolidation. We also know that the radical heuresis of validation aims to constitute a common source of validity: of philosophical theory, cognition as a whole, the sum of human experience, and the world. This validation may be formalistic and situated in a meta-discourse or meta-narrative, for example establishing a system of transcendental philosophy; it may also be (known in the heuristic mode as pragmatistic thinking) ceded to the thing itself, such as concrete practice, real discussion etc. Aware of the fate met by the heuresis of validation, we can justify

the heuristic thesis that philosophical discourse cannot be driven by the postulate of legitimacy, and therefore that heuristics cannot be epistemology in the Husserlian sense.

At the same time, the transcendental discourse and search for linguistic methods for distinguishing the thing itself from its concept and from that of its manner of existence show the extent to which we are both slaves to our concepts and their masters. Conceptual enslavement is described in detail by Hegel's dialectics. The unsuccessful attempts to fully master these concepts, meanwhile, were discussed by Nietzsche, and latterly in post-Heideggerian literature. A correlative task that has not yet been executed in full is to show the ways in which we do in fact master concepts when we have the freedom to choose the cognitive tasks, or actually heuristic means, that we see as having value. The history of transcendental thinking acts makes us aware of the possibility of much more complex heuresis than ordinary conclusions drawn from premises, proving that there are greater possibilities – even within the same fundamental heuristic postulate of seeking justifications. The structure of transcendental discourse also reveals the heuristic feature of philosophical thinking that it always contains both something “declarative”, “exhibited” for polemic as a thesis of a theory and an inviolable layer that constitutes its identity. This is clearly visible with transcendental discourses, as it takes the form of a self-justifying argument and is proclaimed in a characteristic fashion. It is the role of heuristics to ask the questions “why should we not be reconciled to this structure of discourse, and it is even legitimate in criticism and polemics to invoke the postulate that everything that belongs to philosophical discourse should constitute part of the argument and be subject to *petitio principii*?”⁵⁰ Such questions are of course asked, with the aims to broaden our heuristic methods, make philosophical heuresis more flexible and weaken the persuasive power of arguments based on a narrowed-down perception of it that does not fit in with the reality of discourse. So far, however they do not belong to their own domain, and thus are limited in their heuristic and practical power; heuristics is meant to serve as an institutional foundation of this kind of questions and the resultant research. This function is a practical one,

50 It is notable that it is universally acceptable in science to invoke heuristic (methodological) values as the argument for adopting a concept. In philosophy, meanwhile, the purely logical meaning of an argument or concept of an argument as an experiential source obscures other possible meanings of an argument, limiting the philosophical discourse or forcing philosophy to justify other heuristic motifs that cause them than those based on the simplest structure of the premise–conclusion or generally available experience; even an authority is today often not distinguished from an unjustified assumption.

pragmatically defined and additionally linked with the task designated to the heuristics of philosophical life – that of criticism of heuristic habituality. More in the case of heuristics pursued as reflection on the pragmatistic way of thinking in philosophy than that of the heuristics of philosophical life, which is subjected to a rather naturalistic mode of heuresis, we must be linked by the course and internal meaning of philosophical discourses, engaging directly in them in keeping with the pragmatic directive of participation in practice. As we know, this leads to full involvement in this practice – in the course of philosophical debates. Therefore, the input to them that we can identify as that of heuristics will consist solely of certain arguments and analyses based on heuristic reflection, as well as being untypical and not consolidated in heuristic habituality. Pragmatic heuristics is therefore only possible in a pragmatic sense – there is no material distinction between it and the philosophical discourses in which it is involved (for example speaking about transcendentalism or pragmatism), and it can only be distinguished by more frequent reference to the results of heuristic reflection and invocation of a certain kind of typically metaphysical arguments. The main task of pragmatic heuristics is to formally constitute that “institutional” source of heuristic analyses and arguments which – let us repeat – occur in philosophy anyway, and whose element is the individual context in which they appear.

3.5 Perspectives of Pragmatistic Heuristics

Heuristic pragmatic research would be divided into two areas. The first would be the heuristics of philosophical communication or discourse analysis studying the practice, typical courses and consequences of various philosophical discourses guided by the heuristic intention providing expectations as to the results of various types of analyses and arguments, and thus acquiring the ability to accelerate the process of the discourse and protection from typical errors. The second would be the semiotics and ontology of philosophical discourses, striving to describe the semiotic functions of such expressions as “problem”, “aspect of an issue”, “argument”, or “conception”, referring to the assumed elements of their structure, especially in combination with the ontological theses proclaimed or accepted within such discourses.

3.5.1 Heuristics of Philosophical Communication

Discourse analysis understood in such a wide sense of course exists, albeit not as a separate field. There is also another type of discourse analysis directed by different heuristic ideas, such as Foucault’s structuralist discourse analysis (the

archaeology of knowledge). The pragmatic intention to deliver applicable theoretical skill and the heuristic notion of the possibility of foreseeing the future course of discourse and avoiding errors has partially guided rhetoric. This is also the heuristic meaning of Schopenhauer's *The Art of Being Right* as well as some research in the field of argumentation theory, the theory of questions or of criticism and dispute, and even the rather unphilosophical theory of negotiation. I sense that this set is missing pragmatic research that might be of interest to and be able to be developed by heuristics – specifically in providing order to the heuristic wisdom of the theory of heuristic maxims. Every experienced philosopher has them and sometimes calls upon them as an argument, although the value of such arguments alongside contemporary heuristic habits remains minor and needs to be strengthened. The theory of heuristic maxims could indeed become an important part of heuristic discourse analysis.

The heuristic maxims used to facilitate philosophical discourse can relate to various issues – from literary style to dialectical principles. Here are some examples:

- A philosophical statement is more likely to convince the addressee if it is not too difficult and is presented in a good style of language. (It's easy to advise.)
- The respect of philosophers is earned by statements that formulate the kind of firm and distinctive positions – even apodictic – that characterise those regarded as the greatest philosophers.
- Philosophical positions are historically important and discussed when a simple notion, an easily pictured mental device and connected metaphor are involved in understanding them – for example of substance as a physical thing, Kantian reason as forms providing shape, Leibniz's world as mirrors.
- Philosophers have the tendency to adopt as a background for their own positions views that should be criticised and that nobody actually proclaims in the form in which they oppose them. Popular names for such fictions include a solipsism, consistent scepticism, and relativism. Opposing such simplified positions on a long-term basis helps more sophisticated forms of them to develop which sometimes even take on the names previously used in a pejorative sense. It is important to realise that the proponents of these positions are well aware of the traditional counterstatements and their views are always in part a response to them.
- If in philosophical discourse much depends on an accepted stark opposition, in the sense of a certain dualism or bipolarity (for instance subjectivity–objectivity) or also of opposing classifications (such as scientific–unscientific, logically justified–unjustifiable, analytical, synthetic), its historical meaning

will be limited to the role it plays in the dialectical process of removing the oppositions it utilises; with this it loses significance.

- In philosophical discourse, we generally aim to work out some *concepts of reference*, of what it refers to as its object and source of validity, as well as its form, the source of logical correctness and of its truth. On the objective side, this function is fulfilled by being, the world, reality, experience etc., and on the formal side by philosophy, method, logic and rationality. These and many other concepts of reference are always ascribed a more specific heuristic function than solely being the object of reference. This might be a conceptual outline, regulative idea, or assumptions. We must be aware of the significance of these various heuristic forms in our statements and in those which we criticise. Confusion of heuristic roles can lead to paralogisms that are hard to detect and to explain as well as to unjust criticisms.
- Philosophical discourse as something conceptual, and therefore also formal, aims in the progress of self-reflection to take on more formalistic-reflexive forms, for example turning from metaphysical into epistemological, methodological, linguistic etc. We must be aware of the heuristic nature of these conversions and not jump to assign to them a sense of metaphysical declaration (for ourselves and others).

These are just selected examples – we could go on and on. And they are not uniform observations – they contain rhetorical, methodological, and technical maxims. What they have in common is the pragmatic heuristic form of a tool facilitating a thorough insight into philosophical discourse that can make its course smoother. As with any pragmatic aphorisms, of course – from compendia of the art of rhetoric to moralistic *dicta* – the value of heuristic maxims is only apparent in the hands of those capable of using them, who, it would seem, first need to take on board a large amount of contents of this type. The formal heuristic sense of such use of aphorisms – to see through, anticipate, safeguard against errors etc. – is naive in the sense that it calls for formalisation (even if this means only codification) of the characteristics of experience in philosophical work on the one hand and the detail of the discourse (concept) on the other. Although this is an unattainable objective (the impediment being formalism), the effort to conceptualise experience and ability does bring some partial success. It is good to realise that success in such cases, for example in all methodology, is always incomplete.

However, in heuristics, the list of heuristic maxims cannot be an independent and final theoretical result. Its task when armed with this list will be to comment on it in the theory of heuristic maxims. Such a theory may have the chance

to show especially clearly the “family similarities” of the intentions and ideas guiding the various types of philosophical reflection – logical, methodological, rhetorical, and hermeneutic ideas. The principle of this similarity – the appearance of a principle of unity – is assumed as heuristicity. The theory of heuristic maxims might make it clearest of all why there is no unambiguous answer to the question of what “heuristic” means, that it is a concept that is in a way analogous, and drawing its validity from this analogousness. Heuristics as a theory of heuristic maxims seeking their mutual connections and thereby facilitating their association and making it clear that many of them apply at the same time in specific cases can strengthen the practical value of the use of heuristic aphorisms (and also help to formulate them in the most correct and uniform fashion), as well as providing it with an “institutional” basis.

3.5.2 The Ontology of Philosophy

Another form of pragmatic pursuit of heuristics might be the semiotics and ontology of philosophical discourse – in other words the ontology of philosophy. Philosophical discourse often uses various mental notions (devices) and characteristic metaphors in which theoretical creations are defined in a way that is analogous to ontological formations. For example, we speak of the sides and aspects of an issue, or of theoretical fields. The representations of the structure of discourse behind these metaphors are based in ontological ideas, but also reform them, or at least consolidate them. This is therefore something more than just harmless use of metaphors, rather representing a factor constituting the discourse, including its positive theses, and therefore the philosophical result and matter. It is an important task of heuristics to describe these relationships. And this task is a pragmatic one, utilising as it does the tension produced in philosophy between the theoretical (and materially important) and therefore the presumed meaning itself, and the practical, which constitutes only an addition, and thus is only a way of speaking, a manner of revealing contents, only a metaphor. All this “only”, the whole pragmatic side of the discourse, is to be raised to the status of theoretical factor and acquire significance – as a source both of possible arguments and of potential errors. At the same time, it is about broadening the possibilities and competences of argument and philosophy’s self-knowledge as a certain kind of practice. The project of heuristics of philosophical life is directed by somewhat similar intentions. In the history of philosophy, meanwhile, rhetoric was familiar with the idea of extracting concealed heuristic devices, although it was probably not until Heidegger, and especially Derrida, that the contemporary philosophical community were sensitised to this matter.

In the self-knowledge and self-description of philosophical discourse, as in every description, it is the form of the object that dominates. There are essentially two main ways of conceiving the philosophical object. The first is as an empty object, defined negatively, only just named and not yet formed – a problem, issue, question. The second already has a distinctly objective structure, and is understood as filling the empty form specified by the question or posing of the problem – a position, point of view, outlook, conception, proposition, idea, concept, and also argument. Each of these objects has its own unique structure and customary heuristic status – for example an outlook or view, as something defined subjectively, has other “rights” than a position that functions more declaratively. These cases need to be studied in terms of their semiotic functions – and more broadly their heuristic ones. The rendition of these definitions of the philosophical object as its own content and the declarative layer of the discourse is clearly visible with the concept of the idea. The sense of the idea as an intentional correlate of the activity of the mind easily permeates the world as postulated in philosophical theory, in which (or beyond which) such entities as ideas are located.⁵¹ The concept of being itself was originally formed as an empty formal notion of what this new art of philosophy was to deal with. It became a correlate of the universal programme of knowledge, and thus of a certain philosophical object called philosophy. The demands made of philosophy (knowledge) – absolute, invariable certainty and other forms of perfection – were soon transformed by hypostasis in the concept of the absolute as the perfect being, the only one which can be a truly worthy object of cognition.

51 An understanding of this process in heuristics would add to the excessively simplified structure of talking about existence in philosophy, one that contains possible definitions of ways of existence that are equal in terms of their semiotic function and in a way stand alongside one another, as well as a distinct way of existence, the “really” (true, autonomous, authentic etc.) one. However, attributing existence (in a certain manner) is still understood as a simple function differing only in terms of these ways, whereas its sense usually involves a certain heuristic role – the ideas are thus seen not so much as existing as postulated, proclaimed, accepted, assumed. Yet these terms are dependent on the dominant concept of recognising existence, and can be completed with the expression “as existing”. It would take much painstaking work to separate these classifications from existence and give them an autonomous meaning. I made a tentative stab at this in the article “O wyższości ideałów nad ideami” (“The dominance of ideals over ideas”), published in a somewhat distorted form in: *Wartość bycia. Władysławowi Stróżewskiemu w darze* (Warszawa-Kraków: Polskie Towarzystwo Filozoficzne, 1994), pp. 186–203.

Like the objects of ontological worlds, philosophical objects are located in a certain space defined by some concept of totality. In the self-knowledge of philosophical discourse, this is the function of the concepts of cultural range, philosophy, tradition, the canon of philosophical texts, logical space, known arguments and state of research. In the construction of philosophical discourse, meanwhile, the function of closer reference, expressed in ontologies by, for example, class or type, is fulfilled by the subject matter, philosophical tradition, science and school, the author, theory, conception and others. It is very easy for such forms of totality as the tradition or history of philosophy to become declared objective forms of totality attributed to the world in philosophical theory by making an overt or concealed conversion of the world into the history, tradition, texts and even object of philosophy. The formal relations of the philosophical object with its direct basis are specified in terms of belonging (for instance to a subject matter), links (of one position with another), relationships etc. Such concepts of closer reference as the order and conceptual model are especially interesting. The custom of attributing the philosophical object to a certain order or conceptual model results in a vision of the world as divided into (relatively autonomous) orders and structured by categories, classes and relations. For heuristics, of great significance is the customarily dominant form of totalisation in which the connections between philosophical objects (mostly interpreted in the heuristic notion as names and sentence) are logical connections. Today, this favoured idea imposing the presumption of a neutral logical domain common to all discourses in which they can be objectively discussed and criticised competes with the similarly authoritative hermeneutic conception. The latter denies the possibility of a uniform source of all philosophical statements that can be an absolute position for evaluating philosophical views – it denies the heuristic power of logical space. What would therefore be useful would be analyses of heuristic habits in terms of the effects on it that result from this competition. Necessary for such analyses to take place would be development of the ontology of philosophy, describing the notions of logical space and various philosophical objects such as proposition, sentence or logically understood argument.

In the last century, there have been considerable changes and developments in the ontologising way of talking about such philosophical objects as issue, position and concept. Ascribing to them aspects, dimensions and sides has become almost universal, which is no doubt mutually linked to the departure in ontological notions from ascribing a distinct meaning to categorial constructions: part-whole and subject of characteristics-characteristic. Moreover, in every representation of a philosophical object, apart from its own structure we also

conjecture other ontological structures. For example, in the philosophical object of Kant's problem of the subject, a certain set of ways of understanding the subject is assumed. Of course, the structure of the "problem x in y " object affects the accepted theses for the Kantian subject as well as the subject in general. Talking about the problem of the subject in Kant is in fact talking about the subject, but mediated in a complicated manner in deliberation on the works of Kant and about Kant, and thus in talking about various topics in his philosophy. As a result of this research process, apart from the object of interest to philosophers – the subject in which Kant was also interested – a new object also emerges that is a correlate of the discussion on the question of the subject in Kant, the history of the interpretation of Kant's works, the history of the question of the subject in philosophy. This subject is called the Kantian subject. It is an intentional object that is so complex, as it contains the heteronomous moments of the structure of the problem and of the subject, and at the same time so indeterminate, that the human mind struggles to cope with it. Perhaps heuristic reflection might manage to prevent the negative consequences of two overlapping ontologies: the ontological notions with which we grasp the philosophical discourse and the declarative ontological notions on the world.

The heuristic situation is further complicated by the multitude of *modi* in which the (global) object conjectured in the philosophical object appears within it. Within a philosophical position or problem, the supposed object might be, for example, "some" object, "a certain" object, or "a given", "specified", "concrete", "random", or "every" object. The semiotic culture, and the resultant awareness of the consequences that using each of these expressions brings, is not yet consolidated in philosophy. This applies all the more to expressions with a complicated logical status such as "as", "as of", "as it were", "in a way", and even simple quotation marks.⁵²

The form of a philosophical proposition is often defined by the more general structure of the discourse. A typical structure is one that assigns the philosophical object to a background that is described in a more or less general fashion. We can say about a view that it is philosophical, located in some tradition or another or belongs to a particular field. These kinds of statements in philosophy fulfil a

52 All is not well with the logical culture of philosophers, and we can hardly expect it to embrace the subtleties of using such expressions any time soon. It is lamentable that even the greatest contemporary philosophers are no strangers to such errors as speaking of an "apparent paradox" in the sense of an apparent contradiction or simply paradox, or employing the phrase "another alternative" to mean "another possibility", "another solution"; further, less common examples would be easy to find.

much more complicated heuristic function and have a considerably more complex semiotic structure than simply indicating that an object belongs to a specific type. There is at least one, equally fundamental heuristic (semiotic) structure here, which is the proclamation of a regulative idea (for example the idea of philosophy or philosophical art) – the formation of its paradigmatic cases (models of correct usage), and finally – filling it with concrete meaning. The knowledge of various functions of concepts and propositions in philosophical discourse, developed to an extent by Hegel, is today dispersed in various theories of discourse and arguments and in semiotics. What is needed, meanwhile, is integral knowledge. This must be not only logical or semiotic, but *heuristic*, on the functions of the concept of totality and other concepts of reference, for example that of philosophy or those of the names of philosophical disciplines such as ethics or aesthetics. It must also be on functions of statements in philosophy, especially existential propositions – other than logical and rhetorical ones.

Another typical form of philosophical statement that is also dependent on the general discourse structure is based on the function of distinguishing the moments of the structure of the philosophical object. We shall once again mention aspects, dimensions, the sides of a problem, issues etc. Distinguishing the moments of the philosophical object is a result of the tendency to distinguish analogous moments in our ontological ideas about the world, but also makes a clear contribution to their preservation. Aspects, dimensions, sides and moments are significant, but they are often just a way to divorce ourselves from the concepts of parts and characteristics which have been excessively dominant in ontological ideas. It is a similar case with the concept of the object, and especially the concept of “something”, which has a mainly negative meaning – of being distinct from the concept of a material thing, being, substance, i.e. the dominant notions of what is identical.

In transferring the way of talking about the reality of discourse to the world and identifying in it sides, layers, aspects etc., we sanction certain ideas that are not only heuristic but also strictly ontological; in this way we also influence the heuristic habituality, not always positively. By supposing that what is distinguished as an aspect or side has comparative autonomy, we tend to also treat incompatible theories as concerning various aspects of issues. This accustoms us to the kind of thinking about philosophical theories in which the question of whether they are right is secondary, and, when asked in relation to those of the greatest authors, even improper. The emphasis on the form of philosophical statement in which the proposition or conception are assigned to a background that is a certain form of totality, like a tradition or a conceptual model, serves

to consolidate this way of thinking. The contemporary heuristic habituality has the tendency to convert objective issues into philosophical objects – problems, conceptions, ideas etc. Partly as a result of this, categories referring to ontological ideas on the philosophical discourse are adopted in ontological theory. This applies to two pairs of concepts in particular. The first is the form (respectively in the ontological sense and as a concept or idea) and the content that fills it (of being or logical, semantic). The second is the possibility (ontological, and the possibility of a certain position or concept) and the realisation of the possibility (real existence of the object). In general, it seems obvious, and furthermore theoretically indeterminate, to accept that the world (or being) falls into the categories of possibility – realisation of possibility. Most contemporary ontologies assume that an error can at most be attributing possibility to something impossible, or existence to something that is only possible etc., but not in using these categories to conceive the world. However, the fact that it is possible to talk about the world in various ways does not mean that the world is such that something is necessary in it and something else only possible, or that the world is the realisation of a certain possibility, or even that something in it is either impossible or possible, or necessary etc. The same goes for the category of form and content (or matter).

The ontology of philosophy, a heuristic form deriving from pragmatistic thinking and engaged in semiotic analyses, cannot deliver a uniform theory: either describing the self-image – the self-knowledge of philosophical discourses – or proposing a formal system and para-ontological language for them. After all, pragmatistic reflection teaches us that discursive practice is too diverse to be canonised, even descriptively. We also learn the same lesson from semiotic and linguistic analyses portraying the complexity of the question of the significance and function of the statement. However, studying the ontology of philosophy, like other heuristic research, can help us to perceive the limitations and hasty theoretical conclusions, and conceptual links that we have not taken into account, and the consequences of our views not perceived before.

We should not continue any further in designing pragmatistic heuristics. Perhaps we have already gone too far in imagining the prospects, not substantiated by the detail of heuristic research and not corresponding with how heuristics might potentially develop in future. However, if we are correct in identifying the pragmatistic mode of thinking as one of the paths for heuristics to follow, from these rough analyses we can see that, at least in its most advanced stages, this research will be combined with research deriving from methodological thinking and with the heuristics of philosophical life. In all these areas of heuristics, we

are influenced by the heuristic idea encompassing the discourse and the thing itself – philosophical life or communicative practice to which it is to refer. Formalistic heuresis is dominant in all of them, designating formally specified research objectives such as uncovering the structures of heuristic habituality, characterising philosophical methods or reconstructing argumentation in philosophy.

4. Rhetorical Thinking

4.1 Cognition and Persuasion. The Duality of Rhetoric

If we can agree that a philosophical statement ought to be clear and convincing, this means also admitting that philosophy has something in common with rhetoric. Yet the history of this link is marked with ambivalence in which the negative side has generally dominated. This is why rhetoric today, although it has essentially become “philosophised”, and is sometimes even treated as a certain way of doing philosophy, is not unreservedly regarded as part of the discipline. Rhetorical thinking has therefore become thinking in terms of its own duality. This gives it a dialectical character, as well as continually referring to the issue of being philosophical and the fundamental notions associated with it, for which rhetoric is apparently no match.

The fact that rhetoric is closely linked to philosophy, but does not belong to it, means that rhetorical thinking has an extremely attractive rhetoric position. In it, the philosophical pursuit can be thematised not as philosophy’s simple acquisition of self-knowledge, but as an “equal partner”, sometimes designating itself as a rival. “Rhetoric is the counterpart of Dialectic”, go the first words of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*. Many whose philosophising has led them to breach the inviolability of the concept of philosophy, seeing this as more meaningful than simply contrasting their philosophy with bad philosophy, have identified the area in which they found themselves after “leaving” philosophy as that of rhetoric. It is all the more convenient to invoke rhetoric since in rhetorical thinking there are questions over the identity of sense and literalness as an elementary heuristic notion, belonging to the naive interpretation of the difference between more and less figurative (in particular metaphorical) ways of speaking. This is also why the identity of (use of) rhetoric, which ought to be respected, is not a true identity and thus a real illusion of identity, but just the appearance of this illusion.

The most distinct form, and thus in a way also model, of the mutually linked oppositions studied within the “question of rhetoric” and now abandoned – literal and figurative, *signifiant* and *signifié*, logos and myth, concept and metaphor, reason and imagination, non-linguistic meaning and linguisticity of every meaning – seems to be the contrast of their conceptual and logical content – the theoretical proposition with aspirations to be true and based on a logical argument, with what appears to be just an addition: linguistic adornment, the statement’s form that can make the proposition and arguments more convincing, style and ornamentation. The other side of this relationship is problematic for the question

of rhetoric and rhetorical thinking. It starts from the fact that whatever seems to be a (possibly unnecessary) addition, and at least something independent of the logical content of discourse as a carrier of truth, is regarded as being part of its essence. Part of the essence of discourse, therefore, is the moment of persuading, yet reasoning is treated not only as proving the truth, but also authentication of it. The possibility of concurrence between a proof or syllogism and the conditions of discourse, concentrating on which threatens to conceal the noble goal – the truth – with pragmatically (“sophistically”) conceived goals, is based on a simple pragmatic heuristic rule: “we are most fully persuaded when we consider a thing to have been demonstrated”.⁵³ The heuristic nature of rhetoric is therefore first of all pragmatic: considering in theory the practical circumstances and real structure of discourse as the practice of human communication.

Evidence of the ambivalent situation of rhetoric is provided by two Platonic dialogues: the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*. In the former, Gorgias defends rhetoric as the art of persuasion, which can be used justly and to serve the truth. Yet for Socrates, the very fact that persuading figures as an objective in rhetoric detaches it from the highest good and removes any credibility. It seems that for Plato, at least in his early period, striving for the truth is so unconditional that the discourse and dialectic can only be guided by arguments of the thing itself, with no help permitted from art. This, although it concerns the process of the discourse, does not do so because of its actual goal, the truth. Rhetoric here, then, is in a sense corrupted thinking. In the *Phaedrus*, the opposition between the practical conditions of discourse and pure striving for the truth is maintained. Yet here Plato recognises the heuristic value of knowledge, which after all distinguishes those who are able to cognise the truth from those who are not. He reserves for it the term “dialectic”; if rhetoric is to have a positive meaning, it is in the sense of the same dialectical capability, except used to present the truth. If, however, dialectic too is ultimately to be about exposing and offering a reminder of the truth which we already have in the soul, then rhetoric worthy of the name of art and worthy of a philosopher is the equivalent of dialectic. It might be characterised by knowledge of the soul, permitting the speaker to lead the listener to grasp the truth more easily than merely by using proof. In the *Phaedrus*, there is acceptance of the *topos* which rhetoric uses to argue that as an art in itself it can have a good or bad use, and that a good use – in the aim of cognition and presenting the truth – is in accordance with its nature, since persuasion is based on truth. Rhetoric is therefore not rejected, but idealised, with the objective of

53 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1355a 5, trans. W. Rhys Roberts (New York: Dover Publications, 2004).

the persuading being united with the objective as truth and good, becoming an objective of persuading of the truth – a pragmatic complement of attaining the truth by proclaiming it capably. True rhetoric, understood as the art of persuasion, would have to be able to persuade even the gods, who after all could not be persuaded of untruth. Therefore, the value and justification of true rhetoric, taking place for the noblest reasons, lie in the fact that it creates beauty by adorning and improving the speech in which the truth is defended. Ultimately, though, Plato is reluctant to admit to rhetoric, as his Socrates does not claim to have any rhetorical gifts. Plato is a philosopher – and that is enough.

Emphasis of the rhetor's moral virtues as a condition of the success of his art and declaration of the affiliation to the truth is a topos of defence of rhetoric that became part of the daily practice of classical rhetoric from Isocrates onwards.⁵⁴ Although in antiquity the authority of rhetoric, despite Plato's doubts, remained unthreatened (and was also taught at the Academy), in the Early Christian period such reservations and declarations took on a defensive meaning, which also contributed to the decline of rhetoric. However, as the position of rhetoric was challenged, this also had the positive philosophical consequence of giving it the heuristic feature of a field continually defending its *raison d'être*. This meant that it took part of this risky type of discourse upon itself, for some time freeing philosophy from its yoke; only in the era of the development of modern science and positivist ideology would philosophy have serious concerns about opinions of it. At the same time, Plato's subordination of the pragmatic essence of rhetoric – its involvement in the human and practical dimension of cognition taking place in discussion – to a transcendent goal, the supra-pragmatic value of pure truth and the highest good, once and for all linked rhetorical thinking with the issue of things being finite and infinite – today known as the question of transcendence. Therefore, rhetorical thinking is a constituent part of the tradition of juxtaposing and reconciling the finite nature of humans and the infinite nature of our goal.

54 For example, Cicero wrote, "Eloquence, after all, has its own place among the supreme virtues. Of course, all the virtues are equal and equivalent, but still, one is more beautiful and splendid in appearance than another. This is the case with the power that I am talking about: having acquired all-embracing knowledge, it unfolds the thoughts and counsels of the mind in words, in such a way that it can drive the audience in whatever direction it has applied its weight. And the greater this power is, the more necessary it is to join it to integrity and the highest measure of good sense. For if we put the full resources of speech at the disposal of those who lack these virtues, we will certainly not make orators of them, but will put weapons into the hands of madmen." (M. T. Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, trans. James M. May and Jakob Wisse, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001).

However, rhetoric, whose *raison d'être* is in the finiteness of humans (who must be persuaded of the truth, directed to the truth, spoken to appropriately, taking into account their deficiencies and mental inclinations), serves the highest goals. Its task is to tend a field in which the two orders – human and divine – meet, and in which they should agree. In classical rhetorical thinking, the accent will be either on transmitting the truth, making it available in a beautiful form (and thus exploiting the possibilities of the human mind and bringing humans closer to the higher order), or on the function of balancing the effects of human finiteness, expressed in the impossibility of full cognition of the truth. Yet in both cases, the object of the rhetoric is the reality of human mental life, human finiteness. In today's philosophical language, we might say that rhetoric is indeed anthropological. As a theory dealing directly with human affairs – albeit on behalf of a higher order, but not referring directly to the world of ideas – it had to remain on the margins of philosophy. It became an assistant, a supplement, an introduction, a Latin lesson for teenagers, and at best a *sedes argumentorum* for lawyers and politicians. It became almost fully attuned to the needs of people in professions that called for persuasive techniques, and thus further and further removed from philosophy, and increasingly functional and schoolish. If it survived the attacks of some Church Fathers, who called it “the art of sinful lying”, this was no doubt down to its frequent teaching of useful things (letter writing as well as good style and more advanced grammar). It was also able to defend itself, stressing its role in proclaiming the truth of revelation.⁵⁵

Rhetoric's periods of weakness, when it became detached from philosophy, used as a background against which philosophy could define itself optimistically, alternated with periods when it held a high position, and was able to serve as a field in which philosophy was self-critical. Of course, the discourse that emerges from the dispute between philosophy and rhetoric as two forms of intellectual life capable of putting forward similar cognitive aspirations and linked by the common characteristic of not having a specific object, heads dialectically towards conceptions reconciling the two sides. These take the aspirations of both rhetoric and philosophy into account without subordinating one to the other. Aristotle is the model of such conduct in philosophy, and in rhetoric it is Cicero in his dialogue *De Oratore*. It could have been a different story, though. Quintilian, for example, argues in the name of the rights of all those using language and involved in the moral questions which philosophers claim the sole right to

55 I owe much here to Hans Blumenberg's book *Wirklichkeiten in denen wir leben* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981, pp. 104–136).

contemplate competently. He attributes the significance of universal wisdom to the ability to articulate and to master language, practically accusing philosophy of hubris.⁵⁶

4.2 Aristotle: Rhetoric in the System of Logical Knowledge

Aristotle finds a natural place for rhetoric among sciences. For him, many disciplines were servile to science and functioned as tools for conducting it – and rhetoric was no exception. For this reason too, the fact that rhetoric is not directly concerned with obtaining true knowledge about the world does not disqualify it as a science. This concerns the entire *organon*. The sciences of thinking and argument are only responsible for the results of their applications in the scope of the correctness of a syllogism. The logical interpretation of this is the principle of rhetoric being one and the same as Aristotle's other sciences involving reasoning. The *Rhetoric* is also on reasoning, but from a different point of view from his *Analytics* or *Topics* – in very general terms, it is more pragmatic. The topic which provides dialectics with tools is also pragmatic. The heuristic rule which the topic adds to the elementary requirement of logical correctness is that of the authority of universal opinion or of authoritative individuals: a topic is about a dialectical syllogism which “is ‘dialectical’, if it reasons from opinions that are generally accepted [...] [i.e.] by every one or by the majority or by the philosophers”.⁵⁷ This rule is essentially rhetorical, as the authority of opinion turns out to be important in discussion since it persuades, or has the capacity to do so; the (only) logical counterpart of this rule is the probability of premises in dialectical reasoning. The *Topics* outline the possible forms of an argument, types

56 “[F]or what person [...] does not sometimes speak of justice, equity, and goodness, who even among rustics does not make some inquiries about the causes of the operations of nature? [...] But it will be the orator that will understand and express those matters best, and if he should ever arrive at perfection, the precepts of virtue would not have to be sought from the schools of the philosophers. At present it is necessary to have recourse, at times, to those authors who have, as I said, adopted the deserted, but pre-eminently better part of philosophy and to reclaim as it were what is our own, not that we may appropriate their discoveries, but that we may show them that they have usurped what belonged to others. [...] Let the orator, therefore, be such a man as may be called truly wise [...]” (Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*, ed. Lee Honeycutt, trans. John Selby Watson, Ames, IA: Iowa State, 2006, access at: <http://rhetoric.eserver.org/quintilian/>, Preface, 16, 17, 18).

57 Aristotle, *Topics*, trans. W. A. Pickard-Cambridge, access: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/topics.html>, 100b.

and forms of premises of reasoning, and the recurring intellectual actions useful in (dialectical) reasoning (i.e. *topoi*). The reason for the diverse logical nature of *topoi* is that what they have in common is not their logical type or grammatical or semiotic function (at the most their logical one, as a possible premise), but rather their heuristic character, which entails equipping a philosopher or speaker discussing a problem with a pragmatic-logical source of arguments. But whereas the *Topics* presents discussion, the actual procedure of human communication, pragmatically only in the sense that they can be applied in the doxic order, the *Rhetoric* is open to everything that the reality of this communication brings with it. This is illustrated by the definitions of topics and rhetoric: “Our treatise [*Topics*] proposes to find a line of inquiry whereby we will be able to reason from opinions that are generally accepted about every problem propounded to us, and also shall ourselves, when standing up to an argument, avoid saying anything that will obstruct us.”⁵⁸ “Rhetoric may be defined as the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.”⁵⁹

Aristotle understands the more pragmatic character of rhetoric compared to dialectics, or rather the topics that deal with dialectics, as the political nature of this science. Apart from logical reason, the authority of the speaker and understanding of the feelings and mentality of the listener which complement the arguments should be involved in the rhetorical persuasion and legitimisation of the truth.⁶⁰ Furthermore, it is permissible for these arguments to have a simplified logical structure, as a condition for preserving good style and adding persuasive power to the statements. There is more freedom when establishing proof in rhetoric and using the characteristic form of syllogism, and in particular is not required to mention all premises, some of which can be assumed. Aristotle calls these syllogisms enthymemes.

The duality that characterises rhetoric – the conflict between absolute striving for the truth and persuasion – is mitigated by both Aristotle and other theoreticians of rhetoric with the *topos* meant to legitimise rhetoric and involving declaring that persuasion and adornments to statements are radically subordinated to the ideal of truth as the necessary condition. Also characteristic of rhetorical thinking are the functional distinctions introducing “non-truth-related” rhetorical factors to the integral system of rhetoric (and of course also to the corresponding structure of speech). A fundamental distinction of this type is the *tria*

58 *Ibidem*, 100a.

59 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, trans. W. Rhys Roberts, access: <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.html1335b>, 25.

60 Cf. *ibidem*, 1356a 20–30.

officia dicendi deriving from Aristotle: the cognitive, moral and aesthetic function of speech. However, narratives pronouncing the unity of speech and rhetoric, declaring the nobility of intention and glorifying moral value and the will to cognise and proclaim the truth – pronouncing the ethos of the speaker and rhetoric – are always situated above the distinctions reproduced in analytical-empirical discourse on rhetoric. Not only Cicero, but even Gorgias warned that “a speaker must be just”, while in the Platonic philosophy which brought a revival of rhetoric in the Renaissance, it was treated as a logical tool of practical cognition and a vital element of education. The moralism that came with the rhetoric of Platonic provenance was one of the factors that made it an inspiring source of anthropologically oriented philosophy, confronting the practicality and finiteness of human reality with transcendence.

4.3 *Argumentum Ad Hominem* (Schopenhauer, Perelman, Heidegger)

Rhetoric has always been enveloped in a dialectical conflict that has characterised pragmatic thinking: that between the canon and formalism on the one side, and authentic participation and living practice on the other. This has tended to be solved using a metanarrative proclaiming rhetoric as a skill or art (unlike the canon⁶¹) and by introducing appropriate distinctions with which rhetoric has been able to counteract the torpor of formalism. An internal distinction of this kind divides rhetoric into *rhetorica docens* (the art of rhetoric or the canon), *rhetorica utens* (practical rhetoric and oratory) and *rhetorica naturalis* (the natural skills developed by the art of rhetoric). Outwardly, meanwhile, owing to scepticism towards formalised rhetoric, it has been distinguished from that which is more real and authentic, known for example as eloquence or the art of words. Yet these multiple distinctions and this analytical heuresis of rhetorical thinking were a betrayal of the pragmatic intention that lay at its foundation – to widen the accepted means of discourse and adopt for theory and special forms of linguistic

61 Quintilian, for example, writes, “But let no man require from me such a system of precepts as is laid down by most authors of books of rules, a system in which I should have to make certain laws, fixed by immutable necessity, for all students of eloquence [...] for rhetoric would be a very easy and small matter if it could be included in one short body of rules, but rules must generally be altered to suit the nature of each individual case, the time, the occasion, and necessity itself; consequently, one great quality in an orator is discretion, because he must turn his thoughts in various directions according to the different bearings of his subject.” Quintilian, op. cit., Book 2, Ch. 13, 1 and 2.

practice (legal or political speech) the wealth of meanings of linguistic behaviours. Unfortunately, rhetoric opts to inventorise its reserves of meanings, overanalysing and cutting itself off from anything that cannot be isolated and classified. And this is also why rhetoric itself contributed to the formalisation of philosophical statements, perhaps no less than the critique of rhetoric as an unauthorised extension of logic, to the detriment of the correctness and clarity of philosophical discourse. The formalistic excess in which rhetoric was struggling, albeit unsuccessfully – as here too it was creating more and more distinctions – was the reason why it was condemned in Romanticism – the era of the cult of spontaneity. Positivism also held rhetoric in contempt, ultimately pushing it outside of science (despite the opposition of the eminent but at the time rather un-influential philosophers Schopenhauer and Nietzsche). Its renaissance did not come until the 1950s, first with Perelman, and then the post-Heideggerian philosophers and literary critics.

A late representative of classical rhetorical thinking, based on the Platonic ideal of truth and contrasting true proof with apparent proof (sophistry), and employing analysis of the means of discourse (and canonising them), was Schopenhauer. He was a philosopher with remarkably heuristic interests, a passionate critic of the scientific community and heuristic habituality. Part of his legacy was eristics, described in *The Art of Being Right*, which – wrongly – he considered “the first effort of its kind”. The methodological substance of this slim treatise was based on distinguishing logic as the pure science of the laws of thinking, and sophistry as the false science of the tricks used to apparently prove false statements, from the eristic dialectics that he postulated, which disregarded whether something was true or false, and was more interested in the actual course of disputes and methods used to show reasons. This is the science of the verbal duel, or from another point of view, what Schopenhauer calls the science of the innate humane desire to always be right.⁶² This science is needed because of the flaw in human nature that means that we are determined to show that we are right, irrespective of how true our convictions are. The fundamental task of eristic dialectics as the science of disputes, which despite everything is supposed to facilitate disputes in the name of truth, is to “exhibit the arts which most men employ when they observe, in a dispute, that truth is not on their side, and still attempt to gain the day”.⁶³

62 Arthur Schopenhauer, *The Art of Controversy* (also *The Art of Being Right*), trans. T. Bailey Saunders, access: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/10731/10731-8.txt>.

63 Ibidem.

Characteristic of contemporary rhetoric and theory of discourse carried out in a pragmatic and analytical spirit is the fact that the contrast of proof with persuasion and demonstration of truth with demonstration of arguments, so vivid in centuries past and in Schopenhauer, is erased. By its very nature, rhetoric seeks to abandon this juxtaposition. However, whereas in the past it only dared to reconcile these two orders, justifying the science of persuasion as serving the cognition of truth just as much as other sciences and necessary for practical reasons, today pragmatic rhetorical thinking does this in the concept of the argument or reasoning. The new, radical pragmatic meaning of this concept is that an argument is not just an argument for or against, a tool to demonstrate whether our convictions are right, and used in a noble way to discover and legitimise the truth. Now, it is becoming a component of discursive practice interpreted as a self-legitimising argumentative practice. This notion of an argument is developed by Chaïm Perelman on the basis of classical rhetoric, in both his monumental *Traité de l'argumentation* written with Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca and the collected works in *Le champ de l'argumentation*.

Perelman's revival of rhetoric derives from the tradition of philosophy of life and pragmatism as modern forms of the affirmation of active life, which conflicted with the ideal of philosophy as a product of contemplative life. It is therefore a return to the authentic practice of the use of reason, marked by opposition to the schematism and anti-pragmatic simplifications of logical rationalism. This means practice of discourse, dialogue, reasoning, communicative practice taking place before a certain audience. The model for thinking involved in the conditions of communicative practice is rhetoric, and particularly legal thought, which concerns the question of rational justification of decisions. Like a judge or a participant in a public debate, philosophers base their work on the powers of their own mind, shaping their views through discussion and exchange of arguments. They must therefore understand and acknowledge the basis of any specific competences in the entirety of human communicative competences, especially as a fundamental role in philosophical discourse is played by invoking the personal experience of the listener – an *argumentum ad hominem*. When philosophers are open to the practical meaning of their work, this means being open to their audience – to the awareness that what they have to say is both an argument addressed to the listeners to show that a proposition is true, and one intended to demonstrate an argument and persuade listeners of it. Between the extremes of logical deduction in formal sciences and induction in natural sciences, where the discourse might run closely to the outlines drawn by the methodology, there stretches a field of reasoning characterised by diversity of form and means. In

this argumentative practice, nothing is changed by imposition of restrictive postulates in order to simplify and idealised ideas about rationality. There is also no reason to “fight” the argumentative reality, as did Descartes or the positivists. The philosopher’s task is to gain an understanding of it, and this is what rhetoric does.

Like every philosophy of its type, Perelman’s pragmatistic-rhetorical philosophy creates a concept of totality in its metanarrative, which is both a concept of “the thing itself” and the foundation of the legitimacy, as well as a formal means of pragmatic affirmation of plurality and diversity. If, for example, in Peirce truth is confirmed in totality, which is a “communication community”, and in Habermas “communicative reason”, in Perelman it is a “universal audience”, which means the sum of rational people capable of using arguments.

Perelman was one of the first authors – today very numerous – to reintegrate rhetoric by way of pragmatism. The renaissance of rhetoric follows what we might call an anthropological direction as well as that of philosophy of language. In both cases, the concept of rhetoric receives a positive meaning and a particular heuristic function in which a critical perspective on philosophy is recognised. Rhetoric is also often radicalised, or philosophy “rhetoricised”, for instance in the notion of fundamental rhetoric.

Rhetoric can also be simply the concept of a certain stage and a valuable effort by philosophy to overcome the limitations and one-sidedness to which it tends to succumb.

In anthropological thinking, rhetoric seems to be a form of it that refers to all theoretical meanings by way of understanding the role of language in communication, as something of an introduction or archetype of hermeneutic thinking. This hermeneutic appreciation of rhetoric was actually made by Heidegger. In the rhetorical, and particularly Aristotelian, theory of passions, he saw the prototype of his existential-ontological and hermeneutic conception of the human. Rhetoric understands human emotional life not in a purely psychological sense, but rather as the essential moment of the whole of the human world, the mature concept of which is formed in rhetorical thinking. From the perspective of rhetoric, one is immersed in everyday life shared with other people – an everyday life of talking as a way of being together with others. Beneath this idea of everyday life and linguisticity as a fundamental aspect of human existence, however, there is a more fundamental outline of humans that joins rhetorical with hermeneutic thinking by understanding them as weak and limited beings continually consumed with “their business”. Rhetoric does not wish to be a theory that places itself beyond the broad perspective of human life and what is important in people’s lives. By showing its interest in human feelings and the personal existential

reasons for which people open themselves up to linguistic transmission, rhetoric creates an idea of a uniform interpersonal world of everyday life in which it wants to see itself as a product formed and consciously established in it. Technical rhetorical categories can therefore be expressed transcendentally and hermeneutically, as well as being radicalised, becoming categories of the existential ontology of human beings looking out for themselves and others using speech.⁶⁴

4.4 Rhetoric and Hermeneutics (Gadamer)

A return to rhetorical techniques is not something that Hans-Georg Gadamer would have endorsed. This was a philosopher who was particularly alert to the dangers posed for the authenticity and humanistic sensitivity of philosophy by formalisation and ossification. Hermeneutics had to overcome its earlier form of the canon of interpretation, through which it was too hurried in its attempts to control the text, obscuring true hermeneutic experience. But the same also applies to rhetoric, which is also inclined to lose its higher poietic meaning in the canonised “art of rhetoric”. These two fields complement each other and share the fate of a discipline overcoming its canonical form and seeking its universal anthropological meaning. They were also connected historically, as to a great extent early hermeneutics was inspired by classical rhetoric.

This was because hermeneutics, as the attempt to be open to hermeneutic experience, and even if it tries to turn it into excessively methodological knowledge, deals with the general human ability to understand a message. Rhetoric, meanwhile, is guided by the experience of the general appearance of the rhetorical moment in speech, and deals with our ability to talk. The hermeneutic and rhetorical moments are therefore intertwined, and equally universal. This universality applies to the same totality – the sum of linguistic behaviours and consequently all human life experience – that forms its meaning and becomes comprehensible in language. As both rhetoric and hermeneutics refer to a phenomenon that is essential to humanity – speaking in such a way as to be understood

64 Most significant from this point of view in *Being and Time* appear to be § 29, 30, 40, and especially 34, “Dasein and Discourse. Language”. We should point out, though, that in this book the question of rhetoric is barely touched upon explicitly, and in general the hermeneutic reinterpretation of rhetoric tends to be attributed to Heidegger “interpretively”. Heidegger in fact said most about rhetoric in his Summer Semester 1924 lectures (*Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 18). For the significance of Heidegger for the modern anthropological reintegration of rhetoric cf. Peter L. Oesterreich, *Fundamentalarhetorik* (Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1990), pp. 1–33.

and understanding what is said – they are practical disciplines, and both face the question of the relationship of their theoretical layer to the (rhetorical and interpretational) practices that they are to serve. Yet there is a lack of full symmetry between them – hermeneutics more than rhetoric is oriented towards the theory and problems of its self-knowledge, whereas rhetoric remains closer to the order of what we might call realisation – its main field of interest is the practice of reasoning. Rhetoric, which deals with linguistic practice, must remain topical knowledge, whereas hermeneutics can move away more radically from its canonical form, heading towards an experience of understanding that is atypical. Gadamer does not say much about the theoretical superiority of hermeneutics over rhetoric, but we can probably venture the interpretation that rhetoric in relation to hermeneutics is almost one-dimensional, more the art of “current life”, interested in speaking as something happening now, and barely sensitive to the historical. Perhaps an even more profound difference is that rhetoric confirms its value in the success of linguistic communication, and must therefore “prove itself in practice”. Hermeneutics cannot do this – we cannot say that we managed to understand a text thanks to hermeneutics, and understanding cannot be confirmed by specific criteria in the same way that the criterion of a speaker’s success is when the listener says “I agree”. The success of hermeneutics lies in expressing hermeneutic experience and understanding the hermeneutic nature of every understanding. The success of rhetoric, meanwhile, depends not so much on understanding the inevitable rhetoric nature of every speech and through that the rhetorical unity of the whole linguistic world of life, as on recognising rhetorical moments in concrete discourses and statements and exploiting the knowledge of their functions and relationship for cognitive objectives. Following Gadamer, we might say that for rhetoric, understanding is significant insofar as it is the opposite of misunderstanding and simultaneously is accepting understanding. Rhetoric is therefore not interested in the phenomenon of understanding and at the same time not agreeing, whereas for hermeneutics this is important. However, dividing the competences of rhetoric and hermeneutics is a rather inconclusive discourse, as the rhetorical and hermeneutic moments merge too much for it to succeed.⁶⁵

65 Gadamer discussed rhetoric mostly in two articles: “Rhetorik, Hermeneutik und Ideologiekritik. Metakritische Erörterungen zu Wahrheit und Methode” (1967) and “Rhetorik und Hermeneutik” (1976), included, for example, in volume 2 of *Gesammelte Werke*, “Hermeneutik II” (Tübingen: Mohr, 1986), as well as in the “Afterword” to *Truth and Method*, op. cit., pp. 554–581.

4.5 The Significance of The Humanist Turn

Thinking about rhetoric in anthropological terms leads to an ambiguous position towards it. However, if it joins the tradition of criticism of the rhetorical art, a more noble future spreads before it connected with hermeneutic thinking or the history of philosophical ideas as part of a comprehensive efforts at openness to the historical and pragmatic diversity of ways of thinking, meanings, functions of statements and text. Rhetoric is thus incorporated in pragmatistic thinking about the unity of the human world. Yet the humanisation of rhetoric betrays two attributes of classical rhetoric at the same time. Firstly, in its mistrust of the canonicity and simplifying dichotomism of old rhetoric it loses the logical aspect of it that Aristotle exhibited. Secondly, by linking rhetoric with the ideal of practical knowledge, open and understanding its position towards the human world, it suppresses the dialectical tension shown by Plato in the *Phaedrus* and which fuelled classical rhetoric. This is the tension between the higher order manifested in rhetoric as the ideal of truth and human finiteness, with which one must somehow reconcile oneself and agree in order to aim for the truth and higher goals. The anthropological discourse of the revival of rhetoric places this moralistic – and often also theological – aspect of rhetoric on the side of an evil that must be overcome. This evil entails a stubborn and naive belief in absolute truth and ultimate reason, a simplified conception of rationality, and dogmatic clinging to various dichotomies that construct rhetoric as a certain doctrine, yet at the same time are a foundation of its criticism. Combating this evil through humanistic discourse, which opens us to understanding and acceptance of the plurality and diversity of human forms of being in the world and of talking and being rational, as well as semiotic analyses that eschew dogmatic dichotomies, is in fact combating old rhetoric in the name of new rhetoric, using the same heuristic model used in philosophy for the last four centuries. However, if we undertake the heuresis of rejection and cleansing in thinking about a radicalised concept of rhetoric, and not philosophy, we give ourselves a chance of acquiring a more balanced view on philosophy itself, and of avoiding the paradox of rejecting the whole past of philosophy (to obtain a finally successful philosophy), all in the name of the idea of being open to diversity of forms of rationality.

This heuristic description applies to such eminent revivers of rhetoric as Whately, who saw in it a way of pursuing the philosophy of language, or Richards, fighting against “superstition in the strict sense of the word”, as well as a classical and positivistic-logical “mosaic” idea of language, and particularly Blumenberg. He proposes a radically anthropologised and humanist conception of rhetoric, conceiving it as a form of rationality and a “rational way of considering

the makeshift nature of reason". For him, rhetoric is a way for compensating for human finiteness (*Mängelwesen*), yet in the name not of higher goals and a higher order, but rather of the humanist ideal of understanding and openness to human affairs. By studying the role of myth, metaphor, persuasion in human communication, the ways in which convictions and beliefs are shaped, as well as freeing oneself from such dogmatic dichotomies as logos and myth, concept and metaphor, literal and figurative, reason and notion, all unprejudiced by rationalistic ideology, we come closer to understanding the unity and at the same time diversity of culture. Rhetoric belongs to the "theory of the human beyond the world of ideas", and deals with what is particularly human, concerned with that side of language and human activity in which consensus is formed. By continually coming into contact with human limitations and imperfections, it seeks to cope with it somehow, in a way to find a way to live with it. This is why a rule of rhetoric is the "rule of insufficient reason".

4.6 Another Possibility: Nietzsche and The Rhetorical Nature of Language. The Non-Identity of Rhetoric

The criticism of the identity of meaning and juxtaposition of meaning with literal metaphoricality (undesirable in science) is the point of contact of the anthropological and linguistic reintegration of rhetoric and its renaissance in the field of literary studies. Just as philosophers dealing with philosophical anthropology discover the ubiquity of rhetorical moments – metaphorical and figurative – in discursive texts, literature critics also detect the discursive moments that belong to the grammatical structure of language and always accompany the figurative aspect of a literary text. These two approaches are connected with one another, which is why we see a plethora of philosophy books on the subject of philosophy's literary nature on the one hand, and on the philosophical nature of literature on the other. The constant theoretical reference point of these studies is the question of metaphor. Extensive literature has already been produced containing critiques of the classical conception of the metaphor as a non-literal use of a word. The essence of this type of research is identifying humanity with the use of language, and thus conversion of the anthropological perspective to a linguistic one. The philosophical authority invoked by this philosophy is Nietzsche, or among more contemporary authors Derrida.

The turn made by Nietzsche in rhetorical thinking is a manoeuvre in his war on metaphysics, humanism and slave morality. If his whole philosophy glorifies the *Übermensch*, hunting down smallness, conformism, nihilism, passivity, and helped in this task by linguistic research, etymology and tropical thinking

about speech and writing, then rhetoric here serves the highest objectives, even though these have been redefined. This applies both to what Nietzsche says about rhetoric and what is rhetorical in his work and inspired so many contemporary philosophers and critics. Nietzsche was one of the first in the theory of rhetoric to reject the doctrine linking figurativeness with a transfer or change of meaning that simultaneously retains the reference to the actual, literal or popular meaning: “it is not difficult to prove that what is called ‘rhetorical’, as a means of conscious art, had been active as a means of unconscious art in language and its development, indeed, that the rhetorical is a further development, guided by the clear light of the understanding, of the artistic means which are already found in language. There is obviously no unrhetorical ‘naturalness’ of language to which one could appeal; language itself is the result of purely rhetorical arts. [...] language is rhetoric, because it desires to convey only a *doxa* (opinion), not an *episteme* (language). [...] Tropes are not something that can be added or abstracted from language at will – they are its truest nature. There is no real knowing apart from metaphor, and the drive toward the formation of such is the fundamental human drive”.⁶⁶ Next to this, Platonic truth appears as forgetting the rhetorical moment, passive habitual connection to various tropes and metaphors, lacking meaning without the persuasive power of the concept of truth, which manifests itself in saying “that’s true!”⁶⁷ The discovery of the rhetorical nature of language, the ubiquity of persuasion and the figurative game of meanings exposes the violence contained in metaphysical concepts, which impose reactive powers on philosophy and language – the depraved will to power aimed at life, freedom and diversity: “truths are illusions whose illusory nature has been forgotten”. Of course, one can draw from the rhetorical possibilities of language in both a noble and an ignoble manner. Rhetoric pursued in the service of a higher order and eternal truth is an evil science that is opportunistic towards reactive metaphysics,

66 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On Rhetoric and Language*, ed. and trans. Sander L. Gilman, Carole Blair and David J. Parent (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1989), p. 21.

67 “What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are; metaphors which are worn out and without sensuous power; coins which have lost their pictures and now matter only as metal, no longer as coins.” (Nietzsche, *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense*, access: http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl201/modules/Philosophers/Nietzsche/Truth_and_Lie_in_an_Extra-Moral_Sense.htm; frequently cited and discussed (e.g. Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida).

which creates gods overseeing a slave morality. The philosopher who knows that opposing forces are concealed in language and speaking (starting from taking control of things, via naming them, to the most elaborate tropes) must pursue such a philosophy and rhetoric that allows her to recognise the essence of these forces and distinguish those that serve cowardice, passivity and smallness (hidden beneath the appearance of nobility and courage of thinking) from the true force of life, freedom and creativity. Nietzsche's rhetorical thinking has two fundamental aspects: it is semiotic "diversifying thinking", disclosing the plurality and non-identity of meanings, statements and thoughts, and also moralising, exposing small-mindedness, falsehood and nihilism. A double turn takes place here in relation to classical rhetoric. Firstly, the source of the non-identity of discourse, the "rhetorical extra", is not interpreted as a result of human deficiency which must be controlled by the rhetorical study of passions, but as the nature of language itself (the fundamental metaphysical characteristic – difference). Secondly, the moralistic narrative justifying rhetorical thinking by connecting it with recognised values changes in relation to how these values are "redefined". The style which Nietzsche gives to his philosophical statements corresponds to these changes. A linear discourse is more suitable for metaphysical thinking in the name of Truth and the One, that badly realised will to power that seeks to "neutralise" the true element of life and isolate itself from it; its form conceals and combats the diversity and non-identity that true philosophy should track. Meanwhile, aphorisms and poems, surrendering to the language that differentiates the element, teach us to commune with it and make use of it. The usual contradiction is not threatening here, as it merely indicates a bad vicinity of sayings – indirect and various paths lead from aphorism to aphorism, each of which can appear on them again, stubbornly bringing its truth or wisdom against the distracting forces.

In this way, modern deconstructive thinking continues to be inspired by Nietzsche – both his philosophy that tracks differences and his writing style. It also admits to a rhetorical nature. Derrida once said that in all his philosophy he was pursuing rhetoric, while one of the most important books about deconstructionism, by Christopher Norris, is called *The Deconstructive Turn. Essays in the Rhetoric of Philosophy*. Therefore, if the first frontier of rhetorical thinking is its anthropologisation, leading to hermeneutics, then the second is anti-anthropological, and deconstruction is on the other side. Approaching it, philosophy becomes what Paul de Man called "an endless reflection on its own

destruction at the hands of literature”,⁶⁸ or, more broadly, of its linguistic and textual nature. Both the therapeutic metaphilosophy invoking later Wittgenstein and Barthes’s “erotic of text”, explaining why reading gives us pleasure, have a place here, along with Lyotard’s Nietzschean conception of language as a field of play and fighting – agonistic language.

From the point of view of thinking against identity or identicalness – thinking of difference – rhetoric explains its own lack of identity and reveals the appearance of identity that it succumbs to when rhetoric is considered a certain direction of thinking or type of doctrine. Many times in its history, rhetorical thinking has encountered the question of difference and discovered the essential impossibility of defining its own identity. Yet it has remained true to the traditional heuristic ideals of the metaphysical tradition, and despite conservatism – thanks to its mistrust of such concepts as unambiguity and literalness – it has played a special role in the history of philosophical heuresis. Like every form of philosophical thinking, it has been self-problematic. Its problem is not the impossibility of doing philosophy, but itself. It is this possibility of looking in on philosophy from outside, faithful to philosophical self-reflection, that decides on the heuristic value of rhetorical thinking. Heuristics should learn from the history of the problem of rhetoric how to reconcile universality of interests with relinquishing construction of another form of theoretical totalisation, how to preserve identity, renouncing limited unambiguity (of tasks, methods, conceptions etc.), and finally how to escape the authority of philosophy, which proclaims itself tantamount to thinking per se. These postulates have never really been fulfilled within the problem of rhetoric, but at least they have been made.

Let us recall that the heuristic history of rhetorical thinking began with adopting a pragmatic position and with the dialectic that was meant to explain the opposition to the heuresis of the absolute truth and logical proof that oratorical practice appeared to express. The root of this dialectic was as follows: the truth persuades, speech is more persuasive when it is true, true persuasion is persuasion of the truth. Yet the conflict of rhetoric with Platonism goes deeper, and this simple dialectic was never sufficient. It was necessary to go further, suffering more defeats along the way and revealing the actual depth of the conflict.

68 Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), p. 115.

4.7 Plato and The Dialectic of Rhetoric

Although it has only occurred recently in a radical form, since its beginning rhetoric has been accompanied by anthropologisation as a heuristic model constituting the foundation of its self-knowledge. The essence of rhetoric was perceived in humanist terms by the sophists, as well as the rhetoricians of the Renaissance. In the Greek world, a rhetorical education was regarded as part of civic competence, and teaching it as a fundamental tool of *paideia*. In these ideals, there is no conflict with the Platonic idea of heuristics that defined our conception of philosophy right up until our times; the ideals of civic virtues were as dear to the sophists as they were to Socrates and Plato. But this pair were set at loggerheads with the intellectual elites by the attempt to establish an autonomous sphere of application of reason beyond the laws and conditions that the circumstances of public – including political – life placed upon intellectual life. For the sophists and the elites of the time, this was a usurpation and an attempt to appropriate reason and language, an aristocratic and perhaps even asocial stance. The aretological-aesthetic worldview of the Greeks adhered to intellectual fitness, intellectual refinement, eloquence and intelligence. Control of the mind over language, and thus competence in expressing oneself in speech and writing (informal, political, artistic and philosophical), submitted to these ideals. The value and rightness of every statement were only confirmed practically – in a concrete discussion, conversation, or legal debate. And no other authority was known than the authority of the ruler, priest (prophet, poet) and orator. Plato, however, wanted to establish the authority of the philosopher, speaking for the truth and in the name of reason. Therefore, in the opinion of many of his contemporaries, he sought to underpin the authority of the orator with external power, placing him above those who can only rely on their own intellectual competences, expressed in the skill of speaking well. This approach aroused, let's say, a certain political suspicion, but it was also a kind of attack on the contemporary intellectual culture and speech. This was because good use of the intellect, which for the Greek elites educated by the sophists was the same as good speech, entailed clarity, lucidity, and elegant style. They valued eloquence, convincing, logical and sumptuous speech – the pleasure of language, one might say. This way of using the intellect, and speech of this kind as a civic virtue, opposed overtly or potentially the apodictic speech of the ruler, the dark speech of the oracle and the concealed speech of the scheming enemy. It was therefore counter to every final speech with which one may not argue, such as a command, a priest's magical curse or an oracle's prophecy. And this is the kind of speech that Platonic dialectic longs for – although it is a dialogue, it is in the light of the ideal of ultimate truth, with which one can finish,

and say “that is true”. For the Greek elites, accustomed to rhetoric, the very ideal possibility of invoking trueness (rather than an argument), as it were equating human speech with that of the gods who need no arguments, must have seemed like an act of intellectual violence, or metapersuasion (saying “this is no longer persuasion – it’s the truth”). The Greeks saw the truth of statements on general, philosophical topics as the highest good of speech – as an attribute of straightforward, honest and authentic speech. They could therefore accuse the Platonic discourse of a tendency to a similar dishonesty and persuasive excess to that of which Socrates and his successors accused the sophists. A partial solution to this paradox can be found in the fundamental heuristic difference between Platonic thinking and sophistic thinking. For Plato, after all, trueness did not mean something public, to which one can refer, a trump card in discourse, but rather something personal, a subjective experience similar to recollection. This does not, however, alter the fact that both heuristic notions – the Platonic-Aristotelian order of proof and the ideal of absolute truth as a regulative idea of a proper discussion (dialectic), and the ideal of good, clear and authenticated speech – depend on the dialectic of persuasion and truth (proof). The root of this, what we might call the *doxa* and *episteme* dialectic, looks something like this: persuasion is a surplus of proof, a potential source of error and something essentially redundant owing to the truth itself. However, the truth and proof are persuasive, and proof also persuades (authenticates, lends credence to) the truth. We can therefore not distinguish in advance that which is only persuasion from what is part only of proof. Even using the concept of persuasion always serves some kind of persuasion. It is used to define a supposed error of reasoning which is usually not demonstrated by argument but by attributing bad “persuasive”, “sophistic” intentions to the speaker. The observation that the Platonic order is also embroiled in this dialectic is a fundamental step of rhetorical thinking. It means the realisation that the discovery of the ubiquity of the rhetorical moment is not an exposure or humiliation of thinking, but that it is “the same” – the other side of the ubiquity of the logical moment.

The moment of persuasion comprises only part of the complex anthropological component of discourse, whose essential connection with the formal (logical) side reveals anthropologising rhetorical thinking. It involves above all focusing the attention of the new rhetoric on the sphere of understanding, communicating and agreeing, which shapes the discourse subjectively. This sphere is accessible through subjectively directed reflection that as much as possible conceptualises the unique experience of the subjective roots and subjective validation of each discourse and each meaning – the hermeneutic experience. Rhetorical thinking,

in becoming anthropological, first being humanistic, and as a consequence hermeneutic, turns towards subjectivity. The heuresis of such philosophising is aimed at clarifying the experience so that no conceptual doctrine can disturb the subject's readiness to experience – his sensitivity and openness. The hermeneutic phase of rhetorical thinking must therefore turn against its earlier (classically rhetorical) logical-canonical, formalistic phase.

The same process also occurs on another path of rhetorical thinking, when the emphasis is placed not on the human (humanistic, transcendental or hermeneutic) meaning of every communication and the unity of all ways of using language based on the unity of the subject and the human world, but on the linguistic essence of every communication and thinking.

Equating thinking and cognising with use of speech, and competence in using reason with competence in speaking – this heuristic basis of rhetorical thinking depends on a more profound heuristic motivation that involves the conscious or unconscious will to rule: over any discourse, thinking and language.

This is one of the reasons why rhetoric has always emphasised its significance as a certain potentiality or disposition, calling itself an art, virtue, “the craftsman of persuasion” (Isocrates), and its topic a container of arguments (*argumentorum sedes*). Language, though, cannot be dominated, and rhetorical reflection, aware of the inadequacy of its efforts to canonise all the phenomena of use of language in the form of the science of tropes, figures and style, learned of the disseminating nature of language, the element of difference crushing any identity in it. If we are to cling to the idea of domination, and relate rhetorical thinking to the pragmatistic heuresis of legitimation, we will easily surrender to the inclination to solve the problem of chronic diversity and the insusceptibility of language and discourse to attempts at grammatical-logical formalisation of them, invoking the pragmatic ideology of unfettered democratic communication. However, this will mean asking about the status of this ideology, which after all manifests (still as a certain metanarrative) a will to discursive domination. Yet if we are seeking a more radical detachment from this discourse of domination, from reflection being built in the form of a dialectic or meta-discourse, this leads us to the domain of “logic of destruction” and thinking of “difference”.

4.8 The other Side of Rhetorical Heuresis

Rhetorical thinking that concentrates on the linguistic aspects of speech and the textuality of text sometimes makes a radical linguistic conversion in which any metaphysical externality towards language, semantic reference to the “non-linguistic world” and the distinction between *signifiant* and *signifié* disappear.

This transcendental conversion of all content to a linguistic meaning, and as a result to a meaning in the sphere of language and therefore a structural function (since the concept of meaning contains the semantic and metaphysical moment of reference) is a fundamental heuristic phenomenon that guides us towards a structuralist and subsequently a deconstructionist-differentiating thinking about language. The second phenomenon is contemplating the signs of a language in isolation from their meaning – the autonomisation of the sign, which is the beginning of reflection on sound and writing (deriving from Gorgias, who was said to have made the first description of the rhythm of speech). Although poetics and the theory of style that developed this reflection were guided by the metaphysical belief in the correspondence between the word as a sound and the essence of the thing to which the word refers, contemplation of these matters reinforced the awareness of the existence of spheres that were to some extent autonomous – the written and the phonetic aspect. Yet what rhetorical thinking resembled most directly in its history was thinking of difference, as it combined its sceptical spirit with the thoroughness of observations of linguistic phenomena opposing the will to rule – the intention to submit to their authority the formal system of the theory of tropes and figures of speech.⁶⁹ A rhetorical subject of this type is irony and paradox, where we see the distance, recontextualisation, and also “disobedience” of language towards the claims of Platonic rationalism. In addition, even in its most canonical form, rhetorical thinking has always struggled with the problem of structure, finding movement (figurative use and metaphors) within a structure and between structures, the meaning of repetition (periodical, or a refrain) for structuralism as such and the phenomenon of parallel structures which do not fit into homomorphism but are rather something more like mutual interspersing. In rhetorical thinking, this occurs between the grammatical structure of language, the topical structure of a statement and the logical structure of a discourse.⁷⁰

69 A symbol of the indeed very instructive defeat of this methodological-pragmatic venture is the lack of a clear definition of a trope and a figure of speech.

70 At this point, it might be worth quoting Foucault: “Rhetoric defines the spatiality of representation as it comes into being with language; grammar defines in the case of each individual language the order that distributes that spatiality in time. This is why [...] grammar presupposes languages, even the most primitive and spontaneous ones, to be rhetorical in nature. [...] On the other hand, grammar, as reflection upon language in general, expresses the relation maintained by the latter with universality. This relation can take two forms, according to whether one takes into consideration the possibility of a *universal language* or that of a *universal discourse*. (Michel Foucault, *The Order of*

Once again we see that rhetorical thinking is a thinking that leads to other forms of thinking, avoiding giving a definition of itself and finding appearance in any such attempt. As a result, though, it is a universal and radical thinking, and perhaps the only one which philosophy denied complete protection and legitimisation of its universal aspirations (as being indeed philosophical), by denying it the full right to call itself philosophy. We can therefore venture the statement that rhetorical thinking, without specific “civil rights”, hides in the “marches”, as Derrida put it: between philosophy and eloquent speech, between philosophy and literature, between logic and grammar, between anthropology and hermeneutics, between the philosophy of reflection and the thinking of difference. It therefore proves to be related to heuristics, which must also struggle with the problem of identity, as it does not want to present itself as a method or transcendental theory of the language of philosophy, yet – like rhetoric – strives to broaden the domain of the legitimate means (theoretical, stylistic, and, in general, heuristic) available to philosophy.

4.9 What Rhetoric Teaches Heuristics

Knowing a lot, understanding, being capable, and being familiar with as much as possible – this is the thoroughly Enlightenment heuristic idea that always went hand-in-hand with rhetoric and goes with heuristics too. For heuristics, though, like everything it unveils as a heuristic motif in philosophy, it is above all a question: that of extensional, or even syncretic heuresis. This combines a notion of positive, cumulative knowledge with another important heuristic notion – of momentous, profound, wise, true knowledge; it is also an affirmation of plurality. Alongside the question of the thinking of difference, a rival to the thinking of identity and self-legitimising speculation, and alongside the question of the perspective from which we “philosophise beyond philosophy”, syncretic heuresis is a new subject introduced to heuristics by analysis of the heuresis of rhetorical thinking. Other topics appeared sooner: the aporia of formalistic thinking and the contrasting reference to the authenticity of the thing itself (conceived as practice or subjectivity of experience, for example hermeneutic experience), the heuresis of making a conversion (for example of totalising linguisticity), and also the related heuresis of transcendental legitimisation or the question of the dialectical principle of discourse.

Things, trans. anon., New York: Random/Vintage, 1994, p. 84). Cf. also Paul de Man, “Semiology and Rhetoric”, [in:] idem, *Allegories of Reading. Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche and Proust* (New Haven–London: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), pp. 3–19.

The question that therefore remains is whether heuristics should act in the guise of rhetoric. If rhetorical thinking takes us towards hermeneutics and at the same time deconstruction, then in heuristics as radical philosophising we ought to follow the path discovered in reflection on rhetorical heuresis, and thus leave it. This is not to say that we should abandon earlier forms that we find, as dialectics and transcendental discourse do. In heuristics we should not repeat the heuresis of rejection, as the price to be paid for this is the loss of direct contact with various forms of philosophical thinking. If this is possible at all, it is only because heuristic is not a philosophy that “wants to be right”, but rather one that, like hermeneutics, “wants to understand”. And this is not about shirking responsibility for fear of not being right – the inevitable fate of any philosophy that worries too much about its rightness – but rather about a position of curiosity and multifaceted interest in philosophy. Since this is the case, heuristics ought to be particularly favourably disposed to rhetorical thinking. We are aware of the limitations, and even the fundamental unrealisable nature of the programme of rhetoric (enveloped in the pragmatistic contradiction of the heuresis of formalism and the practical thing itself), and we know the other side indicated by rhetorical thinking as a thinking on the marches. Although only to a limited extent is it able to deal with the questions which it poses itself, it gives an example of how one can think on the margins of philosophy and avoid the consequences of the absolutist claims of reason, yet at the same time philosophise radically. This cannot be formalistic philosophising, or exclusively topics or topology. The formalism of topics will always be dialectically dependent on the formalism of logic and grammar as a more general, but less perfect form; even the very positivity and cumulateness of formal topical knowledge poses a heuristic threat. Yet the heuristics that we are starting to create seems excessively dependent on the topical mode of thinking, as it seeks everywhere heuristic moments or “motifs” that are rather too reminiscent of rhetorical tropes and topoi.

4.10 Towards Rhetorical Heuristics

Although we must leave the pursuit of pure rhetoric to rhetoric itself (we certainly have no right to call rhetoric a part of heuristics), there are certain more general subjects of rhetorical thinking, but not of canonical rhetoric, which we should examine in heuristics as its own issues. One of these is the philosopher’s oratorical practice and the rhetorical position he adopts in his activities. After all, we frequently help ourselves when considering a question by referring to our art of *inventio* and our *sedes argumentorum*: “how can I set about this issue?”, “what can I say in this matter?” We have a similar rhetorical heuristic reflection when

we express our position by asking ourselves, “how can I put it neatly and convincingly?”, or “how can I say it to make it comprehensible without being trite?”

What will happen, then, if we fail, to quote Cyprian Norwid, to “name each matter by its rightful word”? This also means not naming a matter by its rightful concept; as we know, the logical and the rhetorical perspective are intertwined. But rhetorical imperfection is also human imperfection, since “le style c’est l’homme”. What does this mean, though? In some sense, one can no doubt say that the same can be expressed in a different way. Yet this identity is only the critical concept of a simplified correlate, a formal understanding. Style can fight against it, both in the recipient and in the author, preserving the instant of true understanding that is not the same as understanding of repetition, summary or paraphrase. Perhaps style is just the formal concept of that which cannot be conceived abstractly as an identical meaning (apparently expressible in many ways, indifferent to the way in which it is recorded), the dimension of the depth of the discourse. Such a concept of style protects us from approaching the question of style in philosophy too analytically, and from naive deprecation of any literal nature in it. Despite the development of deconstructionism and research straddling literary and philosophical theory, we remain far from arguments indicating the mental capacity of style being able to compete in philosophy with the binding heuresis of polemics, which assumes a separation of logical proposition, theoretical content or argument from style (which is understood as the *façon de parler*). However, the concept of style can serve not only apologetics and explaining the phenomenon of the advantage of classical and source elements over repetition and commentary. Speaking openly about style can only be a tool of criticism. An elevated style can disguise common thoughts with the semblance of depth and originality. A high style also tends to be an expression of opportunistic worship of sanctified, albeit often dubious, authorities, and may also result from the vanity of somebody who wishes to play at least a small part in an authority’s greatness. So when we pay heed to style in speaking of a philosophical question, we may raise it to make the profundity and great importance of an issue evident, or we may also reduce it, making it more accessible to analysis and polemic. Heuristics’ task in relation to the question of style is to contribute to the work undertaken by contemporary – mostly French and American – philosophers and critics, to procure for it “civil rights” in the heuristic habituality of philosophy.

The task of heuristics in studying and enriching the rhetorical heuresis of philosophical work seems more autonomous. The fact that philosophers use their art of *inventio* on a daily basis, asking themselves “what can I say about it?”, that the heuresis of their actions often involves selecting arguments for a position

adopted in advance, that what makes the philosophical heuresis of the work rhetorical is ignored – this is the consequence of the traditional deprecation of the rhetorical moment. Moreover, it is true that the most valuable philosophical results come from a linear heuristic research mode, wherein the position, view or philosophical matter as a whole are formed gradually by way of considerations free from the need to devise arguments for the purpose of polemic. This does not mean that topical knowledge on ways of arguing, types of possible positions and their consequences is not necessary or possible. Admittedly, we regard it as a question of experience, talent and general philosophical education, but rhetoric too perceives itself as an art and skill, and this does not stop it from developing its knowledge about *loci communes*. As we stated, this type of knowledge, as formalistic knowledge about discursive practice, can only bring partial success. For heuristics, this kind of topic of philosophical discourse or rhetoric of philosophy as detailed areas could not be separated from the whole of the research whose initial prospects we outlined, or from research on heuristic habituality. What would make heuristic rhetoric unique is mostly the starting point and reference to a rich tradition of rhetorical distinctions, mostly in the field of *inventio*. But the heuristic rhetoric of philosophy should concentrate on phenomena of mutual mediation of rhetorical, grammatical and logical (theoretical) moments, as well as on tracing the processes in which rhetorical heuristic reflection – knowledge about philosophical *inventio* – begins to be a theme in itself, a form of philosophy. Heuristics that invokes the tradition of rhetorical thinking has an important duty to fulfil towards its own self-knowledge. It must study the perspective in which it is to be a topic and analysis of “heuristic moments” – study the limits and relationship of this field of research with the other aspects of it. This difficult speculative task begins with an attempt at creating more systematic topics and analysis of the heuristic moments, i.e. all the manifestations of conscious or unconscious factors influencing the process of the discourse, as well as its declarative layer – the result or thesis – and therefore determining the philosophy as philosophical matter. Of course, this kind of theory must go beyond a rhetorical perspective, especially in cases when the philosophical discourse is guided by dialectical heuresis or reflexive heuresis of self-justification, to understand which it is necessary to abandon the category of argument, as the argument gets too confused with the thesis.

Rhetorical thinking does teach us one heuristic wisdom: that our talking is only talking. It remains a human matter, even if it concerns the most elevated and weighty matters. But this it is also talking without the “only”, representing as it does our only chance and the only way to express to ourselves and others and with

the help of others the fact that we have understood something of these important issues. This wisdom crowns the dialogue between Socrates and Phaedrus, which anticipates the history of rhetorical thinking and all its quandaries: “Socrates: But the man who thinks that in the written word there is necessarily much that is playful, and that no written discourse, whether in meter or in prose, deserves to be treated very seriously (and this applies also to the recitations of the rhapsodes, delivered to sway people’s minds, without opportunity for questioning and teaching), but that the best of them really serve only to remind us of what we know; and who thinks that only in words about justice and beauty and goodness spoken by teachers for the sake of instruction and really written in a soul is clearness and perfection and serious value, that such words should be considered the speaker’s own legitimate offspring, first the word within himself, if it be found there, and secondly its descendants or brothers which may have sprung up in worthy manner in the souls of others, and who pays no attention to the other words, – that man, Phaedrus, is likely to be such as you and I might pray that we ourselves may become.”⁷¹

71 Plato, *Phaedrus*, 277E-278B, [in:] *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, Vol. 9, trans. Harold N. Fowler (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925). Available at: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/>.

5. Hermeneutic Thinking

5.1 Problems with Talking about Hermeneutics

More so than other types of philosophical thinking, hermeneutic thinking has its own “spirit”. It is a tradition that consistently follows increasingly higher forms of self-reflection and self-knowledge. More significant, though, is the fact that the romantic search in every cultural formation for its own central idea is an important element in the history of hermeneutic tradition (albeit one negated by this tradition itself). As a result, the very knowledge developed by hermeneutics assumes the form of the creation of a certain kind of spirit. If even hermeneutics evades the historiosophical totalisation of the spirit and historicist objectivisation of the “spirits” of various times and traditions, and invokes the pragmatic concepts of wholeness, like life, language, or communication community, then hermeneutics cannot be understood without grasping the scientific mentality from which it derives and which supports it – a mentality containing elements of historiosophy and psychologism. Does hermeneutic thinking not deserve that minimal amount of generosity and obedience on the part of science to try to refer to it in the same way that it itself suggests that we reflect on cultural messages? If we are to agree with this postulate, we ought to consider the psychological understanding of mentality, which hermeneutic thinking once held dear – although it was discredited as psychologism – and understanding of hermeneutics as a specific historic tradition. We ought also to be open to the hermeneutic question of how deeply rooted we are in the hermeneutic tradition, as well as how it changes us. This would mean fulfilling the fundamental heuristic postulate of Heideggerian-Gadamerian hermeneutics that understanding should be accompanied by the awareness that it involves applying what is understood to ourselves, and always be determined by the language and historical circumstances. If we were to reject the suggestion to refer hermeneutically to the matter of hermeneutics, we would not be able to count on the hermeneutic “understanding” of hermeneutics. We would find that we do not understand hermeneutics, because hermeneutics cannot be understood non-hermeneutically (whatever that might mean). In hermeneutics, it seems almost to be the privilege of past authors to actually have had their own opinions. They were separated by differences of opinion, but our duty is to understand and interpret their works, and not take a side in their disputes. At least partially, then, hermeneutics seems to deny contemporary authors the right to have an opinion.

It would be naive, and the cardinal hermeneutic sin, not to take account of these circumstances in the heuristics of hermeneutic thinking, especially as there are similar difficulties in the self-knowledge of heuristics. Yet the hermeneutic way of talking about hermeneutics encounters serious obstacles. One of these is the fact that hermeneutic thinking as self-reflexive thinking is the history of rejecting one's supposedly immature forms, deprecating forms such as "understanding the author's intentions", psychological reconstruction and discovery of the spirit of a given tradition, leaving us only with access to ways of talking that correspond to the most mature lectures establishing the meaning of hermeneutics – Gadamer's theory of hermeneutic experience, for example. In other words, it is difficult to respect the meaning of hermeneutic discourse without referring to it with a hermeneutic interpretation, yet this cannot stand in opposition to the main narrative used to legitimise hermeneutics itself. There seems to be no possibility of any critique of these general conceptions of hermeneutics that hermeneuticians might agree to consider. But this obstacle is not peculiar to this question, and in fact applies to interpreting any reflexive philosophy (even if it eludes the consequences of an excess of this reflexivity, as hermeneutics does). The peculiar obstacle is a different one: our starting point, awareness and conviction, which should play the role of fore-understanding of hermeneutics, are not only shaped by our attitude towards the cultural tradition or by the common experience which hermeneutics conceptualises, but have already been shaped under the influence of theoretical hermeneutics, which we often understand wrongly. There would be nothing unusual in this – after all, such is the hermeneutic circle, that we face the task of understanding the tradition that formed us, and interpreting something in which we participate. But the fact that our starting point (fore-understanding) for understanding the very theory of understanding is the result of its own effect changes the situation markedly. Our modern European philosophical consciousness is fundamentally pro-hermeneutic, if often based on a wrong understanding of hermeneutics. Explaining a misunderstanding in a situation of agreement is an especially difficult task. What is more important, however, is the fact that, in the desire to understand hermeneutics hermeneutically – and taking as our starting point the interpretation of the state of its popular conception in intellectual circles – we must fall into a division in which our scholarly self-knowledge is expressed in the same discourse (explaining the nature of hermeneutic thinking) that is the object of our hermeneutic interest. Yet in this case the interest cannot entail adding one more degree of reflection, but must be expressed in a hermeneutic reference to the object of study as something belonging to tradition, in being open to... heading towards... permitting

discussion and “joining of horizons”. Here we see the particularly dramatic conflict (which refers to hermeneutics as a certain whole) present in the philosophy of Gadamer, one between abstract and reflexive heuresis (expressed in methodological thinking and in Hegelian dialectics) and heuresis of “conceiv[ing] a reality that limits and exceeds the omnipotence of reflection”,⁷² as Gadamer put it.

However, we have no choice but to follow our own paths of the heuristic dilemmas of hermeneutics. Before doing this, then, we ought to determine what the most direct theoretical expression of the initial non-understanding, the prejudgment which expressed towards hermeneutics, and overcoming which should be the right way to interpret it.

5.2 Popular Hermeneutic Consciousness and its Limits

In recent decades, hermeneutics has brought important changes in the heuristic habituality of philosophy, forming a kind of hermeneutic consciousness of both philosophers and broader circles in the humanities. The split scientific mentality which has for centuries been endeavouring to reconcile the scientific and Enlightenment notions of rationality with respect for art, religion and the humanities, displayed in the effort to justify them, has lately abandoned the idea of historicism and moralism as tools of this kind of justification. These have been replaced with the ideology of democratic liberalism and pluralism, and in some philosophical circles by elements of hermeneutic philosophy. This means in particular those elements of hermeneutics that contain criticism, for example of intellectual naivety, as well as warnings and cautions. The intellectual equipment of the contemporary humanist must include a set of sayings like “Everyone is rooted in some tradition, formed by history, and no one can be entirely freed from this, or rise above his or her circumstances”, “We cannot attribute to other cultures and traditions our own concepts and ideas about the world, or conceive them in our own terms”; “We try to understand the world around us, but never fully succeed, and are only able to move closer to the truth”; “Science cannot explain everything, as people need other areas in which science should not interfere and which are independent of it”.

Striking in statements of this kind (which are hardly a cultural novelty, but a certain variation on sceptical and relativistic wisdom) is the sense of satisfaction at seeing through somebody’s intellectual claims and branding them as naivety, and at the same time at having the metacultural wisdom to offset the deficiency

72 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, op. cit., p. 338.

of culture. This is the type of thinking that Nietzsche fought passionately, and by no means is this the last word of hermeneutics. Yet if today this kind of mentality is associated with the influences of hermeneutics, then we must ask what caused it to be understood in this way. Is it not at least partly responsible, or did hermeneutics not contain the germ of this mentality?

This appears to be the case inasmuch as hermeneutic discourse contains the aforementioned maxims and cautions, although it removes them dialectically. We should be aware of this dialectical step in reference to the above examples from our heuristic habits. This will allow us to join the right course of hermeneutic thinking, while respecting its rules, i.e. departing from the “prejudices” expressed on it.

As for the matter of being “freed from the circumstances”, in the sense of extra-historical objectivism or absolute reflection, of course efforts of this type are a usurpation and naivety from which hermeneutics dissociates itself. However, hermeneutic thinking aims to assure itself the possibility of both a critical and a correct opinion in every case, also with reference to culturally distant messages. This correctness and critical character will of course be limited by our current historical and cognitive situation. Yet this limitation should not be understood as it is by those who see subjectivism and relativism in every view, but rather as the need to adopt a perspective dependent on time and place and to be guided by motives which cause us to be interested in a given message from a specific point of view. The validity of a hermeneutic statement – like every historically and linguistically conditioned statement – is based on the fact that what it refers to itself has a historical and linguistic character, and is therefore not autonomous and unambiguous, but formed by the interpretations to which it is subject. It is therefore not so much the statement “One cannot discount the circumstances” as the very question of such a possibility (and thus also the simple answer – “it is impossible”) that belongs to hermeneutic naivety. What we have here is a variation on transcendental discourse, in which first the objectivism of a concept is criticised, before we validate using it “in a natural attitude” and present it as necessary, and therefore, one might say, “transcendentally naive”. One such concept is interpretation, which always assumes a dialectical contrast of “only interpretation” with “objective” or “absolute” interpretation, i.e. the truth about what is interpreted. The transcendental discourse used by hermeneutics designates the objective, defined – like in Kant’s transcendental dialectic – as a regulative idea, a truth that in this context gains the meaning of “true interpretation” as an unattainable horizon of interpretation.

“We cannot apply our own terms to other traditions” – in the light of the transcendental hermeneutic discourse, we should say that, although it is important to be mindful of the diversity of ways of thinking, at the same time we must be aware of the fact that we are “doomed” to “using our own terms” – without them, nothing makes sense to us. Hermeneutics does not refuse us the right to our “own understanding” – on the contrary, it encourages it, because every understanding can only be our own. As Józef Tischner put it, “an indispensable component of understanding a text is the existential decision through which hermeneutics makes its content its property”.⁷³ Only by “assimilating” it in this way is it possible to make an attempt at modifying our mental habits and way of thinking and obtaining a careful and open understanding. Otherwise, the best we will be able to manage will be to develop an abstract and sparse idea of “other people’s terms of thinking”, contrasted with “our own terms”.

As for saying that “we can only move closer to the truth”, to the above comments we should add that hermeneutics criticises this “only”, which can mean scepticism and disbelief at the powers and competences of hermeneutic thinking, or longing for the truth in the understanding of the ultimate truth. Rather than saying we can “only” move closer to the truth, we should view every step towards it as a plus.

Regarding legitimisation of extra-scientific (from the point of view of the natural sciences) forms of cognition and reflection, hermeneutic thinking entirely agrees with this aspiration – after all, it was to a great extent from this that it derived. Perhaps the only difference in comparison to the widespread views on this subject is the fact that for hermeneutic thinking, even if (particularly in the case of Gadamer) it is very sensitive to the claims of the philosophy of reflection, it is important for rational human behaviours to be validated as a certain totality that is the source of their meaning and unity. Such a totality might be the *Lebenswelt*, history or practice.

In this way, hermeneutic thinking referring to the popular hermeneutic consciousness appears as a transcendental dialectic, in relation to which the popular consciousness means stopping halfway. The dialectical antagonisms that are revealed here are based on the opposition of intentions which hermeneutic thinking seeks to dialectically and transcendently reconcile. Generally speaking, this is the opposition of a heuristic rationalistic and foundationalist intention inclining towards a reflexive discourse of legitimisation, with an intention of respecting the thing itself of the very text – or message, tradition – in its distinctness, its

73 Józef Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości* (Kraków: Znak, 1982), p. 119.

own meaning and claims, and also in its diversity. On the one hand, then, hermeneutics is pursued as a theory delivering universally valid knowledge, but on the other, the authority of this theory is limited, and its claims to validity are pragmatically ceded to the concrete process of hermeneutic understanding. The tension between the theoretical and practical that appears here is abandoned in the theory of hermeneutics as phronetic knowledge and a certain kind of practical task.

5.3 The Abundance of Dilthey's Heuresis

Although no other field of philosophy is more attached to history than hermeneutics, and none as deserving of being presented from a historical perspective, we must forego any diversion on the complicated development of hermeneutic thought from the 14th century to Dilthey.⁷⁴ What we should bear in mind, however, is that for Dilthey hermeneutics was a universal way of philosophising which had been intentionally grafted onto the fertile conceptual structures of German idealism and at the same time was critical towards its absolutist claims. Even Schleiermacher left excessively easy psychologisms and historicisms. He also gave hermeneutically developed concepts of the spirit and life, historicity, linguisticity and dialogicality of understanding, formulating the basic ideas to which his great successors – Dilthey, Heidegger and Gadamer – would creatively and critically refer. But we must certainly stop at them.

It is especially hard to talk about the philosophy of Dilthey, and this is not just because it is remarkably extensive, multifaceted and marked by an evolution of views. Above all, it aims in the spirit of hermeneutic heuresis to reconcile many different heuristic motifs.

5.3.1 The Concept of Life

Dilthey's philosophy is certainly a philosophy of legitimisation and self-legitimisation, which in order to attain them seeks a path that is unspeculative, but more in keeping with the positivist spirit of the historical school. For Dilthey, the thing itself became "life" as the intersubjective element of history, with the reality of "experience" (and thus sufficiently connected to the subjective base), but

74 As Gadamer claims, the best history of the hermeneutics of the past (until Schleiermacher) is the one written by Dilthey himself. This short but pithy text is part of the monumental *Leben Schleiermachers*. It can be found in the second volume of this work, and is entitled "Die Hermeneutik vor Schleiermacher" (Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985, Bd. 14, pp. 597–659).

drawing its objective validity from the process of “exchange of experiences” and from the understanding that comes with the expressions of life, in which it is ultimately objectivised as an “objective spirit” (conceived more broadly than in Hegel). Life constitutes unity and fullness, and the expressions of it acquire meaning in itself, becoming its “expressions” and subject to understanding, which is the necessary complement of expression within the unity of life – “life cognises life”. However, in the metaphysical vision which emerges from his later works, Dilthey seeks to avoid speculative construction in the Hegelian sense, which shapes the dialectical layer of Schleiermacher’s system (and serves speculative legitimisation not so much of the system as of the highest form of the spirit, which is Protestant Christianity). He also tries to avoid the domination of transcendental discourse on positive methodological work. As Gadamer shows in *Truth and Method*,⁷⁵ aimed against the heuresis of absolute idealism is the heuristic ideal of historical consciousness, which is the counterweight of the absolute knowledge of the spirit, which abandons historicity and views itself in a speculative concept. Rather than a “transcendental approach”, it proposes the ideal of a life that is assumed to be a psychic and historical real happening, rather than the metaphysical basis. Nevertheless, the concept of life takes on the metaphysical meaning of an element and “boundless depths”, and since it is the source of the sense (meanings) and the rule of truth for all forms of the spirit, it would be hard to accept that Dilthey managed (as Nietzsche to some extent did) to radically avoid an alternative: speculative philosophy of the spirit or transcendental metaphysics. In fact, in Dilthey’s metaphysics of life there are two competing ideas: on the one hand, life as unity of experience, expressions, contents of experience and understanding, is the element of all intelligibility as such, the life of the objective spirit which constitutes its objectivisation. On the other hand, life as subjective, but at the same time thanks to the intersubjectivity and historicity taking shape in it (according to psychologically described rules and as a historical process), it is conceived as the source and structure shaping the historical world. Dilthey adopts a form of thinking similar to transcendental phenomenology when he describes the origin of sense. It is formed in experiencing, placed in the context of “life complexes”, thanks to recurrence and analogy, and its essence is being an “expression”, and not a detached conceptual content. In such theories, conceptually still dependent on naturalistic psychology, Dilthey was anticipating Husserl’s

75 In the chapter “Dilthey’s entanglement in the aporias of historicism” (Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, op. cit., pp. 213–233).

way of thinking. In fact, towards the end of his life he admired the latter's early writings, which stimulated him to further thinking in this direction.⁷⁶

5.3.2 The Universality of Research – Tempering The Difficulties of Idealism

In Dilthey's time, there were two known ways of explaining and legitimising intersubjectivity as the foundation of objective meaning and validating the claim to validity of meanings formed in historic detail and the limited human perspective. One was the Hegelian method, expounded in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, and the other the rival transcendental neo-Kantian discourse. This is also of fundamental importance for hermeneutic philosophy. Both of these appear in Dilthey, yet although he considered it important to reconcile, so to speak, the "discourse of the spirit" with the "discourse of life", the latter, prone to moving into transcendental discourse, seems to dominate in his philosophy. These tensions can be illustrated by examples from *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, where we can find this passage: "Spirit has objectified itself in [external objects], purposes have been embodied in them, values have been actualized in them, and understanding grasps this spiritual content that has been formed in them. A life-relationship exists between me and them. Their purposiveness is grounded in my capacity to set purposes, their beauty and goodness in my capacity to establish value, their intelligibility in my intellect. Furthermore, these realities are not reducible to my lived experience and understanding: they form the nexus of a representational world in which the externally given is connected with the course of my life. I live in this representational world, and its objective validity is guaranteed to me through a constant interchange with the lived experience and understanding of others. Finally, the concepts, the universal judgments, the general theories (of the human sciences) are not hypotheses about something to which we relate external impressions but derive from lived experience and understanding. Just as here the totality of our life is always present, the fullness of life also resonates in the most abstract propositions of this kind of science."⁷⁷

However, transcendental discourse is not the essence of Dilthey's heuresis. Rather, it is replacing the discourse of validation and speculation with a discourse establishing understanding and aiming for it with a privileged form of

76 Cf. *ibidem*, pp. 217–222.

77 Wilhelm Dilthey, *Selected Works. Volume III. The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences* trans. Rudolf A. Makkreel, John Scanlon, William H. Oman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2002), p. 141.

heuresis. This is not just an action of the mind, but above all a metaphysical category – a form and manifestation of life that becomes possible thanks to our understanding intelligence. As for science, it is a kind of extension of understanding, conscious life, its highest form drawing its validity from belonging to the same spiritual world from which it derives and with which it deals. This also marks the beginning of the ontologisation of hermeneutic thinking, which begins to concern humans as understanding beings, and the heuristic challenge belonging to the Enlightenment dialectic: validating the departure from the discourse of validation. There is no doubt as to the need to form an original science that would be the basis of other sciences as well as delivering certain visions of the world. Instead, there is just the desire to preserve that which is threatened by foundationalistic thinking: the detailed and individual nature of historical formations of the spirit, the freedom of all the plurality and diversity of its forms, the meaning of detailed historical and philological work whose positive result cannot be replaced by any universal theory. However, if these postulates are to be realised in any science, then the heuristic (epistemological – as it was then understood) status of this theory must at the same time be explained and legitimise, and thus the principle of its precedence also indicated. The heuristic situation is very complex here. Individuality is the correlative moment of generality, and the totality in which it is located is in itself and ultimately a historical totality, which does not permit any “sublation of history”. Yet life as unity and totality demands the internal rule of this unity, which must be conceived ahistorically, but also not as a speculative discourse of absolute knowledge. Dilthey concluded that the principle fulfilling these conditions could be the permanent psychological structure of mankind – human nature.

In Dilthey, then, we have a whole abundance of heuristic ideas which he wants to preserve and legitimise, in spite of their mutual antagonisms. Dilthey wishes to legitimise sciences of the spirit, not purely speculatively, but leaving the due space to their detailed work and the definite character of their results. He aims for this in order to protect the positivity of the research and at the same time to avoid the positivistic (naturalistic) error of losing the generality of sense and aspirations to spiritual importance, which happens in humanistic research when we fail to respect the immanent sense of what is studied, instead reducing it to the role of the external effects of the processes towards it. However, any theory with universal aspirations and constituting a self-legitimising discourse brings with it certain heuristic preferences and concepts that go beyond their own application and lead to a conceptually and heuristically one-sided absolutisation. For this reason, the most general rule of Dilthey's heuresis is the plurality of aspects of

universalisation, which only together form a sufficiently multifaceted picture of spiritual life. Complementarity and multifacetedness are heuristic principles that are meant to overcome the feature of the heuresis of idealistic philosophy that involves aiming for the absolute primacy of particular universal points of view – corresponding to how the heuristic ideal of cognition and science as above all understanding supplants the heuristic ideal of cognition as discourse providing legitimisation.

Dilthey's conception contains a number of discourses of legitimisation – his hermeneutics is by no means the only one. The very metaphysical theory of life interiorising reality in experiences and objectifying the content of its expressions in an intersubjective historical community constitutes a certain transcendental discourse legitimising the (objective) importance of the human world and science about it, which in itself is not part of hermeneutics, but rather its transcendental-metaphysical foundation. Furthermore, Dilthey conceives the principle of legitimisation of the humanities as an epistemological foundation, an essential part of which is supplementing Kantian critique with historical reason. Hermeneutics itself as a theory of understanding, providing justification to the humanities and formulating certain methodological postulates towards them, bases its priority and universal aspirations on the universal nature of the phenomenon of understanding. However, it explains itself on the basis of the metaphysics of life – the expression of life and understanding as the structure of the spiritual world from which its objectiveness derives. Yet the priority of hermeneutics as a theory of understanding and interpretation of spiritual products serving the methodological legitimisation of the humanistic sciences (as understanding sciences) must involve assuring itself, and indirectly also sciences about the spirit, of some higher form of understanding as an indicator of their advantage over the ordinary experience of life and elementary understanding. In saying that, the discourse establishing the superiority of understanding in hermeneutics and science cannot be a speculative discourse of the self-knowledge of the absolute spirit. It must respect the pragmatistic heuristic condition that understanding is legitimised in itself, and not in an external discourse (although, of course, the broader the horizon of understanding the better). The superiority of understanding in science therefore is therefore legitimised in the discourse of the historical consciousness, the critique of historical reason, and also the heuresis of methodicalness. Hermeneutics would therefore appear to owe its validity to being consolidated metaphysically in the theory of life, epistemologically in the discourse of historical consciousness (the critique of historical reason) and to its own heuristic role, which is providing a method. The method proposed by

heuristics is not legitimised solely by the hermeneutic totality that is the spiritual community of the expression of life, but also logic. For Dilthey, this offers a joint basis for the validity of both the natural and humanistic sciences, as a source of their harmony. From the side of logic, understanding has the character of induction, also based on drawing conclusions by analogy. But the method of hermeneutics is also an expanded method of philological criticism, a historical method, and moreover analysis drawing from psychological knowledge. Note too that in Dilthey's thought, psychological totality, the source of which is the belief in the unity of human nature and the intellectual, emotional and volitive attitudes it contains, sometimes competed with the totality of understanding as a foundation of explanation of the unity of the spiritual world. To a great extent, hermeneutics in Dilthey is the successor of descriptive psychology, which was supposed to explain the mutual connection and conditioning of individuality by generality – how the individual is rooted in the wholeness of the spiritual world and based in an intersubjective community of individuals with a common psychic structure.

5.3.3 Speculativeness and Respect for the Reality of Life

It seems that the peculiarity of what is hermeneutic cannot be described in methodological terms. What is peculiar to hermeneutics in the hermeneutic project is the substitution of the model of growing self-knowledge and self-legitimation (in the dialectical process progressing through syntheses abandoning local oppositions) with a model of understanding describing ever wider circles, but never ending, the principle of which is the relationship between the understanding person and what is understood – the community of experiences, unity of life. The dialectical degrees of reflection change into rings of circulation constituting the structure of the process of understanding – a hermeneutic spiral, as it is sometimes known today. This process takes place “on the side of life”, and is always part of it, so understanding conscious of itself should respect the fundamental heuristic principle of pragmatic thinking, that the source of validity of every practice lies in itself: “Interpretation would be impossible if the expressions of life were totally alien. It would be unnecessary if there was nothing alien in them. [Hermeneutics] thus lies between these two extreme opposites”,⁷⁸ and elsewhere “today we must start from the reality of life”.⁷⁹ But in hermeneutic circles, growing

78 Dilthey, quoted in Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 164.

79 Dilthey, quoted in *Truth and Method*, op. cit., p. 223.

ever wider with the progress of our understanding, there is the same heuristic regulative idea of direct reference as in the heuresis of reflection. And just as in Hegelian dialectics, here too it is emphasised that actual and unavoidable mediation is a condition of cognition. In the circle of understanding of the whole by the parts and vice-versa, the unknown by the known, which itself then becomes better known, of higher understanding and elementary understanding, to which this must refer, this means the immediacy of reference, capturing the individuality of what is understood, and even reconstructing a creative experience in which what is to be understood was formed. In essence, however, this is impossible, because psychological and historical mediation of understanding prevents it from leading to direct knowledge. Therefore, as Gadamer and other hermeneuticians stress, the result of understanding is a reconstructive experience as essentially different from the original constructive experience. The doctrine of the hermeneutic circle therefore seems to depend on the theory of knowledge as mediated knowledge, which is necessarily supplemented in the heuristic notion of absolute knowledge as self-knowledge. The philosophical wisdom of hermeneutics – multifaceted understanding of culture within the historical consciousness – is thus not radically different from the historiosophical wisdom of speculative philosophy. The only difference is the historian's greater respect for the reality of life.

Dilthey's attachment to speculative heuresis is confirmed by the fact that that one more form of fundamental knowledge which he develops is simply philosophy, conceived most completely in the modernistic form as radical thinking finding reinforcement in itself and with epistemological criticism and legitimisation of science as its core, and therefore with self-knowledge (the reflection of the spirit on itself) as its chief heuristic feature. Incidentally, the psychological-historical way in which Dilthey understands self-knowledge resulted in the philosophy of philosophy in a psychologistic and methodological spirit, above all being a theory of worldviews. This is in fact a certain alternative solution for hermeneutics, which is always attractive for the hermeneutician.

After all, we have here room for respecting the historicity of the shaping of forms of the spirit. We also have a methodical moment (always present in hermeneutic thinking, at least as a postulate), which involves making a typology of worldviews (analogously to the way in which methods of philosophy and forms of thinking are subjected to typologies, a subject which is also close to Dilthey). Lastly, we have a denial of the naivety of psychologistic relativisation, since a worldview is only expounded in its own concepts, and psychological consolidation does not take away the autonomy of its own conceptual meaning. Yet the

heuristic essence of this project lies above all in legitimisation of the essential source diversity and heterogeneity of what in typical modernistic heuresis seems to be the uniform and simple will to cognition. Dilthey calls this dissimilarity of cognitive interests, associated with the domination of the intellectual, emotional or volitive moment, the diversity of “objective moods” permeating worldviews based on different “life dispositions” and “mental dispositions”.

Dilthey’s efforts to overcome the limitations of positivistic and speculative heuresis – while preserving their methodological and epistemological virtues – were not entirely successful. It is to him that we owe our understanding of the difficulties in which historicist as well as historiosophical heuresis becomes embroiled, and which philosophy must embrace if it is to overcome these difficulties while essentially remaining a kind of philosophy of reflection. Dilthey’s work supplemented hermeneutic thinking as Enlightenment thinking in the interest of the general development of education and spiritual culture and as Romantic thinking consumed with the idea of the spiritual affinity of the people of all times within the unity of the spirit with a new, sharpened heuristic consciousness that perceived the plurality of figures of spiritual life (in science too) and acknowledged them in their own claims and truth. Therein lay its greatness. In Dilthey, hermeneutic thinking begins to go beyond methodological-epistemological aspirations towards ontological themes of the world as an object of understanding and humans as beings that understand the world and themselves. This motif was developed radically by Heidegger, who became a link between the transcendental tradition (of both Kantianism and Husserlianism) and philosophy seeking to avoid the idealistic consequences to which it succumbs when within this tradition it ceased to pay sufficient regard to the *individuality* of the subject, the *historicity* of history, and the *reality* of actuality. In this respect, early Heidegger made a fundamental contribution to the establishment of hermeneutics in its current form as well as existentialism. Moreover, later Heidegger – having departed from the strict human perspective of *Being and Time*, which was a response to the metaphysics of being leading to the idealism of self-knowledge – became, paradoxically, a precursor of the revival of the philosophy of the “end of humans” philosophy, contemporary Nietzscheanism and deconstruction.

5.4 Heidegger: The Existential and Ontological Orientation of Hermeneutics

Heidegger’s philosophy too is characterised by an exceptional diversity of methods of heuresis, and there is no way that it – and even just *Being and Time* – can be treated as simply a step in hermeneutic thinking. The promise that Heidegger

seems to make, that this time we will truly and radically open ourselves to the “being of a being”, rejecting errors and the misleading questions of the past, is formally no different from the promises made by many philosophers before him. But the heuristic essence of his philosophy is not solely about repeating the philosophy of rejection in the name of the ideal of the thing itself, which we are to reach in a new and radical way. Instead, he seeks to connect objective discourse (the metaphysical vision of humans as beings cast into the world and concerned about their existence, which they want to understand, but whose conceptualisation leads them to the intricacies of the metaphysics of being) with the heuristic reflection expressed in constantly asking oneself “what am I doing now?”, “where does this thinking come from and where does it lead?”, “why do I think this way, and should I not do so fundamentally differently?” Mediation of discourse in this type of heuristic discourse is one of the features of Heidegger’s philosophy, which, together with his original style and philological polish as well as his evocative and acute vision, made this remarkable philosopher hugely popular. Ultimately, though, the Heideggerian positive discourse depends on the heuresis of the thing itself, which must be reached or revealed. Of course, the importance of this as a philosophical task is justified pragmatically – by deeming it to be something that belongs to the human essence. Therefore, especially in religiously oriented philosophy, humans have an existential goal ascribed to them, which philosophy can help them to attain. Of course, it is one of the privileged paths to this objective (art, and especially poetry or music, as well sometimes as mysticism or another form of religious life or theology, are usually viewed as equally good). This being so, searching for a privileged form of fulfilling the fundamental existential task is acknowledged as an inherent component of all efforts in this direction. The consequence is a picture of culture full of failed attempts – philosophical or otherwise – which make claims to this privilege and which conceive this principal task wrongly. This, in general, is how the heuresis of rejection of bad philosophy, a very universal heuristic motif, is formed. For example, in Christian philosophy, all individuals, including sinners, metaphysically strive to be united with God. They can follow the right or the wrong path to get there. In Nietzsche, everybody fulfils their will to power, but this can be done decently and splendidly or despicably. In Heidegger, meanwhile, everybody “cares for” the world and being – philosophy too is an expression of this – but one can set about this task in a true or false way. Of course, my concern is not yours, and without doubt Heidegger’s philosophy has room for individual subjectivity. Indeed, it is such an extensive philosophy that for every theoretical inconvenience that we would rather not see in this philosophy we can find a “that’s not the case – in

Heidegger it's not as simple as that". There is no doubt that the fundamental structure of a formal community of the objective of all people and the task of thinking as a form of enlightened realisation of this objective is present in the philosophy of *Being and Time*. And this brings a dual heuristic threat. First, it creates the continual possibility of a discourse of power, invoking the order of the mistaken and subordinating unity to the overriding goal. In it, therefore, a seed of intolerance is sown, to which is added the motif of one-sidedness resulting from the fact that no ontologisation of psychological concepts – to which the concern, the solemnest assurance that it exceeds the naturalistic perspective also belongs – can change the fact that we understand these concepts when we link them with certain mental states (even if we see them as having a non-psychological meaning). The existential-ontological image of a human must respect the psychological truth, and cannot avoid confrontation with it. From a psychological point of view, in *Being and Time* it matches at best only some human types, which are in any case described more precisely and universally by psychology. Second, we have here the heuristic paradox to which every philosophy of the thing itself succumbs: the antagonism of this thing itself as something radically content-based and the objective of philosophy defined formally as showing the way to get to the thing itself. Philosophy draws its dignity here from its formal virtue which can be conceived naively methodologically as a method or epistemology, or, as in Heidegger, as a kind of intellectual and moral lodestar. The result is the tension between "hermeneutics of actuality" and "hermeneutics of being". This is also why *Being and Time*, despite the philosophical heights the author scales, to which we sometimes struggle to ascend, continues to be generally heuristically dependent on the heuresis of philosophy of reflection involved in the discourse of knowledge and power, as well as on the heuresis of the thing itself, which inclines us once and for all towards a philosophy of rejection and formalism.

The existential topic was already prominent in Dilthey's hermeneutical thinking. As we know, in Heidegger it becomes more radical and takes centre stage. He describes understanding as "the existential", the way of being of the Dasein "most tightly woven with existential possibility". Dasein is understanding as thrown in being, which involves being open to being by "projecting" itself on it; in this projecting opening, being is possibility (in the positive ontological sense), and Dasein becomes the "possibility of being". The being of Dasein is also the being-in-the-world which it worries about, as by being above all temporal, it exists in the constant possibility and general necessity of death (in being-towards-death). In worrying about the world, Dasein turns out to be thrown in being as a design

through which it wishes to understand. It is this projecting, in which understanding occurs, that is the way of being of Dasein. The being of Dasein as understanding of being assumes a certain idea of it, yet this premise also has the structure of a project – understanding is by nature circular, structurally different from linear logical conclusion, and also containing the moment of violence of projecting entailing not so much accepting arbitrary premises as the definite character of understanding.

What, then, is the role of hermeneutic thinking, of the conscious radically ontological meaning of the task of understanding? Like any thinking, it is a circular process – in hermeneutics too, “self-interpretation” takes place, which belongs to the being of Dasein itself. If hermeneutic thinking is to do this better, it is thanks to the awareness of its task, and thus to the heuristic postulates resulting from recognising the essence of the process of understanding. One is the postulate of surpassing the naive perspective of reason, interested solely in actual being and regarding projection as violence and an error. By rejecting this perspective, we can consciously enter the circle of understanding instead of limiting it with external reflection: “What is decisive is not to get out of the circle, but to get in it in the right way. This circle of understanding is not a circle in which any random kind of knowledge operates, but it is rather the expression of the existential fore-structure of Dasein itself”.⁸⁰ And further: “our attempt must aim at leaping into this ‘circle’ primordially and completely, so that even at the beginning of our analysis of Dasein we make sure that we have a complete view of the circular being of Dasein.”⁸¹ Yet this is not enough – the very fact of hermeneutic thinking joining the practice of self-interpretation of Dasein, even in “the right way”, means that its theoretical and speculative aspirations are not fulfilled. This first, pragmatic – or “participatory” – sense of hermeneutics must therefore be complemented with a reflexive and methodological sense: “Phenomenology of Dasein is *hermeneutics* in the original signification of that word, which designates the work of interpretation. But since the discovery of the meaning of being and of the basic structures of Dasein in general exhibits the horizon for every further ontological research into beings unlike Dasein, the present hermeneutic is at the same time ‘hermeneutics’ in the sense that it works out the conditions of the possibility of every ontological investigation. Finally, insofar as Dasein has ontological priority over all other beings-as-a being in the possibility of existence

80 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: SUNY Press, 1996), p. 143.

81 *Ibidem*, p. 291.

[*Existenz*]- hermeneutics, as the interpretation of the being of Dasein, receives the third specific and, philosophically understood, *primary* meaning of an analysis of the existentiality of existence. To the extent that this hermeneutic elaborates the historicity of Dasein ontologically as the ontic condition of the possibility of the discipline of history, it contains the roots of what can be called 'hermeneutics' only in a derivative sense: the methodology of the historical humanistic disciplines."⁸² Here again, we have the paradox of joining the heuresis of the thing itself with the formalism of philosophy, defining the heuristic essence of pragmatic thinking: participation in the thing itself of understanding, and joining its practice, is first seen as a higher heuristic postulate than striving for reflexive knowledge. However, this is not entirely covered, and as a consequence the fullest act of reflection is interpreted as "the correct way of joining the hermeneutic circle". Yet this is not sufficient – joining the thing itself of practice (understanding) does not exhaust the reflexive aspirations of hermeneutic thinking, and must therefore take the form of a fundamental ontological theory, as well as the heuristic source for methodology. As a result, the formally highest accomplishment of hermeneutic thinking is discourse, in which it defines its own heuristic position.

Like the founders of hermeneutics, in his thinking Heidegger grapples with the formalism of philosophy of reflection and with the totalising claims that threaten from this side. To do this, he uses methods that do not break entirely with the heuresis of reflection and knowledge itself, and thus within the heuresis of the thing itself, as well as by transforming the formal discourse of legitimisation (as the epistemology or dialectic of self-knowledge of the spirit) into the circular heuristic structure of understanding. Schleiermacher and Dilthey had made it clear that the description of the circular nature of the process of understanding brings hermeneutics closer to transcendental thinking. It seeks to challenge the Kantian and Hegelian position, without abandoning idealistic philosophy. Gadamer is a similar case.

5.5 Gadamer's Hermeneutic Synthesis

Exceeding the limitations of various forms of radical philosophising while at the same time respecting their most profound aspirations and cognitive (heuristic) merits is an overt heuristic leitmotif of the construction of Gadamer's work. Above all, his hermeneutics fulfils the heuristic postulate that repeats the ideal of

82 Ibidem, p. 33.

true rhetoric and which Schleiermacher made in hermeneutics, saying that it is the art of avoiding misunderstandings.

5.5.1 The Hermeneutics of Prudence

Balanced opinion, avoidance of one-sidedness and radicalism, and as a result openness to dialogue and mutual understanding, light and intellectual prudence are perhaps the main features of the heuristic programme of hermeneutics, especially that of Gadamer: “[...] interpretation has the dialectical structure of all finite, historical being, insofar as every interpretation must begin somewhere and sees to supersede the one-sidedness which that inevitably produces. [...] Through its one-sidedness it puts too much emphasis on one side of the things, so that something else has to be said to restore the balance. As philosophical dialectic presents the whole truth by superseding all partial propositions, bringing contradictions to a head and overcoming them, so also hermeneutics has the task of revealing a totality of meaning in all its relations.”⁸³ However, speculative dialectics as a philosophy guided by the idea of self-knowledge carries a danger which hermeneutics tries to avoid – that of futility, formalism and loss of sensitivity to the real difference of what is past – the danger of “idealistic softening”. Gadamer thought – rightly – that “breaking [reflection’s] magic spell” in hermeneutics, conceiving “a reality that limits and exceeds the limits the omnipotence of reflection”, also means to “preserve the truth of Hegel’s thought”.⁸⁴ In Gadamer’s work, the heuristic structure of exceeding the forms of philosophical radicalism within its truth refers to many motifs. In very general terms, these are Hegelian, Husserlian and Heideggerian motifs, as well as strict hermeneutic tradition. Constant themes of Gadamer’s philosophy are the danger that threatens the truth of these philosophies, to be neutralised by revealing the human situation in the hermeneutic experience as being entangled in history, tradition and language, as well, in the face of this experience, by the awareness of the authenticity of the influence of history on us. The most important of these great but dangerous ideas are those of totalising discourse, final legitimisation (for example of experience of transcendental consciousness), the meaning of the whole of history, the ultimate meaning of a text and ultimate understanding of the author’s intention, as well as the idea of self-knowledge as the objective of thinking, and finally the idea of methodological canonisation, hiding the hermeneutic nature of understanding. These ideas, of course, all form one modernistic cluster, and cannot be considered separately. They are motifs that can be distinguished in

83 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, op. cit., pp. 466–467.

84 *Ibidem*, p. 338.

the heuresis of modern philosophy. Discourse that undertakes this subject polemically usually distinguishes one of them as the central motif – for example the idea of the subject, a speculative or metaphysical nature, or the dialectic of knowledge and power – in accordance with the heuristic model of overcoming, synthesis, new radical problematisation, and thus precisely in the spirit of the subject. The result is a procession of things overcome and the last great metaphysicians, as well as the speculative images of the history of philosophy, captivating and convincing, and sometimes bizarre and dubious, that corresponds to this notion.

We should point out that Gadamer does not enter this procession, nor wish to, and neither does he search for the ultimate consequences (of Heidegger's early philosophy, or that of anyone else); he is neither a radical hunter, nor the last metaphysician or first non-metaphysician. And although it is obvious that Gadamer was entangled in the difficulties of modern philosophy, as these difficulties were a major part of his interests, this is without the fever and dialectical struggle or pretentious pathos that once characterised postmodernist modernism.⁸⁵ Gadamer's ideas have the heuristic quality of prudence and reassurance – he tries to mitigate the motifs that are threatening and totalising in modern philosophy, its claims and simplifications, with a reminder of the ideals that grow from the same philosophical stem. These are ideals connected with respect for historical and mental dissimilarity and diversity, and with the awareness of the historical and linguistic situationality, finiteness and definite nature that condition both the need for and the possibility of human communication.

5.5.2 The Ideal of Participation (The Gadamerian Thing Itself)

In his programme of mitigation of philosophical radicalism while preserving what is true in it, i.e. his heuresis of enlightened and balanced opinion, a major concern for Gadamer is to avoid the excess of apodicticity and political moralising that to some extent characterise any philosophy with universalistic theoretical aspirations. In terms of hermeneutic thinking, we can read such accusations in Nietzsche. For him, after all, any interpretation is a manifestation of the will to power. Dilthey's thought is characterised by the escape from discourse of

85 In his introduction to his Polish translation of *Truth and Method*, Bogdan Baran discusses Gadamer's philosophy in terms of how it is caught up in speculative and transcendental heuresis. Everything he says appears to be correct, except that the dialectical whirl of this presentation by no means fits the atmosphere of Gadamer's book, and therefore fails to render the authenticity of its hermeneutic nature, its own, rather than reproductive, heuresis.

domination, in its opposition to absolutism and the associated freedom of abstract speculation guided by the ideal of self-knowledge. This is even clearer in Gadamer. The hermeneutic consciousness is supposed to control these impulses of the philosophy of reflection: "The hermeneutic consciousness, which must be awakened and kept awake, recognizes that in the age of science philosophy's claim of superiority has something chimerical and unreal about it. But though the will of man is more than ever intensifying its criticism of what has gone before to the point of becoming a Utopian or eschatological consciousness, the hermeneutic consciousness seeks to confront that will with something of the truth of remembrance with what is still and ever again real."⁸⁶ This passage contains a reference typical of hermeneutic thinking, to the thing itself, and the lost authenticity of practicality. And this motif is repeated when Gadamer discusses the problem of the speculative and dialectical nature of any talking, the speculative formation of language threatening to suppress the truth of the thing itself through the pure movement of a concept, taking control of language as its own passive tool. "A being that can be understood is language", and the scope of what is linguistic encompasses (transcendentally, although Gadamer avoids using this word) the meaning of everything that being can be for us. For him, the idealistic equation of being and thinking remains valid. Although being is revealed dialectically in the movement of thinking, we should allow the thing itself to speak, in the knowledge that we ourselves only speak from the position of our linguistic experience of the world, and no matter how hard we try, what we say will only ever be a weak echo of the wholeness of meaning, the tip of the unspoken iceberg: "The hermeneutic experience that we are endeavouring to think from the viewpoint of language as medium is certainly not an experience of thinking in the same sense as this dialectic of the concept, which seeks to free itself entirely from the power of language. Nevertheless, there is something resembling dialectic in hermeneutical experience: an activity of the thing itself, an action that, unlike the methodology of modern science, is a passion, an understanding, an event that happens to one."⁸⁷ At the basis of this hermeneutic dialectic lies the understanding of humans' radical finitude that is fundamental to hermeneutic experience, abandoning use of language with the intention of taking control over it, the concept, the thing itself, and at the same time listening to the sounds of the truth, which can only ever show itself to us from the side from which we look at it, and only in the way it can look from this side: "historically effected consciousness [...] knows about the absolute openness of the event of meaning in which it

86 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, op. cit., p. xxxiv.

87 Ibidem, p. 460.

shares. Here too, certainly, there is a standard by which understanding is measured and which it can meet: the content of the tradition itself is the sole criterion and it expresses itself in language. But there is no possible consciousness [...] however infinite, in which any traditionary 'subject matter' would appear in the light of eternity. Every appropriation of tradition is historically different: which does not mean that each one represents only an imperfect understanding of it. Rather, each is the experience of an 'aspect' of the thing itself."⁸⁸ Hermeneutics therefore does not know the problem of the beginning, and yet it is still based on a phenomenologically conceived reference to the thing itself in the sense of authenticity of participating, which it accepts as a pragmatistic heuristic idea instead of the idea of the ultimate basis (or beginning) and the resultant knowledge. Participating entails conscious presence in an infinite historical process and infinite dialogue, and in entanglement in the circular structure of understanding. Hermeneutics can describe this participation and allow it to be understood, which makes it more conscious and effective.⁸⁹ The thing itself, which is ultimately what any true understanding and interpretation is about, is not "in itself", but "for us", although it only ever appears to us when we are able to see it: "exactly because we give up a special idea of foundation in principle, we become better phenomenologists, closer to the real givenness, and we are more aware of the reciprocity between our conceptual efforts and the concrete in life experiences."⁹⁰ For Gadamer, it seems, this pragmatistic ideal of participation, developed in the hermeneutic theory of the circular structure of understanding and in the conception of historicity, is both a response to the claims of the speculative reflective philosophy and a rectification of the position of transcendental phenomenology, where the authority of the subject, in which the meaning is enacted, remains dominant as an idea over the heuristic idea of understanding and interpreting. According to him, this position is characteristic of *Being and Time*. Although the hermeneutic relationship of being and thinking, the conversion of being into being-for-us, i.e. only that which can be manifest to us within our linguistic and historical range, has a distinctly transcendental meaning, transcendentalism is one of the forms of foundationalist philosophy whose

88 Ibidem, p. 468.

89 And this is what the essence of hermeneutical thinking is, owing to the methodological heuristic ideas of the how/what dialectic, i.e. applying knowledge of the conditions of discourse in order to conduct it better. A knowledge of the structure of understanding and interpretation is supposed to permit us to be more aware of our tasks and of the possibilities of participants in culture.

90 Gadamer, "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion," [in:] Gary Shapiro, *Hermeneutics. Questions and Prospects*, ed. Alan Sica (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), p. 65.

radicalism Gadamer wishes to avoid. In the transcendental legitimation of the ontological validity of the world, it is on the subject that the emphasis is placed, as it is for the subject that the world is real. Yet Gadamer wants to retain the perspective of being, and he therefore locates his hermeneutic thinking in the theoretical area of the Heideggerian turn, which involved changing the point of view of Dasein into the “point of view” of being.

5.5.3 Metaphysical Inclinations and an Ambivalent Attitude to Transcendentalism

As we have stated, the transcendental philosopher is insensitive to the admonishment of not appreciating true reality and honest transcendence, seeing himself as being as resolute a defender of it as a realist. Gadamer’s circumspection towards transcendentalism is therefore based not solely on ordinary exploitation of the pragmatistic idea of participation in the thing itself of some kind of practice and exhibiting the pragmatic essence of the hermeneutic venture – it also is a certain metaphysical vision. This occasionally shows through the speculative and historical content of Gadamer’s work, yet nowhere is it clearly laid out. In any case, it is a metaphysics in which the being is concealed and hard to reach. It appears only in flashes, always hiding the Inexpressible. In our linguistic game of revealing the truth, we hinder ourselves, which is why we should direct our understanding so that the unsaid can also attract our attention: “In a statement the horizon of meaning of what is to be said is concealed by methodical exactness.”⁹¹ Truth therefore has something of the Heideggerian *aletheia*, and its being the thing itself is the other side of the thing itself of linguistic practice and dialogue – there is no absolutely transcendent content, but it is concealed on the horizon of experience and thinking, assuring the openness and infinity of the process of understanding and interpretation.

In Gadamerian metaphysics, humans too are the surface below which the depths are hidden. However, in that which they are phenomenally, in their connection with the historical and linguistic situationality that makes them possible (by defining them), above all they are radically finite, and as such beings that must understand and interpret. We shall return here to the transcendental discourse: “radical finitude”, like the authenticity of You, is a metaphysical concept. Yet the argument that finiteness defines a human, allowing him or her to be a concrete human, in a concrete place and time, making it possible to participate in a hermeneutic situation and circle of understanding that is a condition of the

91 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, op. cit., p. 464.

possibility of understanding, meaning and cognising, is a transcendental argument (and one cited in *Being and Time*). This heuristic duality of the metaphysical and transcendental discourse appears frequently in Gadamer – as the heuristic difference between the metaphysical conception of historicity, based on the motif of the authenticity of the thing itself as the reality of influence and the efficiency of historicity (*Wirkungsgeschichtlichkeit*), and the clearly transcendentalising theory of language. This ambivalence appears very hermeneutic – the concept of life, the exposition of circular heuresis as a counterbalance to speculation, as well as the reverence for historical detail and authenticity of history always promised hermeneuticians to mitigate the dangers of idealism, just as in overtly transcendental philosophy this role was played by respect for the own meaning of practicality and intersubjectivity. Yet we ought to bear in mind that hermeneutic thinking, understood as thinking that radically and universally poses the question of the dialogicality of human being-with-others-in-the-world, can also take a form that is unambiguously metaphysical, or indeed unambiguously transcendental. The first type is embodied, for example, by Emmanuel Levinas's most radical known philosophy of authenticity of reference, and the second by the transcendental hermeneutics of Karl-Otto Apel.⁹²

92 Hermeneutics is generally regarded as belonging to the philosophy of transcendental tradition in the sense that it is a consideration of the conditions of the possibilities of humans understanding the world, as well as a transcendental reflection on the foundations of its own discourse. However, it is distinguished from pure transcendentalism by its abandoning of the project of total reflection, belief in the infinity of the process of interpretation (including the self-interpretation of the hermeneutic discourse), authenticity of acknowledging the difference and own meaning of what is interpreted, contrary to the idealistic temptation to subject everything to the totality of meaning involved in the transcendental discourse or in the discourse of the self-knowledge of reason. Hermeneutic heuresis can be regarded as a certain form of transcendental thinking (Apel) or as a rejection of this perspective (Rorty). This essentially agrees with what we have said. Yet we should note that transcendental discourse often takes great pains to do justice to its own meaning of what is objective, the transcendence of what is transcendent, and the lack of transparency of what must remain hidden to us. This is the case in the Kantian transcendental dialectic and critique of practical reason, in the Marburg Neo-Kantians, in Schelling, and finally in Husserl, for whom the constitutive moment and moment of appearing are correlative and equal – the constitution proceeds in the experience of what appears and is the revelation of the content of what is apparent.

5.6 Hermeneutics and The Power of Reason (In The Light of Gadamer's Synthesis)

The slight aversion harboured by hermeneutic thinking towards speculative discourses results from the fear of restrictions to the range of thinking. Yet it is not just the grand narratives of speculative or foundationalist philosophy, or the positivist simplifications protected by the methodological ideology of scientificity, that succumb to an apodictic tone that denies them a truly understanding insight into the matters with which they are concerned. Rather, it is the discursive (or, as Gadamer puts it, speculative) nature of every statement, and its dialectical specificity, that determines its one-sidedness. This was described exhaustively by Hegel, for whom this one-sidedness is superseded by the dialectic in its own course. For hermeneutics, meanwhile, it remains a limitation to be overcome, albeit not within the system, but in the hermeneutic interpretation. This is a circular and forming process: every meaning lives in interpretation, and not only enriches the recipient, but is itself broadened by this interpretation. The hermeneutic circle is one of parts and wholes, of the understanding of the message and self-understanding. It is a circle of prejudice and pre-understanding and understanding that will overcome the prejudice, but also constitute the basis of further understanding; a circle of the tradition living in its interpretations and of the interpretations that grow out of traditions; a circle of the immediacy of reference in the act of understanding and the multi-faceted mediation of understanding in language and history. Thinking in the perspective of the hermeneutic circle is generally reckoned to be an independent form of philosophy. In fact, though, it is related to circular transcendental thinking, while circular heuresis is most thoroughly explained and applied in Hegelian teaching on the acquisition of knowledge in mediation, and partly also in Husserlian teaching about the constitution of meaning and the empirical I. Hermeneutic discourse is characterised by its attempts to avoid the measure of positive claims provided by the dialectic of self-knowledge of reason and constitutive research. Positivity, after all, is a form of the power of reason, and as a result its introversion, detachment from the thing itself, since the being that can be mastered is reason. Yet hermeneutic thinking is also about controlling, grasping meaning, as well and as thoroughly as possible; it too makes a conversion into linguistic meanings, meaning that being is assured a priori intelligibility. The regulative idea of this control is its hermeneutic nature. When we master understanding, know what it is and how far its aspirations can go, we enter the hermeneutic domain: that of hermeneutic experience and understanding, and of hermeneutic consciousness. Yet this is still a form of heuristic consciousness that, despite nominally not wanting to

be (instructing us to understand – albeit in the light of the thing itself – rather than to judge), remains based on the heuristic idea of overcoming and rejecting. Any pre-hermeneutic naivety, failure to understand the hermeneutic truth about understanding and the universality of the hermeneutic moment is rejected. Its loss threatens every statement, which “with methodical precision hides the horizon of meaning of what is really to be said”. Paradoxically, therefore, listening hermeneutically to the speech of another, and authentic conversation protected by hermeneutic awareness are at the same time a continual detection of the ubiquitous correlate of hermeneuticity – “pre-hermeneuticity”, naivety and the claims of speculative reason oblivious to hermeneutic moderation. The hermeneutic narrative seems almost to play a policing role, ushering the naive and disobedient onto the path of hermeneutics. Although this is not a significant theme in Gadamer, he certainly adopted from Husserl the peculiar means of persuasion characteristic of transcendentalism whereby naivety is imputed. This does not seem to help understanding, and can even pose a threat of a reaction – as for example by accusing the rationalistic critique of prejudices of naivety we might at some point expect a critique as a prejudice involving talking about the naivety of former rationalism.

Of course, the will to power of Enlightenment reason in the form in which it is manifested in hermeneutics is expressed in its opposition to related theoretical endeavours, i.e. to epistemologically oriented philosophy. When it is weaker and more one-sided, like positivism – it will be called naive, though it is accurate – the hermeneutic moment will then be said to have been lost. Philosophers, and cultural sources as a whole that do not compete with hermeneutics, appear in it as a thing itself, from whose careful understanding – particularly regarding classic work – hermeneutics draws its dignity as a science. They are sometimes also naive, but in a noble way – naive in the directness of their reference to the meaning they concern and which in interpretation appears in a multifaceted mediation.

These reservations should not be addressed directly to Gadamer’s work, where such a priori assumptions are more the object of calm reflection than a conceptual element of discourse. The certain exaggeration with which we describe the heuresis of hermeneutics here is meant to demonstrate clearly its partial distancing from transcendentalism and all discourse of the power of reason. The fact that hermeneutics also appears as a certain narrative, a persuasive story about hermeneutic ideals which in a certain moment, as in many similar cases, proves to be the objective and highest achievement of hermeneutic thinking, hostile to everything outside its jurisdiction, constitutes a problem of the self-knowledge

of hermeneutics. By no means does it wish to be a discourse of the power of reason or a guardian overseeing the freedom of discussion and dialogue or the purity of hermeneutic experience. Hermeneutics knows only one answer to these problems, and it is always the same: glorification of practicality, the primacy of the thing itself and questions about it, the ideal of truth and of seeking it in free and authentic dialogue, pointing to the relativity and limitation of applicability of any formalism – all rules and formal descriptions of the practice of communication, limitation in the face of its own meaning and the abundance of practice. This is the eternal promise of the redemptive action of the thing itself, the heuristic refrain that hermeneutics continues to repeat.

It is true that hermeneutics does not wish to be purely a metanarrative, a story about the ideals of understanding and reception of tradition in the light of hermeneutic experience, about the ideals of true conversation in the light of the experience of You or based on a reminder of the universality of the hermeneutic moment, present even in places where some would be happy to be rid of it – in the natural sciences and logic. But hermeneutics must be such a metanarrative. It therefore limits itself, locating itself heuristically as setting a certain task that is in fact a practical one, in terms of the very practice of thinking and interpreting. Moderation in judgment, openness, wide-ranging thinking, and loyalty towards the source of tradition are supposed to neutralise the imperious designs of reason. Similar ideas motivate pragmatistic thinking and every dialectic of self-limiting of the aspirations of reason in the name of reason.

5.7 A Critical Comment and Postulate for Heuristics

Two characteristics of hermeneutics are a certain inability to argue in support of anything (apart from criticising what is naive and non-hermeneutic), and an excess of self-control. And this is the general direction of criticism of Gadamer's views, or of hermeneutics as a whole (for example from Richard J. Bernstein, John D. Caputo and Jürgen Habermas). This is a complicated matter, as hermeneutics too, as a continual struggle with bad understanding, is in a certain sense radical philosophising. The thing is, though, that in its attempts to grasp the problem of understanding in universal terms in its epistemological and ontological dimension, hermeneutics is ready to focus on major and fundamental things, and even battle against bad understanding, but only on the grand stage where the most serious effort is taken to understand. It ignores the entire informal background of everyday understanding, deaf to the ideals of hermeneutics (yet certainly subject to the law of universality of the hermeneutic moment that it describes). Gadamer, we might say, measures people by his standards, and is not interested in

the fact that his will to understand, scientific accuracy and desire for the truth are different from those of the average person, or even average philosopher. We can compare the universality of hermeneutics as a theory describing the process of understanding and interpreting to the universality of the general theory of relativity. This can be applied to earthly conditions and dimensions, yet is entirely impractical here, as Earth is bound by classical mechanics. It is similar with hermeneutics – in striving for the truth about the practice of understanding, it went towards philosophical universality, abandoning a small psychological practicality. But our mundane understanding needs a theory that is similarly earthly – to its own measure, and that of the “baseness” of our intellectual practice. Our everyday understanding, including times when we are pursuing science, is not studying. Rather, it is a fragmentary and utilitarian “spotting” of the meanings that we need for various reasons, and the ideological character of the desire for the truth does not hold any particular distinguished place among them. On the other side of the coin, we can ask whether everything is worth studying, hermeneutic investigation of its meaning, and thorough interpretation. Is everything truly worth understanding? If hermeneutics is lacking in a certain critical flair, this is also because it does not need to bother itself with any old understanding or texts which, before being understood profoundly and hermeneutically, can be judged as mediocre or bad; as for those texts that it is worth examining in hermeneutic terms, they above all show their truth and that of their time to us, while their weak points, falseness and errors remain secondary.⁹³ What we therefore need is a more psychologically oriented theory of understanding, a pragmatic description of its course and a heuristic description of our contact with the text and the process in which reading shapes the texts we read. This kind of theory would make it possible to contrast the hermeneutic interpretation of human finiteness, according to which it is a condition of our greatness, with the sceptical position that for centuries has been presenting human finiteness as our smallness. By

93 The hermeneutic perspective seems to marginalise the irrational chaos and incomprehensibility of everything that is imperfect or incorrect in a text, everything that does not bring any truth, and can at best be understood in its reasons. Gadamer’s concept of understanding corresponds to this, at times taking on a very rationalistic and phenomenological hue. The object of understanding here is that which is true and can appear in the essential obviousness of understanding – in this sense understanding is rational, and guided by the assumption of the perfection of a text, the assumption that it is what it is and is supposed to be, a complete expression of its own meaning (cf. “Gadamer, Sprache und Verstehen” [in:] idem, *Kleine Schriften IV. Variationen*, Tübingen: Mohr 1977, p. 95, and Gadamer, *Vom Zirkel des Verstehens*, [in:] ibidem, p. 58 ff.).

demanding such a supplement, heuristics cannot be satisfied with a hermeneutic perspective. Of course, this does not mean that the achievements of hermeneutics can be ignored. On the contrary, the hermeneutic theory of understanding and interpretation appear to be among the few and lasting accomplishments of philosophy, and, like logic with dialectics, constitute heuristic knowledge. But it does not offer a satisfactory explanation of man thrown into the world of reading that surrounds him, the philosopher clutching at various texts in order to add her own to them. The reading life of the philosopher, and the multifaceted process – conceptual, textual, psychological, social – in which philosophical matter emerges, an uncontrollable, unpredictable and “nomadic” process, needs to be studied in a way that is open to various heuristic means. It would be heuristic, and also hermeneutic in the sense that understanding and interpreting, as described by hermeneutics, represent a certain aspect of the heuristic process of reading and writing. Certainly, though, much will remain invisible to us if we are to search only for the traces of the heuresis that we truly understand and are close to in the hermeneutic perspective – the traces of hermeneutic sensitivity.

We must look to hermeneutics itself, however, for the direction in which we should depart from it, as this is the heuristic rule of every review of philosophical thought aiming for a certain result. Of course, this rule need not be viewed too radically and one-sidedly (for instance in the sense of the heuristic idea of superseding/sublation or development), but applies at least as a rhetorical rule.

5.8 On The Margins: The Hermeneutics of Suspicion

The borderline area in which hermeneutical questions cease to be hermeneutics' own questions stretches from the issue of the position of hermeneutical thinking towards criticism. The interpretive work of the critique of ideology and psychoanalysis, and even more so the interpretive work of Nietzsche, always bases its understanding on discovering the manifestation of power hidden within every unambiguity. “It is so” conceals within it “I want it” or “it is to be so”. The justification demanded by the apodictic “it is so”, necessary for establishing the unambiguity and applicability of meaning, always refers to the concept of intelligible totality, to the logos. It may therefore be the case that the most profound essence of criticalness, as resistance towards any violence, is exposing logocentrism. If the means of violence of reason is establishing the identity and unambiguity of meaning, then criticism must show their opposites, separating them from within. Yet if every discourse of power and identity of meaning is possible thanks to establishing a subject for it (which possesses the truth), then criticism must question the subject. If, in the game in which the subject takes authority from the

power of the totality of identical meanings, it is the I and the logos that count, then criticism must display the strength of what is disturbed by their supposed connection, based on the direct presence of the logos in the I and the direct participation of the I in the truth of the logos. This is the independence of what logocentrism would like to see as a transparent medium: speech, writing, the “un-subjectified” logos. The independence of the text, ubiquitous unambiguity, the movement of diversification accompanying everything that “means” providing a counterbalance to the power contained in every meaning in its claim to unambiguity and to manifesting “something”, as well as the meaning, dividing and dismantling unambiguity, of every truly insightful interpretation – these are the phenomena that occupy hermeneutics as the “hermeneutics of suspicion” and are at the same time the domain of deconstructionist thought.

It is important to make it clear that hermeneutics tackles these questions. It stands in constant opposition to the claims of the discourse of the power of reason and all totalising designs. In hermeneutics, however, it is the identity of meaning, confirmed phenomenologically by the directness of the act of understanding, that serves as an authority capable of opposing any violence, regarded traditionally as dogmatism. Deconstructionism, of course, is unable to accept this phenomenological reference to “the thing itself”, and also extends its accusation of “logocentrism” to hermeneutics. Gadamer, though, would emphasise that hermeneutics, in its relationship with the question of the identity of meaning and the notion of understanding as determining true meaning, exceeds pre-hermeneutic naivety. He would also admit, in the context of his discussion with Derrida, that “Difference exists within identity. Otherwise, identity would not be identity. Thought contains deferral and distance. Otherwise, thought would not be thought.”⁹⁴ It is in fact a matter of choice to what extent in our philosophical discourse we will emphasise difference and non-identity, and to what extent surrender to the power of meaning – neither Gadamer nor Derrida will go outside of this game of games. In the discourse of deconstruction, we cannot say something like “deconstruction is a higher, more critical insight and consciousness than hermeneutics”. It would be absolutely not in the spirit of this philosophy, which after all eschews the appanages that come from reflexivity and self-knowledge (and this is also why the Derridean critique of hermeneutics contains a certain ambiguity and readiness to respect the inner truth of its discourse). In confrontation

94 Gadamer, “Hermeneutics and Logocentrism”, [in:] Diane P. Michelfelder, Richard E. Palmer (eds), *Dialogue and Deconstruction. The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 125.

with deconstruction, meanwhile, hermeneutics must repeat its dictum about the universal hermeneutic moment, even in the discourse of deconstruction. In a certain sense, therefore, the polemic of the two discourses is blocked, and no joint declaration can be determined, yet they can still understand each other.

The step that hermeneutics made towards structuralist thinking, which does justice to the game of diversification and the independence of a text towards its author and recipient, was called the hermeneutics of suspicion, intended as a supplement to hermeneutic thinking oriented towards gathering meaning. However, Gadamer sees in Ricoeur's programme a danger of breaching the unity of the hermeneutic venture by polarising the conception of understanding according to two heuristic notions: understanding the author's intention and discovering unrelated and unexpected meanings. This corresponds to the ambivalence of belief in the integral unity and intelligibility of a text and the suspicion ready to expose the usurpations concealed within declarations of objectivity. Gadamer, concerned about the sharpness of these oppositions, tries to capture the critical moment within the unity of a hermeneutic task as a practical task. It is the practical concreteness of the hermeneutic situation and the task of interpreting the tradition in which we participate that stands before us that is to be the authority that decides on how the affirmative and critical accents will be arranged. In other words, the thing itself of practice, life itself, should guide our interpretation and any potential criticism.⁹⁵

Understanding by exposing, revealing complex errors and naive simplifications, is, however, too much of an independent path of thinking – at least psychologically – to be reconciled with the respect for the form and content of the source that characterises Gadamerian hermeneutics. The hermeneutics of suspicion begins where Enlightenment critique of prejudices becomes self-criticism and self-suspicion, i.e. at the same level of reflection as Gadamer's theory of prejudice as a condition of understanding. Where the difference lies is in preserving the critical moment – the "suspicion" – as an independent heuristic moment that cannot be reduced to a factor that is part of the action of "good will" of agreement in the discussion on account of the ideal of truth and honesty of speech. Ricoeur, incidentally, ultimately recognises the power of hermeneutical understanding, surrounding and bringing together various forms of explanation, to reconcile and integrate divergent intentions of interpretation. The difference between Gadamer and Ricoeur is more in their differing ideas on hermeneutic work. Ricoeur permits more structuralist thinking about the text, and for him the

95 Cf. Gadamer, "The Hermeneutics of Suspicion", op. cit., pp. 58–65.

meaning of this is rather as a stage of interpretation. Yet revealing the structure, the inner dynamic of the narrative and the text remains a hermeneutic action, guided by the intention of recognising and acknowledging the diversity of forms of usage of language and demanding to be supplemented by tracing the ways in which a text makes a projection, constituting the meaning of the reality to which it refers. Ricoeur therefore defines the objective of hermeneutics as reconstructing the “double work of the text”. Although hermeneutics draws its legitimacy from the importance of the existential task of human self-cognition to which it is to contribute, this formal goal – reconstructing the “double work of the text” – is expressed in structuralist language, which after all makes use of the “text”, the “doubleness” and the “work”. We can find even stronger structuralist accents, as well as certain similarities to deconstruction, in the American reception of hermeneutics. Hugh J. Silverman, for example, in his semiological hermeneutics, describes the world as both difference and interpretation, bringing a comparative ossification and reification of the systems of signs and a comparative identity of the self, which creates signs in the process that is at the same time interpretation.

John D. Caputo, meanwhile, proposes his “radical hermeneutics” as a heuristic project of philosophising beyond the “safe metaphysical homestead”, fully aware of the “difficulties of life” and uncertainties, as “everything shakes”, with no metaphysical foundations below.

Heuristics too must enter these dangerous territories of philosophical thinking. After all, what it wants to propose to philosophy is to set up a philosophical life in such a way that it will be able to live to its fullest. But this fullness of philosophical life cannot be reached without risk, even the risk of destruction. We shall therefore risk heuristics dissolving into ambiguity, succumbing to self-deconstruction and losing the right to its own name by renouncing the search not just for a method, but also metaphysics, and tackle the subject of structuralist thinking, also known as the “thinking of difference”.

6. Structuralist Thinking

6.1 The Intellectual Mood

“If we thus define the being of what is at hand (relevance) and even worldliness itself as a referential context, are we not volatilizing the ‘substantial being’ of innerworldly beings into a system of relations, and, since relations are always ‘something thought’, are we not dissolving the being of innerworldly beings into ‘pure thought’? [...] The referential context that constitutes worldliness as significance can be formally understood in the sense of a system of relations. But we must realize that such formalizations level down the phenomena to the extent that the true phenomenal content gets lost, especially in the case of such ‘simple’ relations as are contained in significance. These ‘relations’ and ‘relata’ of the in-order-to, for-the-sake-of, the with-what of relevance resist any kind of mathematical functionalization in accordance with their phenomenal content. Nor are they something thought, something first posited in ‘thinking’, but rather relations in which heedful circumspection as such already dwells. As constitutive of worldliness, this ‘system of relations’ does not volatilize the being of innerworldly beings at all. On the contrary, these beings are discoverable in their ‘substantial’ ‘in itself’ only on the basis of the worldliness of the world. And only when innerworldly beings can be encountered at all does the possibility exist of making what is merely objectively present accessible in the field of these beings. On the basis of their merely objective presence these beings can be determined mathematically in ‘functional concepts’ with regard to their ‘properties’. Functional concepts of this kind are ontologically possible only in relation to beings whose being has the character of pure substantiality.”⁹⁶ Heidegger therefore speaks of the un-trueness (“something thought”) of the relational, and simultaneously of the un-trueness (only presence) of the substances-correlates entering purely formal relations. Fortunately, true structure, the world in its worldliness, “the structure of that to which Dasein assigns itself” cannot be formalised, and has its own phenomena based on “mathematical functionalization”. This is one of the Husserlian, one might say conservative passages of *Being and Time*. It is also a “structuralist” passage, and even an exemplary one, as the “seductive power” of presence, a parasite and yet also a host for structuralist thinking, is especially evident in it. Twenty years later, Heidegger would change the presence-phenomenon into

96 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, op. cit., pp. 82–83.

presence in an impenetrable word, the “morning word of being”: “The relation to the present, unfolding its order in the very essence of presence, is unique. It is pre-eminently incomparable to any other relation; it belongs to the uniqueness of Being itself. Thus, in order to name what is deployed in Being (*das Wesende des Seins*), language will have to find a single word, the unique word”.⁹⁷ This is very metaphysical, and consciously metaphysical, in the sense in which art can be metaphysical. Perhaps, between these two quotations, we might squeeze in the whole structure of structuralist thinking. Of course! After all, this thinking can be commenced at any point, to get to any other (as befits movement among structures). For structuralism, this is the fundamental intellectual experience – expansion of the sophistic experience. If, when practising sophistry, we feel that we have the power to find the discursive path to a randomly selected point (a thesis to be “proven”), here we find a much more powerful ability in ourselves: we can place every word, “category”, or sentence according to the “wish” of the language, discourse, structure, class, or subconscious – in the centre, at the beginning or at the end, focusing on it or doing the opposite – dispersing it. We are able not only to “prove” but also to “talk without proving anything”, concentrate our powers of reflection and master the elements of concepts, but also decide against this. We are able to be philosophers, but also to eschew this privilege and become no-longer-philosophers. These remarkable possibilities are assured by an excess of the signifier – a formal and lexical extra that can be used as an empty vessel in a system of linked vessels, gathering the semantic resources “to hand”. Examples of the notions, the “sensory figures” buried beneath this formation of heuristic consciousness (although unable to take a privileged position of the “main wisdom” – of course, that is, unless we particularly want them to, and happen still to be bothered about giving in to or being seduced by anything), are the Nietzschean world as a storm and eternal return. Meanwhile, the initiation, the equivalent of the sophistic “choice” or “order” of thesis to be defended and refuted, is the famous “throw of the dice” – the first thought out of nowhere.

6.2 The Integrating Power of Structure

The things that I would like to write in this chapter on structuralism have already been written, and in an unsurpassable way. If custom allowed me to, I would simply

97 Heidegger, “Der Spruch des Anaximander”, [in:] *Holzwege* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klosterman, 1957), pp. 335–336; quoted in Jacques Derrida, “Différance”, [in:] Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan (eds), *Literary Theory. An Anthology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 298.

insert that piece of writing here instead of my own. I am referring to Gilles Deleuze's entry in the encyclopaedia *Histoire de la philosophie* (ed. François Châtelet, Paris: Editions Hachette, 1973, vol. 8), "A quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?"; translated into English by David Lapoujade as "How do we recognise structuralism?"⁹⁸ This is no perfunctory information about structuralism, but an original and remarkably synthetic study of the essence of the subject. Deleuze treated the topic – the problem of structure – strictly theoretically, without analysing the conceptions that are part of structuralism. The logic of structural thinking seems to be uniform, and differentiation has particular laws within it – incorporated in the "structure of structuralism" as its individual "series" and "differences". Deleuze does not even speak of "structuralism" and "poststructuralism"; he does not diligently separate their individual projects, or reconstruct their diachronies – he simply gathers "distinguishing marks". But his intention is not to "recognise" structuralism and not mistake it for something else – after all, there is no such identity, series or structure that is called "structuralism". And it is certainly not a "structure of structures". There are just structures. Structuralism's consideration of itself is no different heuristically from the structuralist consideration of anything else. There is no great difference whether we say "structure" or "structuralism" – the "-ism" does not mean any theoretical informing, but rather the happening of a phenomenon, the "happening of a structure", so to speak – just as the ending in the word "magnetism" means the phenomenal nature of what is being described (we can observe the interchangeable usage of the words "structure" and "structuralism" most clearly in Piaget). Learning to recognise structuralism is nothing else but learning to recognise the world in structuralist terms, or to recognise the "structuralism of the world". And this was why it was possible, and expedient, to single out structuralism – a particularistic phenomenon commonly spoken of as a passing fad – as a form of philosophical heuresis distinguished by a particularly high degree of heuristic wisdom. The particularism of structuralism is harmless: the particularism of certain mannerisms of individual authors, of a certain intellectual mood and fashion. The particularism of the intellectual adventure of Frenchmen who, alarmed by the political consequences of the narrative of the liberation of the individual, betrayed Marx for Nietzsche. Yet the passing of these ideological and philosophical turbulences is no threat to structuralist heuresis, which in a sense has been present in science for centuries. Today, incidentally, we are at a "post-poststructuralism" stage, and know that

98 In *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, trans. David Lapoujade, ed. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles and New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), pp. 170–192.

after what was overly pretentious died out, structuralist thinking moved distinctly closer heuristically to pragmatic thinking.⁹⁹ This is undoubtedly a success, part of the general success that is the rapprochement of various types of heuristics – from methodological, via rhetorical and hermeneutic, to structuralist. To a large degree, we owe the expansion of intellectual horizons, the condition of this comparative unification of continental philosophy, to the erudite and syncretic

99 Peter Dews's book *Logics of Disintegration. Post-structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory*, (London-New York: Verso, 1988) is to a great extent devoted to this matter. On the one hand, Dews shows a critical (and in spirit sometimes structuralist) approach to the excessively radical philosophy of the subject since the time of Kant – topics blurred by Derrida and other poststructuralists' habit of interpreting the past in too formulaic and anti-metaphysical a way. On the other, he demonstrates the convergence of their fundamental ideas with those of the philosophers of the Frankfurt School, including Habermas. Perhaps most meaningful in the context of the precursors of structuralism is Foucault's theory from *The Order of Things* on the epistemes of the classical age (from Bacon) and modern times ("the age of man"). In this classical era, the place of the rule of probability was taken by that of identity and difference (permitting taxonomical sciences: general grammar, natural history and the science of abundance): "The age of resemblance is drawing to a close. It is leaving nothing behind it but games. Games whose powers of enchantment grow out of the new kinship between resemblance and illusion; the chimeras of similitude loom up on all sides, but they are recognized as chimeras; it is the privileged age of *trompe l'oeil* painting, of the comic illusion, of the play that duplicates itself by representing another play, of the *quid pro quo*, of dreams and visions; it is the age of the deceiving senses; it is the age in which the poetic dimension of language is defined by metaphor, simile and allegory." (Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, op. cit., p. 51. Afterwards, from the time of the Marquis de Sade, this epoch of identity and differences came to an end, an epoch of the power of representation establishing the order of things in the order of statements. Representation came to an end, revealing the a priori and historical powers governing speech. What appeared was the human, literature, culture, objects of continual exegesis – and with this the humanities: historical, philological and exegetic-interpretational. We live at the close of the age of man; structuralism (according to Foucault coupled with phenomenology) is part of this structuralistically distinct era: it provides pure forms, and phenomenology provides a description of the experimental basis – two accommodating surrogates of the representing discourse; cf. chapter VII of *The Order of Things*. This can be interpreted as a structuralist's myth on the origin of structuralism. As we said, there will be laymen, like Dews, who point to the ability of modern philosophy to conduct self-criticism of the totalising usurpations of the reason-subject. Here, of course, Kant's famous statements are cited, but so too is the criticism made of Fichte by Schelling; cf. Dews, op. cit., chapter 1, as well as Marek J. Siemek in conversation with Piotr Przybysz, *Viel, o, sophie* 1990, no. 1(3), p. 49.

nature of philosophical structuralist writing. Derrida and Deleuze, though somewhat anarchistic and incendiary, through their ability to draw from classical, German, and French (both philosophical and literary) tradition, as well as part of analytical tradition (semiological-communicational: Wittgenstein, Austin and Searle), gathered together the heuristic powers of half the philosophical world, becoming models of heuristic virtues. Others, such as Foucault and Lévi-Strauss, did similar services for other worlds of culture, yet remained philosophers. For the structuralists, the praise for diversity that is now commonplace, and dates back to Nietzsche (for instance in the idea that “the world has become infinite” in *The Gay Science*), combines very neatly with a familiarity with this diversity.

The forerunners of structuralism have already been mentioned. Characteristically, we have always encountered structuralist thinking at the end of the development of methodological, pragmatistic, rhetorical, and hermeneutic heuresis. As for methodology, on the one hand the fascination with structuring had been growing within it for a long time, and was manifested in such projects as the theory of systems and cybernetics, as well as semiotics and semiology. On the other, structuralism itself first discovered itself as a method, and described itself in methodological language (de Saussure defined linguistics, in the tradition of drawing “science trees”, as part of semiology, and this as part of psychology). The ability to model phenomena, which derived from this same tradition of drawing tables, charts and “trees”, provided a strong impetus to structuralist thinking in the form of the ontic problem and the epistemological status of the model. In philosophy, this abstraction, mathematical rather than metaphysical-speculative, is a comparative heuristic novelty, a heuristic interjection of mathematical thinking that is in fact one of the fundamental inspirations of structuralism. What was originally the model (and therefore abstract) was interpreted as symbolic, as the structure.

Rhetorical heuresis utilises the opposition of the literal and the figurative and ends up questioning it by universalising the figurative, rhetorical and literary (from Nietzsche to contemporary authors). Furthermore, it was rhetoric that dared to make “anarchic” steps: standing before the independent element of writing and sounds, which ultimately escape formalisation (by grammar and psychology), as well as insidious tropes like irony. It was rhetoric too that was one of the first areas of thinking to experience the limits of formalisation, and one of those intellectual forces that brought the classical age to a close. Rhetoric therefore plays a major part in the “deconstruction of representation”. But this is not all. Perhaps more importantly, it became the first (not counting theology) “philosophy beyond philosophy” – sometimes out of choice, and sometimes

compulsion – and thus experienced what in the 20th century became the experience of the “post-philosophers”.

Structuralist thinking is linked with pragmatistic heuresis above all by the concept of discourse and such notions as linguistic competence, acts of speech, performance, codes, and the “linguistic turn” in general, from which to an extent both pragmatics and structuralism derived. We can clearly observe in communication theoreticians or analysts such as Austin, Searle, Eco, and in particular Chomsky the Kantian motif of “unconscious structures” characteristic of structuralist thinking as well as a fascination with heuresis based on the “rules of transformation”, “conditions of the acceptability of sentences” etc. This heuresis, understood as typical of the structure of language (for example in the sense of generative-transformational grammar), became the heuresis of discourse- or communication-based philosophy – from Schütz and Habermas to Foucault, via analysts (such as Peirce and Eco with their semiology) – as pragmatistic as it is structuralistic.¹⁰⁰ What seems to distinguish these approaches is the difference, frequently cited by the structuralists, between the heuristic functionalist motif (which preserves the concept and function of the active element as something definite within it) and the structuralist one (in which such concepts as function and relationship are in fact removed and the difference between the subject of the relationship and the relationship is blurred so that immanent determinacy is replaced by value within the system, as in de Saussure).¹⁰¹ However, decisive from

100 There is a remarkable concordance between structuralist and pragmatistic accents in Umberto Eco's *La struttura assente* (“The Absent Structure”, which has never been completely translated into English), which distinguishes the synchronically examined closed worlds of individual semiotics and the open world of communicative practice. A communicative analysis cannot be confined to these individual worlds without taking into account human semiotic activity, which makes it possible to change the conditions of transmission and reception of the apparent same message (the dialectical exchange between the code and the message), as it can even become part of the politically repressive system of manual communication. The peculiar emancipatory-structuralist fb that concludes the book betrays a vision of social emancipation and improvement in all the areas of our practical activity (mastering the world) based on the developed semiological consciousness that lets us know that to each division of our practice there are certain corresponding divisions of communicative practice – none of which is in itself the most important or decisive one.

101 Of course, other issues also come into the equation, such as the matter of the meaning of the pronoun “I” and that of the formalistic appearance inherent in the belief about the identical repeatability of linguistic acts. A good illustration of the anti-metaphysical shift in this area is Derrida's debate with Searle; cf. Manfred Frank, *Was*

a purely philosophical point of view (we should not forget that most of structuralism is located outside of philosophy, and is by no means interested in what is philosophical and what is not) is being liberated from the burden weighing down on pragmatistic heuresis that is the imperative of validation (in the thing itself of practice).

We have already touched upon how the hermeneutic perspective is getting closer to the limits of deconstruction, pointing to the idea of the hermeneutics of suspicion and Ricoeur's double work of the text. It is clear that such hermeneutic concepts as the infinity of expression and inexhaustibility of meaning refer to the same experiences expressed radically in the writings of Derrida. But what is also clear is that in hermeneutic discourses the motifs of innumerable mutual connections, unforeseeable differentiations, and the autonomous life of the text in relation to its author and recipient are "pacified" using "static" metaphysical concepts. These, although moved back to the "horizon" (like truth and ultimate meaning) fulfil their regulative function. According to Derrida, hermeneutic meaning, no matter how much it differs from its objectivistic or psychological-intentional understanding, will always remain a means of counteracting what is called the dissemination of meanings and text. Yet if we accept that an opposition within one discourse, with which both sides are familiar and which they treat more as a kind of rhetorical drama – within the discourse of the "problem of metaphysics" – is not all that serious an opposition, then we ought to agree with the view that structuralist thinking is closely related to hermeneutic thinking. This is the thesis promoted by Manfred Frank in his book about neostructuralism, and Dews also basically agrees with it. Both also point to the fact that the source of today's concept of structure and structuralist conception of language is in the philosophy of Schleiermacher. It is evident that these initially diverse theoretical projects are moving closer together and becoming unified. And this is also a more general trend. Philosophy, we might say, is today becoming ever more heuristically sensitive, meaning that its heuresis is ceasing to be "pragmatic", "moderating", "dialogical", or "deconstructive" (although within each of these notions is an illusion of universality that is hard to overcome), and is instead simply heuristic. And quite right too.

Structuralism plays a particular role in this process, as it is here that the borders of philosophy opened most fully. This was not only as the persuasive power

ist Neostrukturalismus? (Frankfurt am Main: Edition Suhrkamp, 1984), Vorlesung 25. If Derrida sometimes places himself very clearly in structuralist heuresis, it is in any case with great criticism towards structuralism's fascination with formalism and abstraction.

of the categorisation “philosophical” weakened, but in the sense of mutual exchange of heuristic means with other areas of science and culture. The condition of this heuristic liberalisation was a certain softening of the artificially sharpened philosophical issues known previously mainly as controversy over idealism and later as the so-called problem of metaphysics (or rather metaphysicality).¹⁰² This heuristic transformation triggered by Heidegger was hugely significant, and much of it took place in the writings of the French authors inspired by him, tackling the heuresis of structuralist thinking.

The term “the problem of metaphysics” shifts the emphasis in an exclusive field of philosophical issues. First, it sidelines the question of legitimacy (which has since the time of Hume been a key heuristic motif of the destruction of metaphysics) in favour of those of presence and difference. Second, it takes the permanent character of the struggles of the metaphysical, including what is critical towards metaphysics, as initial knowledge, in the sense of the fundamental heuristic insight into the mutual relations (in the context of “the problem of metaphysics”) of “anti-metaphysical” and “metaphysical” discourses. This change has made it more or less clear that “metaphysical” and “present” are also particularistic classifications, dominant simply because they have become customary. The large chorus of phrases of rejection no longer have to shout each other down: Idealism!

102 The dispute of idealism, or antirealism, with realism, are rather particularistic terms, as is the “dispute over the existence of the world”. Unfortunately, no common concepts have been formed in this field, since the relevant issues constitute a dialectical conceptual system that does not favour uniformity. In order to express ourselves in the most general terms, we can say that this is a Cartesian issue. I would divide it into two main levels of theoretical advancement: in the first, saying that the subject-object opposition should be suspended is regarded as a theoretical result and something revealing (satisfying), while in the second, advanced questions of transcendental thinking are considered. This latter stage is then divided according to whether it is still thought that the real question concerns the object of the issue and can be solved definitively (e.g. by determining the correctness of some version of transcendentalism), or whether this question is blurred. Of course, the heuresis of the problem of metaphysics supports this second division – i.e. abandoning thinking about the Cartesian issue as a real question. This step is decisive for transcendental thinking, which in fact does not lead to any theoretical position, but involves justifying the constant avoidance of making metaphysical claims as something naive – or rather only conditionally permissible. This means that the transcendental discourse legitimises and permits a certain metaphysical manner of expression (for instance as expressing a “natural attitude”), describing it as being subject to a transcendental (and therefore legitimised) “appearance”. By legitimising a natural attitude, at the same time the transcendental discourse also seemingly and ambiguously invalidates itself.

Cartesianism! Enlightenment! Instrumental reason! Regime of (Platonic) truth! Metaphysics of presence! Foundationalism! Philosophy of Representation! Totalising metanarratives! Auschwitz! Derrida and the deconstructionists were well aware that each such term, despite the immanent semantic claims suggesting the possibility of universalisation and of “reinforcing” each of them, should be applied in its own conceptual and discursive content, and is there to be utilised (*bricolage*) rather than for theories to be built on it. If the position of any of these critical themes is boosted by power stronger than conceptual customs, it is tracking the manifestations of the links between knowledge (discourses, theoretical narratives, ideologies) and power (from self-legitimation to real political influence). Until recently, this Nietzschean critical tradition was a practically mandatory element of any European socio-philosophical book, and even today, the related concepts – Enlightenment dialectics (Adorno), the micro-physics of power (Foucault), metanarrative (Lyotard), and totalisation and transcendence (Levinas) – are the hard currency of philosophy displaying political interests. Anti-totalising discourses stretch from the relatively naively framed issues of “linguistic manipulation”, “ideology” and “propaganda”, via the Nietzschean “will to power” and now classic issues of “anti-humanism” (i.e. abuses associated with the ideas of the human and humanity), to the matter of “logocentrism”, interesting solely to philosophers, and the Platonic-rationalistic brand stamped on philosophy since antiquity, and even today holding it in its yoke. Although all these questions form something of a procession of ideas (and are perceived as such), rather than being competing lines of theoretical discourses, perhaps this makes the general point of view providing an insight into these multiple arguments all the more important. Structural thinking in its “post” form is so strongly connected to the contemporary “procession of ideas” that, in order to grasp its specific heuristic nature, it is necessary to witness the heuristic habits making it apparent that the “problem of metaphysics must be left to itself”, that in every philosophical statement there is potentially, even in abstract form, a “co-naturalness of discourse and violence”. There are many ideas and authors at play, only some of them philosophers. Saussure or Lévi-Strauss would be at best indifferent to some of the problems which drive the philosophies of Derrida and Deleuze. It is a far cry from the spiritually Kantian and mathematic-inspired abstract formalism of this former pair to deconstruction, yet the general type of heuresis remains the same. We are only interested in some heuristic “distinguishing marks”, points and theoretical moments significant for philosophy. We cannot reconstruct the lines that lead from some forms of structuralism to others;

indeed, this would be alien to the structuralist heuresis that we are to learn here, at the same time learning to pursue heuristics.

6.3 From Heuristics of Rejection to Heuristics of Doubling

Like any modern philosophy, structuralist thinking originally appeared with a programme of rejection. Depending on the degree and kind of philosophical engagement of the various authors, the object of rejection was introspection, speculation (i.e. what positivism rejected as being dangerous and free), Hegelianism (as the philosophy of the subject burdened by speculative freedom), and then phenomenology (as the philosophy of “living presence” and the philosophy of the subject), metaphysics, and finally philosophy per se. However, this rejection – or rather overcoming (as Derrida, for example, could hardly be said not to have been strongly influenced by Husserl in his youth) – has the peculiarity of not being pursued in the name of “the thing itself”, but in a way the opposite – in the name of what is absent, and is not displayed or consolidated (as well as that which cannot be presented in a concrete fashion as it is too abstract and formal). Therefore, if the rejection is rejection according to the principle of “it is not so – but so”, it is always governed by “it” that is “so”. In other words, the heuresis of rejection is connected to the heuresis of the thing itself. Therefore, refusal to be subjected to the latter at the same time means refusal of rejection – at least as the final word, as there is no way of getting rid of it entirely, and indeed it is not permitted. This is why it is structuralism (of Derrida, but also Foucault and Deleuze) that remains in this particular relationship with the rest of philosophy symbolised by the transformation of the question of idealism to the problem of metaphysics. This only appears to mean that we are simply reconciled with the inescapability of becoming caught up in the metaphysics of every discourse, even critical, when a metaphysical concept is used in any context (and this is actually what every concept is). “Reconciled” is a meaningless term, a general assurance that we know the dialectical nature of a certain situation. And indeed, there are many structuralist discourses with the heuristic meaning of reminding that something or other determines the form of every discourse on it, drawing it into its own characteristic structure (heuresis): remember that one can only speak of a metaphor metaphorically (or rather metaphomorphically), of myths only mythologically (mythomorphically), of philosophy philosophically, of metaphysics metaphysically and of insanity insanelly. But this is not the most important meaning. What is most important is that these discourses do not agree to the status of dialectical wisdom, and that the inescapability of entanglement and knowledge of it are treated as an opening of the perspective, in which the

discourse can both mark either a path of repeated banality of futile reflectiveness or a mechanical gesture of exposing (the metaphysicality or aspiration to power), and achieve something that in the given state of the issue is an act of mental courage and intelligence demonstrating new forms, new connections, new mental shortcuts, delivering fresh words which the inevitable fate has not yet encountered: “[...] if nobody can escape this necessity, and if no one is therefore responsible for giving in to it, [...] this does not mean that all the ways of giving in to it are of an equal pertinence. The quality and the fecundity of a discourse are perhaps measured by the critical rigor with which this relationship to the history of metaphysics and to inherited concepts is thought. [...] It is a question of putting expressly and systematically the problem of the status of a discourse which borrows from a heritage the resources necessary for the deconstruction of that heritage itself. A problem of *economy* and *strategy*.”¹⁰³

And yet, a virtue of discourse is its criticism and self-knowledge. Structuralist thinking may well be the most radical opposition to the philosophy of self-knowledge and reflection (criticising the concept of the subject in the sense of self as an illusion and threat, and dialectic as subduing true diversity and discord – the identity of the meaning of consecutive dialectical steps and the power of unity of synthesis). However, its dismissal of self-knowledge and reflexive wisdom (often in favour of formal-abstract wisdom, which is close to mathematics) is partial or ambiguous. And this is characteristic of structuralist thinking, governed by double heuresis (or heuresis of doubling). This is not simply doubling in the normal sense – experience and reflexive discourse – but rather one that is free, as long as it retains the condition of redoubling, a “doubled movement”¹⁰⁴

103 Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences”, [in:] *The Structuralist Controversy. The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, eds. R. Macksey, E. Donato, Baltimore-London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1972, p. 252. Cf. also Derrida, “The Ends of Man”, [in:] *After Philosophy. End or Transformation*, eds. K. Baynes, J. Bohman, T. McCarthy (Cambridge, MA-London: MIT Press, 1991). In Chapter 1 of *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spiva (Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1997), p. 12), meanwhile, Derrida writes: “The movements of belonging or not belonging to the epoch [of the philosophy of the present, i.e. the whole of philosophy] are too subtle, the illusions in that regard are too easy, for us to make a definite judgment”.

104 A model example of heuristic doubling is the structuralist philosophy of writing (Barthes, Lacan, Derrida, Foucault). The self-referential text is referential and reflexive (and therefore metaphysical), because it refers to itself. However, in the course of the text’s dealing with itself, the anarchy of the writing is manifested, and its own vitality challenging and distracting the conception of the self-reference. Reflexive, classical

One can describe structure according to its series, follow one line, and at the same time another, or – even better – describe the peculiarity that forms it, its permanent density, or the opposite – a moving blind spot, a neutral element, an empty place circulating around it. If some line of the structure is a line of reflection or dialectic, then this too must be penetrated, but without neglecting the heuristic obligation to pass along an “unconscious” line, marking a different series than that of the concepts of self-knowledge. And here lies the key to understanding structuralism’s position towards causality, historicity, time, origin –

heuresis interplays here with that of dispersion, decentring and differentiation. Another example is the deconstruction of the concept of the sign, which assumes a radical difference of the position of the signified and signifier (and also assumes the whole tradition of metaphysics). We discover that the sign ultimately refers us to the notion of a metaphysical *primum signatum* and concept of a (signifying) transcendental, which supposedly no longer refers to anything, and is not the *signifiant* for anything. Yet this is an abuse whose source is in the marginalisation of writing in relation to speech, in the belief in sound attributed to its object originally and in essence. The sign and speech are thus spread between that which is represented, manifested (in the metaphysical world, whose stability is guaranteed by the transcendental *signifié*) and the subject which manifests, represents or expresses something. Logos, mimesis, expression and sign are concepts that are closely related to this system. In it, writing seems a mere imitation of speech. However, having discovered the rules of this system and the autonomous element of writing ruled by graphemes and its internal game, and not by reference to the writing subject and intentional object, and having discovered the texture – the fabric of a text in which the signifier becomes the signified for something else (and vice versa, in an incessant process), we face the question of whether this should lead us to abandon the concept of the symbol and the distinction of the signifier and signified. But this is impossible. So we ought to tackle the task of double work and double discourse – in the area governed by metaphysical concepts and in that where the possibility of the end of the rule of metaphysics appears. Cf. e.g. the book of interviews with Derrida *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), in which (p. 41 ff.), Derrida also discusses his strategy of deconstruction and general economics, which must avoid a straightforward neutralisation of the binary oppositions of metaphysics, which would mean getting stuck in their sphere of influence, and thus their indirect confirmation. These measures require a double science, heuristic duplication, which does justice to the inevitable need for rejection, but also acts as a safeguard against establishing a new hierarchy (of the concept ruling by its opposition) as a result of the rejection. This is no longer about sublation, or indeed neutralisation, or avoidance of speaking for a specific position (although these are all related heuristic motifs), but rather about preserving a recognised heuristic situation – of conceptual tensions, a game, shifts and discord – in an untouched state.

concepts that it ought to renounce (as metaphysical) and yet tends to preserve. That is to say that structuralist thinking views them in abstract terms, in keeping with its mathematical avocation – as a function of result (or rather “function of apodosis”) defined on the structure. This simple mathematical intuition, and more generally the heuristic *locus communis*, that every concept belongs to some theory and only makes sense within it, is so alien to philosophy that sometimes – naively – we have to say that structuralism contains a diachrony, causality, and origin, albeit structuralist – as if it could mean anything that it is other than structuralist. This is meant to say that metaphysical and speculative concepts are avoided.

Since the programmatic ambiguity of structuralism and its diversity mean that it is not the reverse of that from whose rejection it originated, and does not shun transcendental discourse or reflection, or dialectics, it is also not a slave to these heuristic themes that become its distinctions: entropic-deconstructional and formalistic-abstract thought. The beginnings of these topics – Nietzsche and structural linguistics with semiology – are no more important than the beginnings of others – Kant, Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger, to name the most philosophical ones. However, if we look at this issue from the point of view of the work of the great contemporary French philosophers, we must confess that the Nietzschean aura is very much evident. Some significant discourses that together construct the structuralist tradition – the destruction of metaphysical concepts and metaphysical forms of thinking (destruction of the One, Truth and Good, representation and notion, reflection and dialectics) and the discourse of differentiation, dispersal (distanced to itself, ironic), in general are the legacy of Nietzsche. However, not all the motifs recurrent and reproduced in structuralist thinking of critique of metaphysical concepts (from cause to subject), “myths” (of certain knowledge, scientific method, objectivity, literal meaning, or the intention of the author or user of a sign), ideals (of reflection, self-knowledge) and the traditional oppositions that constitute Western metaphysics (nature – culture, body – mind, sensory – rational, meaning – sign) derive from Nietzsche. Presence, difference and repetition, speech and writing are subjects that have only been developed further in contemporary times. So extensively did French philosophy expand the lexicon of concepts and discursive elements attributed a metaphysical sense (“logocentric”, “Platonic”, “anthropological” – depending on the author and the accepted language) that any concept appears subject to this operation. Alongside any one of them, it appears, we might place its “deconstructed double”, its duplicate in the deconstructionist para-discourse. And this is indeed the case – very much in the spirit of structuralism: a procession which can be joined at any point, and a doubling transformation. The discourse that

allows the problem of metaphysics to finally become a problem left to its own fate is a complex one, making use of all the heuristic resources it encounters. Yet some parts of it are specifically structuralist. Let us be aware of the power it contains, and the comparative impotence of the continued proposals of concepts of totality seeking to pacify it.

Perhaps the most spectacular attempt is the critique of identity and representation. This questions the fundamental heuristic notion that, in speech and writing, somebody (a subject identical to himself) uses signs to represent to somebody else something identical in itself, recreating accurately how it is represented – if he succeeds, he is telling the truth. The desire for such truth is the desire for its object to be manifested to us and retained in us. Discoveries of rhetoric made long ago question the faith in the possibility of repeating meaning, the possibility of identity of meaning of a sentence in various contexts and acts of speech, as well as the Nietzschean discovery that everything refers to something else (there is no “copy” and “original” – “everything is an interpretation”), thus disturbing the peace of this arrangement. It too, incidentally, best exposed the logic of its transformations: from the mimetic Platonic philosophy of truth and the Aristotelian appointment of the human as *animal rationale*, to the multi-phase transfer of the logos and world to the jurisdiction of the subject, and the self-criticism lasting from Kant to Heidegger. The results of this self-criticism, heightened and sometimes even exaggerated, especially by Derrida, Foucault, and Deleuze, though heterogeneous, are harmonious in the sense that they designate a common area of “afflicted” concepts. These include the sign (representing, manifesting), representation (as mimesis, the similarity of the signifier to the signified, illustrating theory, notion), truth (in every sense within the so-called conceptions of truth), knowledge (as a specific quantum, state or mood of the subject, as the totality of concept and self-knowledge, as the living presence of the identical, source meaning, as mental mastering of intelligible matter), intention-expression-interpretation (a system assuming the existence and transmission of identical meaning), metaphor (as the opposite of literalness), scientificity (as the opposite of literality); reason and rationality (in the sense of the power of the One – Logos and The Same – identical and repeatable meaning). Other old metaphysical concepts – substance, being (and further concepts referring to presence, such as actuality and the appearance of something), the idea, causality, progress, history, and especially those that indicated the foundation, beginning, final objective, concepts of totality and mechanisms of final validation – lost their power long ago. Furthermore, the critical discourses attributed to them – from the Kantian one to the rebellion against instrumental reason – often had

little to do with structuralist thinking. It is a different matter with Nietzschean critique, which was able to topple the authority of reflection and dialectics. It could do this by introducing a new set of questions: in short, that of difference and repetition. However, since structuralist and non-structuralist themes blend together, it can be hard to recognise where the boundary lies between, for example, the discourse directed against identity of meaning, confusing repetition with generality and difference with negation, and the political criticism of rationalist ideology. It is harder still to distinguish the pragmatistic moment in conceptions involved in structuralism, such as Lyotard's conception of metanarrative as a tool of power, or Foucault's analogous theories. Some concepts branded in discourses of the destruction of metaphysics are not easy to incorporate into structuralist heuresis, and have not acquired a structuralist "double". Others are. A sign is duplicated in a trace or gram, being in presence, wholeness in plurality, knowledge in power, transcendence in transgression, and the concepts of foundation in *différance*. And a few more examples: classical proof has its correlate in the concept of discourse, a treatise is a text or book, interpretation is grammatological reading, and philosophising is deconstruction. But what duplicates the truth? The concept of *primum signatum*? Or rather a good book? And to return to the fundamental heuristic notion that we just recalled – the "representation of the world", when it is deprived of its author and recipient, represented object and psychological resources subject to expression, and finally language as a system of arbitrary *signifiants* assigned to their *signifiés* – it proves to be a structure that has to suffice for itself, reproduce itself, multiply its meanings and teem over in itself, and exhaust all reference in its own differences and repetitions. Such a structure in Derrida is writing, but for another structuralist it might be, for example, the postmodernist society.

Heuristic thinking made an extraordinary effort to overcome the heuristic motif of the thing itself as it returned, boomerang-like, and to free itself from continual rejection. The thing itself, recognised in its source form of living presentation and marked as "presence", even managed to sneak into Heideggerian being (albeit with the sign of difference, ontological difference – as the non-being of being of that which is present). Derrida ultimately conquered it in his radical conception of *différance*. Rejection, meanwhile, is replaced with great effort by something that remains hard to distinguish from it, the doubling that takes place every time in a text of deconstruction. In order to be able not to reject metaphysics, it needed to be deconstructed. This is because the cause of rejection lies in striving to grasp the thing itself – rejection always means abandoning the past of philosophy for the thing itself. However, freeing oneself from this aim means a

gap forming with metaphysics, although it does not and cannot mean an absolute split from it. Tellingly, classical structuralism, which made such a contribution to the “second structuralism”, did not suffer from an anti-metaphysical obsession, and could even be a distinctly Kantian formalism, profoundly afflicted by logo- and phonocentrism. Incidentally, Derrida also criticised the very concept of structure as containing a notion of a “control centre”.¹⁰⁵

6.4 Two Series in Structuralism

Well established in philosophical tradition are the heuristic notions of stratification (levels, layers), and structuring according to what lies deeper and what is superficial. These notions are closely related to the idea of the movement leading to it – the movement of generation or of genealogy. In structuralism, this must be

105 “But all these destructive discourses [with metaphysics] [...] are trapped in a sort of circle. This circle is unique. It describes the form of the relationship between the history of metaphysics and the destruction of the history of metaphysics. *There is no sense* in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to attack metaphysics. We have no language – no syntax and no lexicon – which is alien to this history; we cannot utter a single destructive proposition which has not already slipped into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest. [...] [For example] the metaphysical reduction of the sign needed the opposition it was reducing. The opposition is part of the system, along with the reduction. And what I am saying here about the sign can be extended to all the concepts and all the sentences of metaphysics, in particular to the discourse on ‘structure’. But there are many ways of being caught in this circle. They are all more or less naïve, more or less empirical, more or less systematic, more or less close to the formulation or even to the formalization of this circle.” (Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play...”, op. cit., pp. 250–251). Derrida goes on to praise the heuristic principle associated with structuralist thinking: keep as a tool that whose value is criticised. This rule, he reminds us, is developed by Lévi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind* in the form of *bricolage*. Here, he proposes using concepts as if they were tools, selected according to one’s current needs, even if their original application was different, and not hesitating to change them when this proves necessary, or to try a few at a time, even if their form and origin are heterogeneous. The *bricoleur* is contrasted with the engineer, who masters the whole of language and its discursive resources. Yet this engineer is a myth created by the *bricoleur* – if we understand that every scholar is a tinker, then the transcendental engineer will also be one, or vice-versa – everyone will be an engineer; the difference between them loses its meaning. The reference to the meaning-whole and subject-centre is abandoned here. *Bricolage* became one of the fundamental heuristic motifs of deconstruction. The critique of structure does not stop Derrida from making wide use, at least in terms of *bricolage*, of the heuristic resources of structuralism.

conceived in an abstract and formal manner (i.e. not in concepts of “mechanisms of production” or a “creative act”), and the appropriate metaphor is supplied by mathematics in the notions of differential and infinite sum. However, there is a fundamental conflict separating the metaphysical and anti-metaphysical series in structuralist thinking. We can conceive generation and differentiation as a genealogical distinguishing element, i.e. as the Nietzschean will to power, or in the classical way, as the activity of a centre. Both series appear in every structuralism, just as in every ontology we observe an essential and an existential discourse. Well-known concepts – genealogy and archaeology for Foucault, and trace, *différance* and dissemination for Derrida – of course belong to the anti-metaphysical series. Meanwhile, semiological concepts – the code or system – as well as Kantian ones – as in Chomsky’s transformational-generative grammar – belong to traditional heuresis. Structuralist thinking is therefore spread, as it were, between the Nietzschean pole – affirmation of plurality, untamed differentiation, incalculability, anarchy – and, let’s say, the cybernetic pole, in which dynamism and differentiation are subjected to the principle of comparative balance (homeostasis, self-regulation) and the system of stabilising oppositions and the conditions (thresholds and boundary conditions) determining the comparative isolation and openness of a system.¹⁰⁶

There are, of course, more cybernetic, “thermodynamic” and “statistical” conceptions inspired by the technocratic temptation to take control of elemental processes. Yet still, beyond the specialist theories of “normal science”, inspired by the concepts of contemporary mathematics, there emerges the Nietzschean spirit and desire to break the rule of preserving energy, while in philosophical texts concepts lacking in scientific mysteries – entropy, the law of series, the law of large numbers – take on entirely non-specialist, magical meanings. Of course,

106 The best example is Piaget’s structuralist Bergsonism, which uses the heuristic notions of generation, reflection, reaction and adaptation to link all intelligible orders – from the physical-chemical (the structure fulfilling the function of source) at the level of inanimate matter to the mental structures with the form of scientific theory. This variant of anti-reductionist naturalism, which makes syntheses of biological, psychological and sociological conceptual schemes using general concepts referring to the processes of communication and exchange as well as cybernetic or typically structuralist ones, proved extremely fertile. The theories of Bergson, Whitehead, Piaget and Mead enriched biology, psychology and ecology greatly and are now expressed and applied in these fields in strictly scientific ways. In philosophy itself, on the other hand, its essentially 19th-century branch seems to be dying out. Sooner or later, anywhere that science steps onto philosophy’s turf, the latter discipline finds itself being dispossessed.

there is no way of using one theory to reconcile the Nietzschean affirmation of activity and transgression with mathematical formalism, to be used by an observer placed in the “control centre” and informing the organised structure – if we are to treat this task seriously, that is. Either *différance*, dissemination, transgression and the “machinery of war”, or the mathematical formalism of a relational definition (a value designated by the position in the system), measurable and statistically described entropy, anomaly and peculiarity defined in terms of the level of its probability, and structure as an organised system. This chain of alternatives, two series within structuralist heuresis – centric (logocentric, metaphysical) and disseminating (acentric, anti-metaphysical) – create an exceptional heuristic tension. The nature of this is different from the dialectical, as it excludes the possibility of synthesis and sublation, and among the targets of one of its elements is all dialectics. We should probably not expect philosophy to develop the scientific skills of formalising and modelling phenomena. But philosophy has learned a great deal from non-philosophical structuralism, which – somewhat paradoxically – helped Nietzschean motifs to “break through”. This was because French philosophy’s adventure with structuralism (after all also an adventure with Nietzsche and Heidegger) taught it to rein in its metaphysical aspirations and free itself from the heuresis of the thing itself and rejection, but it also taught it new “heuristic values”, alternatives to the wisdom that came from the reflection, self-knowledge or sceptical distance to which modern philosophy adhered: the skills of *bricolage*, strategies and economies of discourse, appreciation of detailed and local issues, and discovering surprising and original theoretical areas identified by non-philosophical concepts. In any case, this “dethronement of reflection”, a complex and long-term process in which structuralism is just one of the factors, required two discoveries that were part of the broad field of structuralist thinking. The first is discovery of differential proximity within continuity, i.e. the differential, and the second is applying this concept to consciousness, which initiated the conceptual scheme of “intelligence without reflection” – “minor perceptions”, mental forms and structures, formal a priori, subconscious and unconscious. We have Leibniz – a genius whom mathematicians and philosophers fight over – to thank for both of these discoveries.

6.5 Mathematical Inspirations

The mathematical antecedents of structuralism are stressed by Lyotard and Piaget. Admittedly, these ideas came not from mathematics itself (general algebra and the bases of mathematics), but certainly from mathematised sciences: Saussure, for example, was inspired by economics, and the Gestaltists by physics.

Mathematics is also ingrained in the very concept of structure or system. Structure is always defined not only by its elements (only some of which have immanent properties, non-relational predicates. As Piaget puts it, they are created by the “reflective abstraction which derives its substance, not from objects, but from operations performed upon objects, even when the latter are themselves products of reflective abstraction”.¹⁰⁷ The act of defining the structural object – for example language as a system or discursive formations – is explained by Deleuze “as discovery and recognition of the third order, third kingdom, a symbolic kingdom” alongside “the real” and “the imagined”. Deleuze’s phrase fits even better mathematics forming theories that themselves define their rules and are legitimised in proofs, and not in represented reality or the power of the imagination. The elements of the symbolic structure are always defined in relational (positional) terms: “that which they are”, determined by their environment – the neighbourhood, exclusion, syntax, scope of application, operational significance etc. The manifold possible variants are originally developed in mathematical theories. The concepts of mobile elements and distinguished elements (peculiarities) of the structure, as well as the concepts of the transformations and links between the series constituting the structure and the structures themselves, have mathematical lineage; at the same time, the abstract concepts of reproductions, blending and crossing of structures only acquire a more precise meaning in mathematics.

Particularly abstract are concepts of the fundamental elements of structure as minimal differentiating units – with their own identity, and even a certain imperfect content, but only defined relationally (positionally) in their “game”. By this, of course, we mean the various “-emes”: phonemes, morphemes, gustemes, kinemes, and mythemes. The status of the structure is also in a particular way mathematically abstract, eluding the network of metaphysical oppositions and modalities (real – intentional, real – ideal, real – possible) – the question of metaphysical actuality and empirical accessibility is almost meaningless here, an extremely attractive feature for those seeking non-metaphysical philosophy. As we have said, the internal (and very abstract) meaning connected to the classifications of the structure examined on each occasion have categories which we are taught to conceive “universally”, i.e. metaphysically: time and causality. These may serve to describe the movement and change in the structure, but the question of change

107 Jean Piaget, *Structuralism*, trans. Chaninah Maschler (New York: Psychology Press, 2015), p. 28.

may not be removed from the competences of structural research and passed on to, for instance, “genetic” research as research from another order.¹⁰⁸

Among the other mathematical inspirations of structuralist thinking in philosophy are the fact that the concept of structure is rooted in the mathematical concepts of model, group, body, topological space, the concepts of a mobile element or “empty square” (like a zero phoneme and “object = x ”), as well as the structuralist concept of difference, associated with the modern concept of differential. Perhaps the philosophy of difference even suggested certain mathematical intuitions. In any case, we owe a great deal of extremely original and philosophically fruitful research to it.

6.6 The Philosophy of Difference – Deleuze and Derrida

In philosophical tradition, difference is always conceived in relation to a certain positive classification that established it. Difference has tended to be a difference “in some respect”, involving something possessing distinctive qualities (*differentia specifica*) or resulting from a lack of a certain qualification or a difference in terms of the degree of a certain quality. The formal concept of difference, meanwhile, has been expressed in its quantitative, and therefore abstract understanding, as well as in the purely formal concept of negation as material exclusion and distinction (*omnis determinatio est negatio*). Structuralist thinking, however, makes use not of these intuitions, but of one of the greatest inventions of Aristotelianism – the concept of analogy. Without proportional analogy there would be no differential or structuralism. Analogy as equality of proportions creates an appearance of positive classification which, no longer being just a pure relation, is at the same time completely “suspended” between the segments of the proportion. We reach an abstract whose formal status may be different from an ordinary “characteristic”. Let us take as an example the analogy arm:human = wing:bird. This assumes a new concept of a positional or functional character: that of the position of the upper limb or role of the upper limb. A developed analogical thinking can lead to a whole system of such “suspended” elements, a form of “third world” of structuralism. In such a heuresis, the empirical elements of proportion, at first tangible, are then directed to the purely formal factors of differentiation. They are now only distinguished by the fact that they “do not mix together” (as de Saussure puts it), and therefore become “oppositional, relational

108 On this cf. the example of de Saussure with a study of a cross-section of a tree – perhaps this is where these questions came from (Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2013).

and negative” entities: the arm will never be a wing, but the meaning of the abstract discourse of comparative anatomy does not concern either the arm or the wing, but the structural element (peculiarity) derived from their analogy. Analogical thinking therefore brings us towards the concept of the difference of classical structuralism: towards difference in the sense of differential (differentiation preserving continuity of change), establishing the system of positions and differences as a totality draining the system (cf. Saussure’s slogan “in language there are only differences”). At the same time, though, we are very close to the anarchic, Nietzschean concept of difference, utilised by “poststructuralism” in its sense of *différance* and the differend or struggle.¹⁰⁹ We simply have to cross out the metaphysical and conformist “=” in the right proportion to discover the true difference, for which we no longer seek equality by repeating the same thing. The arm is a repetition of the wing, but not a repetition of the same thing – it is a repetition that has become a condition of the difference between them. And it is this link between the difference with the repetition and the intangibility of that which differs (as something that always appears as different, differing, and not in identity, as this here present), that is the crux of the structuralist philosophy of difference.

The theory of “difference without negation”, not subject to that which is identical, was developed by Deleuze. He describes in detail the processes of differentiation (divergence) based on repetition which is no repetition of the same, but rather a differentiating reproduction and the power of all differentiation. This is a Nietzschean theory directed against the metaphysics of being and becoming, the determinacy and movement of the concept, and Hegelian stabilisation. Difference is fulfilled in repetition, and this is its “identity” – this is the only identity in a “world without identity” – “Being is Difference”. This means an affirmation of true difference. Like Lyotard, Deleuze exposes the dangerous hypocrisy of difference, or the differend, to be pacified by ultimate accord, consensus or synthesis. Deleuze writes, in relation to Nietzsche, but also from himself, “Each term of a series, being already a difference, must be put into a variable relation with other terms, thereby constituting other series devoid of centre and convergence. Divergence and decentring must be affirmed in the series itself. Every object, every thing, must see its own identity swallowed up in difference, each being no more than a difference between differences.” And earlier: “Returning is the becoming-identical

109 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1994), pp. 376–378, where Deleuze describes analogy as the last possible means in the philosophy of representation.

of becoming itself. Returning is thus the only identity, but identity as a secondary power; the identity of difference, the identical which belongs to the different, or turns around the different. Such an identity, produced by difference, is determined as ‘repetition.’”¹¹⁰

In Derrida too, the question of difference is subordinated to the task of regaining true difference, revealing the difference of the difference itself and the secondary nature, removal or absence of what is identical. For him too, difference and identity are shifted to a higher ontic and logical level: difference as the difference of difference, and identity as the identity of differentiation. If Deleuze’s identity and becoming (by negation) transforms into repetition and difference, in Derrida the equivalent of these concepts is a system juxtaposing the concept of difference with those of trace and *différance*.

You will struggle to find the word *différance* in the French dictionary. And this is just the point – to be able to say that *différance* is never present, that it simply “is” not. It “is” not – this means “is” in the sense of a crossed-out “is”. This is not to say that it simply “is different”, intangible and inexpressible, as these concepts contain a supposition of specific qualities. *Différance* is also not a negative concept, an empty place, negation attached to that which somehow “is”. It is not a non-being or an ordinary metaphysical concept of source. It “is” more that which it has not been possible to grasp, and has rather been concealed by the concepts of source and non-being. For now, the epochistic nature of *différance* is expressed by that which “is” not – neither a concept or a word, or even a place (potentially something that can be completed – like a regulative idea of a position in a structuralist system). But perhaps these terms will be exhausted too.

Différance is transcendental in the sense that it is introduced in the assumption that it will satisfy all the expectations placed in it. This is its heuristic flaw which it would be better not to own up to. And the task of *différance* is to be “alongside” – to introduce a “parting” that only permits concepts located in the game of identity and difference. In this sense, it is a “concept” of generating and an echo of the concept of source. It only “produces” the difference and all presence, including “presence for itself” – the subject. Remember, though, that this is not about simply “avoiding” all definitions – it is pure negativity that “works” in this way, not *différance*. *Différance* does not “work” at all, and neither is it an *activitas* or a passive, “slippery” being that moves around, eluding any definitions. The

110 Ibidem, pp. 56, 41. As Deleuze shows in his book, the history of the questions of difference and repetition is outlined by such figures as Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Schelling, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, and Heidegger, as well as writers such as Proust, Russell, Borges and Gombrowicz.

only kind of negativity, or concept that allows it to be understood, is the Heideggerian ontical-ontological difference. Heidegger's difference defies thematisation and is the concept of that which is concealed when we tackle the problem of being, the concept of what is present in philosophy as its unthought. Yet it continues to serve the good that is exposing the question of being. This is a positive task, as it concerns discovering a certain meaning – Heidegger's difference is therefore bound in the chains of positivity and negativity, in the heuristic perspective of expected sublation. Derrida, meanwhile, says, "If there were a definition of *différance*, it would be precisely the limit, the interruption, the destruction of the Hegelian *relève* wherever it operates".¹¹¹ *Différance* is not "on behalf" of anything or "against", neither "beyond" nor "above" – but it preserves the "indecision" contained in the concept of parting, indecision ("neither that – nor that") relating to the opposition of presence and absence, activity and passivity, positivity and negativity, and to all metaphysical oppositions. In this parting action-inaction, *différance* surrounds itself with concepts ("is subject to non-synonymous substitutes", "revolves constantly in a chain of differing complements"), which reveal and explain it, as if one step from metaphysical concepts. These Derridean concepts are, for example, "pre-trace", "pre-writing", and pharmakon.

The game of differences, configurations of metaphysical oppositions, and the whole conceptual scheme are the result of *différance*. Its production, activity, originality, and source nature are to be understood non-metaphysically – each of these categories has a non-metaphysical, "differentiated" or transferred equivalent attributed to it. The *différance* is a "centre of constitution", a "time-performance" – always with the non-existent sign of disconnection from the metaphysical conceptual scheme. It is one of the simplest, and perhaps the only obvious aspect of the entire "orthographic" procedure. The peculiar ease with which it constructs text based on anti-metaphysical epochistics, intentionally referring to extremely metaphysical concepts (such as all concepts of source) creates the impression that *différance* is almost a satire or joke for which those who treat the work of the destruction of metaphysics too seriously are to fall. Remember, after all, that there is no *différance*, it has no "sense" or real name of its own.¹¹²

111 Derrida, *Positions*, p. 40.

112 Richard Rorty and Odo Marquard are two postmodernists who, following in the path of Nietzsche, willingly and openly grasp the opportunity to take a step back from the (often deadly serious) discourse of metaphysics offered by the distance of irony and self-mockery. This provides a natural rhetorical parallel to the results of ubiquitous semantic incorrectness, delayed sense, parting and trace recorded with focused attention by this philosophy. The same, it would seem, could be said about other authors

Différance, in its productive power, and in terms of the conceptual scheme, text, and writing (which it does not enter), is responsible for dissemination – proliferation, creative and authentic plurality or multiplicity, a game that cannot be reined in by any calculation of ambiguity (polysemy). Proliferation transgresses the borders of texts, books, statements – it supplements, changes, challenges, associates and divides: senses, meanings, signified and signifying: it is a structuralist “surplus effect”: that of the signifying, the “empty square”, the power. The question of dissemination is an aspect of the major question of structuralist thinking, also described by Deleuze’s concepts of divergence, nomads, war machine, rhizome and a thousand plateaus – the question first posed by Nietzsche.

6.7 The Nietzschean Calling

“And do you know what the world is for me? [...] This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, without end; a firm, iron magnitude of force [...] a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many [...] a sea of forces flowing and rushing together [...] my Dionysian world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying [...] my ‘beyond good and evil’, without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal [...]”¹¹³

Two perspectives open up in response to fatigue with constant rejection, invalidation, dialectics and the “problem of metaphysics”, and aversion to “representation of the world” – if it is manifested in the structuralist medium, and thus preceded by the destruction of the centrist and taxonomic structure. The first perspective can be expressed by the metaphor of drifting in a decentred “structure” dominated by passivity (moderation, reliance on chance) and remaining “inside” – inside the unrestricted, teeming conceptual scheme, text and writing. The second is a transgressive journey, occupying more and more new territories

too, including Derrida, although his self-mockery is certainly only putative; it is not manifested in the text, since this would be too easy and too close to irony as a classical means of rhetorical repression. In this view, I disagree with the eminent critic of the postmodernists Jacques Bouveresse, whose *Rationalité et Cynicisme* deals them the painful blow of accusing them of a lack of distance to themselves, and thus in effect of conceit. Bouveresse paints the postmodernist as something of a professional revolutionary, living off the war with an imaginary foe, and furthermore bound to certain conservative behaviours (like writing books announcing the perspective of culture) and with a tendency to overestimate his own role. I would contend that this is a profoundly unfair portrait.

113 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kauffmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), pp. 549–550 (1067).

as a nomad, “not knowing borders”, and so inclined to the outside. The idea surfaces immediately that the internal–external opposition is among the first to overcome the movement of destruction of metaphysics, or in fact the beginning of this movement, still immersed in metaphysics (the transcendental sublation of the subjectivity–objectivity opposition). But this is why there can be no real antagonism between the two heuristic perspectives: Derrida’s deconstruction and Deleuze’s nomadic thought.

Deleuze does not make a conversion of everything into writing, or into anything else. He chooses the dramatic effort of countless plateaus – natural, social, discursive – which intertwine into the formless (“body without organs”) world as rhizomes or a “war machine”. Derrida, meanwhile, chooses the teeming writing and the world as text. The difference is purely a strategic one, concerning the ways in which the resources of metaphysical notions can be utilised and transformed. By keeping the multiplicity of various plateaus, Deleuze certainly remains more “structuralist” than Derrida’s textual “conversion”, and here Deleuze is closer to Foucault; the extravert nature of his philosophy also seems a better fit to the intention to free himself from the alluring spell of reflection. But this is immaterial. What matters is that we can find the same ideas, albeit in different places and positions, in Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault. These form a language of critique of metaphysical culture and suitable epithets (“logocentric”, “Platonism”, “royal science”, and will also seek the “archetypes” of opposition to the official culture (in self-referential literary texts, in the history of insanity and in marginal communities not subject to state power, and unofficial manifestations of science). Every philosopher of this movement also describes the elements of heuresis freed from a yoke which has many names. As Derrida stresses, deconstruction is not a special word.¹¹⁴ The same elements reappear in the programmes of various authors and with various names: an interest in locality, anomaly, unclear shifts in the meanings creating the space that an idea can

114 It is important to bear in mind that one of the conditions of avoiding excessive dependence on some founding meaning of the first signifier or form of totalisation is keeping balance in using concepts with a very broad scope of usage and aspirations to particular importance – these should always be viewed as competing with others. This goes for deconstruction too. According to Derrida, when he used the word “deconstruction”, he “had the impression that it was a word among many others [...] in a chain with many other words [...] ‘deconstruction’ was not at all the first or the last word, and certainly not a password or slogan for everything that was to follow [i.e. for the career of deconstruction].” (Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, Lincoln, NE: Bison Books, 1988.).

occupy (linked to such concepts as *différance*, parting, gap, hymen, simulacra, parody and transgression); replacement of the heuresis of reflection and the representing discourse with the heuresis of *bricolage*, double science, considering and judging words, writing as mapping and cartography (Deleuze), economy and strategies of thinking, micropolitics in a revealed interval of meanings; affirmation of the impetuosity, anarchy and lack of self-control guaranteed by escaping the power of logos, totalising discourses, the metanarrative contained in the concept of writing, dissemination, and nomadic thought. To each version of the programme there is a corresponding form of stylistic, or rather textual, revolution – from Nietzsche’s aphorism to Derrida’s two-column book without a beginning and nomadic writing – Deleuze’s book-rhizome. There is a great temptation to represent the symbol of the anarchic world as a supplement to these visions. And indeed, we have motifs of a storm, cloud, labyrinth with no centre, writing and rhizome. These are linked by their transgression of all structure and the power of difference. This may – as in Deleuze – be an active power, or it may be passive – as in Derrida. More importantly, though, pointing to it halts the illusion of presence or manifestation (representation) invoked by every signifier, and assigns to the signified the mode of trace, and to the illusion the form of appearance – of concealing the appropriate game, the shape of mystification, the simulacrum (in contrast to the plainly metaphysical “transcendental appearance”). We are offered a kind of emancipation without an imposed programme of revolution. The political significance of this philosophy thus puts it close to the projects of the Frankfurt School.

There is no doubt that structuralist thinking, and in particular its late and purely philosophical consequences, are accompanied by a number of evocative metaphors, figures of the imagination, and even metaphysical fascinations. To see in this defeat, betrayal or, worse still, naivety, would be foolish and dishonest. The ever-changing multiplicity of the continually inadequate concepts and words that form the languages of the postmodernists, the whole host of metaphors, the innumerable stylistic experiments and mannerisms, all constitute an honest and sincere effort that is entirely at odds with the philosophical, and thus also metaphysical efforts of traditional philosophers. One might even say that the moral backbone of postmodernists is even solidier than that of those who can justify their work, calmly and with hands on hearts, with the ideals of truth, rationality and the service of science. Their calling is Nietzschean, which means avoiding safe places. Postmodernists devote themselves to the philosopher’s life with the same passion as other philosophers, condemning themselves to the same onerous travails with the matter of traditional philosophical concepts and discourses, yet

they refuse to draw the benefits from surrendering to its persuasive power. Pure criticism with the aim of abandoning tradition is not their aim, although it might be simplest, allowing them to escape the mental effort and writing of philosophical books. It would be closer to the truth to say that their work resembles holding philosophy up to a distorting mirror and describing such experiments. Contrary to appearances, this is not work done solely for diversion – after all, certain flaws can be seen only in a distorting mirror. But that is not the most important thing. The merits of the French professors will be emphasised with more reliability and respect, and also entirely accurately, if we simply bear in mind that these were scholars of great erudition and talent who diligently wrote outstanding – insightful and courageous – books, making extremely effective use of the most refined and special philosophical “intuitions”.

The image of philosophy in the distorting mirror should not be taken too literally. That was not what its authors would have wanted – after all, it is one of the gestures of the philosophy of *ratio* to portray the devil, one of the persuasive means of metaphysics. Meanwhile, a minimum of loyalty to the postmodernists requires that we do not turn them into devils, as people often do. In particular, the epithets “irrationalism” or “anti-rationalism” seem lamentable. Knowing just how profoundly and thoroughly these philosophers recognise the specifics of the conceptual scheme associated with rationality as well as the heuristic nature of rationalistic discourses (involving a conquest of all the areas worth bothering with and as yet unclaimed by the academy by making the concepts of rationality more elastic, critical and broad), reducing their position towards these fields with a simple “ir-” or “anti-” prefix is simply naive. One must use be cautious in criticising, as the opponent presents the highest intellectual level and a rare erudition, and the condition of defeating the ornate French of his books is a tough one to satisfy.

What, then, is the character of the postmodernist metaphysics, the perverse reversing of tradition, its Nietzschean deformation, whose flaws – an overt connection with certain metaphors and visions of the imagination, and sometimes bizarreness and pretentiousness – are supposed to reflect (“repeat”) the flaws of philosophical tradition? It fits the quasi-satirical intentions and literary fervour from which it derives. Deleuze calls this an avocation for the theatre, which is inseparable from a fascination with games. An example of a structuralist game might be Go, but also certain playground games. Various illustrations of radical structuralist thinking, led beyond the limits of critique of the centralism and formalism of structures, head towards ideas of such games. What appears is something like a mystique of games and dance, discovery and concealment,

presence and disappearance, leaving traces and tracking, mirror images, mysterious metamorphoses. Taking away the living presence from things, the subject and recipient from literary works, representational ability from signs and statements, and making of every positive content and every signified an echo, shadow and trace that transforms into a signifier for something else, triggers the conceptual effects of separating concepts from their (philosophically assigned) “identity components” (of the “transcendental signifier”). We are therefore left with copies without the original, codes without an encoded meaning, books without an author, consciousness without a subject, meaning without intentionality, signifiers without a signified. In the spaces opened up with the utmost effort between the signifier – the pure form of the sign – and the signified – the identical meaning capable of living separately from the sign in which it is coated, an idea moves around in local movements, those of a player, flashing by, using smart economics and a selected strategy, exploiting the appearances of the pure signifier and pure signified in such a way as never to shut them “in between”. Such notions of a special space and movement are supported by the “metaphysics” of difference, trace, parting and decentring.

This “metaphysics” therefore has its local perspective, one of microstructures that are unable to pacify the tools of the totalising discourse of logos. This is a structuralist paraphrase of the heuresis of detail promoted by Hegel. But it is also a global perspective. It is constituted above all by the aforementioned notions of shapeless, “undrawn” spaces – writings, bodies without organs. These are always associated with a paraphrase of the metaphysical “source of movement”. Responsible for this movement are the multidirectional forces, connections of generation, multiplication, reflection between series, excess and the “empty square”, impulses emerging from apparent sources and the apparent centre (as unconsciousness), the will to power and affirmation. Here, we must always find a way of finding the right balance between the general tendency of dispersion and proliferation (nomadic nature, dissemination), the local movement of excess of the signifier looking for a signified (or another movement of the “empty square”) and the original movement of generation. Ultimately, of course, this must be the same movement. The movement of philosophical thought must also be this same movement, and also has its local manifestations – as tactics or *bricolage*, and global ones – as a strategy of joining together distant series, and at the same time dispersing meanings.

6.8 Deconstruction

Of all structuralism's heuristic projects, the one that developed the most and gained the greatest fame was the one which set itself the objective of preserving all the qualities of the heuresis of criticalness, and at the same time avoiding dependence on logocentric heuristic hierarchies: invalidation and acceptance, as well as invalidation or acceptance and neutralisation, or sublation.

The lofty intention of deconstruction, its ambition as the height of heuristic consciousness, is for philosophical thought not to be consigned to *sic* or *non* (or neither – nor), or the absolute of synthetic reflection. Hermeneutics sets itself the same task, yet its heuresis remains in the sphere of influence of thoroughly metaphysical motifs: interpretation of meaning, the whole of sense and truth. These have just been “treated critically” and sent off “to the horizon” with a logocentric, metaphysical gesture, to play the Kantian roles of transcendental conditions of possibilities or regulative ideas.

The idea of deconstruction is Heideggerian insofar as it is interested in what tends to be blurred, obscured, and unthought in philosophy, despite the efforts of representation – blurred as it cannot be represented or manifested in another way. In the Heideggerian perspective, philosophy's main heuristic measure – manifestation of something identical to itself (as being and meaning) proves misplaced, as it is able only to present its powerlessness to meet the aim, and only in this negative way does it make it clear that this aim is not to represent or manifest something. To some extent contrary to his own destructive stance towards conceptual oppositions, in his conception of deconstruction Derrida retained the priority of the Heideggerian opposition between presence and absence to diagnose philosophy. He was beguiled by the idea of the “metaphysics of presence”, although formally it cannot have priority over other diagnostic totalisations (such as philosophy of reflection or logocentrism). As a result, his deconstruction project has a starting point – it can be talked about, but at the same time gains a heuristic limitation. We should remember, however, that there is much more to it than just using a Heideggerian motif.

One of the main oppositions from which deconstruction liberates itself as a heuristic project is the internal–external opposition. Deconstruction is as much the penetration of text (or a system) from within as its dispersion in the space of other texts and writing. Remaining “within”, we look in the text for that which cannot be thematised, and split it up from inside, commencing the movement of intertwining it with other texts and fields of writing. If at some point the limits of the text must be broken, the deconstruction phase must be “invalidation from within”. But the aim of this is not denial – it is rather from the point of view of

the given text or system that the invalidation is even visible.¹¹⁵ Deconstruction, then, is not neutral, but its combativeness, and sometimes even aggressiveness, is just a repetition of the tension produced by the conceptual scheme that it concerns. One might say that deconstruction is like an allergic reaction, involving the self-aggression of text triggered by the allergen of *différance*. The means of deconstruction are therefore drawn from the text itself, the conceptual scheme, the metaphysics that is deconstructed – all in an “economical and strategic way”. This means that deconstruction is active in a special way – if hermeneutic interpretation “transforms” the text by way of assimilation and interpretation (while maintaining the philological ideal of the inviolable form of the text-source), deconstruction is, as it were, active in the text itself – it transforms it according to its own game of difference and repetition, which is never sufficiently freed (especially as the unity of the person of the author and the requirement of unity of the text fundamentally interfere with this). As a peculiar way of reading that is an alternative to hermeneutic interpretation, the reading used for carrying out deconstruction is called grammatological reading (from *gram*, which is the difference of the presence of the signified, what parts the sign). In its course, the text is almost split into the signifying text, in which the words mean what they mean and can be interpreted, and that which is shifted, detached from its metaphysical foundation. Deconstruction is based on the structuralist heuresis of doubling – “double science”. Of course, this work is infinite, as are the actions of the “philosophemes” that take metaphysical ownership of writing. Philosophical texts often defend themselves from complete subordination to the logic of the discourse that governs them by using various heuristic methods (stylistic, grammatical, typographical) that permit them to form enclaves of limited influences of metaphysical meanings. These include inverted commas, brackets, digressions in the margins and footnotes, and italics. And deconstruction is their ally, one that uses them – the best place to begin the deconstructionist voyage against the current is from the islets of the margins and edges of the text. At the same time, though, deconstruction is continually exposed to manifestations of

115 Derrida says, “[...] I try to respect as vigorously as possible the internal, regulated play of philosophemes or epistimemes by making them slide [...] to the point of their nonpertinence, their exhaustion, their closure. To ‘deconstruct’ philosophy, this, would be to think – in the most faithful, interior way – the structured genealogy of philosophy’s concepts, but at the same time to determine – from a certain exterior that is unqualifiable or unnameable by philosophy – what this history has been able to dissimulate or forbid, making itself into a history by means of this somewhere motivated repression.” (*Positions*, op. cit., p. 6).

hostility from traditional academic philosophy. The main reason for this is that the attributes it assigns itself – a rational, scientific, logical nature – as classifications characteristic of the metaphysics of logos, are in fact among the first to be subject to deconstruction, as well as criticism, as they are presented as means of intellectual violence and metaphysical persuasion. A deeper cause of the hostility towards deconstructionism, however, is the fact that from the point of view of grammatological reading the logical and argumentative links in a text, and thus also its interpretation as a discourse, are not privileged in comparison to etymological, lexical and symbolic links and interpretation of the text as a literary product. It is hardly surprising that analytical philosophers are irritated by any attempts to treat a philosophical work as a literary work. But we should bear in mind that such experiments rarely spring from bad intentions.

As we have said, the concept of deconstruction cannot be singled out too much, as this would be at odds with its most profound intentions. There are in fact many projects that originate from the intellectual impulse that we might define as the sense of being completely open to all semantic effects, intensifications of critical and creative intelligence, intellectual fitness and stylistic zest. Projects that came about in intellectual rapture with the character of artistic inspiration are similar to each other inasmuch as they bring together the temperaments of creative and talented spirits. When Rorty speaks of irony, Lacoue-Labarthe of typography, de Man of allegories of reading, Lyotard of dispersed thinking, Deleuze of nomadic thought, and Derrida of deconstruction, they are all referring to the same experience that is the bedrock of the project of our heuristics; to a harmless degree, they also all succumb to the illusion that they have finally found the right name for this fervour. Of course, this kinship, the unity of the heuristic mobilisation of the critical mind (manifested in multiple theoretical forms) is not a new phenomenon. In some way, it binds together all heuristic projects: Plato's dialectics, Aristotle's *organon*, rhetoric, *skepsis*, syncretism, *mathesis universalis*, the critique of pure reason, dialectic of the spirit, redefinition of all values, the sociology of knowledge, evolutionary epistemology, hermeneutics. We may no longer have any illusions as to the possibility of closing this history, even in the sense that its further course is given a uniform name. But it is not the name that is the most important, and this is no cause for concern (the technocratic indifference of the word "heuristics" is supposed to express indifference regarding the name) – what counts is work and talent, and of course philosophy.

Each heuristic project – regardless of its degree of reflectiveness or intuitiveness, dogmatism or anti-dogmatism, critical nature or naivety, intuitiveness or discursiveness, and analytical or synthetic character – has its own unique

characteristics, its particularity that can be compared with the individuality of the human character, strangely contrasting with the diversity of universal components of the psyche. Characteristic of deconstruction, ready to adapt its tools to every local and specific conceptual situation, and in this sense universal, are the constant reference to the context of the problem of metaphysics (a set of issues, remember, that for many philosophers is of entirely minor significance), the recurring intuition of difference and parting, the fascination with writing, the feeling of ritual and strategic games, the inclination to disperse meaning and deal out concepts to the linguistic game, and contented use of the destruction of the metaphorical–literal opposition. If we are to seek to characterise the project of heuristics with reference to these properties, we must define it as “construction”, since its essential movement is linking and associating, rather than dispersing and deconcentrating. Of course, this is not about “synthesis” or “mobilisation of forces”, organising a grand metanarrative, but rather about becoming efficient in moving around in the philosophical space, with the qualities of a good organiser. If the sin to which deconstruction (and other projects of this kind) is sensitive is to be the repressiveness of metaphysical discourse, then the sin condemned by heuristics is parochialism, naivety and conceitedness. Heuristics does not wish to criticise, but to cooperate. Its critical edge is sharpened only when it encounters philosophy that is too stupid or obstinate and incapable of working with it. Deconstruction does not even look that way.

7. Heuristics and Self-Knowledge

For heuristics, the matter of dealing with itself is no more important than addressing anything else in philosophy. In other words, its self-knowledge is not the decisive heuristic form for it. The experience of structuralist thinking and Nietzscheanism set us free from the charm of self-knowledge, which until recently seemed something irreplaceable in philosophy – the very crux of the philosophical pursuit. Yet in tackling the presentation of the idea of heuristics, and thus facing the practical need to offer a certain knowledge and idea of heuristics about itself, we are met with the challenge of formulating certain elements of its self-knowledge. For heuristics, though, self-knowledge is above all a form of *heuresis* – something interesting, but no more than that, and not decisive in its heuristic status. It is therefore better that we call a chapter looking at heuristics in terms of the question of the status of talking about it not “Self-knowledge of heuristics”, but “Heuristics and self-knowledge”.

7.1 Introduction to The Question of The Neutrum

A dozen or so years ago, when I was making the first attempts to sketch out the project that I am presenting here as heuristics, the part of it that I regarded as the most important was the structuralist conception from the spirit, involving introducing into philosophical language a quasi-concept that could not be uniformly characterised as “something”, a “theoretical object”, or even a certain “form” or “operator”. This was to be a concept that would defy a uniform discourse explaining its sense, application, the need for it and its formal meaning. Any fleeting cohesion would entail no more than the visibility of certain traces of the subjectification of the meaning, and only from certain points of view. Such a trace is the fact that it was to constitute the subject of grammatical sentences, that it could be said that its identity was expressed in certain structural analogies, analogies and familial similarities of the specific functions fulfilled by some concepts in theories. I called this quasi-concept the “neutral element” or “the neutrum”, owing to the frequently recurring motif of escaping any definition, as well as that of its assumed operationality and absolute neutrality in regard to the possible theories, from the point of view of some of which it would have its “base” or its “original” or “actual” sense. The idea of “neutrality” or “blandness” is just one of many which I wanted to associate with others in the concept of the neutrum. The few conceptions in philosophical tradition in which ideas of this kind occur include the

structuralism of Lacan, Foucault, Lévi-Strauss and Derrida, the phenomenology of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty and Meinong's theory of objects, which generalises the concept of the object. Earlier (in Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche and Frege), there are only traces of thinking in this direction. Undertaking and developing this topic is something that I would consider to be one of the most creative and important tasks of heuristics; all we can do in this book is establish it.

The main structuralist intuitions that guide us to the idea of the neutrum are such ideas as the concept of the peculiarity of structure, that of the neutral element (borrowed from mathematics), the empty square enclosing the structure, and concepts of fluid significance (floating signifiers), the object = x , *différance*. Further important steps on the path to the concept of the neutrum were the attempt to replace the transcendental subject with something impersonal and neutral, neither an "I", nor an alter ego, as well as the associated idea of something neutral towards subjectivity and objectivity. Both of these play an important role in the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, while the latter was also close to the so-called second positivism. Precedents to the questions opened up by these ideas and concepts were the thing in itself and regulative idea of Kant, Hegel's conception of mediation, and conceptions that tackle the problem of the sense of containing in a particular word something that loses its sense in every excess of words.¹¹⁶

"The peculiarity of structure" is the concept of an orientation point, in relation to which other elements define themselves so clearly and with such regularity (for example according to some function) that it acquires a positive content, and therefore does not need to be defined purely relationally. Examples might be the centre of a coordinate system, human individuals in a structure of "social phenomena", or elementary mathematical concepts such as a centre of figure, centre of symmetry, the inflexion point of a curve, vertex of a figure, and extremum of a function, while advanced mathematical theories would no doubt provide even better ones. Peculiarities arrange themselves into series, or rather generate series of theoretical concepts with distinct heuristic qualities, concepts around which theories develop. A generalised sense of peculiarities might be rendered by the intuition of the "centre of crystallisation"; peculiarities are something like comparatively constant features of sense, and at the same time sources of its transformation, which connects them to the neutrum.

116 This motif is best expressed by Heidegger's sentence, quoted earlier: "In order to name the essence of being, therefore, language would have to find something unique, the unique word".

The set of concepts consisting of the neutral element, the empty square and the object = x designates particularly important moments in the narrative on the neutrum.¹¹⁷ The object = x is a mobile element of the structure, a kind of formal surplus of meaning that takes various forms, “filling up” in a similar way to the empty square and triggering motion in the structure. It is always “not in its place”, almost moved away relative to itself, not letting itself be “caught”. An example is value in the structure of economic exchange – it is not one of the goods to be exchanged, or even its amount in gold, but it is expressed in constant exchange, something like the proportionality of the proportion itself. To generalise this abstraction, we can say that the object = x is the difference of the difference itself. This propensity to shift in relation to itself makes it a concept correlative to Derrida’s *différance*; it is almost *différance* viewed from the side of its repetition (as it includes the intuition of the object, and thus at least the empty space). This shift towards all meaning characterising the object = x , i.e. its difference, is what Derrida calls *différance*. However, the object = x always “finds itself”, meaning that,

117 Of course, this term “narrative on the neutrum” is meant to replace the term “description”, or “characteristics”, which are impossible here. However, when we reach the stage at which it is “clear what the point is”, we will be able to return to a more usual means of expression – just as transcendental discourse promises a return to objectivist language, and deconstruction moves among metaphysical concepts, but without using them purely affirmatively (naively, as it is usually termed), but rather, in its unique, deconstructive way, critically. Let us say that the first step of this naturalisation of the way of talking about the neutrum will be to accept the expression “the concept of neutrum”, although of course the same reservation levelled at *différance* – that it is neither a concept nor a word – also applies to neutrum.

The concept of the x , or rather *empty x*, is used frequently in Husserl’s *Ideas I* to indicate an empty noematic form, a form of objectivity being filled with noematic senses in the course of acts of consciousness. The concept of the object = x , meanwhile, is employed by Lacan and Foucault. Deleuze discusses it, together with the concept of the empty square and neutral element, in his article “How Do We Recognize Structuralism?” (op. cit., pp. 184–192). This is perhaps the only discussion of its type in widespread literature. We shall remind ourselves of some of its contents here. Certain detailed aspects of the application of “ x ”, if we can describe the broader context of the question of the object = x , are examined, for example, in Jacques Laclan’s article “Of Structure as an Inmixing of an Otherness. Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever”, [in:] *The Structuralist Controversy*, eds. R. Macksey, E. Donato, Baltimore-London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1972, as well as in Andrzej Warminski’s original article about a work by Nietzsche and the issue of the thing itself in relation to the question of metaphor, “Towards a Fabulous Reading: Nietzsche’s ‘On Truth and Lie in the Extramoral Sense’”, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 1989, vol. 15, no. 2.

enclosing the structure, it takes various forms, which can be compared to the various forms of the same equation (containing an unknown). The value “finds itself” in various series – like gold, money, bread... The mobility of the object = x , and its formal nature, bring to mind the metaphor of the blind spot (Sollers), the word-trunk (like the French *machin, truc*), and also link it to the concept of the neutral element (like Jakobson’s zero phoneme and Frege’s zero position) and variable (hence x). A particular difficulty with understanding the status of the object = x comes with the tendency to confuse it with the name-forming functor or generalised analogue in the abstract relation of an analogy. Yet the object = x has its own symbolic, and not abstract or analogical individuality; moreover, every structural order has its object = x , always a different one. These orders join together, becoming linked in a way determined by the character of the object = x . If I buy from the natives of a country their ornaments for glass beads, then the “bead” becomes the object = x , circulating as an exchange good between the series of exchange known to the locals and to me in my country – here as “something worthless, acquiring value there”, and for them as “something valuable from there”. Between the two structural orders, a relationship of economic inferiority and superiority has been formed, resulting from the circulation of physical beads and beads as symbols.

The relationship between individual objects = x and the general concept of the object = x is unclear. The latter is the object = x of the very particular order that is structuralist theory. Making a generalisation leading to the concept of the object = x has heuristic sense as “a way of recalling the objective consistency that the category of the problematic takes on at the heart of structures”.¹¹⁸

In general terms, what brings structuralist thinking closest to the concept of the neutrum is development of a heuresis of “double science”, meaning simultaneous usage of and distancing from the individual discourses’ own conceptual schemes, in particular the metaphysical one. The ability to move around in the space between the affirmative and critical way of using concepts, expressed in the heuristic notions of *bricolage*, double gesture, and deconstruction, is decisive for “non-equating thinking” about the neutrum, for science making use of the concept of neutrum, about which it is said that no expression is satisfactory, but it can nonetheless be accepted on condition that it clearly refers to other possible expressions and intuitions. This characteristic of talking about the neutrum is not associated exclusively with such heuristic motifs as finding the most important word, the philosopher’s stone, or with the dialectic of tracing mediations,

118 Deleuze, *How Do We Recognize Structuralism?*, op. cit., p. 187.

culminating with the return of the concept to itself. Yet the only reason for this is that structuralist heuresis shows the possibility of abstracts without a metaphysical name, “highly processed” concepts, but without a purely reflexive and critical discourse, one of self-knowledge, assigned to them, as tends to be the case in philosophy.

This is not to say that in earlier philosophy the heuristic intention that brought about various concepts of something distinctive and primal did not result in concepts whose heuristic flexibility exceeds the usual metaphysical key concepts of philosophical theory, such as being or the absolute. From this point of view, significant are the formal concepts accorded a certain heuristic role in the theory, and from the side of the objective intention generally given the sense of a factor triggering a movement (that of thinking and being). The most classical of these is the concept of God as a metaphysical objective triggering the movement of creation towards himself, and also of the object of solely negative definitions (negative theology). In heuristic reflection, more advanced is the concept of the thing in itself, with its unique heuristic function of reinforcing the “concreteness” of the transcendental discourse or overcoming its self-referential nature. Kant’s greatest contribution to this field, however, is the concept of the regulative idea as a formal factor integrating the order of reason, and at the same time serving to legitimise its claims to objective validity, which takes place in the discourse of the transcendental dialectic and of the critique of practical reason, in both of which the regulative idea appears as a concept. These are linked to the neutrum by two things: the formalism (“regulativeness”) of the concept of the regulative idea, and the heuresis of simultaneous use of the concept of the regulative idea as an idea (objective *modus*) and the concept of the regulative idea as a concept (that of the critique of reason – formal *modus*). Creating the possibility of interaction between the philosophical discourse and the discourse that makes it its theme is one of the fundamental heuristic objectives of the development of the concept of the neutrum. This objective is so important because heuristic habituality leads us to treat the heuristic links between two conceptual (intelligible) structures according to a few simple models – the theory of something, reflection on something, metatheory, critique – designating the space that separates the two elements as that of critical distance. Only Kantian critique attempts to counteract this simplified reflexive heuristic relationship, integrating the critique of reason with his work considered in this critique. Of course, not until Hegel did somebody fully examine the diversity of the relationship of philosophical discourse with its objects of various theoretical levels – including philosophical theories. The concept of mediation plays a decisive role in his science. A general

concept of “that which mediates” would be a very important intuition to expand the understanding of the neutrum, as the heuristic value of this concept becomes particularly clear if we understand it as a centre constantly mediating between concepts and forming their mutual links. Of course, we must remember that the very concept of mediation is inherently limited, referring as it does to the correlative concept of direct knowledge and the spirit’s return to itself as the crowning of philosophical reflection. It is therefore important in the context of the concept of mediation to always bear in mind the other concept of the centre provided by structuralist thinking – as a bundle or dense concentration where various concepts are jointly subjected to the action of the work of difference, and where concepts “decentred” or “shifted” in relation to the metaphysical, representational concepts are conceived.

What has so far been said on the subject of the neutrum is no doubt no more than a vague introduction that leaves the impression generally contained in the question “What is it all about?” There is no alternative to this, since the neutrum is neither an object of definition, nor can it be understood as a theoretical object connected to a specific research method, or “as a whole” as a thing with a simple ontological or heuristic status (of an idea, programme, method, operational concept etc.). Each way of discussing the neutrum means entering a random place and at the same time showing the neutrum in its peculiar work of designating the links and equivalences of singled-out concepts. The work of difference, mediations and the work of the theoretical construct for the purposes of a concrete theory – each individually – is an example or manifestation of the work of the neutrum.

In a sense, explaining the neutrum means explaining heuristics, or rather providing an allegory of it. Talking about the neutrum will always be limited grammatically – and therefore also heuristically – to talking about a certain object in the sense of the being asked the question about the manner of existence. Meanwhile, heuristics points to an object as a research area, and thus the corresponding categorial question about general status is a question about cognitive status, method or application. Talking about heuristics is a chance for talking about the neutrum to break away from the grammatical compulsion to tie it to the notion of a certain being. For talking about heuristics, in the other hand, talking about the neutrum is a chance to break away from the compulsion to talk about it as a certain science (from which a method, object etc. are expected). However, the discourse type is the same in both cases – a special discourse, incidental for the matter itself (owing to the needs of heuristics), as it adapts to the purely external circumstances that heuristics or the neutrum must

be explained to somebody. The sense of continually avoiding a clear answer, and talking about everything at the same time, is a consequence of this, and results from the fear that the recipient will want to stick to some particularistic intuition whose aspirations to universality make it misleading and say, “Ah, so that’s all it really means!” Unfortunately, there is no “all”. Furthermore, we are operating in conditions in which certain heuristic habits and clichés that make us feel safe and wise become invalid, or rather must succumb to *epoché*. These include warnings against seeking the philosopher’s stone – the great Concept, Word, machination leading thoughts towards the truth, or the antidote to all errors. They also include simple heuristic truths not to attempt to occupy a position from nowhere, or to look for a theory of everything. In fact, these cautions are like the warnings given to someone going into the mountains. Legitimate as they are, a good hiker knows the dangers before him better than anyone, and still decides to go. To find out why these comments are right, and to what extent, we must venture much further than is required by simply believing in their legitimacy, let alone understanding their sense. My greatest fear in writing this work was the inhibiting influence of heuristic habits and platitudes on the reception of its contents – after all, it is this openness to the wide space of heuristic means and ability to move among them and critically assess the scope of their applicability that is one of its important tasks. I believe that the heuristic sketches I present show something of the abundance of philosophical heuresis and prove that talking about it cannot only assume such simple heuristic forms as describing, providing a theory, making a critical reflection etc. The forms that heuristics must take into account are as extensive as the heuresis of philosophy himself. For they must equal the advancement of heuristic reflection that characterises the most eminent philosophical conceptions.

Finding our way around a multitude of ideas where nothing gains priority other than that which it gives itself in relation to its own conceptual scheme and the accepted idea of totality – this key skill needed for explaining the idea of heuristics can be mastered in the discourses defining the concept of the neutrum. As such, it will need its own article. This will conclude the introduction to the neutrum that has been given here.

7.2 The Neutrum

The discovery (if we may use this term) of the neutrum is the result of the intellectual experience revealing an attribute of concepts: that none of them can acquire a superior, absolute position in thinking as a whole. Any claimant to this absolute position – be it a strictly metaphysical concept (from a purely objective

order) or a formal or methodological one (as a concept of universal method) – is supplanted by the key concept of the discourse in which the reflection on its distinguished position will take place. The extreme case is perhaps a concept constructed in such a way that nothing is assumed of it except the fact that it plays the distinct role expected of it. We cannot specify further what this distinct function might be, as to do so would be the particularisation that we are trying to avoid. But in this description too we do not escape certain limitations: it is dependent on the concept of “what is distinguished”, as well as on the heuristic notion that the generality and formalness of the concept are the source of its heuristic power and wide applicability (at the cost of loss of distinct meaning). It is at this point that the neutrum appears, as a formal hypostasis of all the heuristic expectations that can be expressed towards the key concept of the theory, a hypostasis that at the same time bears the load of the critical discourse that reveals that this claim cannot be satisfied and that such a concept cannot have a positive being. Let us think of the neutrum as a concept formed on this dialectical path – in fact just one of many possible paths, and distinguished only due to the requirements of the discourse. We should also note that the neutrum, as a concept of something impossible or a utopia, a description of a project that recognised itself as being unrealisable, is a unique one, far from the idea of a distinct element of a philosophical system. It is not the neutrum “in general”, i.e. as the object of this discourse (and the “neutrum in general” cannot mean anything else than “the neutrum assigned to the discourse guided by the heuristic idea of making generalisations”), that is impossible, as a concept of an unrealisable project – such is the neutrum only in the narrow framework of a certain unrealisable project at the centre of which is a certain *modus* of the neutrum.¹¹⁹ This leads to the conclusion that the discourse endeavouring to defend the neutrum from accusations, and thus to defend some sense of its integral nature (the basis of attaching various ideas using its concept, or at least its name), must give it for a certain multiplicity, the individual elements of which contain within, take responsibility for any deficiencies. According to this intuition, the neutrum is

119 The word *modus* here is, of course, a deliberate choice of term. The grammar and syntax of the neutrum are among the manifestations of the creative power of this concept in discovering phenomena of philosophical heuresis. The categories used to refer to the neutrum depend, of course, on the discursive area and conceptual scheme in which our thinking is operating. Therefore, it will sometimes be permissible to say “the neutrum is such and such”, but at other times this will be an entirely inappropriate means of expression; at times we will be able to speak of the characteristics of the neutrum, and at others of its *modi*, or for example its phenomena.

“something above”, remaining untouched despite the defeats suffered by its *modi*. This corresponds to the metaphysical vision of a being that is essentially general, yet enters particular relationships with other beings, manifesting itself in them and triggering certain processes through which we try to recognise it in unilateral and phenomenal terms. And it is here that the close kinship between the purely formal concept of that which is found in a distinguished position in a discourse (a concept belonging to the other of metatheory) and a certain special objective notion (belonging to the order of metaphysical constructs) is revealed. This is how the heuristic working of the neutrum happens, and more specifically its working within structuralist heuresis – talking about the neutrum is a way of finding the structural links between motifs belonging to various orders. In this case, we find the connection between a concept assumed as purely formal and only accessible by imperfect elaborations (whose imperfections do not encroach on its sense, but only obscure it) and the metaphysical notion of being existing through its phenomenal manifestations but also transcending each of them.

In order to become aware of the unique movement of concepts triggered by introducing the neutrum into their environment, we must begin with a list of examples of concepts from various orders – objective, methodological, logical – with which special heuristic expectations are connected in their native discourses. It makes sense to prioritise the concepts that are the simplest as their usage is affirmative and objectivistic. Here are some strictly metaphysical concepts in which heuristic intentions are manifested (and with a certain chance of being fulfilled in the concept of the neutrum): Parmenides’ being, Anaxagoras’ quality (*poiotes*), the atom, the Platonic idea of beauty and good, entelecheia, prime mover, arche, the absolute, the One, *causa sui*, *prima causa*, the principle, being, the world, monad, substance, matter, the spirit, the self, the transcendental I, thinking, will... Each of these concepts seeks to explain something, and establishes some metaphysical authority, and each finds in some others a substitute or exchange unit (competitor) which can take its place, both as the concept of a system and as an objective correlate of the concept. Explanation of the heuristic roles played by these concepts forms new series of them: something primal, fundamental, a primary being, the key concept, basis of the system, foundation of the world, a concept to explain everything, the beginning... The usual distinction between *suppositio formalis* and *suppositio realis*, and talking about the concept and about reality, have scant heuristic power here – we use concepts of the second series to talk about concepts of the first series, mixing up the orders in a natural way. Why this is the case is explained by the transcendental discourse. It does not matter whether we say that the *causa sui* is

a “concept of being explaining the concept of other beings” or that it is “the primary being, and at the same time the cause of other beings”, since both styles are contained within one cohesive metaphysical discourse. To repeat – the concepts of both series mix together. We could give many more examples of transfers and substitutions, even in these two randomly listed series and between them, transfers that on each occasion are triggered by a heuristic reflection (and finally leading to the possibility of constructing the status of what links all these orders and the analogon, generalisations etc. – and thus to the neutrum). In general, however, the discourse on heuristic claims to significance, aiming to get to the “crux of the issue”, involves even more reflexive concepts, such as those from the methodological or metatheoretical order, like concept, truth, method, logic (of something), philosophy, system, conception, question, problem, view, aspect, objective and conceptual order, cognition, reflection, critical nature, naivety, proof, justification, objectivity, argument... Each of these sometimes occupies a central position in the discourse, subordinating or supplanting other concepts. Below is one of many possible series of transfers and substitutions based on various forms of heuristic reflection. We will start from a metaphysical sentence:

- i.* If the world is one whole, it must have one cause.
- ii.* Sentence *i* connects the philosophical ideas of wholeness, unity and genesis, expresses philosophy’s aspiration to explain using one rule of everything in its being, i.e. in its origin.
- iii.* Statement *ii* suggests that such concepts as the world, being and wholeness occur as forms of totality, which as a critical formal category can replace them. The concept of cause which occurs in *i*, as well probably as other concepts that could be in its place (such as will), is subjected by this statement to the reflexive or metatheoretical concept of the rule. Statement *ii* proclaims that philosophy is about totality, rule and explanation. Judging by the heuristic rule of this statement, however, if we were to try to answer the question “what is the matter with philosophers?”, the “matter” in the answer would be critical reflection, judgement, and metaobjective insight. And in fact, this is indeed what philosophers have always been interested in.
- iv.* Statement *iii* suggests that there is always something “the matter” with philosophers, that they have in mind something other than what they say, but they are unable to realise this fully themselves. But why should we not assume that they say what they say, i.e. ask a question that seems important to them and look for the answers to it. We would be better going back to statement *i* and the related metaphysical problem that is the question of the world’s *raison d’être* and oneness.

- v. From the concept of a cause, via the concept of a rule and the heuristic idea of critical reflection, we have reached the concept of the “essence of a question” and the idea of the “thing itself”. Though important, these concepts and ideas constitute proposals of responses to one question: “what is most important?” Even statement *iv* contains the suggestion that *raison d'être* is in some sense a better expression than cause, demonstrating the readiness to explain this advantage by attributing a particular significance to the theoretical criterion that is applied (for example saying that a reason is a more general or more critical concept, as it is closer to reflexive generalisation of the concept of cause to the concept of something that serves to explain something else). First, then, it is the concept of what is most general (the world) that is most important; then that which causes (the cause); also that which explains (rule); that which is at the foundation (the problem, thing itself); and finally (in this statement), that which is the most important. Statement *iv* does not want to believe in “ulterior motives”, knowledge of which would provide something like secret knowledge. However, it itself suggests its most important thing, i.e. the *thing itself*. Perhaps one ought to leave behind the terrain of the most important (primal, decisive or entirely critical, universal) and set about something that might be quite special, but authentically interests us as something from the world, something concretely problematic?

Through an advanced heuristic commentary, we have again returned to the usual metaphysical concepts: the world, meaning empirical knowledge, the concrete questions asked of us by reality, the thing itself with which we must occupy ourselves. In short: us and the world – that strange, but oh so common encounter of complex mediating reflection with the simplest heuristic form of objectivistic and affirmative usage of concepts. The neutrum runs through all statements, appearing in them as concepts from various orders, or rather constituting various orders. This always occurs in relation to a heuristic reflection of some kind. Here, though, we accept the rule of talking about the neutrum that says that it may not be subjected to anything, and therefore we interpret the heuristic notion of division of the discursive field into orders (objective, methodological, conceptual etc.) as conveying the intuition of the neutrum, for which it is the “master of orders”, the source of their divisions and hierarchies. This definition is of course very abstract. But we can also speak of a series of *modi* of the neutrum, constituting various hierarchising criteria: generality, level of abstraction, reflexivity, and criticality.

We should have no illusions about the fact that heuristic reflection as a type of mental operation mediating structuring transformations within philosophical

discourses is essentially linked to the intuition of the neutrum that it is irrevocably its consequence. In this sense the neutrum is not indispensable, and one can do without it without any damage to philosophical knowledge. The same can be said too of heuristics. All this, means, however, is that if we think about heuristics and the neutrum from the point of view of methodological heuresis – from the technical point of view – then it must demonstrate the value of a tool that, though it can be omitted, is efficient and worth using. Intellectual practice alone can be decisive here, while a matter of interest is that of whether heuristics and the question of the neutrum can be of interest in themselves, and not only in assignment to methodological heuresis. However, the extremely abstract question “what for?” that always appear when a new concept is introduced into philosophy leads us to look for the main intuition of the neutrum in methodological thinking.

From the point of view of structuralist heuresis, what we essentially have is a generalised concept of “the object = x ”, conceived as the source of differentiation. The neutrum generates (differentiates) various series and circulates among them, without adopting a privileged definition, either as a being (in a metaphysical series) about which we can ask “how does it exist?”, or as a theoretical tool about which we can ask “what for?” In general here, the neutrum belongs to the heuristic intuition of the source, and at the same time what is elusive or unattainable (“the difference of the difference itself”, analogously to “praxis of praxis itself”, “track of tracks”, “style of styles”, “method of methods”, “question of questions” – an entire dense series of *modi* of the neutrum is formed). Within methodological heuresis, meanwhile, to an extent the reverse is true: the neutrum generates a series that from the point of view of the notions fundamental to this form of thinking (realised using methods of cognitive objectives) distinguishes the concept of an objective. The neutrum here is manifested as a series of concepts referring to the result of cognition, such as truth, cognition, knowledge, and self-knowledge. The grammatical substantialism of the neutrum brings this concept closer to those referring to the hypostases of the objective, such as fullness of knowledge and self-knowledge, the ideal philosophical treatise, and above all the absolute as Truth. The neutrum therefore appears to be the regulative idea of all cognition conceived in the aspect of its intentionality. At the same time this is the idea of a universal heuristic (methodical) means, mastery of which is tantamount to achieving the objective (cognition as an objective). The relationship with the “distinguished element of the discourse” is obvious. This intuition appears to be a heuristic link between methodological and structuralist thinking.

Compelling as the aspiration to universality of heuristic concepts and notions is, it is difficult to experience a theoretical need to introduce the concept of the

neutrum. The presented series of five statements rather depicts the work of the neutrum that has previously been established than portraying the discursive path by which this concept is constituted. If we are to show the neutrum as something important and necessary, we may of course not depart from the heuresis of “that which is distinguished”. Let us therefore collect a few of the concepts of wholeness (totality), the first object of cognition and the metaphysical foundation, and assign to them a general form of the argument that establishes them, and thus the main discourse of the possible mental system connected to them:

- i.* What philosophy should focus on as its prime object is being, as everything exists in some way, and whatever we talk about, we talk about some kind of being.
- ii.* The object of philosophy is thought. Everything is apparent to us as a concept, so there is no other object than the conceptual object.
- iii.* The key to understanding all phenomena, including psychological, spiritual, and cultural ones, is cognition of the laws of nature. Physical phenomena are the basis of all others, which depend on them entirely and which we can only cognise by ascending from fundamental natural phenomena to the most advanced forms of organisation of matter enabling consciousness and everything that goes with it.
- iv.* In order to understand the world around us, we must return straight towards God, in which everything has its beginning. The first law about the world is that it is created being.
- v.* In order to cognise the world, we must first realise what cognition is, whether it exists and what is a reliable method of it.
- vi.* Everything we know and can know constitutes a certain sense. It is the task of critical philosophy to understand what intelligible sense is and can be, and thus what cognition itself, its possible result and the connection between the transcendent being of their correlates assumed in objective senses and their correlates and themselves.
- vii.* The philosopher must realise that any cognitive endeavours made and the possibilities of their realisation are determined by the fact that it is the human subject who faces the world as a cognitive subject. What is significant for the human must be referred to him and understood in reference to him. Humans is the beginning of philosophy.
- viii.* Philosophical cognition always depends on our historically formed cognitive position and conceptual scheme, and is always an assimilation and transformation of tradition. Intentionally undertaking this effort is the appropriate – open, undogmatic and critical – research position.

- ix. Everything that can reach us as something significant, i.e. including things with claims to the status of cognition, is a certain linguistic sense. It is language that decides what is reasonable and what is not. Cognition of the nature of linguistic phenomena is a condition of the judgement of sense and of the cognitive status of statements going beyond the natural use of words. The first philosophy is the philosophy of language.
- x. If philosophy wishes to be a certain cognition, its first task is to expose the hidden assumptions of every thinking, and then to develop the means of an undogmatic thinking, free from prejudices and opinions reached (hastily or unconsciously) with conclusive significance for questions examined in philosophy.
- xi. It is no use fooling ourselves that we might find something absolutely primal to work as a foundation, beginning and universal means of cognition. There are many claimants to this position, and the competition between them cannot be closed down once and for all. This is why it is fundamental to philosophical cognition that it arises in discussion. It is the transcendental conditions of communication and dialogue that are the formal, starting point of philosophising.

Being, thought, God, nature, cognising, the human, tradition, language – we could mention even more concepts that undergo various forms of intensification (totalisation, absolutisation, radicalisation) in the search for the central discourse. The competition between them is one of various heuristic notions in which the idea of the source, basis, principle, objective or whole is associated with the idea of experience, action, reflexivity, essentiality, criticality, legitimacy, premiselessness etc. Whether one discourse comes to the forefront depends on our sensitivity to the set of ideas that it promotes. But there is no question of a dominant discourse being questioned in its truth or “pacified” by a superior organising discourse. Using a phrase mediated in advanced heuristic reflection, “the leading discourses based on reinforcement”, does not change anything here, at most permitting us to add point *xii*: “in the matter of the starting point in philosophy we must start by recognising the cases of radicalisation, totalisation etc. of various concepts and the associated variants of the leading discourses of philosophy”. The functional similarity between all the leading discourses (as “leading”) is too weak and inaccurate a definition of the connection that arises. The question of what links all the cases together also does not convey the particular heuristic situation that is the impossibility of distinguishing any heuristic means (like generalisation or searching for similarities) in order to deal with the theoretical situation. This does not mean that we cannot look for similarities or

generalise, but only that, by in this way adding another line to the series (contrary to the intention of providing some general judgement), in some way experience defeat, and come no closer to understanding the situation. It would therefore no doubt make sense to avoid distinguishing any particular heuristic means, not to mention individual privileged concepts. To satisfy this (following the elementary heuristic idea of objectivity in the sense of impartiality) we must say that the presented statements in a certain sense address or express the same thing, but without specifying what this is or in what sense. If we were to add something to this, the postulate of avoiding specification would have to be replaced by the weaker postulate of not deprecating the claims to importance of any leading discourses. We may therefore say, for example, that every case, remaining insensitive to the destructive influence of external discourse, contains a peculiar tautological moment. But this does not refer to the freedom of contents and tautological logical form, but to the heuristic formal property of every leading discourse that it creates the optimal conditions for using the right concept (for example that of being, language etc.) and a specific heuristic form (for example reflection, criticality, meta-objectivity, premiselessness) in purely affirmative, paradigmatic usage. In this way, each of the main concepts becomes a legitimate sovereign of its own parent discourse. In order in a sense to satisfy these claims by talking (to an extent approvingly) about the heuresis of totalising discourse, and therefore to preserve the immanent content of the leading discourse (despite their radical mutual exclusion), the tautological moment must be given the sense of “generalisation” or analogy (the type of the unity is unimportant here). Each “realisation” of it will thus be a vital and irreplaceable manifestation – sufficient to itself and not subject to any definition in terms of its place in a hierarchy (for instance that of naivety, critical level, degree of development of the spirit etc.), unless one of the leading discourses itself makes use of the hierarchy. Only here – where the heuristic ideas of non-distinction, non-involvement, respect for the immanent claims of discourses, with readiness to move away from the domination of the heuristic forms customarily distinguished in philosophy: reflection, criticality, methodological insight – does the concept of the neutrum emerge. This time, it is formed as the concept of the tautological moment (the principle or source of obviousness) of leading discourses. It is a pure coincidence that the heuristic quality of the concept that is “indicating other *modi* of themselves”, without the need for absolute precedence, deserves to be linked with a theoretical construct with its own (neologistic) name. If philosophy were different, perhaps it would be necessary to use the concept of the neutrum (even with a completely different name) to “rescue” other neglected forms of heuresis entirely.

Since we have already shown the transfer and mutual substitution of the concepts of the various series (which should portray the work of the neutrum) as well as the specific type of unity of leading discourses (which guides us to the intuition of the neutrum), we should now present the heuristic power of the neutrum as a consciously applied concept. The best way to do this is to trigger the movement of terms and substitutions guided by the idea of defining the neutrum, with various concepts and ideas revealing their heuristic connections in this movement. Of course, by talking about the neutrum itself, we gain a parallel benefit by expanding our understanding of it:

- i.* The neutrum is an object without properties.
- ii.* The neutrum also remains “neutral” regarding objectivity itself: there is only symbolic sense in saying that it is a “certain kind of object”. Its feature of indeterminacy (neutrality) – by taking any properties away from it – can also be expressed by saying that it is entitled to any qualities.
- iii.* Definitions *i* and *ii*, somewhat regrettably, make the neutrum a “something”, defined as metaphysical objects. Yet the actual sense of both of them is that the neutrum constitutes an absolute construct, an extremely malleable theoretical object with which, as it were, one can do “as one pleases”. As a result, that which nonetheless forms as a certain definite character in the course of these operations takes on a particular quality of the truth as something transcendently necessary.
- iv.* The neutrum as a pure construct is an assumed (postulated) pure regulative idea referring in an abstract way to every objective of the discourse, whatever this objective is supposed to show in concrete cases.
- v.* The neutrum is the general idea of “what is good”, “desirable” in thinking, as far as this is taken in the pure form of realisation.
- vi.* What is the neutrum not? What it is not is everything that in some sense is “only”. In other words, erroneous are any definitions of the neutrum that designate limits for it or deprecate definitions based on the attempt to convey the multifaceted, expansive and at the same time epochistic nature of this concept.
- vii.* Where does this leave the neutrum in relation to the law of non-contradiction? In fact, it is not the nominal logical contradiction of two definitions of the neutrum that undermines one of them, but rather the breach that a certain definition can make in a series of definitions connected together in a heuristic chain. If the principle of a given chain of definitions is to reflect the deductive discourse, of course they cannot be logically contradictory towards each other; if the principle is dialectical, they can be contradictory

in the sense of the dialectic; yet if the principle is to bring them closer in the heuristic intuition in which the need for the concept of the neutrum appears, the formal freedom of the discourse becomes particularly large.

- viii. One might therefore assume that the concept of the neutrum was established solely to define it and in this way (or in fact thanks to analysis of this discourse) be able to observe various heuristic phenomena. Indeed, this motif appears important, and as a result we might add the definition of the neutrum as “pure unknown” or “pure object of experiment” – the hypostasis of all intentionality in thinking. But this gives rise to the question of whether there is another way of talking about the neutrum than defining what this “pure object of experiment” is. We should note that any interest in something unknown starts with the question “what is it?”, leading to more complex heuristic forms the more we study. The neutrum is no different. Its beginning is an intellectual game which it would probably be rather appropriate to call a “game of ‘what is it?’”. The “end” of the question of the neutrum, however, can be found in all the central and crucial points of philosophy – in its most important concepts, forms of discourse and arguments: the stakes of the neutrum game are the things that are most important.
- ix. Since the neutrum brings with it the problem of questioning, we must say that the neutrum, without allowing any question put to it (for example “what is it?”, “what is it for?”) to become dominant and restrict its sense, guides us to the idea of the “question before all questions”, “question of questions”, or “always rightly posed, appropriate question”, and correlatively to the idea of something that is the object of the ideally posed question. As we may observe, this guidance is rendered in the emerging practice of talking about the neutrum (on the basis of a purely formal and stylistic-grammatical decision) by acknowledging a given idea as the designation or *modus* (or also idea) of the neutrum. Therefore, if we say that the neutrum is the question of questions, we must also say that it is both the object of this question and the answer to it – both these ideas are suggested by the concept of the question. The neutrum is therefore the answer to the answer, the answer to the question of questions (and thus the objective of the desired knowledge).
- x. Some recurrent heuristic motifs can be observed in talking about the neutrum. These are the habit of linking what is important and is to be discovered with metaphysical intuitions: the beginning and the source, the objective, perfection, idealness and, of course, substantiality. A metaphysical series is thus built around the neutrum which reveals the organic connection of

certain metaphysical intuitions. So we have the neutrum as an objective, rule, source, something perfect, and “something” in general, i.e. an object. At the same time, an anti-metaphysical series develops, in terms indicating the neutrum’s indeterminacy, vagueness and lack of specificity. We also find in the same designation in which our discourse is located (the neutrum as what is important, privileged) an inclination towards hypostasis in the concept of the neutrum of heuristic motifs of an entirely different kind: linking what is important with intangibility, with a threat from excessively detailed definition (obscuring other aspects), and with a lack of cognitive clarity and accessibility.

- xi.* Each definition of the neutrum is correlated with a certain heuristic motif that can be expressed by saying that the neutrum is defined as a heuristic motif governing a given discourse. In other words, a certain heuristic model is proposed (certainly not the only one) for discovering new definitions of the neutrum. According to this, on each occasion the neutrum is conceived as the heuristic principle of a given discourse (expressed grammatically in the form of definition of a certain object), if it is to take the place of its key concept. For example, if the discourse concerns the conditions of correctness of reasoning, its key category – logicity – can be replaced by self-referentiality or reflexivity, as the heuristic rule of this discourse (the rules of reasoning also apply to the discourse on them). Self-referentiality then becomes a definition of the neutrum, which incidentally has an equivalent in a metaphysical series in something like a description of a black hole. According to the same principle, one can also convert into a definition of the neutrum the heuristic motif of reflexivity (the neutrum as self-knowledge), criticality (the neutrum as thought knowing the full range of conditions of its possibilities and applicability), premiselessness (the neutrum as a premiseless thought), syncreticality (the neutrum as an ideal of the encyclopaedia, omniscience) etc. Applying it to this discourse results in the neutrum being defined as a heuristic rule of substitution of a heuristic rule of discourse for its key concept. In the substantial style (of defining the neutrum as an object), the neutrum would have to be conceived as being the idea of the key concept of a discourse as the concept of its heuristic rule.

Enough about the neutrum for now. Much more persuasive will be application of it to issues other than itself, although this will be nothing else than again talking about the neutrum, except in relation to the problem in question. After all, as we have seen, the heuristic power of the neutrum is manifested in its “definition”. This action provides something of a condensed review of heuristic motifs,

a heuristic topology of philosophy that indicates the places in which each concept or mental topic comes up and in which they are linked or separated. Tracking the neutrum is simply philosophical thinking in the tension of heuristic reflection, and only by chance, within the presentation of this concept provided here, can it be suspiciously associated with the heuresis of gnosis.

7.3 The Faces of Heuristics

Heuristics' plurality, variety and heuristic variability is a characteristic that can be overemphasised. As a counterbalance, then, by talking about the various faces of heuristics – and in a way that none of them is given the right to absolute domination – can we extract some “harmless”, non-totalising unity? Neither dialectical nor analogical unity would seem to belong to the “harmless” type. The unity of “familial similarities” and that of “mutual references” of some ideas to others, or one concept to another, are less constraining. This is not in the sense of dialectical insufficiency (requiring synthesis), but in the sense that the philosophical mind formally sets the rule of mutual connection – even if this cannot all at once be captured in all the connections taking place – of all heuristic ideas guiding its thinking. Yet the unity of heuristics is not “its responsibility” – this unity is as possible as the unity of philosophy. Heuristics must be wholly the “responsibility” of philosophy, reflecting its differentiation.

If we wish to sketch the “faces” of heuristics, we must be continually aware that these are local or aspectual dominations in a complex structure of mutual references, repetitions and competitions of various theoretical elements, an example (and chance) fragment of which structure we presented. To put it differently, the faces of heuristics are like reflections in the water which disperse every time it moves, and furthermore, like it or not, talking about them subjects us to a rather particularistic heuristic idea of depiction, i.e. it is “depicting talking” about heuristics. Yet pursuing heuristics by no means suggests this particular vision of it.

The impossibility of permanent connection with any heuristic motif, even with the heuresis of the thing itself, is an experience that moves the identity and uniformity of heuristics into the psychological (or at least pragmatic) sphere and suggests that heuristics should be regarded as a skill or disposition, and perceived as a kind of intellectual mood. Indeed, heuristics seems unique in this respect, especially considering the fact that it is unable to offer the ideal of the criticism and profundity, the inquisitiveness and “essentiality” of thinking, generally entirely sufficient to characterise a truly philosophical disposition.

7.3.1 Heuristics as Optimal Philosophical Speech and Critique

While discussing structuralist thinking, we mentioned the kind of generalised sophistic ability that this perspective provides. Heuristics can also be looked upon in this way. It must develop a metaphilosophical, or in fact “metasophistic” skill, one not so much of proving and invalidating a given thesis, but of conducting a theoretical task described by some heuristic term (“proof” is just one of many; others, for example, are “universalisation”, “critique”, “development”, “sublation” and “deconstruction”). Of course, just like sophistic acrobatics, displays of heuristic intelligence can be irresponsible, or utterly unworthy of a philosopher. I mean here just the certain type of talent and intellectual flair that heuristics requires. Another component of these skills is something that can be called the skill of “optimal philosophical speech”: selection of the right concepts, topics worth undertaking, choice of heuristic devices (like the power of assertion and denotation) for expounded theses, and the appropriate form for the question or problem posed. Of course, various critical abilities also come with this, such as the skill of linguistic critique and critique of questions, and “manipulative” experience in *bricolage* and skilled discussion. The heuristic disposition is at the same time an erudite, and even syncretic one. When we pursue heuristics, we must be able to differentiate, associate, make divisions and typologies of the entire space of philosophy – both problems and solutions – on the basis of all kinds of heuristic criteria and in the most diverse heuristic aspects. The traditional “finding premises” and “anticipating consequences” are very little in comparison to the analytical abilities that heuristicians should demand of themselves. They ought to learn the connection of every philosophical statement with the discourses (and their own history or logic, *heuresis*) to which it belongs, overtly or otherwise. This is a technical and analytical skill that demands a technical-professional relationship with philosophy and a peculiar self-confidence expressed in a critical (or even suspiciously sceptical) distance with regard to every theoretical matter. Philosophy seen from this position is something that can be learned, which applies even to the specific forms of discourse, *locorum communium* and characteristics of style responsible for the impression of wisdom that (rightly or wrongly) a philosopher’s speech can sometimes give. From this angle, the heuristicians assume the position of the “old sage” whom it is hard to knock off track or surprise.

This curt Enlightenment and positivist mentality contains the embers of critical philosophy and mistrust of philosophical life. Going in this direction exposes the other face of heuristics – its critical and moralising one. By investigating what it is in philosophy that separates it from the background of culture, gives it its

uniqueness and quality, and thus also shapes its matter, heuristics must penetrate the suspicious dialectic of greatness and usurpation from which philosophical elitism draws. In the heuresis of distinguishing, i.e. where heuristics itself asks the question about its identity, and asks philosophy about the heuristic foundations of its separation and elevation and the persuasive power of the narrative and words (like “philosophy” itself) that enthrone it in the kingdom of sciences, particular attention must be paid to what escapes the authority of philosophical discourse and yet undoubtedly shapes philosophy. The substantial importance of the externality of philosophy is an especially attractive topic for critical heuristics. Of course, no externality of philosophy is absolute – it is just a variable field of what eludes the attention of philosophers. Political, ideological, and sociolinguistic aspects are examples of factors that do not belong directly to the theoretical order and yet are often introduced to it and considered as circumstances of philosophising. Not noticed, meanwhile, are the things that do not belong to philosophy, as they “slip out” of it, not wanting to fit in, constituting its defeat, its unsuccessful work, its grey area of mediocrity or stupidity. Yet there is no doubt that the majority of its official products, works and thesis show that philosophy matches these everyday and run-of-the-mill aspects, at a level that it can only rarely exceed. The critique of philosophical life and heuristic habituality must reach a certain saturation and fulfilment for the incontrovertible heuristic virtue of balanced judgement (objectivity, as it is commonly known) to be heard.

7.3.2 Heuristics as Knowledge

We can therefore say that the penetration of the externality of philosophy can truly become knowledge when it disposes of the passions of radical criticism and humbly submits to the heuristic demands of systematisation. Of course, heuristics cannot fail to experience ordered heuresis, and therefore at least part of it must become knowledge. In this “transgressive” topic, authentic knowledge should also be formed. It would therefore make sense to postulate systematic study of the links between the ideological and institutional foundation and philosophical matter, of the manifestations of repressive phraseology in philosophical discourse, and particularly in talking about philosophy, of concealed forms of persuasion, worn-out metaphors hiding their metaphorical nature, of examples of superficial formalism and appearances of cognition expressed in common use of sensory representations of the imagination, subtle forms of dogmatism hidden beneath appearances of critical philosophy etc. Each of these topics demands efficient and far-reaching analyses of various philosophical discourses, including their so-called logic, their rhetorical and persuasive moments, their linguistic

means, and the sensory notions and ideological motifs that support them. Of course, philosophy examines all of this, but without any methodical approach. As mentioned earlier, these questions tend to be answered in various margins, introductions, digressions, commentaries and supplements, in *parerga* and *paralipomena*. Making some sort of order of this and presenting it to the philosophical community without making the “heuristic error” of causing irritation – this again is a positivist idea that heuristics should undertake. Of course, heuristics as knowledge, albeit perhaps more expressive in a terrain that philosophy seldom occupies, will in a constant and imperceptible way continue to encroach onto the ground of the philosophical “what” – its everyday issues. The history of philosophical ideas, research on heuristic habituality in its historical formation and of heuristic notions and ideas, the theory of heuristic maxims, analyses of types of philosophical discourses, ontology of philosophical discourse, heuristic rhetoric, the theory of the neutrum, and the other research areas which we mentioned, all form a kind of transitory zone between heuristics focused on the “how” – on the form and determinants of the process of philosophy, and heuristics immersed in the “what” – in objective philosophical issues.

7.3.3 Heuristics as a Mirror of Philosophy

In the “what” sphere, heuristics cannot submit to the directive of “allocation” and try to preserve its identity at all costs. Here it becomes a way of doing philosophy. In a certain sense, this is the opposite of radically critical Nietzschean heuristics, since the place of criticism is taken by kindness and loyalty. The heuristic form of philosophising does so in the constant tension of the heuristic reflection using the knowledge and conceptual scheme delivered by the special research of heuristics, its detailed theories, developed and linked together by it. The heuristic model of conduct, involving the philosophical issue being transferred to heuristics and interpreted in heuristics, as well, correlatively, as examining every internal issue of heuristics as an issue of philosophy in general, is of particular significance. In this way, for example, the question of legitimacy must be considered as the problem of legitimacy and justification of heuristic theories, and the legitimacy of heuristics as a pan-philosophical problem. Philosophy is thus almost duplicated, and an inner reflection, a zone for “philosophy’s own issues” formed. Philosophy gains something like a heuristic laboratory, in which everything can be examined in an experimental, temporary way, as a trial, and in different variations. This can thus make a philosophical problem the object of a heuristic game and special supplementary questions which one can never afford when the issue is treated with metaphysical gravity as a “question posed by reality

itself”, and not an internal affair of philosophy.¹²⁰ The consideration of “besides the point” issues that is part of unofficial heuristic habituality – the intellectual formation, education and political views of the author, for instance, or “pigeon-holing” and other “second-rate” behaviours, can be “civilised”, and raised to the level of accepted means of heuresis. And of course, introducing new heuristic methods to philosophy, developing a critical insight in this field, and in this way establishing planes of agreement and cooperation between diverse trends in philosophy, is the most important social result that we can expect heuristics as heuristic philosophy to attain. However, as has been emphasised, in order to fulfil this heuristic ideal of universality, brightness, acuity, resistance to naivety, dogmas and prejudices, heuristics must build its “institutional” authority – what is to be introduced, changed or supplemented in heuristic habituality must find a certain “citizenship” for itself in philosophy. Heuristics seeks to play this role of a place of asylum for anything that is uncomfortable, impaired and undeveloped in philosophy, yet first this requires a solid conceptual and terminological ordering and standardisation. Heuristics must satisfy this theoretical need as knowledge. The heuristic way of philosophising thus means continually calling upon heuristic knowledge, and therefore something much more than proceeding in keeping with a certain scientific disposition. The questions suggested by a heuristic sensitivity and which are a constant accompaniment to examination of philosophical issues in the heuristic way must gain the sense of specialist questions. What are these questions? The heuristic approach to a philosophical issue begins with technical questions: from what problem area and from which discourses does the issue stem? What does the person framing the issue know and understand? What in this issue comes from ignorance and naivety, without which the question would not have been asked or would have a different form? What are the other possibilities for formulating the issue that precede it and what corresponds to it in other problem areas and other discourses? This kind of insight means that we can choose a suitable beginning for a statement or text that is to refer to a given issue, and adopt an appropriate heuristic stance. This means, in simple terms, a measure of distance and criticism, and sometimes a readiness to digress, transform the problem or even ignore it. We then ask ourselves “what could one say about this subject?”, which is the question of how in a given case we can make use of our knowledge, education and tools. The heuristic approach

120 Perhaps the “duplication” of philosophy by the science of philosophical heuresis would allow many questions and discourses viewed as being mixed up in metaphysicality or left in the realm of the problem of metaphysics to be treated as an internal matter of philosophy, an issue of heuresis, rather than as supporting a particular thesis.

instructs us to enquire how the issue presented itself in the past, how it presents itself today and what could be the answer to it in the future from the point of view of the mental systems known to us. On this basis, we can assess what we can manage – can we tackle the issue independently, or is it so strongly connected with specific theoretical contexts that it cannot be addressed autonomously, or as a question of some philosophical catechism only referring to the discourse to which it belongs. We must then seek as broad a discernment as possible of the psychological and notional foundation of the issue: to what extent is it an issue posed in a philosophical question, and to what extent does it conceal some motivation and problem of another nature? In what sense is the issue designated by simple notions or mental figures (or possibly the lack of them – inability to imagine something or the combination of certain notions)? Finally, we ask to what kind of heuristics the issue belongs or what kind it assumes: what heuristic postulates and notions does it conceal? And in what heuristic area must an answer that might be satisfactory or interesting for the person framing the issue therefore be located? Only on this basis can we ultimately decide whether this is “our” issue to a sufficient degree, or whether it belongs to such a narrow heuristic perspective (for instance strictly analytical-linguistic or ideological) that the attempts to broaden it characteristic of heuristics are doomed from the outset. Sometimes, we may find that what we are initially considering is not an issue at all, but rather, for example, a linguistic expression or initiation of a linguistic game or series of notions determined in advance. Only such a multifaceted initial analysis can decide to what degree a philosophical problem examined in heuristics will continue to be looked at as heuristic, i.e. at the level of reflection referring to its “how” – its history: conceptual, psychological, habitual conditions, the properties of the discourses in which it might be involved and the paths of possible solutions – and to what degree it can be considered in its “objective style”, directly as a certain material issue, and thus in reference to its “what”. In the latter case, of course, the heuristic research will lose its characteristics of a peculiar mental style, its typically heuristic heuristics. It is not hard to see that there is a long way to go before a heuristic philosophy can be formed, i.e. heuristics as a way of pursuing philosophy, especially if this is indeed to be based on heuristic knowledge already formed by its special theories, and bearing in mind the imperfection of the analyses contained in this book. Certainly, heuristics in a form not restricted to postulates and projects will not be created by one person. If the word “face” refers to the concept of a true face, and at the same time means “what is evident” – how a given thing looks from outside, “at face value” – we can say that the true face of heuristics, how it should present itself, is its social face. Not syncretic, as we might

assume from the continual recurrence of the motif of versatility, respect for diversity, the need for an understanding of the whole of philosophy, but social. Indeed, today various trends in philosophy are increasingly open to one another and seek to know about each other, there is increasing readiness to look for similarities and attempt to collaborate, while philosophy is becoming ever less based on linguistic/national and regional exclusivity. This is nothing other than an expansion of its heuristic horizons in a worldwide social process. The heuresis of philosophy no longer differentiates so much – it is no longer analytical, or speculative-transcendental, or hermeneutic. In keeping with the way we use the word “heuristic” here, we can say that the heuresis of philosophy is becoming ever more *heuristic*. This is a form of standardisation serving plurality and diversity – a manifestation of global unification under the aegis of liberal discourse. Together with pragmatism, philosophy of communication, hermeneutics, semiology, liberal political philosophy and other movements, heuristics must no doubt also serve it, at least in its public, socialised guise, as after all it may not renounce the difficult path of radical criticism.

As an element of the real process of “heuristicising” contemporary philosophy, heuristics (which is certainly very far away from “reality” going beyond one book and a few articles) must learn to view itself as something very insignificant – in spite of its extremely lofty aspirations. Even in the role of catalyst or avant-garde of this process, its significance can only be small, and more theoretical than practical – the greatness of the spirit characteristic of influential philosophies cannot affect it, as true spiritual strength always sticks to one idea, and is not at all concerned by any particularism it may have. The pay-off for the universal nature of heuristics is a certain bland quality and the loss of its own identity, but also a certain timidity and smallness; no surge of the philosophical mind will be happy to own up to heuristics.

And indeed, this is one more face of heuristics: it is a philosophy inclined to limiting itself, and get “hung up on the material” delivered by the philosophical thought that it is to deal with, melting in its numerous discourses, dispersing into innumerable various research fields and detailed theories, at each step losing its unity and identity. This is a philosophy that does not take it upon itself to deliver any collection of theses or any other kind of results, a bland philosophy “living” on self-postulation, and thus in fact non-existent. This is the face of a heuristics that does not yet exist, the heuristics visible on the pages of this book. It would not be good for us to pretend that it is more “concrete” than it really is (apart from naivety, pretence could be the biggest sin from the point of view of heuristic involvement). Only very hard work on concrete issues can erase the depressing

impression necessarily evoked by the various epochistic heuristic moments that constitute heuristics: the lack – characteristic of creations with the structure of a theory (or a personal doctrine) – of a level of theses and unambiguous argument for something, regulative, formal (and in another way “avoiding”) terms, like “heuristics” and “neutrum” themselves, the lack of clear-cut and unquestioned submission to various heuristic postulates such as clarity of terminology and method, a clearly specified object, and finally continual operation at a very high level of abstraction giving the misleading impression of domination of the heuristic motif of meta-theoreticity. It is hard to abandon this peculiar face of heuristics in its nascent state, perceived through the prism of the conditions formed by the need for synthetic discourse. In fact, though, it is by no means heuristics’ fate to get lost in meta-reflections and boundless syncretism. This is only an appearance created by the discourse, in which it is constantly necessary to pay heed to negative definitions, and to avoid mistaking heuristics for some narrower heuristic programme, to make it clear what heuristics is not. So heuristics is not threatened by absence or appearance. Its real weakness is this “smallness of spirit”: heuristics is, and shall remain, reliant on the oeuvre of philosophy, which it will comment upon, criticise, develop and continue, and from which it will always only arise. This is a heuristic position similar to that assumed by hermeneutics, and of course conceived according to this model. Paradoxically, the relationship of heuristics to philosophical tradition is a reflection of the situation of the philosopher facing the power of historically shaped philosophy. This is due to the peculiar realism of heuristics, which constantly asks what the work of a philosopher actually involves. For this reason too, the nascent heuristics should present itself from the angle of emerging from real tradition, as the continuation of and a commentary on the heuristic projects of philosophy and a field that marks its uniqueness and distinction very carefully. This was how I tried to present heuristics in this book (but to what result?) – in terms of its roots in methodological, rhetorical, pragmatic, hermeneutic and structuralist thinking.

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