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Nine studies on Hegel
2003
Introductory note

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Introductory note

I collect here my studies on Hegel all composed between the late 1960s and the early 1970s.

Some of them have been revised at later times (indicated at the end of each study) but, almost always, this has been an updating of citations with publications not available at the time of the first draft.

In the decades that followed, I returned to Hegel's books several times, but of my many annotations, in part an expression of views too personal to interest anyone, I did not think it useful to include anything here. They were, for the most part, reflections on the dialectic that perhaps will find a place later in the volume on the History of Logic that I plan to publish.

Faced with the immense dimension (and difficulty) that Hegel's philosophy presents to the more or less well-provided reader, one is shocked. On the other hand, I must confess here that I have often been astounded by the capacity for work of this philosopher. The variety of research interests, the analytical material deepened and critically discussed, the authors kept in mind as a consequence of readings done, in a word the laboratory of a scholar worthy of this name has always impressed me in others and I have tried, according to my possibilities, to work too, with results that I do not know how to evaluate. It is easy to marvel at the work of others, while one tends to underestimate one's own. I am not expressing here a perplexity about the value of what I have produced from the intellectual point of view, this subject is completely foreign to me, but only as effort and commitment, as volume of research, as breadth of references, as reading and memorization, as accumulation of news and capacity for selection, etc. And, in that perspective, Hegel is second to none.

But what impressed me most was his ability to suggest a foothold, something to start with, where to shore up reflection. I am well aware that this is a falsely solid beginning, but it took me a long time to realize it. On the need for philosophy to become a system, an objective totality of knowledge, I have never had any doubts: philosophy cannot and must not become such. Accumulation is the end of the line of research, the zeroing of creativity, the rule of domination that has become the rule of the rule. Every attempt to build a system of thought inevitably ends in the paradox of existence. As a denial in act of life, existence is nothing but a game of illusions, a nothing in the absence of light, a hasty extinguishing of every vital solicitation. With regard to the problem of the form which the philosophical system must take, I have long remained a prisoner of factual procedures not alien to Hegel himself. I got rid of it almost entirely in the Bergamo prison, writing the last draft of the first part of the Treatise on Inutilities.

The need for philosophy to take the form of a system is not new in the philosophical debate of the late eighteenth century. The critique of Spinoza's philosophy, which began with the controversy over Lessing's Spinozism, led Jacobi, for example, to conclude that Spinozism is the only possible philosophy because because of its systematic-deductive formulation it supplements the principle of intellectual knowledge with that of the purest dogmatism.

Saving me from this possible outlet, or rather from this closure, Hegel was useful in making me see the road toward which I could direct myself and the means of which I was about to enter into possession, means that could take me away from that road, as they could deliver me to it for the rest of my days. Hegel was for me something more than a handful of dust thrown into the air, he helped to feed a fire full of logical enjoyments and doubts, but he also extinguished that fire, making me run the risk of quenching every thirst and every desire to become (discovering it at my expense) what I was. I couldn't understand this without starting a dispute with my will, I won't say a departure to other shores, but a yearning dispute palm to palm. This was not exactly Hegel's message at the time of my clashes with the giants; it was not because the time of which I speak was equipped with a fine-grained filter, a filter called Marxism. Reading through it was often a chance occurrence, a beneficial intervention of fate rather than a thoughtful effect of reflection. Since I did not accept this filter, my Hegel was (and in many ways continues to be) different from that of others. There were epochs in which the obstacles were others: virtuosic styles and delicate ways of learning, little strength and much ability to represent all the possibilities, in layers, one after the other, like the Liberty floral motifs and the polychrome majolica of Caltagirone. I passed into it with all the heaviness of someone who wants to put his own things in order. This period was also the bearer of my reading of Hegel, once again different.

My refusal of the system, of every philosophical system, but also of every system of ideas that pretends to watch over and regulate my life, did not lean on the prosthesis of the demonization of every systematic research but, on the contrary, entered the most significant of these researches coming out from time to time strengthened instead of weakened.

Hegel has often been my companion on the road and has never disturbed my dreams of anarchism. With peace of mind of many censors in pectore.

Trieste, April 3, 2002

Alfredo M. Bonanno

Introduction of 1989

Many commonplaces give life to the meaning of order. I will examine some of these, among the most representative, demonstrating their inconsistency and therefore the possibility of leading the idea of order back to its natural quantitative matrix, depriving it of all those metaphysical and qualitative colorings that have ended up making it considered a goal worthy of being achieved. Hegel is a philosopher of order, but he sets up his defense of the rules in the most contradictory way possible. He embarks on the rejection of reason and forces it into a regulative navigation, an unusual effort full of surprises.

Reality is not ordered. It does not allow itself to be reduced to an ordering principle. In its different phenomenal aspects, from small to large, its extension is mobile, that is, it proceeds by movements, which are like the different pulsations of a single movement. In this respect, therefore, and this alone, one can speak of the unity of the real. But precisely the form of movement is exactly the opposite of what commonly pertains to the concept of order, and it is precisely the set of clichés related to this last concept that I want to explore here.

Resorting to a method that can give a gradually accessible view of reality, a method based on the logic of "little by little", does not imply the acceptance of a final order that governs reality as a whole. Hegel is not a philosopher of adjustment. His efforts are recuperative but never color the domain with the illusion of completeness. The method can lead to the production of models, which are sometimes superfluous but sometimes can help propose ideas for action. The subsequent development of models has no relationship with reality except as an instrument of action, at the various levels of the latter. It would be ridiculous to think that reality is reflected through the model. Hegel thinks the opposite, that is, that the model can subsist only by proving itself capable of reflecting reality.

That something exists outside of us is an indubitable fact. Reality is outside of us and, for it, we are also reality outside of it. A forest exists. This statement has rarely been questioned. Faced with the sudden appearance and disappearance of sensations, the firm stability of the object has been considered a guarantee of existence. But a closer examination of this solidity does not escape the revelation of its eventful existence. The forest, in fact, does not exist. There are innumerable forests, not so much in the sense of the different geographical distributions of this typical associative vegetal life, as in the sense of the different realities that we have of the same forest. Realities that are so different from one another that they cannot be called the same forest at all. A botanist, a poet, a camper, an aviator in an airplane crash, a fireman putting out a fire, a freezing person looking for a place to shelter from the rain, all of them, first on the countless list of those who have seen a forest, in practice, have their own idea of that forest, not of the forest in general, if you prefer in the platonic sense, but of that specific forest that is there, always there, in the same place.

Here, this matter of the place, therefore of a spatial collocation, seems to help solve the problem in an affirmative sense. It is possible to crystallize the object by constructing spatial coordinates. By fencing off, say, a high, solid wall, the forest would be enclosed in a precise, immobile place, easily traceable on the plane on the basis of geographical reference points and simple mathematical calculations. But, apart from the obvious formalism of these calculations and the conventional substance of the reference points, what is thus enclosed is only an object whose existence has never been questioned. One thus overturns and seals something that was already, from the beginning, out of question. In fact, the problem was more or less set on the question of whether every time that forest came into contact with a social reality, for whatever reason, it could, by the latter, be considered objective. Secondly, the problem was set in the sense of the intensity to be given to this last quality, i.e. to the objectivity of the forest. Hegel works on this side of these borderline considerations.

These are considerations of great practical value. In any case, I am convinced of the existence of nature and of the absolute significance of all its parts, from the smallest to the largest, even in the continuous and permanent turn of its creative and destructive movement at the same time. But this conviction must be deepened by distinguishing it from a vulgar materialism out of time.

Often, as a child, under the blankets, in the winter evenings, which were really cold in those big old rooms without heating, I liked to think of the reality of the Cornish coast beaten by winds and waves, or of a piece of ice drifting in the middle of the Atlantic. This scared and pleased me at the same time and also seemed incredible. It was unbelievable to me that two such dissimilar real situations could exist at the same time, in the same unit of time, that of me huddled under the blankets, and that of the jagged coastline beaten by the winds or of the piece of ice drifting in the cold and in the gusts of rain. Yet I was convinced those realities existed. I had seen them through the adventure books of which I was a constant and methodical reader and in those books they were described in every detail. I have since seen the coast of Cornwall in winter, and it was not so frightening, not even at night, not even in that part of the country that goes by the unattractive name of "the end of the earth". But those other coasts, the ones I had seen before, through the eyes of Salgarian tales, were different. Those were fixed in my memory, quite uniform and consistent. The coasts I saw later, as an adult, no, they didn't scare me. They were like so many others. Their resemblance to a certain way of being of the coasts of a land that extends over the ocean, ended up making them reassuring.

In the end, it is not possible to doubt that the object exists, unless one wants to advance arguments, even elegant ones, but devoid of philosophical sense. However, there is the big problem of stopping a process of spoliation that, proceeding from the object, goes back up to the consciousness, in an honest attempt to subtract from the status of the first, claimed to be original and independent, what has been introduced by the manipulations of the investigator himself. And the concept of order is part of this process, which inevitably leads to a total spoliation. The object is certainly not the whole of the movements of consciousness, which can be chaotic to infinity, but it can be perceived thanks to these movements, without which it would end up being simply given, a hypothesis towards which it would be difficult to move.

The lack of order is not a fact pertaining to that part, arbitrarily identified, that we usually consider as individual consciousness, not to mention other titles to which it is claimed to respond, but concerns the relational reality as a whole. In fact, we cannot see why the external, with all its problems of determination, should have a different and more well-founded unity. The thing is then very evident just reflecting on the attempts to put order in the so-called inorganic world and on the taxonomic contradictions that derive from it. And this while remaining in the controlled and circumscribed sphere of cataloguing. The unity of reality is therefore based on its lack of order. The latter appears only as a claim of consciousness, more or less as the omen appeared as a claim of diversity. But it is an ordering claim limited only to the ordering towards the sense that from the continuous verification of its own inconsistency ends up producing the restlessness of diversity. To avoid this double reversal Hegel constantly proposes the unity in the particular and the particular in the unity. The resulting process would be acceptable if it did not presuppose an interruption let's say "visual", implemented by the consciousness that observes by interrupting the observation and is observed by removing itself from the observing eye.

The concept of order is based on the concept of non-contradiction. The order cannot admit contradictory elements within itself, otherwise it would put at risk its own existence as an element of pacification and consensus finding. Late Hegelianism, reflecting on the conservative risks of subsumption, did not realize that the elimination of contradiction threatens the elimination of reality or,

if you prefer, the flattening of reality in a catacomb-like evolution. In fact, there is no possibility of definitive consensus if this condition is not in reality, imposed and carefully maintained. From the simple place of bodies to the scale of values, everything must have its place. This comforts and helps to maintain the social order, which then is not a particular kind of order, but the order imposed in the field on the basis of the presupposition of the existence of a spontaneously existing order in reality. Postponing back any further surprise of thought Hegel replaces it with the absolute lack of surprise, the final cancellation of difference: the final and perfect correspondence between reality and philosophy.

Besides being a constant of the so-called common sense, the lack of contradiction, as an indispensable element of reality, has always been present in the history of thought. People have in fact a spontaneous reluctance to admit that something can be different, indeed opposite, to what it immediately seems. This concept has been passed over in philosophy, and we still repeat it today. Aristotelian authority imposed it both in the field of research on being, that is, in metaphysics, and in that of research on reasoning, that is, in logic. In the *Organon* [fourth century BC] it was stated that the principles of demonstrations were found in common opinions, according to which a thing must necessarily be either affirmed or denied, so it became impossible for a thing to be and not to be at the same time. Already, in these very first statements, are present all the dangerous implications of the problem. From common sense, a necessary process is derived not only for being, a vague concept that people rightly cannot admit as existing and not existing at the same time, but for substance. In this way is indirectly demonstrated not only the existence of substance, as the thing that lies beneath, but the very validity of the latter concept, which remains to this day all but out of question. The adventurous itinerary of the objective spirit is another matter. Every time one digs inside it, one is astonished by the capacity of recovery that it manifests in all directions. Towards conservation, but also towards the most extreme revolutionary instances. Always in Aristotelian thought the welding between substance and necessity is accomplished, because if something is man and then the same thing is a bipedal animal, for the fact that the word man has no other meaning, it comes out the necessity that the same thing is at the same time bipedal animal and man, so necessary means just impossible that it is in a different way or that it is not.

With the passing of the centuries, the purely logical aspect of these statements softens until it disappears, until it becomes the foundation of rationality, since, as the Cartesians will later point out, it cannot be that a thing made is not made, that the one who thinks does not exist while he thinks, that the same thing is and is not at the same time, all truths that perhaps cannot be deepened but that cannot be ignored, except, continued the prudent philosopher, to be blinded by prejudice. Down here is the shadow of the good God supreme orderer and recuperator. In the philosophy of optimism, a further and supreme attempt to bring order to reality, it is stated that our reasoning is founded on two great principles, that of contradiction, according to which we consider false that which implies contradiction and true that which is opposite or contradictory to the false, and that of sufficient reason, according to which we think that no fact can be true or existing and no proposition true, without a sufficient reason why it is so and not otherwise.

In a particular way, as we will see in the studies presented here, with Hegel the principle of contradiction returns to become the center of logic, since instead of being considered a law of thought it is considered a law of the abstract intellect. The formal detachment thus realized makes possible the consideration of the principle of identity, or non-contradiction, as a principle no longer analytical but synthetic. The fact is that the Hegelian operation makes it possible to bring back within identity not only simple equality, which would be too easy, but even absolute inequality, pure contradiction. We will see later how these preconditions of the dialectic lend themselves to misunderstandings, such as that of absolute difference, or of the contradictory nature of everything in the sense of ancient thought, an element of relational reflection that cannot be recovered in the gradual concept of a negativity

possessed by any simple reflection. Today these positions are considered outdated. The analytical process is not only the decomposition into primary tautologies, which allow a correct use of the principle of non-contradiction. Strange fate of a principle, that of contradiction, that not wanting to contradict contradicts itself even in its own name. In short, today it is almost completely accepted that analytical judgments are possible with non-analytical contents, therefore with the possibility of contradiction. This, however, touches our problem in a way that is far from passing, as we shall see.

Let us return to the problem of order. This seems to be well rooted in current reality, however many complications it may have had in the most recent scientific logic, particularly in the stimuli of biological research. Thinking about order outside oneself and also outside the method one employs, a method of research but also of understanding, does not necessarily mean proving that this order exists. One just thinks it. Thought does not ground anything and reality does not need authorizations for its existence. In fact, thought is only an element of possible transformation. When it insists on its globalizing claims, it provides elements for conservation processes, simple modification facts directed to the maintenance and upkeep of the structure.

Order is therefore seen as a simple methodological module, as a correct procedure of thinking. In this sense, strongly reductive, exalted by the logic of "little by little", the logic of the old dogmatism has been broken, which claimed to identify a providential order in things. With the exception of Hegel, hence the difficulty (at times) of considering Hegelism dogmatic. Harmony is broken everywhere. From physics to music, from economics to biology, disorder reigns everywhere. Only this disorder is supposed to be brought back to the canons of legibility, codifying it in intelligible models, not contradictory, simple, evident and clear. Otherwise, we would not understand each other. The possibility of contradiction, reclaimed from the premises of logic, is once again admitted not only as a composition of reality, but as a method of thought. One can contradict oneself, not in the same thought, but in successive moments, thus making disorderly reality collide with an ordering thought, capable of making successive corrections. The logic of "little by little" is based on the possibility of making mistakes and correcting them. For Hegel, on the contrary, the false and the true are not mutually exclusive. The false becomes true and the true false. The passing of the one into the other has not in any case been (nor could it have been) properly investigated in all its unsettling aspects.

The domination of consciousness is possible only on condition that it encloses its projections within itself or channels them, as much as possible, towards the accumulation of facts, where the relational sense is solidified. This flow consolidates eminent successes, especially in so-called modern science, and has made people talk, and continues to make them talk, of the glorious destinies of human knowledge. This is paid for by a reduction in subjective potentialities, which, in order to continue to exist, must concentrate on the monolithic nature of the fact, abandoning both the creative multiplicity of the subject and the tension of quality. This penalization subtracts from man a world of things to give him a world of products, a continuous accumulation of small standardized modifications. The great openings of adventure have perhaps closed forever before the ordered unity of consciousness, as it was sometimes realized in the past, at least within the limits of what we can understand now, centuries later. The present, with all the characteristics of reduction, allows only the opening of diversity or, formulating this thought more modestly, allows, better than what happened centuries ago, a life-giving emergence of diversity. This latter movement is far from being guaranteed. The objective characterization of what we saw half a century ago as unquestionable has been greatly attenuated.

The real problem of accumulation consists in the impossibility of enclosing all the creative variants of consciousness, so that it is forced to suggest to the latter a merely dominant and controlling behavior. Life, little by little, has come away from the content to enclose itself first in the consciousness, from

where the disruptive force of restlessness urges it in the end towards diversity, the opening, that is, towards a questioning of every ordering system.

In the period of the rebirth of the new man, a more complete opening up of accumulation allowed for quality to arrive together with meaning, while, with the breaking up of a substantial and unfortunately transitory harmony of destinies, these two orientations were opposed. The levels of tension now contained in the orientation towards meaning are very low. Accumulative mechanicism has withered knowledge, depriving it of life and thus of any immediate possibility of drawing quality. Hegel still thought possible a capture of the latter in the order constituted by ethics. The monstrosities of fascism do not make us sleep at night.

The search for quality has therefore become an adventure. By reducing itself to the archives, knowledge has mainly lost sight of the reality of the thing, the only place where it is possible to restore the truth. All Hegelians, bar none, did not have this loss. They have gone on down other paths to the very end, to total loss, and have always been certain of their choices. On the contrary, with painstaking touchiness, cataloguing now insists on the realization of truth exclusively in sense, as if it were possible to achieve an objectivity beyond dispute. In truth, the territory that accommodates this operationist vision is shrinking more and more.

The loss of illusions based on order has produced significant changes in the scientific set-up, but it could not prevent those old illusions from turning into new illusions, from a general and absolute order we moved to the search for a specific and relative order. Hegel certainly had a much broader and more meaningful vision of the problem of knowledge. The insistence with which today we work on meaning is a proof of this scientific poverty, and therefore primarily cognitive in a total sense, a poverty that is not eliminated by the large amount of data collected. The more extensive and detailed this mechanistic process is, the more distant seems to be the possibility of a recovery of life within the orientation towards meaning. Quality seems to recede. What the great synthesis captured was almost certainly a handful of flies, yet in the movement directed to grasp the totality there remains to this day a fascination that we will vainly seek in laboratory dissections.

The foundation of life can only be traced through the recomposition of those flows that encompass both tension and meaning, for to live is neither to rabidly seek rarefied qualities that continually threaten to burn us, nor to conform to a repetitiveness of meaning that threatens to kill our very desire to breathe. Freedom, truth and all the other tensions that qualify the contents of our existence, have been pulverized, leaving the field where our units of measure, our values, have become the boundaries of a lager and where only the simulacra of their reality remain, ridiculous residues for which we continue to fight with each other.

Moving away from the "strong" Hegelian philosophy, the loss of unity presented itself at the beginning as an achievement, a considerable step forward on the road to clarity. Man no longer has to seek total thought, a possibility of total communication with reality. Division is the basis of order, this is the basis of control and domination. When thought, and the related need for division, had not yet developed, one cannot say that man and the world were better, there was only a different, and wider, potentiality. Then this took a path, that of division, but things could have been different. Knowledge must be total and cannot be based on a progressive growth based on principles that can be perfected infinitely. The fact that in operational terms we are limited to partiality does not mean that these single moments should not be part of a total consideration. Otherwise they are sadly channeled into the perspective of accumulation. If one deals with the problems of the State, one cannot extrapolate from them anything

that does not bring together the necessary answers to a practically total set of problems, that is, one that is capable of considering as present aspects and conditions of the totality of reality.

The first time I read the Italian translation of *Le contraddizioni economiche. Filosofia della miseria* [1846], by Proudhon, a work on political economy, I was stunned to see that it began by talking about the existence of God. Many years later, when I came definitively out of the specialized field of my studies in economics, I realized how right the French anarchist was and how his low esteem in academic circles, at that time frequented by me, depended on his total choices and not on his presumed incompetence. That text and many others by the same author have been impudently plundered by many people who have tried, for mere personal gain, to bring back within the accumulation a thought otherwise directed to the totality.

The ordinative concern tends instead to bring back the processes of knowledge inside different sections, in order to minimize the reciprocal relations, able to lead back, by different ways, the tension to the sense. The separation corresponds to the need to identify specificity, in order to be able to transform it into a usable tool. What mainly escapes from this operation is man himself, the real, living, flesh and blood man, with his limits and his gigantic diversifying drives. There is no particular reason for philosophy to be entrusted with the task of grasping these totalizing drives; perhaps tomorrow we will succeed in condensing or filtering or decanting a different way of grasping totality, and then perhaps the memory of philosophy will also have disappeared, but this is not the problem. For the moment, with the appropriate critical attention, I think the real philosophical task is to grasp diversity through totality. Hegel's legacy may, once again, be just around the corner.

The great historical development of social and economic interests, that is, of field interests, at least as it has been characterized in the last two hundred years, has made possible the failure of the ancient attempt to start from totality. Continuing along the path of Hegel, avoiding his reactionary conclusions, one has always met with official condemnation. Marx's overthrow, like Croce's or Gentile's, has never been a real overthrow, that's why their philosophies have ended up welding the joints of the world. Those who insisted on always operating in an open manner, seeking totality beyond the system that guarantees and governs, were marginalized, forcibly brought back into the realm of an underground or clandestine activity, disqualified and vilified. In this way, the possibility of overcoming the boundaries of the field and of establishing a consistent and rich relational flow with the totality of the real, has disappeared. The great sectoral cognitive growths have become stranded in the repetitive game of accumulation. Even failure (in Hegel's truly masterful failure) has been mystified, transformed into terms accessible to the contemporary masses, capable only of understanding the game of Chinese boxes in which academics are masters. In fact, it has been affirmed that that failure was due to the pretension of founding a systematic, all-encompassing thought, with the intention of encompassing the totality of reality in a rigorous explanation. It has been said that this claim is found, with all its limitations and amenities, even in the great philosophical systems that have followed since the Enlightenment. This seems to me to be a hoax. The logic of "everything and now" must start from another point, that is the totality, and not arrive at the totality starting from the simple and the particular. I think that accumulation, with all its cautious talk and its distancing, is today the right continuation of those ancient systemic illusions, and it is evidently far from what is a true thought capable of placing itself in the perspective of totality.

We can only understand man by avoiding starting from the partial. As a diversity of consciousness, its peculiarities, all that characterizes it precisely as a restless and problematic being, cannot be subjected to collection and cataloging. Under these conditions, the result will be something artificial, reduced to partial specificity. On the contrary, starting from totality, one grasps the painful event of the opening, of

the restlessness inside the consciousness and one avoids the great risk of reducing man to a simple compulsory doing, that is to say, to all that he is able to have. The extreme extraneousness, the relation reduced to an object, has no other destiny than enumeration, placement as a fact in a mechanically accessible whole. Even consciousness is enclosed in the orientation towards meaning and reduced to a fetish, in a homogeneous whole that does not really exist but is convenient for the purposes of control. It is strange to note that as this reductive process was taking place, other forces were breaking the hypothesis of balance and harmony that is supposed to be the basis of it. Life, on its own, was being pushed back, suggesting alienated perspectives emptied of any qualitative motivation. In the final analysis, science and objectivity were made to coincide precisely at the point of exclusion of a third party, identifiable in the individual, in the conscience of the individual.

But reality could not stay still in this orderly cemetery. The field cannot be only the identification of some constitutive relations of the circumscribed, it mainly constitutes the starting point for the cognitive fact, the essential place of consciousness and reality, the possible that is overcome by the alienated, demonstrating the narrowness of the sense and the openness of the quality. The field possesses an appearance of greater order, but once examined well this order reveals itself to be absolutely superficial. The fact cannot reassure the restlessness that is in the intention of consciousness. And this concern is given by seeing excluded, in the mechanism, a part of reality, the qualifying part, so that universality ends up agreeing and being synonymous with partiality.

The idea of order once fallen cannot be replaced with another equally illusory foundation, such as that of probability or statistical trend. If the orientation towards sense remains exclusive and excluding, the result will always be the same. From the ancient, and naive, mechanistic materialism to the more recent and cunning dialectical materialism, the criticism makes no difference; the objections change only in appearance, not in substance. We have to look for a new materialism, which gives a new foundation to knowledge, and what we are building is based on a totality obtained by reuniting tension and sense, quality and content. This freely unleashes relational movement by reflecting within the field a large part of the external conditions and projecting outside the field crystallizations that would otherwise threaten to fester. I don't think we can safely claim to be able to know disorder, and I don't think I'm able to unravel anything. In reality there is nothing hidden. The hiding places are only our tricks to deceive ourselves and put us in an ideal condition to move forward, they are traps that we place in the terrain of recognition to allow an advancement of interpretative investigation, they have nothing to do with reality if not as a small contribution to the relations of appearance. With these two statements we definitively set aside both phenomenological and dialectical intentions.

This does not detract from the fact that among the instruments developed in view of the higher degree of effectualities there is philosophy, and it does not detract from the fact that this, as an effective instrument, is capable of facilitating the knowledge of reality, even if within certain limits. Without unveiling and without revelation. Of a reality that is movement, there can be no foundation that is not movement itself. Hegel was aware of this but thought, in harmony with his times, that the dialectical process did not involve its own foundation. This methodological uncertainty was productive of serious consequences. It is therefore necessary to become capable of understanding the foundation in a different way, given that as something that is at the base we have always considered it as underlying, as substance, in short, as something that if it was not immobile and fixed did not have a motor intention. The latency of which man is the bearer in the opening is a diversity that was bad in the sphere of consciousness, although we cannot say that it was hidden. The veneer of normality has never convinced anyone, just as no one is convinced by the ostentations of well-being and happiness. The external coordinates of order conceal misery and suffering, rationalized and accepted, until the moment when the structure breaks down to give birth to rejection. This is where knowledge is located, the beginning

of the movement towards the recomposition of knowledge. Of course, this knowledge was there before, latent in consciousness, potential in the mechanism of accumulation. But it was reductive, residual. It discarded every danger and every questioning, claiming to base itself and its work on the apparent static, but reassuring, order. Now, on the contrary, we are faced with the dangers of a journey, of embarking on a ship that is not very reassuring, we are faced with the dangers of a risky involvement. Hegel, too, takes risks and sets the reader aside, but the teeth of the dialectical mechanism are too strong to worry him. Openness is not a crisis of consciousness but an increase, a participation. By opening up, consciousness shakes off its accumulating torpor and its reduction of data to a fetish, it understands that the supposed distinction with reality was only a mirage, a trick organized by its own fears and reluctance, and it intuits with more or less immediacy that the foundation lies elsewhere, precisely in the conditions of risk. The consequences of this involvement are all the more shocking as the process of accumulation has gone on reaping apparent successes and solving problems in the same way as opening open doors. No coherently historicist proposal will be able to comfort us regarding a possible use, more or less involuntary, of the mechanism in question. Moving to the level of the automaticity of the process, that immense dimension of the archives seems even more distant and hostile, while we are unable to solve the urgent problems of our lives. Sometimes we can close ourselves off from these problems and then enter a factual dimension, convincing ourselves that we are happy and content with our mechanisms of domination and control. But, as a rule, the conviction is short-lived. The only solution is to listen to one's own restlessness without being afraid of it, following its outlets and the strange and upsetting proposals for diversity.

Openness thus becomes a step to get out of myself and enter another me, profoundly different, but immensely wider and full of desire. The present will then appear to me as the present, that is, as a temporal moment to be transformed into a foundation valid well beyond the objective conditions of the field which, by accident, provide it with the sense of the beginning. The movement from the opening, to continue with the recognition, ending up in the territory of the thing, is thus the new foundation that cannot be defined as subjective because it is only relational, that is, it is the way to get to weld the fracture between tension and sense. The subject in movement is certainly a subject, but it is already a concrete relation, not a static hypothesis outside of reality. Openness is therefore an enlargement towards the goal of transformation, an essentially active goal. But action contrasts with the very concept of order, at least in the terms in which this is now codified, i.e. order in cataloguing, order in intentions, order in needs, order in projects, order in life. But life does not accept these ordering concepts, even when it hides behind the attitudes of submission and obedience. The itinerary of liberation, which takes place at different relational levels, both internal and external to the field, both individual and collective, both intentional and logical, is not a linear process that can present disturbances and even reversals. In the midst of reconnaissance there can be a return of ancestral fear hence the restoration of order as a panacea. These are obfuscations that cannot be avoided, although they only produce delays, as they are never able, in absolute terms, to restore conditions within the consciousness as they existed before the opening. In these events, which are often obscure and contradictory, and almost always difficult to understand, one could also see a detachment from the process of accumulation and a closure, always relative, within consciousness, in a kind of mystical solution of subjectivity. But the solicitation of involvement is always present and admits no exceptions. However these misunderstandings go, it is always there to determine conditions of anxiety. And we return to the beginning.

The relationship between knowledge and the itinerary from consciousness to the thing gives rise to a different process of growth, a relational accumulation completely opposed to the simple accumulation of meaning. Knowledge develops and becomes science, which is also different from the science of content and separation. The new science that is thus constructed, on the foundation of uncertainty and

disorder, involves man; it is not limited to making him a more or less passive participant in its results. It involves him in all the moments of its development, its contradictions, its results. The new science becomes universal science, not only of the field, even if it departs from the field, but science capable of reaching the totality. This too is a science of facts, interpretative and transformative, not modifying. But it is a matter of special facts, in a first phase, of that factuality that is defined as interpretative and, in a second phase, of that factuality that is transformative and therefore no longer fact but action.

Here, too, there are a priori orientational conditions that ineluctably influence knowledge, and it could not be otherwise. The unfolding is in fact expressed through a dimension of movement, through an involvement that is risk and not preservation. We are exactly at the antipodes of the conditions of accumulation and the archive. But the reduction of the latter to an object occurs because of an internal contrast within the subject, arising from a rejection of listing and classification and the attempt to create a more meaningful taxonomy of the accumulated material. In short, at a certain point, the subject asks questions of the archives, but receives unsatisfactory answers. The construction of a science of objects is the negation of a knowledge of things. Object science presents itself as a science of nature, as a science of the spirit and even as a science of the existent, where interest develops from and towards a point of reference in which quality has first been enucleated and then killed. Hence the extraordinary similarity of all these partitions that are reduced to matters of method and nomenclature, to distinctions that in reality do not distinguish at all. Beyond the distinctions, one can reconstruct a path that continued to unfold even without our awareness, determined by the entire sky of relations that can be drawn and also by the totality of those that are so weakened for us that they can be considered non-drawable. The distinction founds an absolutely provisional analytical clarity that is considered valid only on condition of remaining within the circumscribed scope of the field.

Perfectibility, the basic element of the methodological concept of order, travels in the direction of meaning, deepens it and even penetrates the continuous variations determined by the processes of self-organization of the accumulated material, but it cannot access real knowledge, which also includes man, if not as a coincidence, that is to say, an exceptional happening that for reasons not easily representable proposes the widest vision and almost able to make understand what before remained on the threshold of comprehension or, if it is not a coincidence, it is a reduction of man to the conditions of the mechanical object, as the electronic project is trying to do now. Completeness therefore reveals itself as an accumulative illusion, a typically quantitative illusion. Order reigns supreme in the quantitative project, regulating its goal of completeness and, in so doing, fixing the essential terms of generalized control. No element must escape completeness, but first each element must be recognized as such, that is, endowed with characteristics that make it suitable to participate in the project of completeness itself. Every different element is excluded a priori, considered unimportant or uncategorizable, in any case not essential to the realization of the project. It follows that in this way the consciousness becomes the guardian only of itself and of all those elements, appropriately adapted, which are previously considered useful to the project of control.

The sense selected in this way is carefully separated from the quality that was also in the flow, an operation that, by putting order into the relationship, reduces it to a hypothetical object, while the processing waste is reduced, in turn, to residues capable only of recalling distant qualitative experiences. On this basis, through different processes, tools are built, of which language is one of the most effective. But already the construction of a laboratory is a reflex operation, dictated and almost imposed by conditions of restlessness that are developing within the consciousness. The creation of structures is the work of consciousness and also an effective way to silence anxiety. In the structures, in fact, an artificial foundation is constituted that lends itself very much as a substitute for the only real foundation, which is that of totality, that is, capable of understanding man and his continuous concerns.

The structure is solidified in the very practice of the accumulative mechanism, where it acquires different meanings in relation to the internal reorganization of the sense, but also to the possibilities of recomposition of the entire flow. Thus the same content can be recomposed and re-elaborated an infinite number of times, participating in an infinite number of structures, which only apparently have an ordered relationship, while in fact they are in a continuously modified relationship devoid of constants. The cognitive experience fixes these structures in categories, also for the purpose of better organizing one's own world within the field, but here we are dealing with further additions of meaning that are made in view of operational ends.

The structural relations have a reorganizational capacity that makes them difficult to undergo processes of measurement, but since, on the other hand, a measurement is indispensable, and therefore an order, we resort to idealized assumptions of static nature, from which derives the hypothesis, also idealized, of an empirical measurement perfectible in absolute. This latter work is doomed to failure if it does not accept the openness of diversity, that is, if it does not admit the difference between structures, and does not propose this difference as originating in a different way from the structures themselves. Measurement will then always be a modifying process of the mechanism of cataloguing, but it will try to put this mechanism of reserving meaning in contact with the conscious itinerary of experience, in essence with the reconnaissance activity of diversity, and with the territory of quality. Thus structure relates to form and is opposed to form by structure.

Order becomes a problem of form, at the antipodes of structure and the elaborations of meaning. The spatio-temporal relations, as they occur within the field, are not exclusive characteristics of this particular place, but particularities determined in this place by the conditions of the flows that reunify here, dissociate in their orientations and then resume movement within the total set of relations. In the field, these flows assume a different style and are differently disposed to measurability, producing different relations with the levels of effectivity. In this way, we never arrive at the stabilization of an effective order of measurability; every time we have to start over again. The measurement becomes itself a work, a task of science, until the high specialization, definitely covering the other purposes, primarily the desires of man, reduces science to the fictitious order of procedures. In the totality of the real, measurement is not impossible, only that it should avoid being too partial and too precise, since it can be neither one thing nor the other, it should overcome these limits by modifying at the roots the very idea of order. The photographic fixity of relations is an apparent relation. As such, it influences reality and participates in its destiny, but it is not identifiable precisely because only the appearance of it exists. This is not to say that there is no reality of appearance, otherwise one would have to admit that there is something beyond reality, let's say nothingness. I am only saying that appearance has its own apparent life, its own relational life that produces consequences in the actuality, but it cannot orient flows in a different way. For example, it cannot participate in meaning, much less form. Every time it is proposed as an alternative orientation in the face of something, let us say in the face of movement, it fails in its static nature. The result is that a relation of staticity has its relational consequence until it is confronted with orientation. In this case, its relational capacity weakens until it almost disappears.

Science becomes a creator of measured or measurable objects, which it inserts in a project of accumulation, where it finds more or less precise temporal and spatial references that are considered as links with reality. In effect, in this way it is duplicating a reality through a series of apparent relations, more often exclusively structural, which ascend the relational course itself to become either one of the causes of the restlessness of consciousness, or one of the causes of control and domination. The great scientific construction is therefore on this side of true knowledge, maintaining within the mechanism of accumulation, where the various scientific hypotheses and operational technologies are developed, a debased attachment to the utility of the results. Thus reality becomes a desert, a series of

approximations to be covered with the abstraction of everything else, consciousness in the first place. The desert is, in fact, a hope that is continually postponed, a desire to reach something that, in its extreme remoteness, continues to escape, to fade, until it disappears, but which, precisely because of its continual disappearance, is continually pursued.

It may be objected that these large-scale accumulations of meaning have little in the way of individuality; they cannot take into account the complications that are unleashed in the water glass of consciousness. And that would be a further erroneous assertion. It is precisely in consciousness that the central fact occurs that puts into crisis, that is, imposes from outside a situation of contradiction on all that construction, systematically understood as perfectible, and this central fact is the opening of the fault of diversity. The more the exponent of accumulation of objective science grows, the clearer its limitations appear, the more the difference becomes lacerating. Consciousness refuses to be massified. At first it accepts the terms of control, considering it from the point of view of immediate utility, then it realizes that this utility kills life. Even when it doesn't find the strength to produce a significant gap, such as to determine an opening, inside it there will always be visible signs of restlessness and the infinite cataloguing will have to deal with these very threatening signs.

The order of accumulation can also be seen as a journey, but different from the one that begins with abandonment and reconnaissance. The modern myth of science is personified in acceleration, that is, in faster and faster acquisitions of data that are fed into an enormous container capable of reworking. The ancient myth of the odyssey contrasts with the previous one for its deceleration, for its conquest of a space that gradually develops with greater and greater difficulty and against which we must exercise greater caution, masks and tricks. The first appears as an instantaneous displacement, in real time, to use an electronic term, an embodiment of the speed of light, a journey where it is no longer possible to distinguish the itinerary, the route, the difficulties, but where everything contracts into a continuous pulsing that re-presents the same movement, in essence the same journey repeated an infinite number of times. But the maintenance of the journey in the sense of knowledge does not imply, per se, a reaffirmation of the concept of space and the related concept of time. It is not a matter of dilations or contractions of this kind. It is a matter of movements in experience, real itineraries within the relational flux that, within the field, may find coordinated correspondences in time and space, but may also not find them by grafting themselves directly into the totality of relationships.

In the reconnaissance phase or, even better, after the jump, within the thing, the progressive remoteness of the sense, the perfected search for this remoteness, the construction of it even with refined and particular expedients, allow to slow down the experience, giving more space to the characteristics of disorder, on which, after all, a deeper knowledge of reality is based. I don't think the important correlations between the speed of re-presentation of the elements of experience, i.e. their repetitiveness, and the possibility of subjecting them to an ordering process have ever been emphasized. I think this is an important reflection. The substantial impossibility of placing order in reality usually escapes us precisely because we are pursued by the speed of reproduction of events. Those who have experienced heroin know that there is almost always a slowing of the ability to grasp the passage of time. The single moment begins to dilate, at first insensibly and then more and more, until it allows us to identify the fractional aspects of the experience. The heat, the cold, the noise, the smells, the contact with smooth surfaces, all this loses the traditional consistency of unity and begins to break up into separate elements, absolutely devoid of relation to each other. Not only between the smell and the heat, but also within the smell itself. Under certain conditions we are able to distinguish several dozen nuances, to construct fantastic nomenclatures of these variations, giving names and gradations, distinguishing uses and fades. Since it is evident that these experiences are not due to chemical processes but to the action of certain substances on our normal faculties of projection, I infer that these faculties can also be educated to

accomplish the same result without the chemical prosthesis. I myself have tried with results not always exciting but, at least sometimes, definitely interesting.

Similar slowing down phenomena have been realized by me regarding the memorization capacity. In order to activate the mnemonic coordination schemes, which as I said before I divided into an affirmative part, wider, and a negative part, less wide, it is necessary to reduce the speed of communication and also to distribute the communication itself in a visual space as less wide as possible. This involves not only a temporal slowdown, but also a spatial shortening. The data of experience thus lose their order and acquire a new one based on something external to them, a merely instrumental order. For their part, the data are left, as far as possible, in a kind of natural disorder, which could also be that of their presentation, of their calling to attention, of mere chance, etc. For the purposes of the functioning of the mnemonic mechanism, which evidently is and remains a mechanism, the order of the data has very little or no importance.

In the journey towards quality there is therefore a progressive crumbling of the order that diversity has borrowed from consciousness. Openness, by itself, is not undermined by the order, which has consciousness borrowed from the orientation towards meaning, but is the effect of restlessness, only this. Moving toward quality, diversity reveals itself in the itinerary itself, that is, it understands the path and is understood by it. Up to a certain point, it retains its original physiognomy, and thus appears more aggressive, less suited to the techniques of abandonment. Then this physiognomy fades and with it the original restlessness. What diversity loses in terms of its inability to coordinate meaning to perfection, hence the restless rejection within consciousness, it acquires during the journey in terms of understanding the outside, in knowledge. The progressive darkening of the original rejection results in a greater ability to adjust to reality. Knowledge is a consequence of this relational refinement, which stands in relation to the previous diversity as an increasingly broader and progressively sized capacity to enter into relationships.

In becoming familiar with the new task, diversity also learns to use the tools of consciousness, the same tools that were previously only suitable for control and accumulation, only that, instead of the old scientific precision with its set of quantitative illusions, there is now a cryptic and adventurous commitment. Projection operates on a multiplicity of planes, it does not limit itself to the evidence that is supposable through the filter of cataloguing, it unpredictably mixes the relations with which it comes into contact, inserting in place of the order of accumulation other types of order, those dictated by sensibility, memory, love, affinity, repulsion, etc. Once again the experience of the chemical prosthesis must be recalled. In full evidence, even long after the impact with the substance, there are violent returns, flashbacks that capture the less pleasant aspects of certain sensations or memories, emphasizing the now lost sense of orderly levels that can no longer be drawn upon. The management of these adventures can also go down in tone, that is to say, it can descend to the necessity of consumption, but here we would already be in another field, that of subjection, while the simple provisional support is only proposed as an aid for a look towards infinity. Having learned the multiple capacity of the levels, well beyond the single universe of the accumulated sense, it is possible to construct crypto-paths that are infinitely broad, while remaining within the circumscribed dimensions of the reconnaissance territory. In the case of failure, or of an intervening subjection, one can always admit, if only to oneself, that one is about to fall back into the blindness of common sense, of the delimitation imposed by consciousness.

Order in quality appears as a contradiction in terms, but it can be considered a reflection of the relational disorder in the prism, however narrow, of our ability to project. The joy and dismay of finally being in quality, in the midst of desolation, impose an urgent restoration of certainty, if only the

certainty of being in the thing itself. And this necessity, at first, takes on the sumptuous aspects of conquest, of victory, of the overwhelming certainty of having been able to weld the two opposing orientations together. Then the movement shifts slightly, and the dazzling red of the victorious horizon fades, showing the declining territory of desolation, the actual consistency of the place of quality. The form flashes with an unvibrant texture, little suited to make up for our longings for compensation. After all, we are not willing to forget past labors and anxieties. If we find ourselves there, we often think it only fair that someone or something, at least a simple feeling of contentment, should provide us with the retribution we deserve, for having been so brave and certainly so much better than those lost along the way.

But the extreme simplicity of the deployment confronts us with a very different reality than we imagined. The victories are soon downsized. Once the orientations have been recompacked, they soon develop on their own, and just as quickly get out of hand. A thin line begins to appear on the horizon, the zone of no return. Here life pulses very slowly. Gone are the bright moments of insights, the harrowing seats of doubt, the nights of anguish and fear. Here, the rampant courage no longer has its initial meaning, when it served to qualify diversity, otherwise too circumscribed to restlessness. The slowing down that had begun to manifest as soon as outside consciousness, in the territory of the thing reaches the maximum element of simplicity, a pulsing of form in a total network of relations without center, without possibility of sedimentation, in which each element is itself the center, tree and leaf and thin rib and ladybug on the leaf and all the rest. The strip of further difference from delirium leads me to conclude that all acquisitions, especially those following the opening, if they have a sense and an explanation in the context of transformative effectuality, they do so precisely because they manage to circumscribe themselves as acquisitions, without spreading too much, self-controlled in harmony with the reduced acceleration of the whole. Otherwise, it would no longer be an adventure that we try to follow to the end, even to its most extreme and contradictory consequences, but just another way to get involved, an alibi to find a courage that we do not have and a motivation that we do not know. A fascinating project can then fascinate us, leaving us dazed, searching for one victory after another, for a success that will only end up launching us into a dimension that is once again repetitive and sad. At some point, I also need to understand why the new territory where I find myself is characterized by desolation. If desolation is repulsion, rejection, lack of participation, refusal to identify a similarity that we seem to have been looking for for some time, why does it take on these hostile and inhospitable aspects? Why does the initial affection, little by little, imperceptibly, turn into hatred and derision? Why, as the positive results succeed the initial masquerades and we move forward toward the leap, do we begin to feel overconfident, to the point of rejection of the messy, random event? Why is it that the great fear that seizes us when, in the face of different evidence, we are forced to admit the randomness of that event, we are unable to push it back? And why are we ashamed of it? Was this not the most logical conclusion? Of that vast punctuation of sensations and small feedbacks, countless emotions that are slipping out of the catalog and that we abruptly make sure return to it, of that dense and impenetrable vividness, what is left? The stubbornness of those who relentlessly begin again? Or, suddenly, we find ourselves in front of the evidence, all new, of a shocking discovery, nested in the simple admission that the disorder of reality cannot undergo orderly processes, so that our final defeat, inevitable in our logic of "everything and now", opens up like an offer without limits, an unexpected gift.

Bergamo Prison, 30 May 1989

Alfredo M. Bonanno

I. Theory of identity

Hegel criticizes the fragility of Kant's system but fails to note that that system could in a sense be the moment of non-identity that is absolutely part of his own theory of identity. In this connection he writes: "Kant has indicated historically the moments of the whole, determining and distinguishing them exactly; and this is a good introduction to philosophy. The defect of the Kantian philosophy lies in this, that the moments of the absolute form fall one out of the other, that is, considering the thing from the other side, our intellect, our knowing forms an opposition to the in itself; the negative is missing, the overcoming of the ought-to-be, which is not conceived. But thought and thinking had now become an insuperable need, which could no longer be eliminated. Therefore, in the first place, the need arose for particular thoughts to appear as necessary products of that first unity of the self and justified by it. In the second place, thought had spread over the whole universe, had attached itself to everything, had investigated everything, had inserted its forms in everything, had reduced everything to a system, so that in every field one had to proceed according to its determinations, not according to a simple feeling, according to custom or practical sense, according to the immense unconsciousness of the so-called practical men. Even in theology, in politics and related legislation, in determining the aims of the state, in industry, in mechanics, one must always proceed by general determinations, that is, rationally; so much so that one even hears talk of rational breweries, rational brick factories, etc., and so on. This is a need for concrete thought, while in the Kantian result of the phenomenon there was only an empty thought". (Lectures on the History of Philosophy [1816-1830], tr. it., vol. III, t. II, Florence 1964, pp. 340-341). As much as the concreteness of the distinction appears at first as an achievement of the practical spirit that builds and perpetuates the world, in the long run it turns out to be, precisely, devoid of content. It is difficult to open a passage to this consideration. The vision based on domination does not produce concreteness but disintegration, it weighs down on life and deforms it in winding ways and with reversals that test any spontaneous defense. Everything is at hand, we try to push it away, we always and methodically reject it because we are afraid of losing, because we always want to win, we want to educate humanity to win, but we are just jumping jacks.

Hegel says that this gap has been overcome by Fichte, whose philosophy is a more consequential expression of Kantian philosophy and a structuring of form in itself. But the concordance goes beyond that. Fichtian thought for Hegel has the great merit of having established that philosophy must be a science on the basis of a supreme principle from which all determinations are necessarily derived. In fact, the content of philosophy is - according to Hegel - the truth, that is, the system, a truth that cannot be expressed in such a principle as an original principle, but on the contrary comes out of the totality of all propositions that generate each other by virtue of their contradiction. We move with intuitive thoughts and desires toward something similar to that from which we come. There is in this similarity not a real foundation on which to base the "strong" deductions that a certain philosophy claimed to impose (idealism), but the ecstasy of a further desire, a beauty that we have not been able to hold in our arms no matter how much a criterion of perfection that we feel close and unattainable continues to speak to us. This is the complete opposite of the Fichtian attempt to derive the universe of pure identity from the original position alone. "The defect of the Fichtian philosophy - continues Hegel - is therefore, in the first place, that the ego retains the meaning of individual real self-consciousness, as opposed to the universal, absolute, or to the spirit, in which it is only a moment; in fact individual self-consciousness is precisely this, standing aside against another. When therefore the "I" was called the absolute essence, there was a great scandal, because in fact the "I" appeared only in the meaning of the individual subject, opposed to the universal. Secondly, Fichte does not arrive at the idea of reason as a perfect and real unity of subject and object, that is, of the "I" and the "non-I"; it is presented, as in Kant, only as the thought of unification in a faith, with which therefore Fichte also ends. This he expounds in his popular writings. For since the "I" is fixed as opposite in front of the non-"I", and is only as opposite, it is lost in that unity. The attainment of this end is therefore transferred into the bad infinite, into the sensible infinite: a process precisely, which is the same contradiction as in Kant." (Ib., p. 362).

The distinction found its home in the Criticist West, and Fichte did not jeopardize the claim to function that this grounding had been advancing since the mid-eighteenth century. Conclusive clarity, extreme and boundless, seemed then possible, and Hegel subscribed to the same program by other means, however here it is precisely this genius of Prussian functionalism that grasps the problem in the best way. That distinction, in its claims to bring order, drives back every creature of uncertainty, is an obvious fact. The rich man, who provides for his investments with order and planning, does not like the ambasm of the poor man who does not know what the pains of entrepreneurial calculations are.

In fact, the consequence drawn from a principle denies at the same time the latter, breaking its absolute pre-eminence. What Fichte had only glimpsed is now deeply explained.

In this way Hegel in the Phenomenology starts from the subject trying to examine the concrete contents, as in the Logic [1812-1816] starts from the being. The choice of the point of departure, of the First Absolute, is for Hegelian philosophy quite indifferent; it does not admit such a principle as a hardened principle, as a principle that in the process of thought is destined to remain unchanged and always the same as itself. In this way idealism is not abandoned altogether but remains far below. "Thinking is cosality, or cosality is thinking." (Phenomenology of Spirit [1807], tr. it., vol. II, Florence 1963, p. 120). And further on he continues: "Here essence has in it the split, in such a way as to belong first of all to two kinds of consideration; on the one hand essence must have in itself the difference, and on the other hand just for this reason the two modes of consideration are reduced to one; in fact, the abstract moments of pure being and of the negative, in grace of which the two kinds of consideration are distinguished, are then united in the object of these considerations themselves. - The universal which they have in common is the abstraction of pure trembling in itself or of pure thinking itself. This simple movement of rotation, being only movement, must decompose itself and distinguish its own moments. Such a distinction of moments leaves behind the stillness as the empty shell of pure being which is in itself and is no longer an effected thinking, but life; for this distinction, as difference, is all content. But it, which arises beyond that unity, is thus the exchange of moments not turning in on itself; of being-in-itself, of being-for-another, and of being-for-self; - it is effectivity in that way that it is the object for the effecting consciousness of pure intuition, - it is utility". (Ib., pp. 120-121). The pulsing of reality is pure trembling in itself, the absence of connective characterizes the rhythm that escapes musical cataloguing. Causality does not close the circle but postpones forward, more and more, obsessively. Every evolutionary sigh falls back into this pure trembling, now resentment, now oblivion. From pure trembling it becomes pure thinking that breathes form, that fills the movement of generations with inextensive fecundity, that speaks in the end the language of negation without affectation or suspension of judgement. The conclusion is an artifice that hides the continuity deluding us about the weight and meaning of our existence.

The absolute rigor and the compactness of the path of thought that he, together with Fichte, pursues with respect to Kant, determine the priority of the spirit, but in the objectivity of the Hegelian dialectic that demolishes all pure subjectivism there is something of the will of the subject to always jump out. The Hegelian subject-object is always subject. Søren Kierkegaard writes: "If indeed the existent could be outside itself, truth would be for it something concluded: but where is this point? The I=I is a mathematical point that does not exist: in this sense, each could take this point of view without one being a hindrance to the other. It is only in moments that the single existing individual can find himself in the unity of finite and Infinite, that which transcends existence. This moment is the instant of passion. Modern speculation has done everything possible so that the individual can objectively emerge from himself, but this is not a feasible thing: existence prevents it. And if today's philosophers were not those scribblers who are at the service of a fantastic thought, this speculation would have already seen that the only practical interpretation of its research is suicide. But modern scribal speculation deals little

with passion; yet for an existentialist, passion is precisely the culmination of existence - and we, it is clear, are existent. In passion the existent subject is infinitized in the eternity of fantasy, yet at the same time he is in himself determined to the utmost. That fantastic I=I is not the identity of finite and Infinite, for neither one nor the other is real: it is a fantastic encounter in the clouds, a sterile intercourse, and the relation of this single I to this empty mirage is never indicated. All essential knowing is about existence, that is, only knowing that has an essential relation to existence is essential knowing. The knowing that does not draw existence from within the reflection of internalization is from the essential point of view a casual knowing, the degree and scope of which are essentially indifferent. That essential knowledge relates essentially to existence does not mean that abstract identity between thought and being as indicated above, nor objectively that knowledge relates to something existing as its object; but it does mean that knowledge relates to the knower who is essentially an existing being, and that therefore all essential knowledge essentially relates to existence and existing. Therefore, only religious ethical and ethical knowledge is essential knowledge. But every ethical and ethical-religious knowing is essentially in relation to the fact that the knower exists." (Postilla conclusiva non-scientific Briciole di filosofia [1846], tr. it., vol. II, Bologna 1962, p. 9). To grasp the instant of passion is not given to the reflective moment. When the reasoning intellect returns to it, that instant has already passed into the incident, impoverished into something of which one is able to speak. A stupid disintegration is almost always mistaken for the homogeneous reflection of what one wants to remain indelibly protected by time. Humanity has not yet gone beyond its puberty rites. Delirium frightens it, awareness as well. Philosophy is able to go beyond the dilemma but, for the moment, it does not hint at moving.

This explains the permanent scandal, the contradiction sometimes attributed to obscurity or confusion. To be consequential, the substance of the conditioned would be the unconditioned. The absolute, what is absolutely resolved, is precisely the indefinite. Kierkegaard had said: "From the point of view of universal history the guilt of the individual is not seen in the way it is solely in the intention, but one sees the external action devoured by the totality and within this totality attracting to it the consequences of the action. He therefore sees, what from the ethical point of view is completely confusion and nonsense, how both well-meaning and ill-meaning actions bring with them the same consequence: that the best king and the tyrant can bring about the same misfortune. More precisely, he does not see this either, because it is still a question of an ethical reminiscence: he sees what from the ethical point of view is a scandal, that is, that from the point of view of universal history he must ultimately disregard the distinction between good and evil, as this is found only in the individual, and precisely only in the individual in his relationship to God. From the point of view of universal history a proposition becomes false, which from the point of view of ethics is true and is the vital force of ethics: the relation of possibility which every existing individuality has in relation to God. Universal history is not concerned with this, because it understands everything backwards, thus forgetting that the dead were once certainly also living. Therefore, first of all ethics, the subjective becoming; then, universal history. (Ib., vol. I, pp. 352-353). The story of an executioner such as Napoleon is remembered, that of the thousands of deaths he threw onto the scales of history is not. Yet those deaths weigh from the moral point of view, while they are light from the historical one. But can one speak of a historical, or political, point of view? Can morality be disregarded? If the hordes of the victors take over the homes of the vanquished, that does not make them right. The ill-tempered pens of historians of that feral rampage make a wide description, not grasping the differences considered objective: hanging a murderer, with a stamp, is not a better action, it does not equal, it does not restore anything ethical. It throws back into the vat the same grapes crushed before to squeeze out the last juice.

Thus Hegel: "Whether the reassurance of acting by persuasion of duty is true, whether what is done is really duty, such questions or doubts have no meaning in the face of conscientiousness. - In that

question, i.e., whether the assurance is true, it would be assumed that the inner intention is different from that which is given for good, i.e., that the will of the individual self can separate itself from the will of the universal and pure consciousness; the will of the pure and universal consciousness would be in the words, whereas the will of the individual self would be properly the true spring of action. But precisely this difference of the universal consciousness and the single Self is that which has been taken away, and the overcoming of which is conscientiousness. The immediate knowledge of the Self certain of itself is law and duty; its intention, is the right; it is only required to know this and that, to express its persuasion that its knowing and willing is the right. The enunciation of this assurance removes, in itself, the form of its particularity; it recognizes in this act the necessary universality of the Self and, calling itself conscientiousness, it is said to be pure knowing-if-meaning and pure abstract will, that is to say, it is said to be universal knowing and willing which recognize others, which are equal to others, - for others are precisely such pure knowing and willing themselves, - and which are therefore also recognized by them. In the wanting of the Self certain of itself, in this knowing that the Self is the essence, consists the essence of right. Whoever therefore says that he acts thus out of conscientiousness speaks the truth, for his conscientiousness is the Self in the act of knowing and willing. This, moreover, he must essentially say, because this Self must at the same time be universal Self. But the Self is not universal in the content of the action because, by virtue of its determinateness, the content is in itself indifferent while the universality is in the form of the action; and what is to be posited as effected is this form; it is the Self which as such is effected in language, which is pronounced as the true and which, precisely in this act, recognizes all selves and is recognized by them". (Phenomenology of Spirit, vol. II, op. cit., pp. 179-180). But the real act, to be such, must open itself up to abandonment and ridicule, appearing in its own realization as a small step forward, not as the certainty that proves itself in its own truth. Silence surrounds acting as such, the inner voice is not audible to anyone, no one knows where the small ray of light that determines its presence comes from. Hegel assumes that ethical universality consists in this, in this simple placing beyond the doing, but his indication - at least here - seems a bit cumbersome. Only a few solitaries know how to listen to the silence, to run the risk of ridicule in order to indicate that ray of light, to remain in the shadows. Need calls the call, makes its voice dual and captivating, but it is not the best cue to enter Hegel's text. The improvement is remote, almost driven back into the surroundings of the specification, while it is the totality that attracts the philosopher and makes him critically observe the situation of doing. To start simply from man, as someone has argued, in my opinion naively, is to erase with a stroke of the pen the halved and suffering reality and replace it with the abstract humanitas that rises disdainfully above all limits and all common conditions. The ethical moment is not a particular moment to be recognized and passed on, a privileged place that must be sheltered once the pacts with the measure are fixed (Kantian heritage), but it is a putting back into play, a continuous return to observe that the historical process is not deterministically directed to the improvement of conditions, that within it live the forces of necessity and freedom without there being any way to foresee a prevalence of freedom over necessity, at least not more than it is possible to foresee the opposite outcome.

Up to this point the Hegelian philosophy appears false to us, but how does it become true? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to keep in mind that the entire system is solidly fixed on spirit. It is not opposed in an absolute way to a non-spiritual element, to a material element, rather it is unlimited and absolute, therefore free. In this way, on the Kantian tradition, in the Encyclopedia [1817], the spirit is recognized as active and productive not unlike Kantian practical reason. The productive spirit not only becomes the principle of being but also of thinking. It is important to note that in Hegel producing is not opposed to matter as a simple subjective performance but is sought in the object determined in objective reality so that one almost reaches the intimate essence of synthetic apperception at the center of mystery, far beyond the simple arbitrary hypostasis of the abstract concept. This would then be social work. Herein, in this much-discussed concept, lies much more than "work" understood in the

modern way, especially in its capitalist evolution. In other words, there is that *otium* which also belongs to doing, if only as a distance from oppression, as an awareness of oneself as a passive object of the same oppression, therefore as a possible step forward, we still do not know in which direction. The society ordered in the oppressive way that hosts us today is certainly inhuman, within its insane modules have had their way and are spreading as places of certainty and virtue. To go "out" of work means to kill oneself, but not if one thinks it possible to go "out" of this work that we have in front of us. But going "out" also means destroying this work, inventing something different, not grabbing whatever life-board is at hand. The "social work" is therefore an all-encompassing concept that makes it difficult to distinguish, within it operate objective and subjective processes that Hegel only partly manages to show in their not always schematically dialectical movements. Today the escape from poverty no longer appears as a naturalistic satisfaction of need, there is something else that remains to be clarified. The impediment is more profoundly rooted in the abandonment of one's own capacity to grasp the taste for life, even if the existence proposed in doing so turns out to be full to bursting with unimaginable surrogates and embellishments that until recently would have made a lord out of a poor man.

Karl Marx in the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* [1844] will note how Hegel here determines the essence of work and really conceives the real man, true, as a result of his work itself, while maintaining intact the fundamental criticism against the Hegelian approach that considers man simply as self-consciousness and not as a union of mind and body.

With the moment of generality of the active and transcendent subject as opposed to the empirical and contingent one, Hegel represents the social essence of labor. In other words, the reference to a general subject instead of a single individual who works - in harmony with the tradition of Aristotle's *Politics* [345-325 BC] according to which the preservation of subjects depends on the activity of others - allows to define work as something organized, social, rational, something that represents a social relationship. The society that Hegel has in mind is certainly a product of labor, even in the restrictive sense to which we have become accustomed today. Another perspective would revoke in doubt not only the conclusions of the *Philosophy of Right* [1827] but also the dialectical mechanism itself. A society in which everyone can be freed from work as we see it today in everyday life cannot come out of a mechanism that is well defined in its scans, it cannot be "taken away" by any historical process, however much the philosopher on duty may imagine some qualitative leap. If today work is the exclusive purpose of the oppressive society in which we live, this is not a random event, within these conditions it is not possible to operate differently, generations follow one another and all pursue the primary purpose of opening the way to work, whether it is to be exploited or to be exploited. Whoever pursues, with greater or lesser success, the aim of escaping from this mechanism is never in a position to say he is "outside" the working reality, since it continues to host him without possible alternatives that are not ridiculous puns, but must continually verify his situation by rejecting all attacks on his "relative" autonomy. He can certainly take advantage of his own evaluation of reality which is profoundly different from the person who stamps his time card every morning in the factory, but he is forced to verify this distance, on pain of his disappearance and painless re-absorption in a phantom working area, profoundly miserable (see, for example, social workers, etc.). Even for those who decide to directly attack the production of wealth, taking directly what they need, and even something more, they are part of the work game, but they can keep themselves out of this game with a careful consideration of their own work, that is, loading this work with a qualitatively different meaning, so as to recover that humanity that routine risks killing even in the case of the direct attack on wealth. A thousand ways can be studied to reactivate a human condition that has been taken away from us, overwhelmed by the totalizing world of work. The relationship between these direct efforts to suppress labor and the dialectic is yet to be discovered.

The Hegel of Phenomenology thus recognized spirit as labor. The relation of spirit to datum appears according to the model of a social process and precisely according to a labor process.

The dialectical mechanism also applies, of course, with regard to the labor-reality relation. The essential connection of the concepts of craving and work frees the latter from the pure analogy with the abstract activity of the abstract spirit.

Here is how Hegel specifies: "The spirit has for us as its presupposition nature, of which it is the truth, and is therefore its prime absolute. In this truth nature has disappeared, and the spirit results as the idea that has come to its being for itself; whose object, and subject together, is the concept. This identity is absolute negativity, because in nature the concept has its perfect exterior objectivity; but now it has surpassed this exteriority and has, in it, become identical with itself. The concept is such an identity only insofar as it is returned to itself from nature.

"The essence of spirit is thus, formally, freedom, absolute negativity in the concept as identity with itself. According to this formal determination, spirit can abstract from all external things, and even from its own exteriority, from its existence: it can endure the negation of its individual immediacy, infinite pain; that is, it can maintain itself affirmative in this negativity and be identical for itself. This possibility is in itself its abstract universality and for itself." (Ib., vol. II, p. 350). If it were possible to forget, just for a moment, the dialectical mechanism, here Hegel opens up the possibility of a negation of labor. The objective spirit, therefore man, can deny everything, even himself as a product of labor, and with this refusal, with this negative critical phase, find himself in his own abstract universality as a human being, recomposed in himself despite the attempts continuously made by the productive mechanisms of everyday life. And it must not be thought that here Hegelian thought is atomistically reduced to the way in which the single privileged individual can react. The objective spirit is the thought of the time in which we live, towards which we all owe something that can never be definitively identified. The force that overwhelms us in the society in which we live, that pushes us to overwhelm one another, is one of the aspects of that same "way of seeing things" that we are able to formulate differently, critically, when we attack the enemy. This interesting consideration leads us to deviate a little from the drapery of the Hegelian dialectic and to affirm that behind it lies the otium possible in the frenetic raging of doing that suffocates us. This makes the passage from doing to acting thinkable.

Hegel continues "This universality is also its determinate being. Insofar as it is for itself, the universal is particularized and remains in this identity with itself. The determinateness of the spirit is, therefore, the manifestation. It is not any determinateness or content, of which the extrinsicity and exteriority would only be a distinct form: not only does the spirit manifest something, but its determinateness and content is this revelation itself. The possibility of the spirit is therefore, immediately, infinite and absolute reality.

"Revelation, which, insofar as it is the abstract idea, is immediate passage, becoming of nature, - insofar as revelation, on the other hand, of spirit, which is free, is a positing of nature as its own world: a positing which, as reflection, is at once a presupposing of the world as independent nature. Revealing, in the concept, is creating the world, as its being; in which spirit gives itself the affirmation and truth of its freedom.

"The absolute is spirit" - this is the highest definition of the absolute. - To find this definition and to understand its meaning and content, such, it may be said, has been the absolute tendency of every culture and philosophy; to this point every religion and every science has aimed with its efforts; only

this impulse explains the history of the world. - The word and representation of the spirit was soon found; and it is the content of the Christian religion to make God known as spirit. What is given here in representative form and is in itself the essence, one must understand in its proper element, in the concept: this is the task of philosophy, a task which cannot be said to be fulfilled in a true and immanent way, until the concept and freedom become the object and soul of philosophy." (Ib., vol. II, p. 351). The identity of spirit and freedom cannot be understood by remaining within the framework of the mechanism that Hegel himself constructed in such detail. Not spirit is freedom, nor its opposite: freedom is spirit, but the very movement that is grasped in the static nature of this ambivalent relationship is spirit and freedom at the same time. Being the same thing does not prevent movement from presenting it, this thing, always in a different way. The Hegelian idea of freedom continually overflows into the impossibility of completeness, so that it is necessary to omit any desire for detail, any examination of the particular, if one does not want to drown in the recitation that prevents any receptive faculty.

But, returning to work, idealism loses its validity as soon as it transforms work into its being in itself, that is, as soon as it sublimates its principle into a metaphysical fact, whereby everything that has been produced by men since the earliest times becomes eternal and just, everything that is transient, conditioned-including work itself-and which constitutes their suffering. Yet idealism is obliged to this transformation. Unconsciously suffered limits are insuperable. If something walks without us noticing it, we cannot stop it because we do not grasp the insult that strikes us. Even more, that insult that should make us react ends up constituting us and holding us up, drawing itself as our true personality.

Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program [1875] captures a remarkable aspect of Hegelian philosophy. Marx rejects the principle: "labor is the source of all wealth and all civilization," asserting that only nature is the source of use values and only of these is true wealth constituted; labor is instead the extrusion of a natural force, human labor power. The bourgeois have every interest in attributing to work a supernatural creative capacity, since it is a remarkable means to make others work and exploit them: in this way the metaphysics of work and the appropriation of foreign labor are complementary. If this equality can be considered true, it must be said that a return to the past, to a stately world in which at least part of humanity enjoyed otium, is impossible. Without in any way detracting from the value that the radical negation of work entails. A life cut in half can be recompact only on the condition that it does not remain a prisoner of the mental models that the very cut of totality has produced.

The essence of the productive spirit as work in the Phenomenology becomes from "natural religion", strangely enough and in the most banal form, a spiritual element for the religious content as a "product of human labor". Thus Hegel: "The first form, being the immediate one, is the abstract form of the intellect, and the work is not yet in itself filled with the spirit. The crystals of the pyramids and obelisks, simple combinations of straight lines with flat surfaces and equal proportions of parts in which the incommensurability of the curve is eliminated, are the works of this artificer of severe form. By virtue of the mere intelligibility of the form, it is not its meaning in itself, it is not the spiritual Self. The works therefore receive only the spirit either in themselves as a departed foreign spirit which has abandoned its living interpenetration with effectivity and, dead itself, enters into those crystals lacking life; or they refer outwardly to it as such which is itself outward and does not exist as spirit, - as to the rising light which casts its meaning upon them.

"The separation from which the working spirit moves, the separation of the being-in-self which becomes matter worked by him, and of the being-for-self which is the side of self-consciousness intent on work, has become objective to him in his work. His further effort must aim at removing this separation of soul and body, at giving clothing and figure to the former in itself, but also at animating

the latter. Both sides, while they are brought nearer to each other, maintain, in this act, one in relation to the other, the determinateness of the spirit represented and of the garment that envelops it: its unity with itself contains this opposition of singularity and universality. While the work is connected to itself in its sides, the other thing happens at the same time, namely, that it becomes closer to the self-consciousness that works, and that this, in the work, comes to know itself as it is in itself and for itself. Thus it constitutes, however, only the abstract side of the activity of the spirit, a side which does not yet know its content in itself, but in the work of the spirit, which is a thing. The artificer itself, the inner spirit, has not yet appeared; but it is still the inner and hidden essence, which as an integer is given only as decomposed into the active self-consciousness and the object produced by it." (Ib., vol. II, pp. 120-121). Then he goes on to say that if with the separation of manual and intellectual labor the privilege has reserved for itself the intellectual one - thus the easiest one, despite all claims to the contrary - nevertheless manual labor returns to recur in the intellectual process itself in the imitation of physical activity mediated by the imagination: the spirit cannot completely escape its relationship with nature. But this is an unconvincing argument: the identification of work with the absolute is an attempt to transform the curse into a blessing, a suppression of that "material" to which every kind of work feels bound. A little later he will say: "The knowing spirit is conscious of itself, and is to itself in the form of the objective; it is, and is at the same time the being-for-self. It is for itself, the side of self-consciousness, and properly in opposition to the side of its consciousness or of relating itself to itself as object. In its consciousness is the opposition therefore the determinateness of the figure of which it appears to itself and from itself." (Ib., vol. II, p. 206). In this way one tries to pass off the whole concept of constraint as freedom. However, it must be acknowledged that no one is capable of leaving the world formed by labor to take refuge in an immediate other. The critique of the philosophy of the identification of the spirit with work can only be made by comparing its philosophical concept with what it actually does. At one time, at this point in my Hegelian readings, I was thinking of the Nazi concentration camps and the writing on some of them. But it must be acknowledged that Hegel's concern here is different. He tries to say (not fully succeeding) that freedom must have a content, and that this content, other than the content of individual freedoms, must necessarily be the spirit in its making, which is also a doing, that is, a work. If a work can be free, it must, as a first step, tell itself differently, that is, indicate another consistency and practical perspective. In order to do this, a creative effort is needed that does not draw on the abstract universe of banalities that bind us daily, but digs, on the contrary, in no man's land where desolation risks mercilessly illuminating our pettiness.

After all, *otium* is a privilege that must be conquered through involvement. If it comes from the outside, say from a social condition, it is not such a privilege, but becomes work again, if only because of the defenses that must be put up against the desire of others to reappropriate it. The refusal of work requires an ethical foundation that has yet to be discovered. Not a legitimacy, which lies precisely in the external working mechanism that suppresses and destroys every trace of humanity, but in its being a possible universal modulation of a life worth living. And every superior yearning, every aspiration to something different, comes out of the rule and the imposed limits and presents itself to the highest evaluation that everyone makes of his own work. It is not a question of readjusting old concepts, but of discovering a new perspective. It is well known that the notion of system, in the emphatic Hegelian formulation, implies the identity of the subject with the object developed to the point of reaching the absolute, the integral unity: but with this identity the truth of the system is lost. But this identity, this total reconciliation through the spirit, with the essentially antagonistic world, constitutes a mere affirmation. Here is how Hegel specifies it: "The true figure in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of it. To collaborate in bringing philosophy closer to the form of science, - to the goal reached which is capable of laying down the name of love of knowledge in order to be true knowledge, - this is what I have proposed to myself." (Ib., Pref., p. 4). This is one of the classic places where Hegel sacrifices to the divinity of the system. This happens (as in this passage) while the whole setting seems

non-deductible from the premises, while any search for parallels is in vain, while the conditions of causality and determinacy that would make one admit of systematic necessity are not found.

But a perfect system and a completed reconciliation are not the same thing, indeed they are the opposite: the unity of the system, the world conceived by the Hegelian system has satanically revealed itself today as a radically socialized society, that is, as a system. "Existence itself, existing, is aspiring, and it is as pathetic as it is comic: pathetic, because aspiring is infinite, that is, oriented toward infinity, it is the infinitization that is the highest pathos; comic, because aspiring is self-contradiction. Therefore, love is always aspiring, that is, the thinking subject is existent. Only systematic and objective thinkers have ceased to be men and have become speculation: this takes place in pure being. No one denies that objective thinking has its reality; but with respect to thinking, where precisely it is subjectivity that must be accentuated, objectivity is a misunderstanding." (S. Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postilla to the Crumbs of Philosophy*, vol. I, op. cit., p. 289). Objectivity is a great misunderstanding. For centuries the whole West has been trying to build it on something strong, constantly testing itself, killing millions of poor wretches, consciously or instinctively aware that its fate depends on such a foundation. But its mysterious nature eludes him. Just think of power and its attempts to root itself in "the people." Nothing more comical in the midst of tragedy. Determinism, challenged in science now permeated with probabilism, still finds itself alive in places where it should be harder for it to survive. Social reality seems well determined, and everything works in the best of ways, since that is what the rulers say. And since absolute indeterminacy is a form of determinism, the statement can also be made the other way around and it still works. The monolithic nature of what is in front of us, and which we summarize in the concept of "power", may be shaky, but it keeps reassembling itself on solid bases. Perhaps there is somewhere, in the science of social adaptation, an optimal curve on which two contenders can settle with mutual satisfaction, but this curve is as if it were not there because each of the contenders always fears that the other may derive a greater utility than his own in spontaneously modifying the status quo. This is why there is no "normal" social behavior that cannot be reversed into its counterpart of "abnormality." Every repulse that makes the well-wisher blush can tomorrow change into another repulse (or vigorous approval) of the opposite sign, without the system suffering. Hegel understood all this but, in some points, fearing for the compactness of the system, he did not develop his considerations to the end. Instead, social reality - without questioning its interpreters at all - has given birth to one of the most important and systematic constructions of the last millennia. It is the time of death over life.

An element of the highest value in Hegel's work is the fact that he derives the evolutionary systematic character of society even before the direct experience of his times could suggest it to him. In the closed world of production, in a situation in which social work is regulated on the basis of the relation of exchange, in a world in which the priority of the whole over the individual parts is affirmed, the desperate impotence of each individual realizes the exuberant Hegelian idealistic system. The instrument has thus become an end, indeed the only end necessary for survival; man had to conform to this instrument by reducing himself to sensible practice, contracting all direct movements and tracing the residues of lost quality. The correct evaluation of the means and their use has become almost impossible, if not by continually putting oneself at risk and rethinking every arbitrariness and every indifference. The triumph of efficiencyism has led to a society in which the instrument dominates as the end of the entire social order, while the desire for a different life is not even able to manifest itself as a solicitation towards the good, which in itself is not sufficient but which something however allows a glimpse.

Now an act of force is necessary because the dialectical principle, otherwise, would end up extending beyond the existing denying the thesis of absolute identity: in fact this is absolute only insofar as it is realized.

We would then have that the truth for society would be dissociation, that is, the lack of repression of the state and therefore the liberalization of the dialectical process.

The objective turn of idealism implemented by Hegel put back on its feet the speculative metaphysics destroyed by Kant, so much so as to restore concepts such as that of being, even to the point of trying to save the ontological demonstration of God. All of this encouraged the claim of Hegel to existentialist ontology. Heidegger's interpretation of the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the best known testimony. From this one can understand the affinity of existentialist ontology with transcendental idealism. Exactly, Kierkegaard: "If one admits that the system is after existence (hence the reason for the exchange with a system of existence), then the system comes after, and so does not immediately begin with the immediate with which existence began; although in another sense it did not begin with it, because the immediate is never, but is taken away when it is." (*Ib.*, vol. I, p. 310). This is why it is never possible to identify the exact moment in which a new social form begins, or the individual who made it possible. The images that have come down to us are mixed. The "great" only have guessed something, Goethe, Nietzsche, Novalis, Hölderlin, obscurely. If we listened to them assuming precise answers it would be a vain effort. Only enigmas radiate from their attendance. After all, these "greats" are without content.

But Hegel denies to being precisely that condition of "being before any possible thought", of which instead the resurrected metaphysics of these recent times tries to speak. "Since substance is in itself Subject, precisely therefore every content is also the reflection of itself in itself. The subsistence or substance of a determinate being is equality with itself; since its inequality with itself would be its dissolution. But equality with itself is pure abstraction; and this is thinking. By means of this nature of the being, and insofar as the being has for knowledge this nature, knowledge is not the activity which manipulates the content as something foreign, not reflection in itself outside of the content; science is not that idealism which succeeded the dogmatism of assertion, taking on the guise of the dogmatism of reassurance or the dogmatism of the certainty of itself; On the contrary, knowledge sees the content return to its own interiority, and its activity is rather immersed in the content, - because it is its immanent Self, - and also at the same time returned to itself, because it is pure equality with itself in the being-other; activity is thus the astuteness which, while seeming to evade activity, realizes that the concrete life of determinateness, just as it deludes itself that it is dedicated to the preservation of itself, to particular interest, is, instead, the inverse: that is, an operating that dissolves and makes of itself a moment of the whole." (*Phenomenology of Spirit*, vol. I, op. cit., pp. 45-46). But this astuteness must have field in front of it, that is, it must have how to move, otherwise it suffocates in the immediacy that is self-gratifying. It dissolves into permanence and becomes concrete by letting itself go, no longer cunning but consciousness formed and operating. Capture is then the task of the historical process, of the dynamic development of history. This is why Hegel speaks of a process that accomplishes us in a total way, without further referrals or pluralistic outlets. But this capacity of immediacy to be itself and the opposite of itself in the availability of openness, even if in the scholastic eventuality of a home arrest, must draw from the outside what it needs, from the outside and therefore from its opposite, from its fears, for example, from a problematic future and abstractly available to different solutions, one incomprehensible to the other. The process here returns to being abstract, that is, it subtracts itself from the fierce determination that encloses it in the need for reproduction, in the narrowness of the field, in the economy as seen by the dialectical materialists, it subtracts itself in the name of feeling, of emotion, of desire, in the name of everything that can revoke from itself the right to decide for the destruction of

every bond. Idealism protects its own limits because it knows that these give it meaning, but it must accept the substantial limits that nature proposes to it without escape, in the end there is the will to power, if nothing else, since we can give to this last concept many different nuances, life as impulse, as force, as beauty in the night that no light seemed to penetrate. With the definition of being as a critical and negative moment of the dialectic, Hegel's theory is irreconcilable with its current theologizing. Everything else is still practicable, one enters it like an old gymnasium. The tools are a bit rusty but they work. Sometimes one stumbles over an artificial formula, over-elaborated concepts that risk extinguishing the intuitive comprehension that, after all, is the only acceptable guide in such quagmires, but then one comes out in the open. A particular verbal experience comes to the rescue as we throw all school problems overboard. Many chromatic felicities emerge in this way.

Hegel's being is the opposite of any primordial entity. It is the immediate indeterminate, where immediacy - the element on which the existentialist interpretation is based - becomes indeterminacy, refusal of the dignity of being, its simple negativity. Being, the immediate indeterminate becomes nothing, nothing but nothing. For Hegel, freedom is the character of rationality, it is what in itself removes any limitation, and this was the supreme point of the Fichtian system. However, again according to Hegel, in the Kantian-style community with others, it is necessary to renounce it in order for the freedom of all rational beings who are in community to be possible, and community is again a condition of freedom; freedom must remove itself in order to be freedom. In this way Hegel places himself directly on the side of the dominators, but he tries to explain this conservative position by arguments that are absolutely different in character from any praise of dominion, as the history of philosophy has taught us.

In his critique of the Fichtian system, it is explicitly said that this system fails to be what it sets out to be, thus giving up what would be vital to it. In the Fichtian realization the system of freedom is transformed into a system of the universal determination of rational beings, into a system of tyranny in which the abstract intellect imposes itself from outside on all that is life and freedom. This is Hegel's critique of Fichte, and implicitly points to one of the worst flaws in the entire *The Doctrine of Science* [1794]. According to Johann Gottlieb Fichte, freedom is a simple negative, that is, absolute indeterminacy, or, if one prefers, a purely ideal factor, freedom considered from the point of view of reflection. He understands freedom in an abstract way, as an empty universal, and such a concept of freedom cannot but be contrasted from the outside with living individuals, who, as individuals, cannot and will never be the universal. "For him [Fichte] participation in Being is realized only through action. Therefore the self produces itself; but it can only do so by automatically producing the world which is its instrument. And the freedom of the spirit always manifests itself as a task to be fulfilled." (L. Lavelle, *La présence totale*, Paris 1934, p. 236). Remarkable example of overlap. The task of which Fichte spoke a few times is the exposure of oneself to risk, not to duty as an escape from oneself and acceptance of the framework that we envisage as a guarantee of protection. In Fichte a philosophy of reflection operates, a splitting of the universal from the particular that reaches its extreme consequences in political conceptions and in the conception of freedom.

Contemporary philosophies of being, starting with Husserl, fight against idealism. This expresses in them the irrevocable condition of historical consciousness: they note that everything that exists cannot be developed or deduced from simple and subjective immanence, from consciousness. But they hypostatize the extreme result of a subjectively conceptual abstraction: being, so they remain in this way entangled in idealism.

The idea that in Hegel essentially unfolds against traditional idealism is not that of being, but that of truth. The affirmation of philosophy in general is given by the fact that form of thinking is the absolute

form and that truth appears in it as it is in and of itself. Truth for Hegel is not subjective thinking but rises above it, just as an "I" in and of itself. The knowledge of truth is no less than the knowledge of the absolute. This closes the circle of the relationship between true and untrue. The two moments change each other without transforming into qualities. The false is produced in the same way that the true is produced. The being above subjective thinking returns to the thought of the individual and here it is, little by little, produced as true and as false, as true in the moment in which the thought thinks but does not know it is thinking, as false in the next moment, when it knows it is thinking but is not thinking. Life is silenced in the narrow dimensions of reflection, then thought as such, and here it produces the patterns to which we are accustomed. The analytical nature of this movement is certainly constitutive of man, it opens up the possibilities of history, it makes him understand the boundaries of what should not be done and what is not done despite all possible suggestions. But it is not a rigorous model of control, it does not guarantee any reproduction of the truth. The world continues to flee forward on its way, while life refuses every effort that would like to bring it back into the sphere of the comprehensible, reproducible, conditioned. The untrue has its own reasons that go beyond the immediate claims of analyticity. Every tautology laughs at itself and at those who want to place it in the field of value judgment, where we are the ones who commit ourselves and not reality in our place.

Now the idea of the objectivity of truth strengthens the reason of the subject while today's attempts to escape from subjectivism are connected to its defamation. Thus Nicolai Hartmann: "If consciousness returns to its true position, things appear to it in themselves for what they are. The urgency, the arrogance of the central position precludes it from the objective world behind the subjective surrounding world. By reorienting itself on the world, consciousness puts itself back in its place, returns to its corner and dismantles that surrounding world which prevents it from seeing the world. It is only in this way that the world becomes visible to it in its objectivity. And since things become objects for it, it will become the subject of those objects. The non-spiritual consciousness is not a real subject, nor does it have real objects: it lacks, in this regard, the necessary distance from things. Only spiritual consciousness arrives at objectivity, which is a consequence (and not a cause) of overcoming tension and assuming the eccentric position. Spiritual consciousness is object consciousness and knows things as in front of it, as its own objects. Things do not become objects by themselves alone, but only through the form and work of consciousness, and they are such only "for" consciousness, not in themselves. To tell the truth, things have always been in front of consciousness, - in the world in which this and those coexist -, but it was, precisely, a matter of pure and simple coexistence, perhaps of a relation of causation, of stimulus, of utilization, but not of a relation of objectivity. With respect to the spirit, another type of "being in front" emerges here: being in front as a way of appearing, the being of things for him. "In themselves", they are what they are even without the spirit, but they can only be objects "for him". They can therefore become objects only if the spirit, with the form of consciousness that is proper to it, makes them objects, if it objects them. This becoming an object of things is a function of a particular attitude of the consciousness towards them, a way of dedicating itself to them. This function is knowledge. (The Problem of Spiritual Being [1933], Florence 1971, p. 153). Coming forth as making oneself available to consciousness is certainly a movement of the world, which in this way expresses for me the overall conditions of what humanity has done since it began to go around down the tree, but it is also a reorganization of my own. A unitary, universally valid scale is not possible. There is nothing uniformly workable, no matter how much the inordinate zeal of philosophers claims otherwise. This guarantee is not even in Hegel. He was a vital person, a sanguine man, not a Kantian codger. Although he was a slave to his own system, outside of which he felt lost, not a few times impetuosity took his hand. In the story there is the reality of a nature that he could not see (the spectacle of the Alps left him indifferent - and I can understand that), but the great natural forest hosts us all, even the reassuring dialectical mechanism. If this mechanism has a sense (restrictive and deadly, in my opinion), it has it because it includes man, because it speaks of the events of life, otherwise it is

nothing more than an exercise in formal logic. Enclosing itself in space and time, this mechanism continually falls back on itself, and so it provides a key to man, a distorted key and harbinger of frightening consequences, but still a human affair.

In Hegel the truth in itself is not being. It is necessary to set aside the opinion that truth must be something tangible. This was the thought of a warrior caste that has had its day. There is no content to be privileged, not even on a transitional basis. Stimuli and enhancements are not facts, and when they become facts they yearn for the images of a past dream, a primordial dream where the stimulus did not aspire to a precise concretization. I have seen the starched collars and shaved beards advance, I have seen them trample on their own and others' dignity. How is it possible to think of all this as truth? Waiting for a joyous resurrection from these cemeteries is tantamount to walking on hot coals. In this way truth flows into the process dissolving as a simple result. Hegel writes: "The true and the false belong to those determined thoughts that, deprived of movement, would like to be valid as particular essences of which one is on this side, the other on the other side rigidly isolated and without reciprocal commonality. Against such a conception it must be firmly affirmed that truth is not a minted coin, which, as it is, can be spent and cashed. There is a fake, as little as there is a villain. False and bad are not as perfidious as the devil, so much so that, if one were to take them for devils, one would be making particular subjects of them; while they, as false and bad, are only universals even though they have, one with respect to the other, their own nature. The false (for we wish to speak only of it here) would be the other, the negative of substance, which, as the content of knowledge, is the true. But substance itself is essentially the negative, either as distinction and determination of content, or as simple distinguishing, that is, as Self and knowledge in general. One can well know falsely. Whatever is known falsely means: knowledge is in inequality with its substance. But precisely this inequality is the distinguishing in general, which is an essential moment. From this distinction derives the equality of the distinction itself, and this equality, having become it, is truth. But this truth, not as if the inequality had been removed, in that way that from pure metal the dross has been expelled; nor is it truth, as from the barrel now constructed the arnese has been removed; rather the inequality itself is still immediately present in the truth as such, it is present as the negative, as the Self. It cannot then be said that the false constitutes a moment or even an element of the true." (Phenomenology of Spirit, vol. I, Pref., op. cit., pp. 30-31). This is a bold statement by Hegel, but capable of opening a breach that can no longer be repaired in the wall of truth, which has always been assumed unassailable. Here the matter lies in saying, but saying, in turn, lies in escaping reality, in trying to cover it up. So the circle closes. Looking reality in the face does not mean saying it. Saying is always a use of words, a putting back into play of meanings valid for others. Reality, for us, exclusively for us, is something else. The literal search, this or that module of the workshop, remain enclosed in a brain capable only of biting into the meal granted by the power in charge. The laurel grows elsewhere.

Hegelian truth is no longer in time, as nominalistic truth was, nor in the ontological manner beyond time: time becomes for Hegel a moment of itself. Hartmann again: "The unity of knowledge must not only bind together the men of one epoch, but also men belonging to very different epochs. It connects the phases of the entire historical process of knowledge in a natural unity; it connects the figures of the objective spirit beyond their historical separation. But even here it is always fidelity to the thing that produces unity. This unity - which has a character of pure spiritual objectivity - has an exceptionally great capacity and scope. It enables the successor always to "discuss" objectively with the thought of the predecessor. In discussion, in fact, there is that living commonality which, although temporal, goes beyond time and, with all its historicity, is nevertheless grounded in the supra-historical. Only in this way does it become fully comprehensible how the moment of accountability and critique becomes an internal criterion of the historical spirit". (The Problem of Spiritual Being, op. cit., pp. 517-518). Every relationship with the spirit of the times is a link. It is all a matter of seeing to what extent this is

necessary. The stances they defend, the opinions they illustrate, the mindsets they form, do not seem to be necessary. Examining them does not bring satisfaction unless it is pragmatic and positive, the stuff of bank deposits. Truth as a process is a percussion of all moments, contrary to the principle of non-contradiction, and has, as such, a temporal core. This liquidates the hypostasis of abstraction and concept equal to itself that dominates traditional philosophy. If the Hegelian movement of the concept has in a sense revived Platonism, nevertheless this Platonism is at the same time freed from its static nature, from its mythological inheritance, assuming in itself all the spontaneity of liberated consciousness.

Even if we admit that abstract thinking and abstract being, as we read in a controversial passage of Parmenides, are the same thing, the value of the ontological concept of being and the Hegelian concept of reason are different. Both categories take part in the dynamics of history. For Hegel it is precisely with Parmenides that one rises to the realm of the idea. Thus he writes: "According to Parmenides a man frees himself from all representations and opinions, denies them any truth, and asserts that only necessity, being, is the true. This beginning is certainly still confused and indefinite, and we can not further clarify what is contained therein, but the clarification is given precisely by the development of philosophy itself, which certainly we do not have here yet. With such a beginning is connected that dialectic, according to which the mutable has no truth; in fact, when we take these determinations in the sense that we usually give them, we run into contradictions. (Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. I, op. cit., pp. 279-280). Unity is necessary. Parmenides testifies to this. If the world we are accustomed to call "spiritual" is the one we have before our eyes, welcome the dehumanization of unity of which Parmenides speaks. The same with religion. Atheists are inhumane, any varnishing of this statement (secular humanitarians) is just organic secretion of new priests. Perhaps life cannot do without the morbid element. If only because it is the bearer of disease, of madness. Perhaps in ecstasy itself there is something even more insistent than abandonment and refusal to find resistance and safeguards. Death itself is a matter of man, of man's life, vital and full of tension, as opposed to that daily death that spreads unseen in the desertification of existence. The morbid element is not a corrective, it does not even try to present itself as the other aspect of rationality, it is life itself, not the hand of the devil, not a metaphysical mask of arbitrariness. In Hegel the night has a profound meaning, it penetrates the whole motif of the unity of the real, it constitutes the negative aspect that awakens the positive to new existence, it maintains the ambiguous reference of something that can be subjected to reason, but with a long interpretive work, not simply by affixing the seal of the diurnal domain.

Attempts have been made (also R. Kroner, *Von Kant bis Hegel*, vol. I: *Von der Vernunftkritik zur Naturphilosophie*, vol. II: *Von der Naturphilosophie zur Philosophie des Geistes*, Tübingen 1921-1924) to consider Hegel an irrationalist, and there is no shortage of points for statements in favor of this thesis, such as when he says that speculation is contrary to reflection, but ultimately Hegel, like Kant, insists decisively on reason considering it as a whole, and then the same movement that should lead beyond all the determinations of thought is a self-critical movement of thinking. The radiating capacity of this concept is considerable. It has not been entirely exhausted. Reason, monolithically stylized into something almost liturgical, knocks on the door of non-reason, of madness, to ask permission of itself to make "normal" the grotesque and hallucinatory sessions of synthesis. There is no expression of quality, individually taken, that could not put all treatises on logic into crisis. But not Hegel's book. The latter is arranged on a double order of representational planes, continually tipping and refracting in references and projections that are seemingly gratuitous but connect with one another.

The consequentiality of Hegel's attempt to save, against Kant, the ontological demonstration of the existence of God could be questioned, but what induced him to do so was not the will to obscure reason, but on the contrary the utopian hope that the block, the boundaries of the possibility of

experience were not the last tules, and that the spirit, against all its conditioning, weakness and negativity, resembles the truth and therefore must be redeemed to the knowledge of the truth.

Today, when idealism is slandered by everyone, it is precisely in the absoluteness of the representation of the spirit that a salutary corrective is revealed. It corrects the depressing resignation of today's consciousness which is always ready to validate, once again, through its own weakness, the humiliation inflicted by the predominance of blind existence. This is how the idea comes to the full consciousness of its infinity or absoluteness, that is, the fact that everything is Spirit and there is nothing outside the Spirit. This self-knowledge according to Hegel is the result of a dialectical process represented by art, religion and philosophy, which differ from each other not for the content but for the form. The subjectivity of which so much is spoken outside the philosophical walls is not a first principle, it refers to something that comes first, and not only logically, refers to the structure of existence as we perceive it, then before the distinction between subjective and objective is established. There is no way to operate separate descriptions, except in the case of tautologies that only apparently distinguish and then leave everything as it is. The analysis, in each of its judgments, contains the entire content of a metaphysics of the accomplished fact, from which one cannot escape by remaining within the ambit of the objectifying distinction. Hegel promotes a different way, mystified by dialectics, however able to show the limits and consequences of what we think is an autonomous condition of consciousness and instead is nothing but one of the many modulations of producing.

Hegelian reason is careful not to be only subjective and negative, always acting as an interlocutor to the opposite element of this subjective reason, indeed going to find reason in what is contrary to it. Hegel with this does not want to keep the protester at bay but, on the contrary, he senses that the destiny of man in general can be realized only through this protester, through the overpowering of the world over the subject. He should also appropriate the forces adverse to him and, to a certain extent, insinuate himself into them. In this there is a kind of cunning of reason, a peasant cunning that runs through part of Hegel's own personality. The history of empire is all here, in keeping the different at bay, but in staying away from the reality of domination, it fully participates by accepting the world as it is produced by its own being stretched towards diversity, by its search for a completeness never attainable, a quality that no one has seen. The empire has a historical event that does not correspond to the logic of empirics. All reality cries out against the accepted and metabolized dominion, and yet this process continues, against the concrete experience that should teach us to be wary and teaches us nothing, against the pain that neither warns nor strengthens, against the stupidity that does not hint at moving away one step.

In practice, however, in Hegel's philosophy there is a certain resignation and it is then the most bourgeois part as it would like to justify the existing as rational and liquidate the reflection that stands against it, with the excuse that the world would not let itself be changed. In contrast, Kierkegaard: "Resignation does not imply faith. For in resignation I acquire nothing but my eternal consciousness. And this is a strictly philosophical movement that I have the courage to make when necessary, and that I can perhaps inflict on myself: because every time that a finite circumstance is about to overtake me, I impose a fast on myself until the moment of making the movement; because the consciousness of my eternity is my love for God, and this love is worth more to me than anything else. Faith is not necessary for resignation; but it is necessary for obtaining anything beyond my eternal consciousness. This is the paradox. Movements are often confused with one another. It is said that faith is needed to renounce everything. One hears even the strangest speeches of people who complain of having lost their faith. And when you look at what level of the ladder they are at, you realize with amazement that they have arrived just at the point where they must make the infinite movement of resignation. I make that movement alone; and the reward I have for it is myself in the consciousness of my eternity, in happy

harmony with my love for the eternal being. Through faith, I renounce nothing; on the contrary, I receive everything, in the sense in which it is written that he who has faith as much as a grain of mustard seed can move mountains. It takes human courage to renounce all temporality in order to gain eternity. But at least I acquire it, nor can I, once in eternity, renounce it without contradiction. But it takes the humble courage of paradox to grasp then all temporality by virtue of the Absurd and this courage is that of faith. By faith Abraham did not renounce Isaac; indeed by faith he obtained him. The whole question consists in temporality, in the finite. I can, in my own strength, renounce everything and find then peace and then, rest in pain." (Timore e tremore [1843], tr. it., Milan 1962, pp. 88-89). Kierkegaard is turning the question around. His resignation closely resembles the renunciation of what one wished to become in order to open up the great prospect of being only what one is. The extreme difficulty of Hegelian resignation is right here, that is, in having understood that rationality does not found the world by justifying it, but constitutes it regardless of a possible justificatory foundation. The philosophical uselessness of this further step places the existing rationality in the resignation of an implicit and never declared incompleteness. Reality is itself its own reality, there is no deeper essence than this continuous relation to the unity that is self-recognized in existence.

The most problematic and best known of Hegelian theories, the one that affirms that reality is rational, is not only apologetic. On the contrary, reason is found there in conjunction with freedom. Freedom and reason are true absurdities when they do not coexist. The real only insofar as it transpires to the idea of freedom, and is therefore effective self-determination of humanity, can be considered rational. Reasoning in this way, here is where existentialist reflection ends up: "The forms of objectivity are, as such, the unattainable object of orientation in the world in the single sciences. The philosophical question refers to the existential relevance of these forms. We call spirit the being that for the subject exists only as a clearly known objectivity in totality. Spirit is the unity of objectivity and subjectivity, but in the form of objectivity. Not being a completed unity nor unfinished a rupture. While the orientation in the world can know the spirit in the spheres of its being through its own self-consciousness, the question regarding existential relevance refers to the origins where for existence decisions are found in this objectivity. From this point of view, instead of the multiple spheres of spirit, there are three forms (as Jakob Burckhardt says): the state, religion, and culture. There is first of all the objectivity of the construction of being in time (the State), then that of temporal participation in authentic being in eternity (religion), and finally that of language to understand itself in the world and in eternity (culture). Being in time subsists as a product of human society. The will to subsist and to last, born of the care for being in time, seeks orders that assure being and extend the space and possibilities of life. Whatever the form of the assurances and possibilities, whatever the conditions and freedoms, in all the care of being, the State is always the ultimate and sovereign instance, the concentrated force of society that makes possible a decisive action on the totality. With power, man wants to achieve in the State that lasting and just organization that allows him to guarantee the future of the human being". (K. Jaspers, *Filosofia* [1932], tr. it., Torino 1978, pp. 835-836). Here are the clear and reactionary conclusions of an anti-Nazi philosopher. This is what happens to the much vaunted promises of openness and availability. Dialogue is an internal means to the oppressive conditions set by binding and circumscribing boundaries. The spirit is summed up in the state (religion and culture are worthy countrymen of the monster), a plausible claim but one that rejects not only a reading of Hegel, but any glimpse of the world. If I look beyond the state I should suddenly be blind to reality, spiritless (not poor, but devoid of the whole), and that is what the good, morose bourgeois have in mind. Discipline, order, rigor, norm, necessity: these are their points of reference.

The two-faced character of Hegel's philosophy is evident first of all in the category of the individual. The general - he says - is at the same time the particular and the particular the general. The dialectic,

exposing this relationship does justice to the field of social forces, where everything that is individual is already preformed beforehand socially, and where nothing is realized except by individuals.

In this way the duplicity of bourgeois society, which in Hegel has really come to self-consciousness, with respect to individuality is clarified. Man, as a free producer, appears autonomous to bourgeois society, heir to the divine legislator, virtually omnipotent. But the individual, who in this society is actually a mere operator of the social production process, remains at the same time powerless and without value. The doing, lacking quality, is not really expressed. The world is an accumulation of facts without quality, the tension that these facts could have had has been totally (or almost) transformed into meaning, each of them is loaded with a content that can in this way fill the world. If it can happen that doing expresses itself through thought, and therefore finds justification for itself in the modularity of effectivity, this is not how it is transformed into action. Nothing is really transformed by remaining in the sphere of production. Quality is not expressed except in the reduced guise of the residue. The tropes cannot hide the qualitative vacuity, while the syntactic connections do their job expressing tautologies that seem to justify a certain beginning and then find equally valid reasons to justify a completely opposite one.

The Hegelian apologetics and resignation represent the typical bourgeois mask that utopia has put on in order not to be recognized and immediately reached, in order not to persist in impotence. Adriano Tilgher concludes: "Historicism grants that the ideal end of History is the complete realization, the full triumph of Reason, freedom and supreme spirituality. But for it, Reason is not something indivisible that either comes into being all at once or does not come into being at all; it is, instead, a faculty or power that comes into being a little at a time, unfolding itself by degrees of increasing perfection, whose series constitutes an ascending or progressive path. None of these degrees can be skipped: each is necessary and good in its place and time. The superior degree is not the negation and total suppression of the inferior degree: it negates and rejects the inferior degree for what is imperfect and lacking in it, but absorbs and preserves it in what is good and valuable. History is the laborious and slow, but sure and continuous, ascension of humanity from irrationality to Reason, from the servitude of nature to the freedom of the Spirit. Each historical epoch represents a progress in comparison with the preceding one, and each one has some good, each one being the work of Reason. The Reason worthy of this name is distinguished from the utopia and reverie of the individual only by the fact that this is exhausted in the individual, and remains without serious and lasting consequences; universal Reason, on the other hand, is embodied in an entire historical epoch, generates it from itself, fills it and permeates it with itself. History, the past, tradition and fact thus become the distinguishing criterion of Reason from that which claims to be such and is not. Triumph of Reason, therefore, but, at the same time, respect for the past, institutions, traditions, History, the work and incarnation of Reason. Progress, yes, but in stages and in order, so that nothing is lost of the purchases of the extinct generations. Revolution, but, at the same time, conservation: in a word, reform. Reformism is the political practice by which the bourgeoisie, without denying the revolutionary principle from which it arose, renders it practically inoffensive. Reformism is the practice of that same intuition of the world and of life, of which Historicism is the theory. Here is solved the problem why just the 19th century, and no other of the previous centuries, has been the century of Progress, of Evolution, of History". (Criticism of historicism, Modena 1935, pp. 66-67). These notations take into account Hegelian thought regarding the unfolding of the history of philosophy. Behind every partial revolution, every revolution of resentment, stands the grand old man of reformist recovery. His battered figure advances with difficulty, propping himself up with a stick, descends from his insignificant dwelling, where he has spent his life reading the works of the possibilists and the misunderstanders, goes down to the street and spreads the advice that the supreme hour would not want to hear but that the needs of the belly and

the throat cover with convincing colors. Everything can be fixed, heed the experience. And the edge of the abyss, where society could (finally!) fall, retracts.

Here is what Hegel writes about the situation of the philosophy of his time: "In the philosophy of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, is summed up and expressed in the form of thought, the revolution, which in recent times the spirit has come in Germany: the series of these philosophies is the path by which the thought has started. In this great age of world history, of whose innermost essence the philosophy of history offers us a concept, only two peoples have participated, the Germans and the French, however opposed they may be to each other or precisely because they are opposed to each other. The other nations have not participated intimately, but politically, both peoples and governments have. In Germany this principle burst out as thought, spirit, concept, in France it burst out in reality: what came out in Germany of reality appears as violence of external conditions or reaction against it. The field of the most recent German philosophy consists in making now the unity of thinking and being, which is generally the fundamental idea of philosophy, itself an object, or in conceiving it, that is, in grasping the most intimate of necessity, the concept." (Lectures on the History of Philosophy, vol. III, t. II, op. cit., p. 268). In the end, this distinction, which I fully agree with, is nothing but a Hegelian expedient, an example of apparent contrast reversed on the real. The German philosophy (from Kant to Hegel) has the same aspects of the French revolution, lowered, I would say better merged, in the conditions of Germany and the German people. The inexorable hardness of form envelops the entire course of German thought of this epoch, and it is a conquest on a par with the path chosen by France, in harmony with the conditions of the French people and its historical events. What in Germany may seem to be circumscribed to the universities was instead experienced by the entire bourgeois class and proposed influences on the rising proletariat. German thought erected a world at its disposal and produced it in its own image in the Western perspective proper to this country. In this way, the French revolutionaries and the German philosophers at the dawn of the nineteenth century did not (respectively) want to do or say, but did and said in the same concrete movement.

How much then, at bottom, Hegelian philosophy spreads over the concept of the bourgeois soul is perhaps most evident from its stance toward morality. It represents a moment in the critique of the category of the individual in general. No reality is situated outside the world and its rules, and this what might be an anti-dogmatic statement is turned upside down into pure dogmatism. Man can turn his attention to the world and by this be placed under conditions of attention: there is in the movement of exchange a reciprocity that conditions and is conditioned. The overcoming does not reset the world, it proposes a different experience that has consequences in the world and in the ethical possibility of living in the world. No diversity is a permanent condition but refers to another one that breaks the delay and proposes itself totally to the attention of the possible sources of life.

In the Phenomenology, Hegel was the first to declare that the fracture between the self and the world again passes through the self itself, so that the individual himself is at the same time a "socially functioning" being conditioned by the thing (i.e. by work), and a being "for himself", with specific inclinations, interests and aptitudes. These two moments indicate divergent directions. Here is Hegel: "In its simple truth the spirit is consciousness and places its moments outside one another. Action divides it into the substance and the consciousness of the substance; and it separates the substance as well as the consciousness. Substance as a universal essence and as an end is opposed to itself as a singularized effectivity; the infinite middle is self-consciousness which, in itself a unity of itself and of substance, now becomes it for itself; it unites the universal essence and its singularized effectivity, elevates this to that and acts ethically, - and that it lowers to that and realizes the end i.e. the merely thought substance; it produces as its work, and thus as effectivity, the unity of itself and of substance.

"In the disruption of consciousness the simple substance has received, on the one hand, the opposition of against self-consciousness, and presents, therefore, on the other hand, also in itself the nature of consciousness: the distinguishing, that is, in itself as a world organized in its own masses. Substance is thus split into a distinct ethical essence: into a human law and a divine law. In the same way, the self-consciousness that arises against it is ascribed, according to its essence, to one of these powers; and, as knowledge, it is divided into ignorance and knowledge of what it operates; knowledge which is therefore a false knowledge. Self-consciousness therefore experiences in its operation both the contradiction of those powers into which substance has split, and their mutual destruction; and also the contradiction of its knowing the ethicality of its own action with that which is ethical in and of itself; and it meets its own demise. But, in fact, by this movement the ethical substance has become effected self-consciousness, that is, this Self has become something that is in and for itself; but thus ethicality itself has gone down." (Phenomenology of Spirit, vol. II, op. cit., pp. 6-7). But in this way pure moral action becomes ambiguous, turns into self-deception. When modern analytical psychology recognized that what the individual man thinks of himself is pure appearance, pure rationalization, it acquired some of the Hegelian speculation. Hegel deduces the shift from pure self-consciousness to hypocrisy, which later in Nietzsche will become the critical point of attack on philosophy.

In Hegel the assertion that there is no moral real is decisive: in him the intuition that the moral element is not at all understood by itself, that moral consciousness does not guarantee at all an honest activity. Since morality in general is insufficient it falls into itself as immoral and therefore has only an arbitrary foundation. This critique of morality is irreconcilable with the apologetics of society which, in order to keep itself alive, needs the moral ideology of the individual, the renunciation of happiness.

[1967], [1978], [1990]

II. The progressive synthesis as growth of consciousness

Hegel submits to thought a phenomenology of the spirit, not of consciousness. By this is meant a description of the figures, categories, or symbols that guide this growth according to the order of a progressive synthesis.

It is not from consciousness that the genesis of meaning proceeds. Rather, consciousness is inhabited by a movement that mediates it and elevates its certainty to truth. In this way, the spirit, the Geist, becomes that movement, that dialectic of figures, which makes of consciousness a self-consciousness, a reason and, finally, thanks to the circular movement of the dialectic, reaffirms immediate consciousness, but in the light of the entire process of mediation. At first dispossession and only at the end repetition. In between, the essential, that is, the complete path of the constellation of figures: the lord and the servant, the stoic exile of thought, skeptical indifference, unhappy consciousness, devout thought, observation of nature, the spirit of enlightenment. Man becomes adult, becomes conscious insofar as he is capable of these new figures. All this is absolutely inexpressible. At the moment when thought puts it into words, what is said does not correspond to the movement thought before, it is not dialectically the same thing. The interest for Hegel is all here, in his adventurous search for something that cannot be found. The rhythms of the dialectic are prisoners of the figures that personify them, the thought that thinks them is not free to think them in another way. According to Hegel there is only one possible way, once the essence of reality is dialectical. Several times the philosopher betrays the presupposition and lets himself be taken by the force of events, by the creation in act of his saying, by the spontaneity of what he is thinking, but other times he goes back until he recomposes the general picture in the context of the constructed. By doing so, his saying is conditioned, it cannot but be placed in the dialectic in which it is expressed and here find that little bit of life that ends up characterizing it. Every instrument is a condition of the result. More than in any other philosophical place, Hegel's

thought is conditioned to the expression of itself, that is to its own dialectical logos, so much so that at times it seems almost a dialogue with itself. Self-consciousness has no different life, in the case of an opening to a different consciousness the perverse circle of dialectics ends and new perspectives come forward.

Thus Alexandre Kojève: "The Unhappy Consciousness is the Christian consciousness; it is the psychology of the Christian, who, for Hegel, is the most perfect type of the Religious. What does the Christian want? Like every man, he wants to objectify himself, to realize his ideal, which until it is realized is revealed to him in the feeling of insufficiency, of Schmerz, of pain. But, as long as he remains Religious, he does not succeed. In fact, what is it to realize, to objectify one's ideal, if not to have it recognized by others, by all others? In other words, it is to achieve individuality, the synthesis of the Particular and the Universal. And it is precisely this Individuality that the Christian seeks in his religious sentiment. If he imagines a Divinity and refers to a God, to an absolute external-reality, it is because he wants to be recognized by it, to be recognized by the Universal in its most particular Particularity. Only he fails to do so.

"Man imagines God because he wants to objectify himself. And he imagines a transcendent God because he cannot objectify himself in the World. But wanting to realize individuality through union with a transcendent God means realizing it in the transcendent, in Jenseits, in the Beyond of the World and of himself, considered as Bewußtsein, as living in the World. It means therefore to renounce the realization of the ideal in the World below, therefore to be and to know oneself unhappy in this World." (Introduction to the reading of Hegel [1933-1939], tr. it., Milan 1996, p. 254). Kojève knows that every recognition is conventional, that is, he proposes a recognition "under certain conditions", it is therefore necessary that these conditions are common to the recognizer and the recognized. The pain of non-recognition pervades the consciousness while the other remains distant and incomprehensible. Touching it with discourse, therefore with the doing that continually promulgates its rules, does not lead to a real overcoming. The Hegelian overcoming proved to be a mere illusion. Here nothing can be "taken away", and nothing can be brought with it, at least not in the overcoming. To go beyond is something different, a movement in which reason plays a secondary role. A freedom, albeit residual, laboriously renounces, but renounces, these ties and moves towards the desolation of non-convention. Here the principle of tolerance is no longer kept in mind. The redundancies that occur here are different, they refer to territories that are unthinkable in function of the proposal of openness, but they break the dialectical circle.

Kojève continues: "Said otherwise, on the one hand, the emotional religious attitude arises from the feeling of pain caused by the experience of the impossibility of realization in the World; on the other hand, it generates and nourishes this feeling. And it is this nostalgia, which is projected into the Hereafter, that fills with a theological content the pictures of the transcendence of the Verstand, situating therein the image of a personal God, of a self-conscious reality, of a Geist which, in reality, is the projection into the Hereafter of the unhappiness of religious Consciousness.

"So: to nourish, to cultivate nostalgia, the painful feeling of the insufficiency of the reality one lives, is to find oneself in the religious, indeed Christian, attitude. Conversely, to be in this attitude is to nourish and cultivate unhappiness and nostalgia.

"To escape religious psychology is, therefore, to suppress the unhappiness of Consciousness, the feeling of insufficiency. And this can be done either by realizing a real World, in which Man would be truly "satisfied", or by suppressing transcendence with an abstract act and reconciling the ideal with reality. The first solution is the one implemented in and with the French Revolution, which made

possible Hegel's absolute atheistic science. The second solution is that of the bourgeois Intellectual." (Ib., p. 255). But the realization being pursued here is that of being other than oneself, that of extreme rationality. Every improvement gathers the forces of the past, proposes itself as a pedestal for any future, as long as it serves to "add" something. Being oneself, exclusively, strongly oneself, is something else. In this perspective, there is no resentment, no original sin to be redeemed, no transcendence to be brought back down to earth. Realizing oneself in what one is seems to me to be the highest thinkable vision, even if not definitively sayable, given that what is transcribed here is only an ill-concealed betrayal. This is not a task because it is beyond any task. There is nothing to suppress because unhappiness was before, that is, in wanting to be other than oneself. Even the afflicted nihilistic notations, the desire to be beyond history, is only a way to modulate aspirations to the recognition of one's belonging to the other. The decision that interrupts the search for a "being other than oneself", is a desolate condition, a cry launched towards the desert, perhaps towards the great expanse of the glaciers, where there are no more paths and where no advice is accepted. The lack of a precise path is harmful and despairing, but it relaunches one's own possibilities of getting involved, it painfully suggests going further, as if the vessels of yesterday had been burned, in a propitiatory and ironic stake at the same time.

An exegesis of consciousness would consist of a progression through all the spheres of meaning that a consciousness must encounter and appropriate in order to reflect itself as a self, a human, adult, conscious self. This process has nothing to do with introspection; consciousness is nothing more than the internalization of the dialectical movement of the figures themselves.

It is certainly not possible today, after more than a century, to restore the Phenomenology of Spirit as it was written, but in any undertaking of the same style it is necessary to take as a guide two principles, two guiding themes:

1) Progress of the Hegelian dialectic. We are faced with a progressive, synthetic movement, in which each figure receives its own sense from the one that follows; thus skepticism is the truth of the recognition of the lord and the servant, but skepticism is the truth of the Stoic position that declares inessential and nullifies all differences between the lord and the servant, and so on. The truth of one moment lies in the next moment as indeed does its content; meaning always proceeds from the end to the beginning. Thus Giovanni Gentile: "The dialectical necessity of thought coincides with the freedom of thought; because all limits are generated by the same dialectic of thought. The limit of thought cannot be the limit of thought if it does not begin with being thought itself; if, as a limit, it is not in the very sphere of thought. Nature - the only possible limit of thought - is only abstractly nature, concretely it is thought in its internal mediation." (La riforma della dialettica hegeliana [1913], Florence 1975, p. 188). A limit, for the sole reason of existing, is itself an obstacle and a delimiting circumscription. If I accept this premise, I can think of the night of life as the primordial crucible and still fail to say something capable of conveying that thought. I can approach it, describing it indirectly - as I am doing now - but I cannot say that this thought is without limits because it is itself a limitation being able to separate the night of life from my saying something about it.

From this, first, rule of reading we derive that phenomenology is possible only because of this retrograde movement of the true. It does not create anything, but only makes sense explicit as it is discovered, since the final sense is immanent to each of its earlier moments. This is why the philosopher can model himself on what appears, that is, he can be a phenomenologist insofar as through what appears he comes to see the light of successive figures. It is this anticipation of the spirit that constitutes the truth, in itself unknowable, of the antecedent figures.

2) Content of the Hegelian dialectic. At issue in phenomenology is the production of the self, of the self of self-consciousness. Of course, this production of the self is inseparable from the production by progressive synthesis. Gentile again: "Absolutely actual thought is universal by its very necessity. The Platonic, Aristotelian universality (parallel to the identity of every concept with itself), the one desired by the realists and fought by the nominalists, is abstract universality, because it is the universality of abstract thought. One cannot speak of the universality of the concept of man, of animal, of triangle, of number, because there are not these concepts, neither in heaven nor on earth, but the thought that thinks these concepts. And the thought of these concepts cannot be the thought in general, the divine thought (of God who is other than us), if the only concrete thought is the thought absolutely ours. The only thinkable universality is therefore that of our act of thought. An act that is universal in the sense that, insofar as it is necessary, it arises as the thought, not of a particular thinker, from which other thinkers who are also particular may diverge, but as the thought of one who thinks for all". (Ib., pp. 189-190). Reasoning unexceptionable but partial, in any case on the side of poor Hegel who comes out not only reformed but also mistreated. The trouble lies in a before and an after, moments that Hegel resets by unifying them when here they are restored to shed light on the act that would incorporate them. But this non-dialectical summarization is spat out because Gentile does not allow for a distinction within the act. The monolithic nature of his thought prevents him from doing so, thus conferring on thought (act) a status that is not its own, that of fact (not thought).

It is remarkable to think that it is precisely in the moment of desire (Begierde) that the self prefigures itself, attracts itself towards itself. On this point Hegel and Freud meet: it is in the movement of desire that not only a new way of looking at the world is born, but also a new and different culture, sometimes able to transform the world. However, domination is always around the corner. The deep contradictions, and the same underlying tragedy of Gentile, are all present in these considerations: "In short, history is the progress of man towards freedom, as a single fleeting glance at the course of it attests. And every step towards true and proper freedom, in the individual and in history, is a step forward in philosophy. Freedom is the resolution and preservation of individuality in universality. Free is he who feels himself one with the law, and in the law he sees the form and value of his own will. Practical freedom, whether moral or political, remains a desire or a goal shrouded in obscurity until such unity is realized, and the individual sees outside, above, or against himself the law, which is his law. But freedom is not exhausted in the unification of the spirit with the practical law, for beyond this there is a higher law, which the spirit has no less need to make intrinsic to itself: which is the law of being, logic, truth. And this further, this extreme unification of the spirit with truth is philosophy: philosophy as we have seen it arise in a profoundly human way from the work of modern reflection, in particular from criticism. This supreme liberation of the spirit, which is philosophy, is in the same line as moral liberation, and is above it; because if it is not science that leads to morality, it is morality that leads to science; nor is there true science, - which is not vain knowledge of news and abstract constructions destitute of any value towards the interests of the spirit, - which can be reached by any other way than that of the free ethical will". (Ib., p. 124). I have never understood how these words could be those of a fascist. The real problem, the problematically obscure core from which to distance oneself with a critique, is religion, the unification of morality and religion made without exercising any spirit of distinction. Once again, Hegel is thrown out the door and is not slow to re-enter through the window. If free is who is identified with the law (which is plausible) we are talking about one of the many forced freedoms (the list would be too annoying), not freedom. And this could not escape a reformer of the Hegelian dialectic. But the forced (partial) freedom to which Gentile refers, a freedom that can only be found in law, from which coercion derives, if it is Hegelian thought, concerns the relationship with the content of reality and not with the possible ways of thinking about it. Certainly, conditioning concerns the object or, as we used to say, the pragmatics, while convention can be freely fixed, but the two moments must be left separate without the possibility of meeting, which is obviously

impossible, otherwise the two moments contaminate each other. The residue of freedom of which Hegel and Gentile speak (in different ways) moves in the sphere of history and conditions the spontaneity of thought, that is, its possible linguistic construction, which is in many ways the same thing. In the end, the freedom we are discussing here is reciprocal tolerance, a value that is debatable as much as one likes, but nevertheless to be taken into account.

Identities can be pushed further. The abandonment of the object, the death of the object play an essential part in this education of desire. The Hegelian gentleman who has put his own life at risk and rediscovers it as lordship, carries out the movement that Freud will describe as the conduct of mourning and installation of the object in the interiority. Gentile again: "The error, therefore, as such, is an abstraction: and its reality, its revelation consists in a dialectical moment of consciousness. This is to be said of all errors: of the small fleeting errors, which are committed in ordinary life and are quickly corrected; and of the great philosophical errors, which await correction for centuries. Any error is an error insofar as it is corrected and therefore gives rise to a truth. There is no error that is erased from the spirit, annihilating itself like writing on a blackboard. The spirit which first accepts an opinion and then abandons it because it is false, without substituting another opinion for it, is not to be conceived of as a pot which is first full and then empty. The spirit and its opinion are *unum et idem*; and the spirit, which was capable of error, having become aware of its falsity, is evidently no longer the spirit of before. He must have seen a truth, which he did not see before (or no longer sees, which is the same) - a truth, which is the negation of the ill-learned opinion. This is the eternal process of the spirit: from a truth to a higher truth; once this has been reached, the former no longer has any value: that is, it retains a value relative to the previous degree of consciousness, which can indeed be relived (and the historiographer relives it); but it is no longer current. In short, an error is a degree of the spirit, a category of being, insofar as it is evaluated from the point of view of the degrees, of the higher categories: and better than an error, we should speak of an erroneous spirit, which always comes by correcting itself. And correcting itself in two ways: in one way, in order to become a philosophical spirit, or explicit philosophy; and in the other, in order to proceed from one form to another and more perfect than philosophy itself. In two ways I have said, not because one of them is essentially different from the other; but because empirically they are distinguished by what the one corresponds to the prehistory of philosophy and the other to history." (Ib., pp. 127-128). That the progress of the spirit goes, from one form to another, towards its improvement is a very debatable fact, just as it is true that the error Gentile discusses goes towards another less serious error (not the true one, which is other than a hypothesized falsehood of milder entity) only on the condition of fixing a further error that is always less serious but not entirely devoid of falsehood. Subtracting dogmatic faith from this reasoning leaves little, a sort of inverted scholasticism devoid of symbols but no less squalid. When the Italian youth of the period between the two world wars discovered what was hidden under Gentile rigorism, they were shocked. A predominantly spiritual life needs little salt in the brain. To cross one's arms indignantly is typical of the intellectual who has gotten his feet wet and intends to retire them to safety. The same process of progressive diminution of error, corresponding (but up to a point) to an equally progressive acquisition of truth, is to be kept away. He who has his hands full wants to take advantage, for his own small needs, of the passage from error to truth; every analytical clarification, corresponding to a removal of quality, is for him a step towards truth but is also truth itself as a step, a strange truth, wounded and plastered, but still truth. One should not think of the utilitarian scepticism of the loner who holds the world in nonchalance, we are not necessarily faced with a kind of moral snobbery, but precisely in the presence of the consequences of a philosophical choice. Hegel, however, is far from this.

We see, however, that beyond the partial correspondences, very different is the sense that gives rise to the truth and related problems. In Hegel the spirit is the truth of life, a truth that does not yet know itself in the position of desire but is reflected in the awareness of life. In Freud every sublimation that

makes new, essentially social goals appear, must be understood economically as a return of the object libido, to the narcissistic libido.

Self-consciousness, Jean Hyppolyte will say, is in this awareness the origin of a truth which is for itself at the same time as it is in itself, which is made into a history through the mediation of different self-consciousnesses, of which only the interaction and unity constitute the spirit.

This recurrent movement of the true assigns its full meaning to the Hegelian philosophy of desire. For if self-consciousness can be said to be desire, it is so insofar as desire is already illuminated by the dialectic of the splitting of consciousness into two rival self-consciousnesses. Precisely in the light of the subsequent dialectic of lord and servant the previous dialectic possesses a truth.

Thus the position of self-consciousness, as a desire in the proceeding of itself, allows there to be a light in existence. In this way it places itself as desire precisely on the path of returning to itself, from the simple consciousness that was only the explanation of the other being of the world. What it pursues is itself, so it will only reach itself through its relationship with another desire, with another self-consciousness. But this attainment is not absolute. Starting from anguish or need, from the restlessness that both summarizes them, it does not arrive at a definitive word, at an absolute answer. There is nothing absolved in Hegel if not the final conclusion, that's why many opportunities for reflection are possible even if the background is always the flat one of a proponent of order and discipline. To absolve oneself means to accept the reduced dimension that hosts us, to consider oneself arrived, to fight the nostalgia of what we could have done and did not do, to dogmatically affirm that only what we did, for the mere fact of having done it, was the only possible thing to do. In the relationship with the other, a desire coagulates that cannot be compared to the other desire, the original desire, eternally present, which then becomes the final desire, that of the womb. Death (all nostalgia for birth is nostalgia for death) must be constructed, not merely wished for, as its thought approaches in a more convincing and detailed manner.

According to Hippolyte we are in front of a teleological dialectic, which progressively explicates all the horizons of this desire that is birth of self-consciousness. In this teleological aspect of phenomenology the true archeological character of Freudism is manifested. In the contrast of Hegel we discover in Freud a strange philosophy of destiny that is like the invincible reverse of every phenomenology of the spirit, magnetized by the absolute future of total discourse. Archaicity of the Id, the superego, narcissism and the death instinct, form but one archaicity, while the movement of the Spirit is its opposite.

The antithesis can be summarized as follows: the spirit is that which assumes its own sense in certain successive figures, it is the movement that always annihilates its own starting point and is affirmed only at the end. The unconscious means that intelligibility always proceeds from anterior figures even in the case where this anteriority is understood in a purely chronological or metaphorical sense. Hegel, in the conclusion of Lectures on the History of Philosophy [1816-1830], writes: "The general result of the history of philosophy is, first, that in each age there has been only one philosophy, whose synchronous differences constitute the necessary sides of a single principle; second, that the succession of philosophical systems is not accidental, but represents the necessary gradual series of the unfolding of this science; third, that the last philosophy of each age is the conclusion of this unfolding, the truth in the supreme form which the self-consciousness of the spirit gives of itself. The last philosophy, therefore, includes in itself all the stages; it is the product and conclusion of all the previous philosophies. Today, for example, one can no longer be Platonic. It is also necessary to rise above the pettiness of opinions, thoughts, objections and individual difficulties and above our own vanity that

makes us believe we have thought something special. In fact, to grasp the intimate substantial spirit is the point of view of the individual; within the whole he is like a blind man pushed forward by the intimate spirit of the whole. Therefore our point of view is now to know this idea as spirit, as absolute spirit, which thus sets against itself another spirit, the finite spirit, whose principle is to know the absolute spirit, so that this becomes for him." (Vol. III, t. II, Florence 1964, pp. 417-418). To serve one's own era? Not really, perhaps preparing life for subsequent epochs. To create the conditions so that these are in part predictable in the act in which we act, in the moment that our action follows what (only a posteriori) we can define as its vocation. In being oneself to the full, a call is realized that does not make us back down in the face of the abyss that we continually see behind every unsolved enigma.

Man is the only being who is the prey of his infancy so that he is always in front of a symbolic anteriority that attracts him, an order that is the opposite of that of the spirit. Very generally one could say therefore: the spirit is the order of what is final, the unconscious of what is primordial: the spirit is history, the unconscious is destiny. Hegel allowing.

[1971], [1996]

III. Hegel's phenomenology and Husserl's phenomenology.

On the one hand (Edmund Husserl) a groping thought, uncertain, heedless of history, inclined to admit that the problem of knowledge conveniently posed and solved provides the key to all philosophy (thus rejection of the whole philosophical tradition), finally the idea that philosophy is a matter of personal reflection of a spirit that in this way acquires not a "new reality" but a "new knowledge", so that it does not need in its work to put itself in continuity with the history of the world, but only to get in touch with things (a natural contact).

On the other hand (Hegel) a solid and systematic doctrine, always determined by its end, which asserts that philosophy arises from history, which denies the ultimate real scope of the problem of knowledge (considered only a phase of the evolution of knowledge), which proclaims that philosophical knowledge reveals the absolute Spirit to itself and ensures its total perfection.

Beyond these oppositions there is more. Edmund Husserl has always risen against any dialectical conception of philosophy. But before examining these criticisms two remarks must be made.

Husserl is not a historian of philosophy; his knowledge of the history of philosophy is clearly deficient. Indeed, this serves him only as an illustration or contrast. His interests come from reflection on a particular scientific discipline: mathematics. Of which he is perfectly aware. The case of Hegel is different. Husserl begins his career at a time of particular discredit for Hegelian philosophy. The reasons for this discredit are unrelated to an overall evaluation of this philosophy, rather they stem from a misinterpretation of the Hegelian philosophy of nature.

All the science of the nineteenth century had radically contradicted the claims of the philosophy of nature, as in the Renaissance had occurred with Aristotle. But we are mistaken if we think that the Hegelian cosmology proposed simply to anticipate the path of positive science expecting from it a confirmation or a condemnation. Hegel has never arrogated to himself the vain task of trying to invent in advance, and with the sole forces of reason, a knowledge that frees "by nature" from empirical observation.

With the philosophy of nature Hegel intends to provide an explanation of nature and life as they offer themselves to us in non-scientific experience. However, Husserl's attitude towards Hegel was, in the relative context, unavoidable, but it cannot serve as a basis for comparison today.

The opposition between the two phenomenologies is, it will be said, total, since one implies a conception of phenomenology that reduces it to a description of things, while the other describes the necessary vicissitudes of the becoming of the spirit in history, vicissitudes imposed by the nature of the spirit itself with which the philosopher finds himself in absolute connivance. It is therefore not a description but a creation. The result of the description carried out by Husserl is however a deepening of the structure of things, that is a discussion on the essence of reality. There are no objects that are not historically determined, i.e. are not factual reality. The transition to Hegel is the consideration that this search for essence is a project inherent in things themselves that is discovered in observation, an element of things and a product of things. Phenomenology, in any case, is activity that projects toward the future, that emerges from conditions of need and looks toward a completion, that examines and realizes a project. None of this would be possible if the historical mechanism of possible satisfaction were not presupposed within reality. The suspension that he observes is founded by Husserl on a negative hypothesis directed towards coming out towards the positivity of the project construction, the same happens in Hegel, where however the movement takes another name and is enriched with other considerations, while remaining identical to the Husserlian version. There is no phenomenological possibility that does not include a description. Hegel does not rest in the acceptance and contemplation of something, he proceeds towards successive determinations. The succession of figures, while captured in dialectical disposition, is always an actualization, a historically verifiable transformation. The fact that we often find ourselves with nothing in our hands is a critical extreme. It is not true that of every reading of Hegel (perhaps less so of Husserl) we are left with nothing in our hands. The prize is sometimes cruel to our illusions.

Husserl's philosophy is inspired by the intention to return to things themselves. It deems such a project possible because it conceives of consciousness as exhaustively defined by intentionality. The nature of consciousness is not that of possessing content; on the contrary, it is consciousness of what appears to it. Only in this way does it become conceivable for consciousness to say that things are. Of course this is not enough to liquidate all the difficulties of knowledge, but it is enough to radically transform it. Enzo Paci writes talking about Husserl: "The true meaning of the general does not deny the individual: the essence is the life of the individual and the individual really lives only in essential relations. In this way the most formal theory, the theory of theories, is necessary to the most concrete factual life and this is necessary to the other. The individual becomes generalized, the general becomes individualized." (*Funzione delle scienze e significato dell'uomo*, Milan 1963, p. 135). No fear of abstractness, this is Paci's message, inserted in the end in a combative vision of life and in a not entirely incorrect conception of the class struggle. The Marxist veil, in conclusion, was never in front of him as an impenetrable obstacle. The love for men often leads to paid sanatoriums where clinical pictures are advanced to understand coercion and hide consequences. Theory lies well beyond this mess, reflecting with it as a tool, continuing to pay, does not move the problem one step. A crime is always a motion of the soul and requires the same effort of negation that was necessary to write the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Giulio Preti, following the same line of reasoning: "A discourse (a theory, a discipline, a science) is devoid of factual sense where at least a part of the statements contained in it - and precisely that part that syntactically constitutes the class of consequences - cannot be made to correspond to statements describing sensible facts, true or false according to the occurrence or not of empirical facts contained in them". (*Praxis and Empiricism*, Turin 1957, p. 38). And the redundancies? Is it possible that they are all hidden in that "at least in part"? I, who read Preti's text at the end of the 1950s, asked myself this question early on. Yet it is not a parade speech that he makes, he does not expect with this

position of cautious critical suspension any compensation. The spell of an asymmetrical construction of thought was not entirely foreign to him and he did not consider it a fictitious ornament. Our Hegel did the same.

In very different terms, but quite close in meaning, are some remarks from the Preface to the *Phenomenology*. "The more rigidly opinion conceives the true and the false as opposing entities, the more then, in relation to a different philosophical system, it expects solely either approval or disapproval, and only one or the other it knows how to see in a stance with respect to that different system itself. Opinion can scarcely form a concept of the diversity of philosophical systems; rather, it sees in the diversity a contradiction rather than the progressive development of truth. The bud disappears in the flowering, and one could say that the flower is refuted by it; similarly, when the fruit appears, the flower is declared to be a false existence of the plant, and the fruit takes the place of the flower as its truth. These forms not only distinguish themselves; but each of them also vanishes under the impetus of the other, because they are mutually incompatible. But at the same time their noble nature elevates them to moments of the organic unity, in which they not only do not repel each other, but are on the contrary necessary to each other no less, and this equal necessity now constitutes the life of the whole. But just as, in part, the contradiction to a philosophical system does not know how to conceive itself in this way, so, on the other hand, the consciousness which accepts this contradiction within itself does not know how to free it or keep it free from its one-sidedness, nor, in what appears in the form of a struggle against itself, does it know how to recognize interesting moments."

(*Phenomenology of Spirit* [1807], tr. it., vol. I, Florence 1963, p. 4). The distinction is summed up in the organic unity, and herein lies the nobility of its analytical origin, but from this unity it does not reproduce the detail of something that even in the unity could not but be there, but only the necessity of the procedure, the rhythm of the mechanism. The more I advance in distinguishing, the less perfect what I have in my hands appears to me. Yet distinction is the primary condition of my living among things, of my daily production. There is a contradiction in this only if I consider philosophical reflection as something detached from reality, because it is only the philosopher who looks back at the lost unity and regrets it, regrets in other words not being able to find it in the dissection carried out for the analytical love of truth. Reality asks for this distinction and I provide it, and so I blind the presupposition of beauty, that nobility of which Hegel speaks, and my work is necessary because I must respond to the continuous onset of the real that asks for explanations precisely to my philosophical ability to speak of its way of being, of its living that is also mine and of which I am the stupidly satisfied counterpart.

Hegel again: "The demand for such clarifications, as well as the way to satisfy it, lead very easily to discard the essential. Where better could the ultimate meaning of a philosophical work be expressed than in the aims and results of it? And how could these aims and results be more clearly known than by their difference from what the culture of an age produces in the same field? However, not that such a procedure should be valid beyond the beginning of knowledge; not that it should be valid for eventual knowledge, it should in fact be counted among those discoveries which serve only to go around the thing itself, and to misrepresent the actual lack of discipline by the appearance of serious work. For the thing itself is not exhausted in its purpose, but in the process of its realization; nor in the result is the effected Whole; on the contrary, this is the result with its becoming; for itself the purpose is the non-vital universal just as the tendency is the mere impetus still deprived of its effectivity and the naked result is the dead spoil that the tendency has left behind. Similarly, diversity is rather the limit of the thing: it is where the thing ceases, or it is what the thing is not. Such a work around the purpose and the results, and around the diversity and the evaluations of one and the other, is a lighter effort than it might seem. In fact, instead of concentrating on the thing, such a proceeding only bypasses it; instead of lingering in it and forgetting itself in it, such a knowledge always attaches itself to something else, and

remains with itself, instead of being with it and abandoning itself to it. Of what has compactness and intrinsic content it is well easy to judge; more difficult is to understand it; extremely difficult is to produce the objective representation, which unifies the one and the other element." (Ib., pp. 4-5). Something that is about to be taken away, Hegel says, in reality is its limit, a limit that I find in the further process but which, when I see it as a movement that is overcoming the really existing relation, impoverishes me like any limit, demands satisfaction (the task of the notomizer) but never, never fully satisfies. The purpose of any distinction (the sadness of scientific discovery) is a limit with no reason other than that of minimal effort. Certainly that is a reason too, but it satisfies no one (apart from pragmatists). The structure of the thing, its essence, escapes me as soon as I want to take hold of it, and this causes me pain and anxiety. To get out of the cul-de-sac I have to satisfy myself through dissatisfaction. My stomach has become accustomed to this food and so I can even satisfy myself.

Hegel continues: "The beginning of the process of liberation from the immediacy of substantial life must always consist in acquiring knowledge of fundamental principles and universal points of view; in rising, thus, to the thought of the thing, supporting or refuting it however with principles: in conceiving its concrete and rich fullness according to intrinsic determinations, and in formulating on it a well-constructed judgment and a serious judgment. But this beginning of philosophy, first of all, will make room for the seriousness of the full life, seriousness that introduces the experience of the thing itself; and when, then, the rigor of the concept will have descended into the depths of the thing, then that cognition and judgment will know how to remain in their proper place in the conversation.

"The true figure in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of it. To collaborate in bringing philosophy closer to the form of science - to the goal attained which it is able to lay down in the name of love of knowledge in order to be true knowledge - this is what I have proposed. The inner necessity for knowledge to be science lies in its nature: and, with respect to this point, the clarification that most satisfies is only the presentation of philosophy itself. But the external necessity in so far as it, apart from the accidentality of the person and the particular occasion which prompted it, is conceived in a universal way, is nothing different from the internal necessity, and consists in the form in which an age represents the being of its moments. If it could be shown that our age is propitious for the elevation of philosophy to science, this would be the only real justification for attempts to achieve this goal, since the necessity of it would be emphasized or even realized. (Ib., p. 5). Let us set aside for a moment the conclusion in the system. The methodological closure will seem at least unjustified in the face of the previous appeal made to the seriousness and totality of the commitment. To penetrate into the thing itself, that is the problem, not to go around it like moths gone mad. This is not a movement of the soul, a mystical experience, but an opening to a public universe, a physiological movement. The thing is the element that allows you to feel the depth of your own bodily environment, that allows you to read aloud the intuitive nuances that infiltrate a single breath. The world that seems to remain closed to any attempt to break in, here can be lured into a trap, and like a huge skein gently unraveled. Ancient texts are thus brought to light in every layer of the parchment of flesh, without tearing.

Hegel thinks that knowledge cannot be conceived as a bridge between consciousness and what it is not. Such a way of seeing is contradictory in itself, since it considers knowledge as simply different from itself.

Here, then, is a common content in Hegel and Husserl. From the moment of perception, consciousness reveals itself as an ecstatic interiority, that is, as an interiority that is (not that has) a movement toward the other than itself. Paci again: "That my individuality can pose itself to myself as a teleological ideal does not mean that it can count as something definitive, that it can be definitive. I myself as a single person, as evidence, as an individual, have truth in me, but I have it as an index of an infinite

explication according to the sense of universal correlation. For this reason, my individuality does not give me a definitive science but, in phenomenological research, it must be taken as an index, as the starting point of phenomenological explication. This means that if the cosmos, the Weltall, is in every individual, truth, the sense of truth, is never in me a singular revelation, but is the index of all other possible revelations and is therefore such as to reveal itself connected in a system of universal relations. The claim to make truth coincide with an index of it is the identification of the hidden with the revealed, and thus the denial of the task of phenomenology of explication. In this sense Husserl affirms that a science of the separate individual, of the single, of the atomic removed from relations is not possible." (Function of the Sciences and the Meaning of Man, op. cit., p. 137). I can't hold the truth in my fist, and not even what I think is conquerable, accumulable, on reflection, can I definitively enclose it. Everything runs away and crumbles, set as it is on the effect of the unpredictable. Success is a mockery of destiny, the calculated system a crumb of no importance. Even joyful desire must be regarded as an enemy if I run the risk of falling in love with its beauty like a fool.

Of this fact Hegel will provide a Hegelian explanation while Husserl will merely see that things "are" like this. Hegel's explanation is that consciousness is movement toward an absolute defined as pure self-possession, in the reciprocity of interior and exterior, in the reciprocity of matter and spirit, which consciousness does not reach at the first stroke, but from which it is not even entirely separate. It is not separated because this absolute is in the end itself, so that the movement that seems to lead it outside itself is in reality a realization of itself. Thus the concept of necessity is overturned into that which cannot have in itself its reason for being. The force weakens and is no longer capable of self-generation other than the repetition of the model. There is no satisfaction in the claim to win, every moment being available for domination. Everyone looks around for a foothold, thinking that this foundation is owed to them. Loss is an unlikely foundation but certainly much more available to the project of life, the prospect of denial, of death. To insert oneself critically into existence requires a real capacity for self-foundation, and no one provides us with this capacity. If we observe the loss of everything, and of ourselves, we find a founding indication in the negative, an activity of transformation that always catches us off guard by showing us our isolation and the radical impossibility of philosophy to constructively remedy this restlessness. The strength of the whole can be seen through the weakness of the other, the distinction recovered in its belonging to the whole - according to the teaching of Hegel - and here escape the ontological mystification, the claim to be able to satisfy the need for life, the need for fullness that continues to elude us. Reality is in the loss of ourselves in the other, in the subsistence of this passage, in not resisting its eternal flow.

For both phenomenologies examined, the starting point is the "aiming" at a present datum; both affirm that this aiming, if it becomes aware of itself, must transform and overcome itself. This transformation consists in moving from aiming at a datum to the perception of a thing. It is remarkable that the engine of this movement is in the two philosophers very similar. Each time it is the real sense experienced and exercised by the aiming and of what is aimed at that manages to change the aiming into perceiving. Aiming" is distance but it is also sharing, focusing, taking on one's own, not resisting. Living includes a certain way of "aiming", but this can decay from attention to habit, and existence finds here the nourishment that sustains it and puts it to sleep by lulling and deluding it. In the guise of deriving an opinion, this aim is useful, it is useful in the construction of the processes of cause and effect, it acts as an origin and even as a foundation. In its possible aspect, as we saw before, it does not provide answers about the past nor does it scientifically predict the future, it proposes opportunities and possibilities. Aiming is thus only possible and its so-called result, remembrance, is not what deduces the process but what life, one's own destiny, proceeds towards.

At this point the two philosophers diverge. Husserl stops in the explanation of a consciousness that remains, in the final analysis, an irretrievable arising, that is, that preserves a being as such. Hegel strives to recover this being of itself, dragging consciousness by a movement that must include all history, toward a final figure that is realization of an absolute spirit.

Husserl's phenomenology describes, Hegel's constructs dialectically. In fact, this apparently clear differentiation is very superficial.

Here is what Husserl says: "Meanings revived by distant and confused intuitions, by indirect intuitions - when they are at least intuitions - cannot be enough for us. We want to return to 'things themselves'. We want to make it evident, on the basis of fully developed intuitions, that precisely what is in the abstraction currently carried out is really and truly corresponding to the meaning of the words in the expression of the law; and, from the point of view of the praxis of knowledge, we want to arouse in us the ability to maintain the meanings in their unshakable identity, by means of verification, sufficiently repeated, on the basis of reproducible intuition (or of the intuitive carrying out of the abstraction). In this way, by bringing to light the variable meanings, which the same logical term assumes in different enunciative contexts, we convince ourselves precisely of the existence of equivocation; it becomes evident to us that what the word means in this or that place finds its filling in substantially different formations or moments of intuition, that is, in essentially different general concepts; by specifying the confused concepts and appropriately modifying the terminology, we then also obtain the desired "clarity and distinction" of logical propositions.

"The phenomenology of logical experiences has the aim of making us understand descriptively (not, for example, from an empirical-psychological point of view) these psychic experiences and the meaning inherent in them, thoroughly enough to enable us to give determinate meanings to all fundamental logical concepts - meanings, that is, which, after having been clarified by recourse to an analytical examination of the essential connections between signifying intention and meaning-filling, are at once comprehensible and certain in their possible cognitive function; in short: meanings responsive to the interest of pure logic itself, and first and foremost to the interest of a true critical-cognitive understanding of the essence of this discipline. The fundamental logical and noetic concepts have not so far been completely clarified; they are accompanied by numerous equivocal meanings, so harmful and so difficult to accept and therefore to keep distinct, that it is precisely here that the main cause of the backward state in which pure logic and the theory of knowledge find themselves is to be sought." (*Ricerche logiche* [1900-1901], tr. it., Milan 1968, pp. 82-83). What verification Husserl wants to do? That of the empirical foundation. In fact, only a speech that logically does not make sense can be empirically proven, then acquire a logical sense a posteriori. The factual truth would come in this way to make up for the limitations of the truth of reason, Kantian synthesis would help the analysis. Husserl's thesis is sustainable because there is no homogeneity between truth of fact and truth of reason, while for Hegel the movement that distinguishes them belongs to the spirit that is objectified in nature and from there returns as truth. But how does one express truths of fact? For Hegel this is done through the intelligibility provided by the spirit of the time, that is, the reality in which we live. For Husserl the reasoning is no different in that the attempt to name them in the empirical specification is done with language and this is in time.

"However, we must admit," Husserl continues, "that many conceptual distinctions and delimitations of the purely logical sphere come to evidence in the natural attitude, thus without phenomenological analysis. While one performs the corresponding logical acts by adapting to the intuition that operates the filling, one does not reflect on the same phenomenological situation, but one can also confuse the fuller evidence, give a false interpretation of what it grasps, reject its safer choices. In particular, a

clarifying investigation is required of the tendency (by no means accidental) of philosophical reflection to inadvertently mistake the objective attitude for the psychological and to fuse together their attitudes - which must be kept distinct in principle, however correlative they may be in relation to their essential status - with the consequence that, in the interpretation of logical objectivities, we allow ourselves to be misled by psychologistic misunderstandings. By their nature, these clarifications can only be given by a phenomenological theory of the experiences of thought and knowledge, which constantly considers the intentional object inherent in them by essence (exactly in the ways in which it "manifests itself," "presents itself," etc., as such in them). Only by a pure phenomenology, which is anything but psychology understood as an empirical science of the properties and psychic states of animal realities, can psychologism be radically overcome. Only it offers even in our sphere all the presuppositions for a definitive and sufficient determination of all the purely logical fundamental evidences and concepts. Only it dispels the inevitable semblance, precisely because it arises for essential reasons, that induces us to interpret logical objectivity as something psychological." (Ib., pp. 83-84). The point is to find the phenomenologically adequate language. Any logically grounded discourse proves nothing because of its own tautology. Husserl's attempt is a humanistic effort to refound the world from a simply mental operation, decontextualizing things, putting reality in brackets. It is an attempt to get rid of the condemnation to silence - implicit in Hegel -, to go beyond historicism, to reconstruct a modest but superb humanism, destined to a secondary job, and for this very reason proud of its own choice.

Husserl again: "The motivations now discussed of phenomenological analysis are essentially connected, as can easily be seen, with those that arise from fundamental and more general gnosological problems. In fact, if we understand these problems in their maximum generality - therefore, evidently in a "formal" generality, which makes abstraction from any "cognitive matter" - they are to be counted among the problems concerning the clarification of the idea of a pure logic. The fact that every activity of thinking and knowing is directed towards objects or states of affairs, which it can grasp in such a way that their "being-in-itself" manifests itself as an identifiable unity in the multiplicity of real or possible acts of thinking, i.e. of signifying acts; moreover, the fact that every thought has its own form, subject to ideal laws that define in general the objectivity or ideality of knowledge - all this raises these questions again and again: how are we to understand the fact that the "in itself" of objectivity comes to "representation," indeed to "apprehension" in knowledge, thus becoming subjective again; what does it mean that the object is "given in itself" and in knowledge; how can the ideality of the general, as concept or law, present itself in the flow of the real psychic experiences and become cognitive possession of the thinking subject; what does it mean, in relation to knowledge, the *adaequatio rei ac intellectus*, in the different cases, when the cognitive learning concerns something individual or general, a fact or a law, etc.? It is clear, however, that these and similar questions are absolutely inseparable from those tending to illuminate the scope of pure logic, to which we have previously alluded. The task of clarifying logical ideas, such as concept and object, truth and proposition, fact and law, etc., inevitably leads to the same problems: which should, moreover, be faced because, otherwise, the essence of the very clarification to which phenomenological analyses tend would remain obscure". (Ib., pp. 85-86). Hegel works on the construction of the world, Husserl on its description. The latter task could be considered a logical presupposition of the former, but it is not; the two movements diverge. After all, the "things themselves" do not belong to man except under the productive derubrication, that is, thanks to their modification into objects made comprehensible. Skipping this phase one finds oneself in conditions that are only hypothetical, that is, devoid of basic interpenetration. Consciousness can be cooled in distinctions that are no longer reasonable, even if they can be stretched once again until they connect with productive links. This step backwards is present in Hegel but it immediately disappears in the dialectical procedure, that is, in the mechanism that brings the luxuriance of experience back into the "superior" overloaded condition of totality. In Husserl, on the other hand, each descriptive element repropose itself endlessly in order to

realize that chimera which in Hegel is seen as pain and captivity. The insistence on particulars seeks in Husserl to escape the ever looming psychologism and, in fact, this descriptive elongation produces a kind of "swelling" of "things themselves", not a more careful penetration (a total penetration is obviously a contradiction in terms). The central axis of this description is always the suspension of judgement, the refinement of the analytical instrument, its emancipation from every psychological caveat. But the pressing of the angles, the reaching of a state of excitement precisely of cognitive layers never touched before, the gratuitous universalization of certain passages (from saying to doing and vice versa), are not able to constitute a guarantee of logicity. In fact, the paths of Husserlian inheritance have been directed towards other destinations, even if the basic method lent itself to a different development that cannot be considered a real betrayal. The thing in itself remains, as is natural, remote (non-existent in the presence of any suspension that is never zeroing physical conformation), even if here it claims to aspire to the status of "in itself" of "state of things" or "object". A state never specified by Husserl as a productive element and product of the world itself.

Last but not least, the Husserlian description is entirely based on the dialectical opposition between sense and presence. Depending on whether one pushes Husserl's philosophy (but the work is illegitimate anyway) to emphasize one or the other one can regard it as idealism or realism.

It is clear that the attitude of the subject toward what is for him an object is liable to assume very different, even opposite, modes. There is, with phenomenological language, a variation in the intentionality of consciousness. In practice, a first character of meaning is that it develops ceaselessly with its own forces alone, so that the position of consciousness with regard to what might be called the becoming of meaning is extremely ambiguous. It is at the same time constituent and witness.

In the same way that in Hegel, consciousness appears as the witness of a process taking place in it, which it cannot dominate but which, nevertheless, awaits from it its realization. This mystery of a consciousness acting and acted upon at the same time is fundamental in the two phenomenologies. Here is how Hegel expresses himself in the Conclusion to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy [1816-1830]: "The present point of view of philosophy is that the idea is known in its necessity; that each of the sides in which it is expressed, nature and spirit, is considered to represent the totality of the idea, not only as identical in itself, but also as that which produces from its own bosom this unique identity; and that this latter is therefore known as necessary. Nature and the spiritual world, i.e. history, are the two realities; what is as real nature is the image of divine reason; the forms of self-conscious reason are also forms of nature. The ultimate goal and interest of philosophy is to reconcile thought, concept, with reality. It is easy to find fulfillment in other subordinate points of view, such as those of intuition, feeling, etc., but it is also easy to find fulfillment in other subordinate points of view. But the deeper the spirit has penetrated into itself, the stronger the opposition, the greater the wealth outside; the depth is to be measured by the magnitude of the need with which it searches towards the outside, in order to find it there." (Vol. III, t. II, tr. it., Florence 1964, p. 410). Immediately evident here is the undivided and inexhaustible address of Hegel. Not a rejection of particular conditions (even morbidly so), but their collection in a harder field, in that base of existence without rhythms and doubts (no oscillation, no unpredictable movement) that allows history, the melting pot of animals, plants, men, stones, an inexhaustible whole producer of meanings. These measures were not conducted beyond an always possible schematization. It was preferred to see only one contradiction at a time, avoiding even questioning the very possibility of a contradiction outlined too clearly. By placing attention toward the earth, as historical materialism has done, one has abandoned the sky (and this abandonment has been very positive, up to a certain point), but then one has not gone ahead in the concrete search for all that toward the earth was possible to identify. Thus, it was possible to discover that power is not so much separated from those who suffer it, and that this link can even be strengthened in a sort of collaboration

between two opposites that casts any possible solution (of a radical nature) in a bad light based on the consideration of simple contradiction. A labyrinth of directions seems to run through the real, the sharpness of once turned out to be only a model to facilitate things, a model that only succeeded in cheating them.

According to Husserl of the classical period, meaning has value of knowledge and truth only if it is filled. It is presence that has the power to fill. But how can a presence fill a meaning? Jean-Paul Sartre's proposal does not appear convincing: "How could we conceive the negative form of judgment, if everything were fullness of being and positivity? If there is being everywhere, it is not only nothingness that is inconceivable: from being there will never be negation. The condition that makes it possible to say is not that non-being is a perpetual presence, in us and outside of us, it is that nothingness affects being". (*L'être et le néant* [1943], Paris 1950, pp. 46-47). In other words, this is only possible with a change of intentionality towards meaning itself. So either presence fills nothing or it is still a sense but aimed in a different way. Therefore, trying to know what characterizes a "present sense" one is sent back to a certain attitude of consciousness to which, moreover, corresponds a modification of the object. Sartre himself goes on to say: "The ideal of knowing is to be what is known and the original structure is not to be what is known. Worldliness, spatiality, etc., only express this non-being. Thus I find myself everywhere between myself and being as the nothing that is not being. The world is human. The very particular position of consciousness is clear: being is everywhere, against me, around me, weighing on me, besieging me, and I am perpetually postponed, from being to being. I want to grasp this being and I find only me. It is a fact that knowledge, intermediary between being and non-being, sends me back to absolute being, if I want it subjective, and sends me back to myself when I believe I grasp the absolute. The very sense of knowledge is what it is not and is not what it is, because, in order to know being as it is, it would be necessary to be this being, but there is no being as it is except because I am not the being I know, and if I were to become it, the being as it is would vanish and could no longer be thought of. Knowledge puts us in the presence of the absolute and there is a truth of knowledge. But this truth, though it discovers to us nothing more and nothing less than the absolute, remains strictly human." (*Ib.*, pp. 269-270). Conclusion: a pure and simple opposition of meaning and presence is untenable. Presence is meaning conceived differently from non-present or merely purposive meaning. In other words, existence itself can be said to be a sense and not what merely fills a sense.

Now this truth is at the heart of Hegelian phenomenology. It teaches us that a mere putting into presence of consciousness and its object, is totally unacceptable. Experience is not a way of consciousness about things, it is becoming of consciousness in things. For Hegel, phenomenological anthropology is a phenomenology of spirit, that is, the becoming of consciousness in man and the becoming of man in the world can only be conceived as the realization of an absolute totality.

A final problem: the situation of the phenomenologist with respect to his description.

Husserl, at first, did not notice this problem, thinking it possible that this description is like that of a spectator not in cause, while on the contrary this is not possible. In Hegel, precisely because the *Phenomenology of Spirit* consciously tends toward the constitution of an absolute totality, the problems arising from the position of the phenomenologist are not lost sight of.

Ultimately, any phenomenology presupposes a phenomenologist who knows more about it than the self or consciousness he describes. But what does this supra-knowledge mean? What is its legitimacy? In fact, phenomenological description is oriented by a knowledge and an experience that are not the ones it describes. Consciousness is not so easily bracketed, not even phenomenological consciousness.

Rationality tends to hegemonize reality, often dramatically asking for an index of orientation, a reference that takes it to an elsewhere capable of giving better answers to suffering and anxiety. There are counterpowers that continually threaten the fictitious "peace" of a parenthesis, that demand a more just perspective at the risk of radical dispersion. Failure to respond to these instances results in uncontrollable rejections that pollute the outcome of phenomenological description, that deliver the results to a new perspective of power. A new rationality, this time stronger, comes to reset to zero any result obtained, with holy peace of every aseptic phenomenological attempt.

In the first Husserl there is the claim to describe a subjectivity that is not yet positively intersubjective. But these descriptions cannot be accomplished without language, which by its very nature is a phenomenon of the intersubjective layer of experience. A classical philosopher would respond that the experience to be described is completed and finished in itself before being translated into language. But a philosophy of intentionality that fights against the illusion of immanence cannot admit the existence of an experience that has come without the intervention of language to its full reality. By which we see that the notion of a phenomenology that assumes absolutely nothing at its beginning, an idea dear to Husserl, is simply mythical.

Indeed, Husserl's latest development shows useful indications in this sense, something akin to rethinking.

[1971], [1990]

IV Dialectic of the Thought and Dialectic of Thinking.

The center of Hegelian idealism is the concept of dialectic. Already in Plato's dialectic, ideas are conceived as constituting a system, and Aristotle grants value only to the apophantic, enunciative discourse that requires the synthesis of concepts.

But in this philosophy the concepts are placed between them in a mere relationship as if they were a prius and the relationship a posterius. It will be Immanuel Kant to clarify that the truth is not achieved through the construction of thought that is modeled on the relationships of reality (as had recognized the previous philosophies), but through the a priori synthesis that is category, then concept, but transcendental concept that is original concept, pure concept. With other logical means, but keeping in mind the problem in Kant's development, Søren Kierkegaard: "That thought in itself has reality, was the presupposition of all ancient and medieval philosophy. By Kant this presupposition was questioned. Now, if one admits that Hegelian philosophy did indeed lead to the bottom of Kant's skepticism (yet it seems that this is always a big problem, despite all that Hegel and his school, with the help of the terms "method" and "manifestation," did to hide what Schelling, with the terms "intellectual intuition" and "construction," had confessed more openly; namely, that theirs was a new point of departure) and thus reconstructed, in a higher form, the theory so that thought has reality not in virtue of a presupposition; can it be said that the reality of thought, consciously constructed is a conciliation? Then philosophy would be carried only as far as that point from where in ancient times it began, when precisely conciliation had its enormous importance." (*The Concept of Anguish* [1844], tr. it., Florence 1942, pp. 11-12). In other words, we are in front of the same thought as an act of thinking, in order to constitute the thought, it is not a matter of the concept in the sense of concept in itself, but concept in the sense of conceiving. Here we would place the interesting observation of Giovanni Gentile, according to which the actuality of language is demonstrated by its spontaneity. But the constitution of the thought is still possible thanks to the language-object, to the language that comes out multiple and articulated, not as a unique and spontaneous act. The concept is therefore an inactual conceiving that is actualized in the operation of thinking. What was inexpressible is expressed thanks to the reciprocal collaboration

between thinker and thought language. The creative act, i.e., the conceived concept, remains impracticable and is not actualized, but on the other hand, its reflected expression, which Hegel supposes to be dialectical, comes out. Logical discourse can thus be considered language-object. It is easy to understand how here, reasoning from the Gentile act, the spontaneity of the latter is sacrificed, which would be obliged to choose the dialectical relationship constituted by the relation between the act and the fact. When the dialectic is posed, according to Hegelian schemes, the act is no longer creative; it is the mechanisms that act in its place and make it an element of construction, an instrument.

If, therefore, dialectics means the science of relation, we can affirm that the ancient dialectics, that of Plato, is the dialectics of thought, while the new one, affirmed by the Kantian doctrine of categories, is the dialectics of thinking. The former is the dialectic of death, the latter that of life. But things are not really in this systematic way. There is in the Hegelian "manifesting itself" a compact, absolutely intuitive background, which more than recalls the "intellectual intuition" and the answers given by Schelling to the mechanism of the unknown. The saving of effort does not belong to these two philosophers, yet some reflection of this pragmatic canon appears and continues in the process, since of all human hopes and sorrows it is as if nothing happens. Hegel prefers not to wrestle with reality, he waits for it, so he is not a philosopher of specification. It would take too much time and too much patience, he prefers to move towards the absolute with a single blow. In his thought this aspect is implied, it comes to light rarely but it illuminates with tenacity all his considerations. In the Hegelians it becomes a strong dominant passion and as such causes much annoyance. With precision, Max Scheler: "Even Kant tacitly assumes that the vital values can be reduced to hedonistic values, because he thinks that all values can be divided into 'good-bad' and 'pleasant-unpleasant'. Now, if this is not permissible for "well-being", much less will it be for "noble". But the real reason, why the particular nature of this mode was neglected, is the misrecognition of the fact, that life is a "pure essence", and not empirical concept of species, embracing only the characteristics common to terrestrial organisms. We cannot, however, go into this subject. Distinct from the vital values, as a new modal unit, is the field of spiritual values. Already in the way they give themselves, they reveal their independence and clear detachment from the corporeal and natural sphere. Their distinct modal unity is also proved by the obvious fact that, in order to attain them, one must sacrifice the vital values. The acts and functions, in which we learn them, are functions of "spiritual" feeling, and acts of "spiritual" preferring, loving and hating, which are detached from the homonymous "vital" acts and functions as much on the level of pure phenomenology as for their intrinsic laws, irreducible to any biological law." (The formalism in ethics and the material ethics of values [1913-1916], tr. it., Milan 1943, p. 105). The pure essence of life, assuming that Scheler has approached it, does not admit distinctions, even those of values, while it could have a global explanation, impregnated with totality, coming to make us feel something of the bare bones of its inevitable unfolding. By contrast, distinction is inevitable in order to understand and to be understood. The polarization of knowledge is one of the characteristics of the modern domain, and the latter corresponds to a seizure of the various taxonomies in a contradictory way. Each definition is left open and therefore able to assume within itself infinite variables, all appropriately reasonable. The call for unity is put between the lines, abandoned or has become the ornament of some isolated university barn owl. For another aspect, in the various distinctions, the contradictory continuity that we once took such care to emphasize is also missing. Power has decentralized or is definitively abolishing its center, developing conflicts that are devoid of subjective modulations, variables that play relevant roles as if they were objective components of reality. Life has become a game of images, of distorted reflections, of modelled micro-dimensions, of individual behaviours mimicked on ideals absorbed only by reflex. Frighteningly striking is the empty interval that has come to be placed between the various ethical instances, the speeding up of choices, their standardization. All it takes is a simple apparition and immediately this is substantiated with reality, exalted in the fact that it produces it, that loads it

with concreteness and reference. A shift of image and the vague identity of before, now solid and strong, is transferred at first vaguely and then in an increasingly concrete way in another identity. This is how fixed identifications are born, the new strategy of values, the certain sign of subjective reference.

Every form of objectivism stagnates in an already realized reality. The dialectic of thinking, on the other hand, does not know a world that already is, that would be a thought, it does not suppose reality beyond knowledge. Hence everything that is is in virtue of thinking, and thinking in this way is no longer a posthumous, and useless, effort that intervenes when there is nothing more to do in the world, but rather is the cosmogony itself. Here is Hegel: "The concrete form of thinking, which we must here consider for itself, manifests itself in general as subjective with the reflection of being in itself, so that it is opposed in general to being; and the interest is then the reconciliation of this opposition in its supreme existence, that is, in the most abstract extremes. This supreme splitting is the opposition between thinking and being: to understand their unity constitutes henceforth the interest of all philosophies." (Lectures on the History of Philosophy [1816-1830], tr. it., vol. III, t. II, Florence 1964, p. 4). The history of thought, therefore, in the new dialectic becomes a process of the real and the process of the real is no longer conceivable except as a history of thought. The world proceeds in the Hegelian way, this is the first conclusion reached by any reader of Hegel, even the most spineless. Individual realities do not wait for the world to proceed for them; even when they do not recognize themselves in this proceeding, they are the objects of the movement of history. Every separate dogmatism denies itself by denying life, and life penalizes it by forcing it back into the process from which it would like to stay outside. I struggled to free myself from this movement. Jumping elsewhere is, in fact, something different. The new reality cannot be understood by merely resorting to Hegel's conditions. This does not mean that these can be ignored. The principle of acting is still with us, continuously connected to the rigid mechanisms of production, but it does not accept to be catalogued. The years to come, I think, will increasingly confirm the free fall of any Hegelian (and Marxian) claim to "explain" the world. There is no longer any "overcoming" that can make history be considered "completed". Other attitudes require the matter that overhangs us, the clash that awaits us. Other sensibilities, but these will never be entirely separate from our past. A community of ghosts cannot be raised except selectively. The possible catastrophe that fate has in store for us, no.

Here is Giovanni Gentile: "Between the two dialectics [that of thought and that of thinking] there is an abyss: the abyss that divides modern idealism from the ancient. In fact, the fundamental presupposition of the former is the reality or truth all determined *ab aeterno*; so that a new determination, as a current determination of reality, is no longer conceivable. The progress of science (and all, in general, the life of the world), in such a presupposition, can only be the vain dream of a shadow: an apparent vanishing of vain appearances without consistency and without meaning in the unchanging scene of the world in a deserted theater. How to find in Platonism the explanation of the birth of souls and of the world in all its infinite varieties? Placed the ideas in their immanent relations, everything that by adventure happens, and perhaps the same human dialectic, that from the shadows of the worldly prison rises to the contemplation of the living sun of the Good or the One, cannot nor even depict itself in the slightest ripple of an immensurable ocean eternally quiet. Placed the same eternally living fire of Heraclitus, and the eternal flow and mother war of all things, since all this is a thought world, and yet thinkable, eternally thinkable, and yet already *ab aeterno* determined, that fire will burn as much as a painted fire; for, if it really burned, the combustion would import a novelty, an absolute novelty, which is excluded from the concept of *ab aeterno* determined reality. Once the atoms have been placed with their eternal fall or any movement that is due to them *ab aeterno*, no more happening is possible that is true happening, as anything new that changes the essence of reality. Every sort of objectivism stagnates in this dead gora of an already realized reality". (La riforma della dialettica hegeliana [1913], Florence

1975, p. 6). The Gentilian interpretation here is clearly forced. There is in the thought something more than the simple death of life, there is an overpowering impulse, a desire never concluded that spreads widely in the movement of thought and provides the movement in question with the strength not to erase itself in the equivalence between thought and thought. Classification is certainly a thought and this makes it at the same time necessary and coactively reproducible, but it is not by denying it that we get out of simple doing. Every instrument can bear unusual fruits, but these must be cultivated elsewhere in order to bear fruit.

Gentile again: "Dialectics, on the other hand, of thinking does not know a world that is already there; that would be a thought; it does not suppose reality, beyond knowledge, and of which it would be up to knowledge to take possession; because it knows, as Kant has demonstrated, that everything that can be thought of reality (the thinkable, the concepts of experience) presupposes the very act of thinking. And in this act he therefore sees the root of everything. In such a way that everything that is is in virtue of thinking: and thinking in this way is no longer a posthumous and vain effort, which intervenes when there is nothing more to do in the world, on the contrary it is cosmogony itself. The history of thought therefore in the new dialectic becomes the process of the real, and the process of the real is no longer conceivable except as the history of thought. Ancient man felt melancholically divided from reality, from God: modern man feels God in himself, and celebrates in the power of the spirit the essential divinity of the world." (Ib., p. 7). Of course, the totality of the problem is not in this distinction. Kant had explained it more carefully. According to him, the idea of the complete set of conditions (world) reveals its illegitimacy by giving rise to antithetical statements, all of which can be demonstrated. The antinomies of pure reason are therefore: finiteness and infinity of the world, continuous or interrupted divisibility, free or non-free causality, existence of a necessary being as the cause of the world and its non-existence. The defect is in the very idea of the world, which, being beyond any possible experience, remains unknowable and therefore cannot provide a criterion of choice. This illegitimacy is evident if we observe that the theses present a concept too small for the intellect (dogmatism) and the antitheses one too large (skepticism).

The problem of category deduction. Hegel has set foot on firm ground: reality is the same thought and true, the only real concept is the same conceiving or, as he says in the *Phenomenology* [1807], all knowledge is resolved in absolute knowledge, that is, in the idea. "The reduction of individuals to puppets, undeniable at Hegel, in Croce vanishes together with the teleologism that implied an aprioristic system of values culminating in the State and in the absolute Spirit and the tension of the Whole towards an absolute final realization. For Hegel, fullness is realized at the end, for Croce at every moment. According to Croce has value only the contingent spiritual horizon (which individualizes the Absolute) of the finite consciousness that becomes and perpetually changes. This conception is very similar to that of Feuerbach's Humanity and therefore, just like Feuerbach, Croce struggles against the Christian myth and Platonic dualism: only he accentuates more strongly the religious idealistic content of this, if one can say so, momentary nature of the Absolute. This is the most radical doctrine of immanence, fundamentally very similar to positivism with its cult of facts". (E. Troeltsch, *Der Historismus und seine Probleme*, Tübingen 1922, p. 617). The Hegelian completion (indispensable to its dialectic) cannot be accepted. The end of history turned out to be a trivial history of the end, an infinite history like all others. No cunning or insidiousness can bring about the resolution identified and described (partial moment) by Hegel. Better Kant in dealing with the model of his "rational theology". In moving forward, straight toward its conclusive end (Hegel), at a certain point an obstacle would seem to loom. Not a real interruption but a sort of "reversal". What was supposed to objectify itself as spirit, and here definitively conclude, seems to sink into a subjective self that continues to generate itself. The suppression does not take place correctly, what we can observe is that the spirit continues to dehumanize itself endlessly, as if precipitated into itself, in a vicious circle with

no possible end. There is no moment in the genesis of this new process, but this genesis takes place as the movement takes place; one does not go from one point to another, but travels without motion in a new universe without space. The definitive Hegelian "taking away" does not manifest itself, while from its overthrow, at least as far as it appears, there seems to come out continuously a world willing to perpetuate only itself in a delay that annihilates any individuality.

The science of the idea is for Hegel the science of the relation of synthesis, or more clearly of synthetic and relative activity: science of thought, but not as thought, although as thinking. His idea is unity of being and essence.

Hegel's efforts are in fact directed at penetrating the whole process by which this unity is realized, not as thought but as thinking or category.

The deduction of categories for Kant had had an empirical foundation derived from the analysis of the forms of judgments offered by experience. In Fichte it had had a truly systematic a priori deduction. Hegel sets out on this path, seeking to overcome the multiplicity and unity together of the categories by squeezing the multiplicity into the triad of the idea, which is thought itself. Our rootedness in the process prevents us from stopping it schematically, from detaching or separating it from us, from specifying it in later moments. We are the function of the process; our estrangement would reset it to zero. A priori we cannot determine how the relationship between sensory perception and the logical subjectivity of analysis is consolidated. Fixing the given in a theory is an intuitive movement, a blind function (to use Kant's words).

If in practice Hegel numbers the categories, with the same dialectical law he cancels the number by virtue of that overcoming or ideality immanent in the real, so that all the multiplicity of the Hegelian categories is resolved in the concrete category of the absolute idea that is absolute unity. For Kant the movement of the categories is an art hidden in the depths of the soul, whose sense is never completely comprehensible, even if nature possesses it in full. Hegel does not pose the problem, he "jumps" into the thing and resets to zero the distinction of the categories.

However, the dialectical process is not multipliable from the transcendental point of view but only from the empirical point of view, so it must necessarily transform itself from a process of thinking into a process of the thought. In the moment of knowledge, in its disposition as a process, an emergent form emerges, not yet complete in its empirical aspects, a form that is linked back to the past. The Hegelian idea approaches this form which proposes the essence of things, what being was before it was subjected to the process in question. But this position is overturned into its opposite, that is, into being as it will be after it has been now and here, all and immediately, and this due to the fact that it is not possible to place oneself at a point of arrival from which to observe the movement of what "being was" as essence. The process is never concluded, our placement within it has the very purpose of ensuring its openness, its constant opening. Essence in Hegel is thus what can be, possibility, that is, what will be. The sum of its specifications never corresponds with the totality, there is always something less in the distribution, something that must be conquered in loss, not in progressive accumulation. To know is to live this unity of the divided in the specification that renounces progress without losing sight of the world with its miseries and partiality.

Gentile states more precisely: "This dialectical process, in which reality is mediated, and yet has an intrinsic ideality within itself, that is, a moment already overcome and preserved, this process, which is the concreteness or realization of the idea, is not multipliable from the transcendental point of view, but only from the empirical or historical point of view: and in order for it to appear capable of further

mediation, as happens in Hegelian logic, it must, by chance, transform itself from a process of thinking into a process of thought. If we say idea this thinking, the process will be being, essence (negation of the immediacy of being) and concept (as conceiving) or idea. But being here is not thought, so ideal a moment of the act of thinking: as such, it does not represent an abstract concept which, united to the other equally abstract concept of essence, gives, in unity, the concrete concept; it is rather an abstract moment of the act of thinking, which only on this side of that moment is consummated as an act; and, fixed therefore in that moment, it is a throttled beginning of life." (*La riforma della dialettica hegeliana*, op. cit., p. 9). Gentile seeks here to think dialectically and non-dialectically at the same time. His aim is to identify the point of the reversal of the process of thinking into the process of the thought.

In fact he concludes: "To mediate this moment, which, I repeat, is not a concept, it would be necessary to consider it as an act of thinking, which in a certain primitive and elementary way is already consummated in itself. And this is evidently not possible except on one condition: that we fix the abstract as if it were concrete. And to fix the abstract as concrete is to detach, even temporarily, the part from the whole, in which its reality is. But, once the part is detached from the whole, the part becomes the whole, and the process of the part cannot but be identical with the process of the whole. The being of the major triad in the Hegelian logic is mediated within itself, inasmuch as it already finds in itself an immediacy and the negation of this immediacy: another being and another essence, of which it is idea: quality, quantity, measure. And the same can be repeated for quality, which will appear as being for itself, unity of being (a third being) and of determined being; and the same again for this being, which will appear as becoming, that is, as unity of being (a fourth being) and of non-being. Being (pure being), determined being, quality, measure, in this way, succeed four degrees of being, which only in the fourth is perfect as the first moment of the greater triad (being-essence-concept). But what is the difference between the first and second degree? Determined being is the mediation of pure or indeterminate being. Except that this is also the difference between the second and the third, between the third and the fourth, between this and, finally, the concept. So that the concept will be the concept of the measure; but the measure will be the concept of the quality, and the quality the concept of the determinate being, and the determinate being the concept of the indeterminate: that is (which will be the same) the determinate being, will be the becoming of the pure indeterminate being, and the quality the becoming of the determinate being, and the measure the becoming of the quality, and the concept the becoming of the being as measure. And if we call becoming or concept (conceiving, thinking), the resolution and concreteness of the thinking act or category, we will always have the same process (dialectical), varying only the terms of the relationship: always the becoming of a certain being or the concept of a certain measure (= being). It varies the being, and it varies the becoming according to the being. Becoming in its dialecticity, in that restlessness (*Unruhe*), of which Hegel speaks, does not change, nor can it change." (*Ib.*, p. 10). No detachment is possible. The dialectic that posits and compares, absorbs and distinguishes, does not stand up to the critical light of totality. Gentile knew this very well, and herein lies his fascination with Croce's "distinctions", which are too modestly directed towards differentiating with quibbling logic. In Gentile's reasoning there is no modern ritual characteristic of empty positivist or empiricist experiences in general, in it the ancient spirit of unity is perpetuated and hovers. Classical overcoming here is reformed under the aspect of paradox. The becoming does not change because it remains in suspension in the absence of mutation that summarizes in itself every possible mutation, the rupture returns as recomposition. The negative remains specular to the positive, connected and interdependent dialectically the two moments cannot prevail in any case. The refusal, once thought, belongs to the positive, except for the hypothesis of a criticism capable of sinking into itself towards levels not yet known. The more radical the contrast between the dialectic of thought and that of thinking, the more peremptorily the impossibility of overcoming is confirmed. In order to reconfirm the essence of objective spirit Gentile continually needs the act of creation, something that brings reality out of itself without a break. All this movement is absolutely

heterogeneous to the conditions of existence, to the production of everyday life. The difference is so extreme that one is not even able to formulate it decently. Every apologia for the negative seems to pale under the blazing sun of the positive.

Thought as a single category. But does it really change being? The old Hegelism with Hegel believed so. The new one is convinced that the only change in being is becoming and this is the characteristic of current idealism, because it insists on the concept of the idea-act. In the actuality of the idea there is the indeterminate which is the becoming and the determinate which is the real, the act of thinking, the latter has overcome and contains in itself the former.

Actualism cannot admit an ideality, nor any form of being that transcends the actuality of thought as thinking, and makes it clear that every thought (for example, the entire Hegelian Logic) is real in the unique act of the thought that thinks it, and only there does it have its truth.

Thought is one and immultiplicable, and in this unity it is truly infinite as thinking. The thought is multiple: but the thought, grasped in its concreteness since it is the thought of thinking, that is, thought itself in its concreteness (self-consciousness), resolves all its multiplicity in the unity of thinking. In this way, all acts of thought, when they are not considered as mere facts, when they are not looked at from the outside, are a single act. Hence, Gentile insists, "It could be shown that where, in the Hegelian deduction, you see dialectism, you have the true restlessness of thinking, and therefore the immultipliable because infinite unity of the category; and where difference, the various of the categories, comes before you, the dialectism of thinking ceases in fact and the dead finity of the thought rises again, as in the ancient dialectic." (Ib., p. 14). But finality is self-conscious, it possesses thinking in its wisdom of death. It does not accept that the world is always the same, it uses a part of it but proposes the range of possibilities not only as an abstract theoretical opening, but as a reversal. History is the realm of specification precisely because it presents the continuous occurrence of possibilities. It is necessary to become aware of what is happening in the world - once again "phenomenology" is an instrument and a guide - in order to improve the conditions of existence, to make the body breathe, to crack the walls of the prison, to interpret the signals of quality. The foundation of the prison in which we find ourselves is not yet given, it is only possible, even if we are in it as if it were what it is or was, the essence of being. While remaining tied to quantity the structures of the world are intentional toward possibility, that is, they are never complete, they are imagined rich in something they do not possess but that once imagined acts within them with consequences and effects, that modifies directional patterns of production, that develops processual integrations, etc.

The Hegelian concept of becoming. The problem of becoming as the unity of being and non-being is the whole problem of the dialectic. Pure being and pure nothingness are therefore the same. Their truth therefore is this movement of the immediate disappearance of the one into the other. Becoming, a movement in which the two terms are different but of a difference that is resolved equally immediately. But, Kierkegaard does not agree: "When the beginning with the immediate is obtained through reflection, the immediate must have another meaning than it usually has. The same statement: "begin with nothing" is deceptive, even prescinding from its relation to the infinite act of abstraction. "To begin with nothing" is in fact neither more nor less than a new form of expressing the dialectic of the beginning itself. The beginning is, and yet it is not, precisely because it is the beginning. This can also be expressed by the formula: the beginning begins with nothing. This is but a new expression with which we have not taken the slightest step forward. In the first case I think of the beginning only in abstracto, in the other case I think of the relation of the beginning equally abstractly to something with which it begins, and it is very clear that this something, yes, the only something which corresponds to such a beginning, is nothing! But all this is but a tautological periphrasis of the other proposition: there

is no beginning." (Postilla conclusiva non scientifica alle Briciole di filosofia [1846], tr. it., vol. I, Bologna 1962, p. 311). This is the mythical foundation of existence, the hidden meaning of every conviction as an unreflective response of the life that circulates in us and to which we cannot look with a dispassionately objective eye. The possession of the vital force that pushes us forward relentlessly could open the way to an inclusive consideration of reality: it in us and we in it, the claim of a paradox full of fantastic images, but it has never been so. We live in an age devoid of dignity and we are all - more or less - infected by it. The critical solicitation had to be subjected to critical investigation itself, not accepted as the key that opens all doors. By doing otherwise, we deluded ourselves into believing that we were delivering something concrete to historical development, something that would re-evaluate the function of the individual with respect to the intrinsic mechanism, the "strong" mechanism hidden in reality. Only that this heterogeneous road to the dominant role of accumulation could not - if not for a short time and as an illusion productive of revolutionary effects - hide the re-emergence of negatively criticized values. History and the positivity that characterizes it recover these values in a reinforced way once domination is able to absorb almost all subversive cues. The safeguarding role played by language has not yet been fully brought to light.

In other words, Hegel warned, my identity is not the exclusion of contradiction, like Aristotle's, rather it includes it. But this deduction contravenes the essential purpose of Hegelian dialectics, in fact it makes possible that anti-dialectical concept par excellence of the neutralization of becoming in becoming: as being vanishes in non-being, becoming would also vanish in the negation of becoming.

Being and nothing are the opposite but they have in common the fact of not having any determination, but then the principle of a priori synthesis that governs the Hegelian logic for which the identical is not joined but the different, is betrayed. The result then affirms a difference between being and nothing, but only as an opinion. Thus Gentile tightens on the subject: "Hegel wanted to say that the thesis [previous] expresses the result of a process that is resolution of a contradiction, that is immedesimation of two different terms; and it does not express the process in which this difference should also appear. Moreover, he was careful to warn about the need to distinguish between the imperfect form imposed by an extrinsic reflection on the dialectical process, and the intrinsic nature of this process. He therefore added this general observation: that "the proposition, in the form of a judgment, is not suitable for expressing speculative truths, because the judgment is an identical relation between subject and predicate, where one abstracts from the fact that the subject has more notes than the predicate, and the latter is more extensive than the subject. Now, if the content is speculative, the non-identity of subject and predicate is also essential moment; but this in the judgment is not expressed." [Logic [1812-1816], I, 85].

"Finally, when it is said that being and nothing are one, this unity, Hegel noted, even more than identity, expresses a subjective reflection, almost a relation resulting from a comparison. It would be better to say, that being and nothing are inseparable and inseparable, if this did not leave the affirmative side unexpressed. In short, he concluded, the result of deduction, the becoming, is not the unilateral and abstract unity of being and nothingness; but "consists in this movement: that pure being is immediate and simple, that therefore equally immediate and simple is pure nothingness; that the difference of it is, but it is also true that it annuls itself (sich aufhebt) and is not. The result, therefore, also affirms the difference of being and nothing, but as a difference only opined." [Ibid]." (The Reform of the Hegelian Dialectic, op. cit., p. 19). Critique of the Hegelian concept of becoming. In the Hegelian doctrine it is clear that the becoming imports a difference at the bottom of the sameness of being and nothingness; but everything is reduced to a requirement: being and nothingness are identical, therefore they were different. But in what did this difference consist? Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg will say that there is no difference and therefore the dialectical principle is missing, the contradiction of which Hegel spoke,

who, feeling the need of difference and not being able, analytically, to deduce the becoming if not from identity, resorted to the opinion of difference. But what is this opinion? It is the affirmation of something ineffable. 1) If the opinion, for which there is the difference, does not enter into the actuality of the logical process of becoming because it is a form of subjectivity, then we cannot speak of difference in the categories of becoming. Then pure being and pure nothingness, in their indeterminacy, do not differentiate themselves, so the identification ceases and the dialectic vanishes. 2) If the logical third is not the opinion, but the becoming, the becoming will presuppose and overcome the difference but it will not help to enlighten us about the way to satisfy the previous requirement.

Therefore, Gentile concludes: "Hegel, in short, it is necessary to agree, has a vague intuition of becoming, he does not have the concept. And he does not put himself in a position to possess it, because he analyzes this concept, instead of realizing it, as he should have done, in order to think it dialectically and in accordance with the principle of the identity of being and thought.

"Precisely because Hegel affirmed with great vigor the necessity of the concept of becoming, without succeeding himself to determine it, the greatest problem, the most difficult, which he tied to those who after him have conquered or believed to conquer his point of view, is this one of the frank intelligence of the first categories of logic, in which the dialectical nature of thought must be recognized. It would be very interesting to have an accurate history of the wanderings of the Hegelian school around the concept of the first logical categories". (Ib., pp. 22-23). In order to deal correctly with the concept of becoming, Hegel would have had to open a non-dialectical parenthesis, thus restoring Kant's critique in full. He would thus have corrected the ancient dialectic, but he would not have grasped the secret of unity. Hegel hints at taking this step, but when he tightens up decisively (with overcoming) Kant's objections come back. The becoming escapes any determination. Something like this happens to Husserl that in the so-called "first philosophy", the philosophy of essences or transcendental, fixes the essences once and for all subtracting them from the becoming, in this way ending up losing the historicity of the world. Later, around 1924, he will seek the reconquest of the world by considering metaphysics in a new way, that is, in the sense of being able to explain through it the factuality of the world, in other words, the concrete and natural development of existence. The same step of initial closure was made by Heidegger closing himself in an exclusive metaphysics of being, admitting that the essence of being is only its actualization as such and rejecting its possible form, that is the movement towards becoming. Later he will agree with the assessment that the essence of being is not the beginning but the opening to the world. The beginning from the past is transferred to the future.

[1975], [1990]

V. Activities of the "Hegel-Gesellschaft" at the beginning of the seventies

The extraordinary vitality of Hegel's philosophy is demonstrated in the fact pointed out by Arturo Massolo that Hegel is alive, since to reject his philosophy is to reject philosophy. The paper presented by the Frenchman Gaston Fessard s.j. on Hegel's ambivalent attitude towards history, is addressed to the attempts to resolve the Hegelian conciliation in Marxism and existentialism. Hegel had said that "universal history is the depiction of the way in which the spirit strives to arrive at the cognition of what it is in itself." (Lectures on the Philosophy of History [1822-1831], tr. it., vol. I, Florence 1941, p. 46). An itinerary is always fascinating, even if it is not possible to describe with good approximation its morphology. The very expectation of the results provides satisfaction. Henri Zeleny tries to use Hegel in the problem of the mediating function of philosophy in the face of the contemporary transformation of science and the crisis of the speculative tradition.

Fessard says that until the Phenomenology [1807] the Hegelian concept of history remains open to the dimension of the future, hence of time. With the Encyclopedia [1817] the vertical atemporal logic-nature-spirit replaces the horizontal temporal of the Christian trinity interpreted phenomenologically. Here's Hegel: "The spirit of a people is a natural individual; as such it flourishes, vigors, declines and dies. It is in the nature of finiteness that the limited spirit is ephemeral. It is alive, and as such, it is essentially activity: what occupies it is creation, production, self-realization. A contrast exists insofar as reality is not yet adequate to its concept, or insofar as its internal concept has not yet been brought to the degree of self-consciousness." (Ib., p. 53). The step toward the real breaks man's loneliness by making him full of hope, but this remains shrouded in the risky atmosphere of uncertainty. Hence the need to return to the strengthening of consciousness, in a vicious circle that never prepares the right conditions to face the future. Karl Marx himself remains in the phase of programmatic enunciation, in fact the youthful dialectical series nature-man-society ends in the vertical and materialistic concept of time that coincides with the naturalistic concept of active infinity. Søren Kierkegaard, on the other hand, first breaks the circularity by saying that the "cross" is the intersection of existence with freedom. In this sense, Benedetto Croce: "There is no fact that is not known in the act that is done, through the consciousness that in the unity of the spirit continually germinates on the action; and there is no fact that, sooner or later, sooner or later, is not forgotten, except to be recalled, as we have said speaking of the dead history that is revived by the work of life, of the past that through the contemporary becomes contemporary again. Tolstoi was fixed in this thought that not only no one, not even a Napoleon, can predetermine the course of a battle, but that no one can know how it really took place, because, the same evening that ends the battle, arises and spreads a story artificial and legendary, that only a credulous spirit can mistake for real history, and on which, however, work the historians of the trade, integrating or tempering fantasy with fantasy. But the battle is known as it unfolds; and then, with the tumult of it, the tumult of that knowledge also dissipates, only importing the new situation of fact and the new disposition of mind that has been produced, and which is expressed in poetic legends or aided by artificial fictions. And each one of us knows and forgets at every moment most of his thoughts and acts (and woe if he did not do so, because he would live by laboriously accomplishing every one of his slightest movements!); but he does not forget, and keeps more or less for a long time, those thoughts and feelings, which represent memorable crises and open problems for his future: and sometimes, not without great astonishment, we witness the resurgence in us of feelings and thoughts, which we thought irrevocable. Therefore, it must be said that at every moment we know all the history that we care to know; and of the rest, since it does not matter, we do not possess the conditions for knowing it, or we will possess them when we care. That "remaining" history is the eternal phantom of the "thing in itself", which is neither "thing" nor "in itself", but nothing but the fantastic projection of the infinity of our operating and knowing. The fantastic projection of the thing in itself, with the consequent agnosticism, is occasioned, in philosophy, by the physical sciences, which present a reality made extrinsic and material, and therefore unintelligible; and historical agnosticism is similarly occasioned by the naturalistic moment of history, by chronachism, which presents a dead and unintelligible history: he who allows himself to be seduced by this game and loses the path of concrete truth, immediately feels his soul fill with infinite, vain and desperate questions. Likewise, he who has lost his way, or has not yet found the fruitful path of the industrious life, feels his soul filled with infinite desires, with inexecutable actions and unattainable pleasures, and suffers tantalising pains. But the wisdom of life warns not to get lost in absurd desires, as the wisdom of thought not to get wrapped up in idle problems". (Theory and History of Historiography [1917], Bari 1948, pp. 44-45). It is not the proclamations and collapses of empires that mark the movement of history, at least as we experience it in the midnight of the senses, when the hour turns to reflection and decline. The concreteness of totality lies in considering those events no more important than a geological stratification, in sensing them but not in bringing them into broad daylight. The gem of life cannot be grasped through accumulation. The rhythm of oblivion allows it to be lost, thus to access a place other than the one marked by history. Ties

do not dissolve but loosen in the fresh rejection of all conquest. This is not agnosticism but a reversal of acquisitive expansionism. The eras of Comtian instrumentation make me cringe, especially Aurora.

Mario Rossi asserts that the history of the Hegelian dialectic culminates in the Jena period and thus is a dialectic of estrangement and reappropriation of the Whole, which as such has only the history of its self-understanding. The figures of the Logic [1812-1816] thus become particular figures of this dialectic; it is the system itself that is no longer distinguished by its method. In Jena Hegel writes: "In the spirit the absolutely simple ether has returned to itself through the infinity of the earth. In the earth in general there exists this being-one of the absolute simplicity of the ether and of infinity - diffused in universal fluidity, but consolidating itself, in its diffusion, as a singularity; and the numerical one of singularity, which for the animal is essential determinateness, becomes itself an ideal, is transformed into a moment. The concept thus determined of spirit is consciousness, as the concept of the being-one of the simple and the infinite; but in spirit the latter exists for itself, or as true infinity; the opposite in it, in infinity, is this absolute simplicity of both. This concept of the spirit is what is given the name of consciousness; [for consciousness] the opposite to it is equally a simple thing, in itself infinite, a concept; each moment is in it altogether the simple, immediate opposite of itself; the individual subsumed without contrast in universality; but likewise consciousness itself is the immediate, simple opposite of itself: once [it is] the opposite to an [other] of which it is conscious, thus splitting itself into an active and a passive, and the other time [it is] the opposite of this splitting, the absolute being-one of distinction; the being-one of the distinction that is and of the distinction taken away." (Philosophy of the Zen spirit [1801-1807], tr. it., Bari 1984, pp. 3-4). Rooting oneself in things, in the earth, taking from this the bare framework of the possible that becomes necessary with an amazing logical leap. One can be lulled all one's life by this concept, but in the end it is necessary to set it aside. From the specific capacities of the individual (seeing, tasting, etc.) to the general resonance in terms of totality. The walk of a god.

Hegel's arrival in Jena was in January 1801. He had several years of work as a tutor in wealthy families in Bern and Frankfurt, accompanied by a fairly long work of research pertaining to theological and political topics, which did not result in publications but still allowed him to arrive at a certain awareness of his philosophical positions in the complex of German philosophy. In Jena he embarked on a university career as a freelance lecturer. The paternal inheritance allows him to abandon the work of private tutor and to enter the university center of idealistic philosophy and romantic culture. Here he met Schelling, with whom he had shared the same room during his years at Tübingen. Schelling, although five years younger, is much more advanced in his career and is already collaborating with Fichte for the idealistic elaboration of Kant's philosophy.

His arrival is preceded by a letter, written to Schelling November 2, 1800, which reads: "I think, dear Schelling, that a separation of several years can not prevent me to appeal to your kindness in view of a particular desire. My request concerns some addresses in Bam-berga, where I hope to stay for some time. Since I am finally in a position to abandon the ties I have had until now, I am determined to spend some time in an independent situation and to devote this time to the work and studies I have already begun. Before venturing into the literary vortex of Jena I want to fortify myself with a stay in a third location. I regard your great public success with admiration and joy. You leave me the choice either to speak of it in a tone of humility or to show myself to you. I will use a middle way: I hope we may find each other again as good friends. In my scientific training, which started from the most elementary needs of men, I had necessarily to be driven towards science, and the ideal of my youth had necessarily to change into the form of reflection, into a system. I wonder now, while I am still occupied with such a system, what way to look for in order to get back into the lives of men. Of all the men I see around me you are the only one in whom I would like to find a friend, from the point of view of the expression of

ideas and action on the world, for I see that you have conceived man purely, that is, with the whole soul and without vanity. Therefore I look toward you with great confidence, so that you may recognize my disinterested effort - even if it stands on a lower sphere - and you may find value in it." The dear friend Hegel will become Schelling's enemy as soon as that system he mentions here is finally consolidated. One man in charge, one philosophy. Marx will follow the thread of this reasoning.

The reports of the representatives of the socialist nations within the "Hegel Gesellschaft" beat on the mediating function of Hegel towards the program of constitution of a new culture by those nations. Unlike György Lukács, C. I. Gulian focuses attention on Hegel's classical texts instead of on youthful progressivism.

The cause that leads the young Hegel to believe that "our age is an age of gestation and transition to a new era" is surely the contemporaneity of the French Revolution. The students of the Stift in Tübingen are excited by the great news coming from neighboring France and raise a tree of liberty. A transformative event of such importance, endowed with a political role as important as that played by the French Revolution, ends up feeding an abstract philosophy far removed from the needs of life. For the young Germans it is an event that corresponds to another revolution, the Kantian one considered as a real "Copernican revolution". Marx pointed to a "German misery" to explain how in England men with a grandiose undertaking transformed the material conditions of life and production in the industrial revolution, how in France the political revolution destroyed with struggle and violence the ancien régime and gave life to the modern state, while in Germany the revolution was limited to debates in the lecture halls, involving a few hundred intellectuals and then realized as a simple "philosophical revolution". A "German misery" due to political provincialism, economic backwardness, cultural limitation. Everywhere else in Europe everything was changing, but in Germany the news arrived dull and distorted by a real philosophical filter. The changes were so diffused in a fantastic world where the political struggles, the social clashes, the technological innovations were transformed in ideal elements, with all the consequent misery to such transformation. Among the results of this misery, however, there is also the great romantic poetry of Hölderlin and Goethe, the idealistic philosophy, the sensitivity to history and to the problems of language. The French Revolution lends itself to a philosophical reading and thus to enthusiasm among young Germans. It is interpreted as an attempt to give concrete implementation to the Enlightenment ideals, to realize, in history, a "living encyclopedia". The French Revolution assumed in the eyes of the Germans an innovative dimension that probably the French themselves, confused by political events and daily struggles, could not perceive. Returning to Marx this event is presented as the historical attempt to "put the world on his head", to give life to a state founded on reason, to realize in history the kingdom of freedom and rationality. The German philosophy, even though not grasping this vision of reality and therefore losing many elements of the French revolutionary events, understands something important, the great revolution was in fact at the origin of that desire to concretize the absolute in history, an adventure that will be one of the most important motives of the European events of the nineteenth century and the following century, despite all the horror of domination that has been embodied in these events. Hegel, together with other German thinkers, who had grasped these signs of renewal, will soon backtrack. In 1830 he will be able to speak of an "aimless yearning for novelty", and Goethe will find the spread of a "direct aspiration to the unconditional in this absolutely conditioned world" unseemly in the French revolution.

One more aspect: for the Germans, the French Revolution represents, at the moment in which the facts are realized, therefore until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the violent insertion of eternity in the crystallized circle of time, the breaking of the absolute, of reason and freedom in the history of man. The revolution for them has a mythical value. The equality urged by the revolutionaries creates

the more than modest revolutionary citizen, with his fashions and his watchwords, with his popular festivals, his civil religion, his patriotism, his immediate identification with the state and the people. It offers the German a vision of a people capable of overcoming the split and individualism of modernity, of a people in which the individual blends harmoniously with the whole. It is the return to the totality of which the ancient world had been the creator. Wrapped in the all-encompassing mantle of the State that came out of the great revolution, even before the restorative event this totality was already suffocated in the leveling of quality. What had been able to make its appearance for a moment, now returns to bow its head in front of the spectacular parades. It is this involuntal process that they call progress. The anarchist energies are so watered down in the pluralist respectability and exuberant excess there is almost no more memory. The words of Adriano Tilgher are sharp: "As the revolutionary soul in historicism takes over from the conservative one, more and more it sticks to the state of affairs, more and more the attempts, the efforts, the criticisms directed partially or totally to deny it seem to be abstractions, the sign of an anti-historical brain. If it is what it is, it means that it is good and necessary that it be. Violence, revolt, revolution, all this is abstractionism and anti-historicism. True progress consists in the slow but sure accumulation of small improvements, of small reforms. Of course, History never stops, but its path is truly fruitful when it is slow, so slow as to be imperceptible. Human history is thus conceived as a process similar to the insensible growth of a plant or an animal, like a biological process. And since violent revolutions derive from the opposition of Reason to factual reality, Historicism ends up increasingly resenting Reason, and finally banishing it, representing historical progress as an unreflective involuntary unconscious development, which the intrusion of Reason, which is conscious reflection of will, can only disturb and ruin. Hence the importance given to language, to traditions, to customs, to myths, to legends, to customs, to popular songs, to everything that is naive, primitive, popular, collective, unconscious, unreflective, that comes up little by little without wanting it and without knowing it; hence the hatred with which the irruption of the effort of will, of human reflection, of individual and conscious energy in History is looked at". (Criticism of historicism, Modena 1935, pp. 74-75). The use of reason has revolutionary foundations in the sense that it is also from it that we must start for the construction of a different world. Every detail of this construction belongs to the domain of critical reflection, particularly the negative one. Conservation is thus subjected to such a profound critique that almost nothing remains standing. In fact, the society in which we live does not even have those guarantees of efficiency that would suggest its partial use. All the distillates of bitterness and resentment then boil in the glass retorts of theory, and we hear the drums of awakening and social claims resound. The muscles tense and the expectation is great. The consensus omnium is put under suspicion, the individual eye, if not exactly isolated and unique, however able to read even the desires of the individual, is its acceptable ballistic technique. It strikes and proceeds further. The same partial attempts, if not objectified in a total perspective, seem to be discarded, varnishing of chains, nothing else. Historicism, beginning with this rhythm, carefully following the implications of the revolutionary method, soon withdraws uncertainly. What has become of history? This question frightens him, it seems to him that that flash of fresh denial is turning into a congeries of hard times and disrespectful of traditional values, in the end, of History itself. Certainly, changes must be made to improve social conditions, but the roll of the drums and the smell of dust, for goodness sake, never all that, the number grows with calm and temperance, the piles pile up on the piles, even if they are piles of corpses that misery continues to produce. The use of reason, from this point on, produces consent and acceptance of domination. The development of empirics is viewed positively in that it walks in the same direction as history. Certainly verbal insults, expletives, even wisecracks (see the contemporary revolutionary writers of France) are possible, but they must conceal a based conservative sense, appropriately enlivened by that linguistic paraphernalia reminiscent of better times. Now the governing reason has discovered that there is a subterranean river level, an operating historical reason, which is a prelude to materialist modifications, a river reason that only needs to be supported, without ugly paroxysms and screeching of badly connected belts. It may not be a harmonious river bed,

but it is enough to guarantee a progressive future improvement because it is a pre-established mechanism, inherent to reality itself. Historical reason is about to abandon the revolutionaries, so it is time for the revolutionaries to abandon the old hag. All political revolutions have been accommodated by this logical process. On the one hand, conservation reborn from its own ashes, on the other hand, a small number of sighted people in search of their own destiny.

Lukács points out that for the young Hegel "antiquity is a current and living example; it has passed, yes, but it is a matter of renewing its greatness, and this renewal constitutes precisely the central political, cultural, and religious task of the present." So his "enthusiasm for ancient democracy is intimately and deeply connected with his attitude towards the French Revolution". According to Lukács, Hegel is a pupil of Adam Smith, so, like his master, he objectively represents the relationship between the division of labor and technical progress, a relationship in which he sees the necessary movement of human progress. This does not prevent him from noting the destructive effects that the division of capitalist labor and the development of technology and machines necessarily produce on human labor. Hegel does not see these aspects as something that must be eliminated or corrected; in any case, he is not a utopian. Instead, he studies the necessary connection between these aspects of the capitalist division of labor and its economically and socially progressive character.

Massolo asserts that the only true opponent of Hegel is Nietzsche, who sees in dialectics the simple and supreme expression of the spirit of revenge. But in fact the study of Hegel must be understood only as a simple participation in our time and, intimately, as a rejection of the Hegelian system itself. In his youthful writings Hegel has not yet come to the point of arguing in its various aspects for the necessity of a way other than simple reflection on reality. He limited himself to asserting that reflection, being incapable of uniting opposites, must give rise to an expression capable of indicating identity and opposition separately in two different propositions. The absolute for him, at this stage, is already identity of identity and non-identity, identity and otherness. To arrive at the demonstration of this structure of the absolute requires a different logic from the classical one to which the intellect and the use codified by Kant have accustomed us. This logic, in the maturity of Hegel's thought, will be dialectical logic. Lacking this logic, the intellect is forced to separate what in the absolute is identical and therefore united. The intellect exposes the identity with a principle, the highest principle and therefore out of question: the principle of identity, while it exposes the split with a subordinate principle: the principle of foundation or, in a lower and therefore weaker form, the principle of causality. Hegel accuses Fichte of having made this split in the Doctrine of Science [1794] thus forcing himself to move from two principles (according to Hegel's analysis) equally unconditional: the ego posits itself and the ego opposes to itself the non-ego. Identity and opposition are separate and therefore irreconcilable. The logic of the intellect does not see that the two principles say the same thing, they are actually the same and express identity and splitting together. In the proposition "A is A", which expresses the principle of identity, identity is certainly expressed, A is equal to A, but at the same time the opposition: the first A is not the second A, the first is subject, the second is predicate (Hegel specifies that the first is subject, the second is object), the identity of identical is not expressed, but of different. When A is repeated it is split, it has in itself the difference, and it is of this difference that identity is predicated. Thus, the second principle, in exposing the opposition, cannot avoid putting opposites in relation: the second principle would like to expose the "form of non-thought", the dispersion and otherness of being, but for the sole fact that this otherness is placed in thought it is placed in relation, and here the second principle takes the form of the principle of foundation or principle of causality: A is different from A, A is equal to B, A is caused by B and therefore has its being in another, in something different. Thus, in the end, Hegel states that the second principle expresses not only the different, but the identity of the different: "as an antinomy, as an expression of absolute identity, it is indifferent to place $A = B$ or $A = A$, if precisely $A = B$ and $A = A$ is taken as the

relation of both principles. $A = A$ contains the difference of A as subject and A as object, together with the identity, as $A = B$ the identity of A and B together with the difference of both".

In other words, reflection is a tool that philosophy cannot give up. Science must be a system. One cannot expose the absolute in a basic proposition separate from the whole. The absolute is exposed only by the system as a totality. It is necessary to have a logic that, going beyond reflection, grasps the identity between identity and non-identity and thus is able to say with thought what is the structure of the absolute. By accepting the logic of the beginning, the positive turns into the negative, and vice versa. If we start from the work that accomplishes in the making of man, the negation of work is the other aspect of identity. Denying work reaffirms the positivity of it. If we start from the negation of work, we reaffirm the opposite in that every starting point is such because there is something to move towards. There is no logic of the absolute that can account for the movement relative to the distinction. If I deny something I presuppose the existence of this something, the same if I affirm it because this affirmation presupposes the possibility of denying what I intend to affirm instead. Transgression implies law, and I have seen transgressors and destroyers be worse obedient to the rules than many priests with tonsures. The uselessness of the negative is based on the usefulness of the positive, and vice versa. We can reject something if we know it, that's why we insist on existing in the world of conciliation, because that's what we want to escape from. Diversity, on the other hand, we do not grasp in the realm of the negative, it is the absolutely other, it is not the relationship between what we intend to criticize negatively and the positive affirmation of the same that allows us (makes logical) the criticism in question.

Henri Durski points out that Heidegger developed a critique of vulgar time that touches the same roots as the destruction of Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics, so it is strange that this philosopher then declared himself anti-scientific. So at a time like this of general crisis of natural certainty, of near and far, of before and now, a dialectic of the concrete becomes necessary, separated from Hegel's by the same distance that separates us from the consideration of space and time that the achievements of modern science have come to make inadequate. The linguistic expressions used by Hegel are not identical, following the logical line of their common sense, to the parallel Heideggerian expressions of Being and Time [1923-1928]. The concept of Dasein, in the Heideggerian etymological indication appears as an ontological sign of man's being. For Hegel instead, and also for the popular conception of the term, the expression indicates only an existing reality in general not necessarily referable to man without an appropriate specifying. With effectiveness Tilgher: "Every research of the reason, of the cause, of the reason of the existence of time is destined to turn into the absurd. The cause is the antecedent in time, the first, to which thought strives to reduce, to set as identical, the consequent in time, the later, while respecting the difference in time that separates the antecedent from the consequent: contradictory effort and therefore always more or less doomed to fail. The cause, therefore, presupposes time. A cause of time should be the antecedent in the time of time itself, that is, it presupposes precisely that time which it should explain. Time has no antecedent, it has no cause, because every antecedent, every cause is internal to time. Time is not reducible to anything else, and therefore it is pure irrational". (Critical Causalism, Rome 1942, p. 81). Hegel almost never resorts to the classical concept of causality, having the dialectical mechanism as an intermediate region where to intervene the transition between the before and the after. Nature does not wait for its own regions to be explained, it continuously produces itself in its own timeless unfolding, an unfolding that is then read temporally by the human eye that scrutinizes it. The ancient thought that man continues to brood within himself: can time explain the cause, that is, can there be a cause of time? Remains unanswered even today. Reason will never dominate time, it will never understand something (for example a stone) in terms of millions of years. The average length of human life prevents it from doing so. This last point is intuited from the tension that we feel in front of what has already happened, in grasping certain

relationships that for convenience of structure we call causes, but which are not such, while analysis waits in the antechamber to gather those few crumbs that will allow us to go forward. Experience lives on these crumbs; they are the eternal measure of reality on the basis of man, of his physiology. There is nothing in human thought, in its totality so extensive and varied, that can help us to think something different. The investigable remains serenely beyond any causal combination.

The same with the concept of the world. Welt, "world," means "common world," the world where men commonly live, and not the world that has become the object of a Heideggerian "common caring." It is not, as for Hegel, the ontological equivalent of "nature", but the "in-cui" of Essence, that is, the constitutive place, the ontological horizon of Essence. Along the line of research designed by Hegel, the question of the world is not evaluated in its existential and anthropological relations.

Otto Pöggeler reposes the question in Hegelian Phenomenology. What is this work? An exposition of the system or a part of the system? The author's conclusion is that the Phenomenology occupies a special place in the Hegelian systematics; but it is not a part of the system with respect to other parts; rather if it is true that the Philosophy of History [1822-1831] is the foundation of the system, the Phenomenology constitutes its introduction. Being, Nothingness, Becoming. Hegel is the first to introduce these concepts into the history of Western philosophy. "We find ourselves among the Greeks as at home for the fact above all that they appear to us in their world as at home: we are united by the common spirit of attachment to the homeland. What happens to us with the Greeks is what happens in ordinary life, where one finds oneself well among those persons and families who are gathered in their homes, self-satisfied, and not seeking anything else outside or above themselves. The Greeks undoubtedly received more or less from Asia, from Syria, from Egypt, the substantial germs of their religion, of their culture, of their social order; but they were able to erase so much of what was foreign in such an origin, and so much to transform, elaborate, turn it upside down, to make it something else, that all that they, like us, appreciate, recognize, love, is precisely what is essentially theirs. Therefore, in the history of Greek life, however far back one goes and however much one has to go, one can do without this retrospective investigation, and one can instead follow within the very world and the very manner of the Greeks the beginnings, the budding, the progress of science and art up to their highest flower, as well as the sources of their decadence, which are also exclusively indigenous. In fact, the Greek spirit in its development uses what it has received, the foreign element, only as a material, as a push: the Greeks in this felt and behaved as free men. The form they gave to the foreign substratum was precisely this particular spiritual breath, the spirit of freedom and beauty, which on the one hand can be considered as a form, but on the other hand is precisely what actually constitutes the highest substance". (Lectures on the History of Philosophy [1816-1830], tr. it., vol. I, Florence 1964, pp.168-169). Things did not go just like that, but Hegel has his reasons to say so. What about the Dorians who also constitute the most genuine and essential reason to understand the Greek soul, even the most culturally evolved? Hegel does not pose the problem.

And, further on: "Precisely in this indigenism of existence, and more precisely in the spirit of indigenism, in this spirit that represents its own existence as something independent in physical, civil, juridical, ethical, political relations, in this character of free and beautiful historicity, for which what the Greeks are is with them also Mnemosyne, is enclosed also the germ of the free activity of thought, and it is contained therefore the necessity that philosophy arose among them. In the same way as the Greeks were at home, philosophy also consists precisely in this being at home, in the fact that man in spirit is at home, he is indigenous to himself. If with the Greeks we are always at home, this must be especially true in philosophy; but not really as at home, since philosophy is only at home with itself, and when it has to do with thought, it has to do with what is most peculiarly ours, with what is free of all particularism. In the Greeks, the development of thought begins with their original elements; and in

order to understand their philosophy, we can stick to those and not look for other more distant reasons. (Ib., pp. 169-170). Also in this passage Hegel does not grasp the strength of Greek thought, just as in the previous one he had not grasped the strength of Greek history. This is not an oversight but a forcing. The ancient ratio, just the original one, had this relationship with the force, with the conquest, with the domain, and here is the true nature of reason. Then the evolution of acquisitive events, even the great Greek conquests and victories, even the period of Pericles, declined, and it is precisely then that philosophy records its highest moments. Certainly Hegel is the philosopher of the nottola, but not as a questioning of reason, he could not think this, he could not go so far as to question the entire dialectical apparatus. In this sense he was right to cut away those considerations that would have caused misunderstandings and logical difficulties in his philosophy. The fact that in the evening of Platonic thought or in the afternoon of the Dorians there are the same elements does not concern him. Man (Greek or non-Greek) always makes use of himself, of his own means, he has the power of reason and that of doubt, he employs both, he does not wait for something great to prod him from the outside. When significant events occur, it is often not the philosophers who record them, they live immersed in a reflective condition that is sometimes the least suitable to understand what is happening.

It is Hegel, for one, who considers the Presocratics as philosophers working on the preparation of all our logical thinking. And these studies of the Presocratics have better prepared the study of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. It is not only a trivial historiographical recovery, but it opens the possibility of indicating a new way of doing philosophy, of thinking the very thought of being. To think means "to determine something". Here, for the first time, we see the possibility of a transition from being to nothingness. Being and nothingness are referred to as the indeterminate "here." The real meaning of the first fundamental experience of the "here," which corresponds to the "this here" of sensible certainty, occurs when we affirm "there is something." But sensible certainty is not yet certainty of "something," as much as it is simply the affirmation of the pure and simple "this here." The Phenomenology describes from consciousness what the Logic brings in the objective dimension of determinacy thus reaching the idea. For Hegel "the truth of being is essence". But the truth of the "essence" is the "concept", which, in turn, is the idea. From logic as a universe of "possibilities", we arrive at reality? The link is given by the "creation", according to Hegel, understandable only on the basis of logic, which in this way would provide us with the thoughts of God in the act of producing the world.

Thus Martin Heidegger, in depth: "With the reference, here necessary though obviously very concise, to the essential history of truth in Western thought, it has been mentioned at the same time that one falls victim to gross mystifications if one arranges the thought of Parmenides and Heraclitus with the help of modern "dialectics", appealing to the circumstance that in the early thought of the Greeks the "opposition" - and even the fundamental opposition between being and nothingness - "plays a role". However, instead of borrowing from Schelling and Hegel a convenient and apparently philosophical procedure with which to explain Greek philosophy, we must rather solicit our attention and follow the indications that can be provided to us by truth in the essential form of unveiling. In immediate reply to what we have just said, one could indeed observe that we men of today are still only able to understand the initial thought of the Greeks by interpreting it on the basis of our present-day knowledge, even if one should then ask oneself whether the thought of Schelling and Hegel, that is, their entire work, does not in any case rise to a height incomparably higher than that of present-day thought. What sensible person could dream of denying this? We must admit, moreover, that the beginning, if it generally shows itself, certainly shows itself not without our efforts. But the question remains as to what kind of commitment this is, where and how it is and will be determined. At the same time, it may indeed seem that our present intention to think about the beginning is only an attempt to historiographically arrange the past from and in function of the present. It would also be useless and especially misleading to want

to calculate which of the two things would require a more essential commitment and preparation: whether the foundation and development of a fundamental metaphysical position within the tradition of Western thought, or simply paying attention to the beginning. Who could deny that in this endeavor we constantly run the danger of coming forward, with what is ours, inadequately? Nonetheless, let us try to pay attention to the indications that are provided to us by the essence of unveiling, hardly thought of and everywhere hardly thought through. Revelation refers to the "opposition" with veiledness. The usually known opposite of truth is non-truth in the sense of falsehood. We find this opposition already at the dawn of Western thinking and speaking, even in poetry. Given what we have said so far about truth as unveiling, we must obviously guard against interpreting ancient "representations" by projecting onto them later notions of the false and the untrue. On the other hand, we can think adequately about the ancient meanings of the 'false', in the sense of opposition to the true, only if we have considered the true in its truth, that is, if we have thought thoroughly about unveiling." (Parmenides [1942-1943], tr. it., Milan 1999, pp. 48-49). Questioning today has become a sport for the masses. It is not without responsibility, in this, the Hegelian philosophy that makes reality correspond to reason, without residue or half terms. Unveiling is a task appropriate to reason, as are producing and modifying. But what is unveiled? To unveil something requires faith in the universal spirit. It is no accident that the "counter-informers," like the "demystifiers," are all set on dialectical mechanisms. I too thought this behind-the-scenes doing possible, but my lack of dialectical faith soon had me on the ropes. Now, unveiling reveals, i.e. a part of the whole (which is thus considered "unvarnished"), at the same time the rest is covered by new sediments. The false is problem not yet correctly set. If the false differs from the true thanks to my capacity of unveiling, it leaves the true empty of meaning because reality is false in its eternal production. To grasp the detail refers to other details or other grasps. To unveil seemed to us to draw the extreme consequences from what reality served under our noses. I say we seemed to be taking on responsibilities that perhaps, on reflection, are not mine, but let's move on. Nothing was to be "drawn" from a hypothetical "something", for the same reason that this something could not be "overcome" (in the Hegelian sense). Perhaps it would have been more correct to think of dragging something away towards a future that was opening up to unthinkable possibilities. A rupture, that's what seemed to be at hand, a disruptive radicality capable of breaking the circle of forced doing, productively directed since ever to reproduce itself. In the last thirty years, this is what I have been concerned with, to drag out of a passive reality all that could aspire to lost quality, to a critical negation of whatever specialization is capable of distinguishing good from evil as one who cuts an apple in two. Destruction can only be the ruins before our eyes, the ruins of the world reorganized in reproductive form, of the broken dream fed to computer programmers, of the anticipation of freedom lowered to co-management of profits. Moving veil after veil, one always finds another thickness to move. The "unveiling" in the long run, except for dogmatists, becomes a craft like any other, a segment of total alienation.

Hans Georg Gadamer repropose the very topical theme in Hegelian studies of Hegel and the ancient dialectic. In a culture that recognizes itself as historical but absolutizes molecular questions by passing them off as historical research, the return to Hegel is inevitable. The conclusion is for an affinity between the different dialectical speculative procedures (Greek and Hegelian), but above all an elective affinity for that world of the past. Hegel identifies his own method with truth without residue. The Hegelian dialectic is the movement of the absolute spirit that unfolds everything at the moment it encompasses everything. The spirit according to Hegel holds everything in place without allowing anything to remain unresolved. In the dialectic, the truth is told in a complete way, the absolute spirit does not keep any secret for itself. Nothing can be left out, there would in fact be an interruption of the incessant movement, that is death, or rather, error. Everything is explained, taken away, made its own by the subject that thus becomes absolute itself. Hegel mentions a colossal effort, it is precisely this transformation of data into product. Every reality that resists is made to become a product of the

absolute subject through internalization. Dialectics through internalization produces the radical coincidence of outside and inside. A clear distinction between external and internal is impossible because everything is summarized by the being-other in the in-self. The dialectic does not meet death because death is never its own. Its death is only the interruption. In the dialectic, the life of the spirit remains constant in its truth, but only on condition that it finds itself again in absolute desolation. The true and the false, as connected aspects, are moments of truth. Thus Hegel: "The element of philosophy is the process that is created and runs through its moments; and this entire movement constitutes the positive and the truth of the positive itself." The truth also encloses in itself the negative, that is, what would be called the false if it could be considered as anything of which one must make abstraction. On the contrary, what is vanishing must be considered as essential. That which disappears must be taken into consideration in order to prevent it from being lost. In this way there is complete adequacy between truth and its formulation, the coincidence of method and truth, when the unfolding is complete and the goal reached. It is not seen here what happens to truth under this form of monopolization, for the interpretation that seeks to exhaust truth ends up betraying it in its essence and reality. Truth has the characteristic of being infinite, and inexhaustible, not referable to object. What for Hegel is coincidence of truth and method cannot be accepted light-heartedly, and therein lies the greatest danger of dialectical logic, since, for Hegel, such coincidence equals superimposition, adaptation, exact correspondence, while identity should exclude confusion between truth and its formulation. Here is the extremist Giovanni Gentile: "If the error is the thought that you can not think, the true is the thought that you can not not think: two necessities, which are one necessity. *Verum norma sui et falsi*. Meanwhile thought is thought, insofar as it is necessarily thought, which is like saying, insofar as we think we cannot think otherwise. Every act of thought is exclusion of another act of thought (not of all other possible acts; but of the one thought immediately before). *Omnis determinatio est negatio*. And yet only by realizing an error, and yet freeing myself from it, do I know a truth, that is, I think. In this vital knot that binds the (abstract) error to the (concrete) truth, is the root of thought, and the fundamental law of logic. The necessity expressed by the old logic in the law of identity is an abstract necessity, as abstract was the thought or the truth, to which that logic aimed, winding itself in a labyrinth of contradictions. The principle of identity (or of contradiction) $A = A$ states a necessity relative to what has been called abstract thought, that is to nature, which, by definition, is the negation of thought and therefore cannot admit in itself any kind of logical law. $A = A$ is the law of error in its abstractness. And however one may think according to this law, it would for that very reason be an error. In fact there is no thought that is resolved in $A = A$. The logical necessity is of the real or concrete process of thought, which schematically could rather be formulated: $A = \text{not } A$. In fact every act of thought is the negation of an act of thought: a present in which the past dies; it is therefore the unity of these two moments. Take away the present, and you will have the blind past (the abstract nature); take away the past, and you will have the empty present (the abstract thought i.e. another nature). The truth is not of the being that is, but of the being that cancels itself and by cancelling itself really is: unthinkable proposition, as long as by thought we take abstract thought, where the being fixed, cannot but be; but proposition, vice versa: that we cannot but think, when by thought we mean concrete thought, the absolutely actual thought (so that the truth of the concept of becoming cannot be grasped if not with respect to that true becoming which is thinking, dialectics). The principle of identity must be replaced not by the equally abstract principle of becoming, pure and simple, but by the principle of dialectics or thought as an activity that arises by denying itself. This principle is not the abolition of the principle of identity, but its inversion, since dialectics does not deny the truth of truth, but the fixity of truth, and therefore affirms that truth is itself but in its movement". (*The Reform of the Hegelian Dialectic* [1913], Florence 1975, pp. 187-188). If every process of negation is necessary - as Gentile argues - it is because there is no completeness in doing. The reasons given by the philosopher are obviously different, but I have become convinced, especially in these last two years spent in prison [1989-1990], that there would be no criticism without this limiting characteristic of the productive

process of reality. The so-called false is therefore all internal to production, indeed it constitutes its original composition since there is no originally happy condition but only a continuous flight in the face of the unpredictable risk that comes from the future. When I touch the truth above the peaks where the night passes and prepares the day to come, nothing remains in my hands if I want to stay close to the salvific crackling of the fire. It is in the night, in the dangerous nocturnal adventure of desolation, that I stagger traces of certainty. The limit of Hegel's thought, reflected in the Gentilian reform with a truly unique intensity, is in the fact of having brought back the totality of the real (point of strength) within the only human possibility (necessity) of existing (point of weakness, otherwise called "bad totality"), while existing is a pre-constituted model of relationships and codifications, where life finds itself as a fake that continuously reproduces itself in the change that never transforms it into something vital.

Another movement has come forth, not yet in its details, but visible enough. An event of subjectivity that advances towards openness, that puts itself at risk by fighting in the reality of everyday life, among the rubble of production, in the anonymity of forced repetition. This event leaves behind the illusion of a radical critical negativity, capable of turning the world upside down; it works here, it digs here, where it is, in its own distinct (separate) condition. Distinction does not frighten him; on the contrary, it stimulates him, leading him to abolish the extreme radical self-consciousness. There is no privileged position, no center that does not tip over into a periphery, no conducting intelligence, no con-vincing philosophy. This involvement shows the inner limits of every total project, of every experimentation that pretends to eat the world, of every critique that denies the existing to find itself with another existing simply changed. At the same time this involvement shows the non-existence of a last level of understanding, where the new man makes the new society rise with an alchemical effort. Speaking is the place of separateness, fixed here in the terrain of production, from within which a last gesture could mark something different, but this gesture I do not know if it belongs again to the word.

Richard Kroner, author of *Von Kant bis Hegel* (2 volumes) from 1921-1924, of which there was a second edition in 1961, says less than the title promises, particularly about Schiller's role in the evolutionary process of philosophy from Kant to Fichte. Rejection of the equivalence of the religious-extatic method with the critical-speculative method as it appears in the Hegelian dialectic. The central theme of Hegelian philosophy starting from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is the controversy against all those positions of thought that support a knowledge of the absolute in a logical way, resorting to feeling or pure intuition. For Hegel these philosophies have a double weakness. They remain entangled in a position of the intellect that reflects and separates: in fact, it is the intellect that separates the infinite from the finite, opposing a parcelled plurality to an empty unity indicated by the name of Absolute or God, which of the absolute has only the name and not the content. These philosophies conclude on mystical and irrational positions: if the absolute is pure unity, it transcends the intellect, which remains the only faculty capable of objective knowledge, so it remains only intuition to reach the absolute or, rather, ecstasy, irrationalism. These are philosophies that can present themselves in advanced forms, appeal to the teaching of critical philosophy, be rich in doctrine, and yet remain on irrational and superstitious positions. In the *Encyclopedia* [1817] Hegel compares such positions to the polytheism of Eastern religions, arguing that many "have defined the Indian religion, in its essentials, as monotheism. That this definition is not inaccurate, results from the little that has been referred to. But this unity of God, and that is of the spiritual God, is so little concrete in itself, and, if one may say, so lacking in force, that the Indian religion is also, with monstrous confusion, the most insane polytheism. But the idolatry of the miserable Indian, when he worships the monkey or whatever, is still never that miserable representation of pantheism that everything is God and that God is everything." Mysticism is uncritical empiricism. Ecstasy and idolatry of the particular datum are complementary

aspects of the same theoretical position, the position that in the German philosophical culture between the two centuries takes the aspect of philosophy of intuition and feeling.

A new direction is opened by Kierkegaard: "Just as there are examples of lovers who have a certain resemblance to each other, even outwardly in expression and facial appearance, so the mystic sinks into contemplation of the divinity, whose image is increasingly reflected in his soul in love, and the mystic thus renews and restores in man the lost image of God. The more he contemplates, the more limpidly this image is reflected in him, the more he himself comes to resemble this image. His interior action does not consist, therefore, in the conquest of personal virtues, but in the development of religious or contemplative virtues. But even this is too ethical an expression for his life: his true life is prayer. That prayer is also part of an ethical life I do not wish to deny; but the more ethically one lives, the more prayer has the character of purpose, so that even in prayers of thanksgiving there is an element of purpose. Things are different for the prayer of the mystic. For him, prayer is all the more meaningful the more erotic it is, the more it is inflamed with ardent love. Prayer is the expression of his love, the language with which alone he can address the divinity, with whom he is in love. As lovers in earthly life sigh for the instant in which they can express their mutual love, melt their souls into a soft whisper, so the mystic sighs for the instant in which, with prayer, he can, almost furtively, penetrate into God. Just as lovers feel the greatest bliss in this murmur, when they really have nothing more to speak of, so too for the mystic; his prayer is all the more blissful, his love all the happier the less it has contained, the more in his sigh it almost disappears for him." (Aut-aut [1843], tr. it., Milan 1964, p. 123). As distant as this way of seeing a considerable part of reality may seem, it is found connatural to the model suggested by Hegel. Here Kierkegaard does not resort to the dialectical mechanism but to Schelling's insights. "Murmuring" is used here to identify the lowering of the philosophical tone. The heights of Hegel are clearly far away. Next to this tenuous thread proposed to the intentions of every man of good will, the system appears as a fortress, a monstrous figure that claims to dictate the conditions of interpretation, the rhythms of reason. The luxuriant world of Hegel's constructions, examined with the intuitions of the extremely subdued, appears to be built on shaky foundations. The worry of the faithful makes one smile a little. Removing the "high" part of Hegelism, the spirit of time remains, which is itself an objective spirit but which is measured daily as a "climate" in which we all live suspended almost like fish in an aquarium. Analytical fortitude here becomes evanescent, so much so that someone has said that there is more philosophy in twenty-four hours of the life of the man in the street than in the entire Phenomenology of Spirit (Raul Vaneigem). This negative living is reversed in the positive construction of the revolution. At least it should, only that the rhythms of this reversal do not correspond to those of the "high" part of the theory (Hegelian or not). Never do concepts dissolve completely into the spirit of the time, in the same way that the latter never consolidates into one or more concepts. Thought can radicalize itself until it reaches (often with supreme ease) the moment of opening, but it is like a dream, where everything remains suspended in an atmosphere without concreteness. The manner of lack certainly does not produce the filling of a subsequent phase, nor can the subject with impunity pose itself as a totality, becoming the only point of reference of possible thought, of absolute meaning. Hence the lowering of the tone, the intrigue and the corridor mediation, the rituals, the defamations, the slide towards dogmatism, the safeguard of every meagreness. The little that the many have at their disposal finances the much that is possessed by the few and leads them to seize power.

Wilhelm Raimund Beyer talks about Hegel's trip to Vienna and the influence of this trip on the development of aesthetics. Influence of artistic beauty and music (Mozart, Rossini). Hegel's attitude towards music in general is marked by suspicion towards instrumental music and this at a time when music had become established and was reaching very high heights. He indicates the presence of too much music and only music, which would mean: too much art, only art to be valued, this is the defect.

Hegel does not admit the autonomous meaning of absolute music, he is suspicious of the intrinsic drama that characterizes it and sees the risks of technicality and aestheticism summarized in a kind of mystical and ineffable enjoyment. While presenting a criticism that could be considered "backward", Hegel foreshadows and therefore contributes to explode the deteriorating aspects of an uncontrollable expressive subjectivity, he foreshadows, as I was saying, the detachment of the enjoyment of art from deeper spiritual values, it is therefore the taking hold of sentimentalism in the enjoyment of art itself. But, at the same time, Hegel as a good connoisseur rejects a type of enjoyment that eliminates all aesthetic enjoyment, remaining only technically attentive. He criticizes those who seek the technicalities of composers, the special characteristics emphasized by connoisseurs, the performance of performers and virtuosos, ways of not grasping the substance of music. The strengthening of technicalities, the underlining of safeguarding devices, are attempts to escape from the determining feeling of beauty, considering the fact that this feeling is too dangerous because it gives space to that dimension of eros that very often frightens us. To live beauty in the sphere of quantity, not being able for the moment to do otherwise, is to use symbolic forms. Art is symbolism and creative activity of symbols or, if you prefer, erotic activity. The Dionysian force of excess has been linked with this very reality by Nietzsche. But there is another possible connection, that with death. The circular form represents eros and death alternately. Artistic technique, its reinforcement to the extreme of tolerance, is a way of saving oneself from death but, in other respects, it is a way of dying without realizing it, on a daily basis, drowned or suffocated by the very technical spread of what was once art.

Hegel is certainly retrogressive in taste, but he is also prescient in critical analysis, anticipating trends that would develop later. Thus, he criticizes the outward cult of executive correctness that is not accompanied by spirituality resulting in something ugly for too much of formalism. It can also be argued that the Hegelian distrust towards absolute music, and therefore towards any form of pure art, will be supported by Wagner with the theory of "the sacrifice of every great poetic and musical merit in favor of drama".

Beyer then talks about the Austrian Catholic criticism of Hegel up to Anton Gunther and the bourgeois liberalist criticism of Franz Grillparzer. He then discusses Austromarxism, both unconscious of Weber and conscious of Adler and Hilferding, who discussed at length the Kantian genesis of Marxism in defense of their own revisionism. After Hegel's death, the intellectual and philosophical world of Germany had the impression that a parabola had been accomplished. The development of rationalism begun with Descartes and reworked by Kant ends with Hegel, without interruption. The opposition of the last Schelling cannot but appear an isolated parenthesis (except for some other parenthesis: Kierkegaard). Hegel died in 1831, so the period between 1815 and 1840 must be considered as marked by the hegemony of Hegelian philosophy. King Frederick William III accepts that all universities are placed under the direction of Hegelian. This is possible because of the victorious restoration that brings Germany back to the traditional conditions of life, although the liberal instances and ferments do not disappear completely. From 1840 industrialization grows and with it the demarcation between two new social classes: the capitalist bourgeoisie and the proletariat becomes clearer and more visible. The bourgeoisie feels the need for greater freedom of initiative, and supports the rise to the Prussian throne of Frederick William IV, who seemed at first close to the liberal program. The ideal reference of the rising German bourgeoisie is the French model of the thirties, a model hostile to the restoration, although more willing to compromise between the reactionary forces: monarchy, aristocracy and clergy, in order to control the popular claims of the poorer classes. In Germany, the demands of the bourgeoisie are advanced to criticism, philosophy and literature: freedom of trade, freedom of press and expression, freedom of conscience and religion, etc.. After just a decade, a period of tranquility turns into a period of social, political and cultural transformation, a period that will result in the revolutions of 1848. On the wave of similar revolts that occurred in other European countries (France, Poland,

Greece, etc.), even in Germany the first petty-bourgeois and workers' revolts begin to form. Revolutionary movements occurred in Saxony and Bavaria and other parts of the Confederation. The first typically working-class manifestation in Germany is the Silesian weavers' insurrection in 1844. This insurrection made no political demands but only economic ones. It was brutally suppressed. While Germany was going through this typically liberal experience, the first Sansimonian publications arrived from France, as well as the first truly socialist literature: the writings of Fourier, Proudhon, etc. German workers' organizations are born, founded in the early thirties by German emigrants in France and England. The best known exponent of German utopian socialism in the 1930s and 1940s is the tailor Wilhelm Weitling. He criticizes the emerging capitalist system in Germany, imagining a transition to socialism caused by a spontaneous uprising of the impoverished masses. The German philosophy, the protagonist of this intellectual climate, where explode at the same time the liberal themes of criticism of the absolutist state and socialist criticism of bourgeois society, is certainly that of the young Hegelian, or the "Hegelian left". Interesting as few others is the digression of Croce: "But the "philosophy of history" is just as contradictory as the deterministic conception from which it arises and to which it is opposed. Because it, having accepted and gone beyond the method of joining together the brute facts, it no longer finds facts to join together (which have already been joined, as it could, by the category of cause), but rather brute facts, to which it must confer, no longer a link but a "meaning", and represent them as aspects of a transcendent process, of a theophany. Now those facts as brutes are dumb, and the transcendence of the process requires, in order to be conceived and represented, an organ that is not that of the thought that thinks, that is, produces the facts, but an extralogical organ (for example, a thought that proceeds abstractly a priori: Fichte), which is not found in the spirit if not as a negative moment, as the void of actual logical thought. And the void of logical thought is immediately occupied by praxis, or, as we say, by feeling, which then, refracting itself theoretically, takes on the character of poetry. A poetic character, which is evident in all "philosophies of history": both in the ancient ones, which represented historical events as struggles between the gods of individual peoples or single people or protectors of single individuals, or the God of light and truth against the powers of darkness and lies; and thus expressed the aspirations of peoples, groups or individuals towards hegemony, or of man towards goodness and truth: both in the modern and very modern ones, which are inspired by the various nationalisms and ethnicisms (the Italic, the Germanic, the Slavic, etc.), or which represent the historical course as the race towards the kingdom of Liberty, or as the passage from the Eden of primitive communism, through the Middle Ages of slavery, servitude and wage-earning, towards restored communism, no longer unconscious but conscious, no longer Edenic but human. In poetry, facts are no longer facts but words, not reality but images; and therefore there would be no place for censorship, if here one remained in pure poetry. But one does not remain there, because those images and words are now posed as ideas and facts, that is, as myths: myths of Progress, Freedom, Economy, Technology, Science, as long as they are conceived as engines external to the facts: myths no less than God and the Devil, Mars and Venus, Jehovah and Baal, or other cruder figurations of divinities. And this is why the deterministic conception, having produced the 'philosophy of history,' which contrasts it, is forced to contrast in turn its own daughter, and to appeal from the realm of ends to that of causal connections, from imagination to observation, from myths to facts." (Theory and History of Historiography, op. cit., pp. 57-58). However, the repudiation of a first and only engine remains typical of the dialectical mechanism, reformed or not. The fact that instead of being "first" it is "within", in my opinion, does not change things much. The idea of history as a mystical unity that always reappears the same in front of those who know how to make it live within themselves, is possible only if the reappearance is charged with suggestion, if, that is, the involving power of remembrance is inserted into the remembered fact, if a negative critique of reality is promoted that in its reconnaissance (interpretative) phase is not an end in itself, that is, it is not directed towards restoring (by reinforcing) the previous conditions. Having "overcome" everything, here is that the hated enemy to be overcome (in history) reappears in the very place of factual events, in the forced existence

that we all know how it brings us into itself and reproduces us always the same as ourselves. There is no verbal radicalism of the specialists of the partial that can destroy the prison walls that are before our eyes.

Croce continues: "The reciprocal refutation of historical determinism and the philosophy of history, which makes one and the other two emptinesses or two nothingnesses, that is, a single emptiness and nothingness, seems, instead, as it usually does, to the eclectics the reciprocal fulfillment of two entities, which make or should make an alliance with each other to support each other. And since eclecticism, *mutato nomine*, rages in contemporary philosophy, it is not surprising that history is frequently assigned, in addition to the office of investigating the causes, that of the "meaning" or the "general plan" of the historical course (see the works on the "philosophy of history" by Labriola, Simmel, Rickert); and since writers of methodologies tend to be empirical, and therefore eclectic, even among them it is common to divide history into "historia", which is done by gathering and criticizing documents and reconstructing events, and into "philosophy of history" (see for all Bernheim's manual); and, finally, since ordinary thought is eclectic, nothing is easier than to gather consensus around these: that mere history, which offers the series of facts, does not suffice, and that it is required that thought should go back over the constituted chain of facts in order to inscribe in it the design placed there and to answer the questions of whence we come and where we are going; that is, that, alongside history, a "philosophy of history" should be placed. This eclecticism, which substantializes two opposite vacuities and makes one give the hand to the other, even sometimes tries to overcome itself and to merge those two fake sciences or parts of science. And then one hears people defend the 'philosophy of history', but with the caution that it must be conducted with a 'scientific' and 'positive' method, by means of causal research, and thus reveal the action of reason or divine Providence. (Ib., pp. 59-60). Croce does not want to proceed further, to the conclusion one would expect. History cannot be reduced to the study of causal relationships, in the same way that all attempts to see in it the inexplicable movement of chance must be rejected. Yet - as I discovered only late in life - Croce had come close to identifying a collective world, a sort of foundation of life, of which only a few reflections can be grasped in existence, but a thousand obstacles, not least his own personal wealth, blocked the final step. But neither can history be traced back to the search for an intrinsic mechanism, be it the action of reason or that of the omnipresent divinity. Here the question arises whether Croce has always been exempt from the defect now stigmatized. I don't know, it seems not to me. The conventional elements of the masterful use of history never completely disappear; after all, Croce remains a master, even when he does not want to admit it.

The interpretation of neopositivism. Karl Popper ends up confusing Hegel-Marx-bolshevism-fascism, praising the Roman Catholic universities of Austria that were untouched by Hegelism and therefore remained faithful to true philosophy. "The essential characteristics [of Hegelism] are shared by the two most important modern versions of historicism: the historicist philosophy of racism or fascism on the one hand (right) and the historicist philosophy of Marxism on the other (left)." (Postscript to the Logic of Scientific Discovery [1983], vol. II, The open universe: an argument for indeterminism, tr. it., Milan 1984, p. 29). Against similar foolishness Beyer shows how Hegel, if not the Hegelians, has always remained alien to Nazism. The case of Gentile deserves reflection. He immediately signed his adhesion to Fascism and never wavered. Even though he was a minister in Mussolini's government and wrote the philosophical part of the entry "Fascism" for the Italian Encyclopaedia (published under Mussolini's signature) and even though this exposition was the official philosophical doctrine of Fascism, Gentile never managed to get his philosophical ideas recognized as the official ideas of the Fascist State. These ideas are too difficult and philosophically researched and even too strange to exert any influence outside of intellectual and academic circles. Eugenio Garin writes: "As for actualism, its crisis is also well before 1945. Gentile's human vicissitudes, his relations with Fascism, his tragic end, if they did

not completely block the circulation of some aspects of his thought, they nevertheless forced him into the shadows, and sometimes into misunderstanding. An ancient misunderstanding, intertwined until the First World War with his relationship with Croce, which, despite the almost complete publication of his correspondence, still awaits an adequate analysis and evaluation, through which we can put an end to the artificial meeting of the two philosophers under the usual label of the greatest exponents of Italian idealism. From the so different doctrinal formation to the clear opposition after a long collaboration, it is not by chance that their always different paths eventually became adverse. The fact that both of them took positions on the same authors (Hegel, Marx) and on the same events (the war, Fascism), but to arrive at opposite conclusions, did not make us reflect enough on the reasons for the constant gap. Yet nothing could be further from the cultural roots and training of the two thinkers, nothing could be less similar than their interpretations of Hegel and Marx, or of the Italian cultural tradition - of their way of conceiving their own philosophical research: a methodology of the historical sciences against a "metaphysics" of the mind, bordering on a sort of "mystical rhetoric" of the "Spirit". On the other hand, just as the less defined, more restless and disturbing aspects of actualism have involved it in equivocal adventures, so they have made it a component, or at least a stimulus, of quite a few positions that were active for a long time before and after 1945, starting with those who never denied their philosophical debt to Gentile, even if they were distancing themselves from him in their own ways (such as Calogero or Spirito, just to mention two names, but very active thinkers in the post-war period)". (Agony and death of Italian idealism, in AA.VV., *La filosofia italiana dal dopoguerra a oggi*, Bari 1985, pp. 25-26). Fascism basically does not have its own philosophical doctrine. It is based on a mixture of ideas of various origins: mystical-religious ideas, irrationalist, nationalist, positivist, neohegelian, syndicalist, corporatist, etc.. The immediate inspirers of the eclectic fascist ideology are rather to be sought in Enrico Corradini, Piero Marinetti, Vilfredo Pareto, etc.. Fascism exerts its influence on the masses as a mystical and irrational doctrine, in which man is seen in his immanent relationship with a "higher law" and with an "objective will". Opposed to the materialistic currents of the previous centuries, the valorization of scientific thought is not very significant, but it allows to obtain the political support of the neo-scholastic and neo-Thomist religious currents. The ideological misery of fascism is one of the causes that push some bourgeois intellectuals towards the neo-Hegelian idealism.

At the third congress of the "Hegel-Gesellschaft" [1960] the only anti-Hegel voice was that of Mario Rossi. In the present revival of Hegelian studies, according to him, the decisive solicitation in this direction made by Marxism is imposed. Now, whether this recognition is given today with or without the mediation of Marx, the same recognition corresponds to one of Marx's major concerns. In judging today the oppositions to Hegel one must remember what Eric Weil wrote on the subject: Marx who understood Hegel overthrew him. Kierkegaard who did not understand him rejected him. In 1923, the year of the German crisis, with strikes and insurrections, with the attempts of the right wing to take power, Weil, a young rich student with open Marxist sympathies, tries to create in Frankfurt a stable institute that he decides to call simply "Institut für Sozialforschung". This institute, according to Weil's idea, was to study "the complex social connections that require intellectual cooperation in research work." After thinking of Lukács and Karl Korsch (who had published the first *History and Class Consciousness* [1923] and the second *Marxism and Philosophy* [1923]), Karl Grünberg, a professor of law and political science at the University of Vienna, moved to Frankfurt, defined with great approximation the father of 'Austro-Marxism', was called to direct it. In the official opening report Grünberg indicates as the purpose of the Institute to break with the German academic tradition capable of producing only "mandarins" loyal to the preservation of power and far from practice. On many primary points Grünberg does not meet with the consensus of Horkheimer and other young members of the Institute.

Massolo carried out research on the young Hegel and the problem of history. The problem of philosophy and the problem of history, in the young Hegel, coincide in that his interests are not speculative but historical. His directing himself to reality, urged by the situation of his times, requires him to reject the Kantian-Fichtian concept of history as "superfluous" and therefore to secure the new concepts of historical determinacy. Studying Hegel is justified only as a participation in time, therefore as a commitment of the scholar to the time in which he lives. If we want to be with Hegel, we must go beyond Hegel and therefore against Hegel. The same path had made Croce. History and philosophy coincide. "So that, whoever thinks according to the deterministic conception of history, as long as he wants to refrain from truncating with arbitrariness and imagination the research begun, is led by necessity to recognize that the method adopted does not achieve the goal that is pursued; and since, on the other hand, we have begun, albeit with insufficient method, to think about history, there are no other ways but to go back to the beginning, changing direction. The naturalistic presupposition, which still remains firm ("first gather the facts, then look for the causes": what thing is more evident and more inescapable than this?), pushes of necessity to the second party. But to cling to the second party is to go beyond determinism, it is to transcend nature and its causes, it is to propose an opposite method to the previous one, that is, to renounce the category of cause for another, which can only be that of end; and of extrinsic and transcendent end, which is the analogous opposite that corresponds to the cause. Now, the search for the transcendent end is the "philosophy of history." The consequent naturalist (and I call such a person the one who "continues to think", or, as it is commonly said, draws the consequences) cannot avoid this research, and never avoids it in effect, however he conceives his new research; not even when he tries to avoid it, declaring the end or the "ultimate cause" unknowable, because (as it is also known) an unknowable affirmed is an unknowable in some way known. Naturalism always crowns itself with a philosophy of history, whatever the form of its systematizations: either it explains the universe as the atoms that pair up and by their various pairing up and dancing produce the historical course, which they can also put an end to by returning to their primitive dispersion; or it calls the hidden God Matter or Unconscious or in some other way; or, finally, it conceives of him as an Intelligence that makes use of the chain of causes to put its advice into action. And, conversely, every philosopher of history is a naturalist, and such he is because he is a dualist, and conceives a God and a world, an Idea and a fact beyond or beneath the Idea, a Kingdom of ends and a Kingdom or subkingdom of causes, a heavenly city and another more or less diabolical or earthly one. Take any construction of historical determinism, and one will find or discover in it, explicit or implied, transcendence (in Taine, for example, it bears the name of "Race" or "Siècle," real deities); and take any construction of "philosophy of history," and one will discover in it dualism and naturalism (in Hegel, for example, in that of his admitting rebellious and impotent facts, which resist or are not worthy of the dominion of the Idea). And one will see more and more clearly how from the bowels of naturalism comes out, incoercible, the 'philosophy of history'". (Theory and History of Historiography, op. cit., pp. 56-57). The alternative is with history or against history, but this is a falsely reassuring crossroads. There is no doubt that dead things have a power over us, whether this power they acquire in the name of a mechanism intrinsic to the evolution of things or in the name of a transcendent end, the question is secondary. We need to dispense with this power, which then translates into control as a result of adopting a criterion of the world that acts as a guide if not an obligatory guideline. The past enters into our present life, supplying it with body and construction, with fictitious crowns and secret habits that are quick to explode into acceptations and debacles without remedy. Croce struggles to avoid falling prey to the natural consequences of his choices, but he can't; Hegelianism is ultimately stronger than he is. The continuous vanishing of life works as a misfortune on every construction that pretends to exorcise it without going through the active transformation of reality, the overturning of all values. By accepting, even in the smallest part that each of us thinks is truly negligible, the dictate of the framework of values, as inescapable as the nakedness of events, we end up feeling guilty, a guilt without remedy that clouds the importance of what we are doing, handing it over to a fate that threatens

but does not hint at showing itself as the shadow of the sacred wood where we constantly dream of hanging our weapons.

Here are some essential points that summarize Hegel's thought. The historical account includes the philosophical concept. A philosophical system worthy of the name is an aid to understanding historical reality. Philosophy is the methodology of history. Individual and idea cannot be taken separately. Traditional philosophy is resurrected in historiography. There is no distinction between important historical facts, i.e., provided with meaning, and non-historical facts or trivial facts, as there is no determining factor. There is no fundamental factor. History, poetry, moral consciousness, thought, do not have laws, do not have obligations, are not necessary. The search for the causes of historical facts is also limiting. There is no sense in an objective periodization of the historical process. There is no historical predictability, there is no scientific theory of social development. Historical judgment is only about the past. History is only a series of single, individual, unrepeatable phenomena, a series of creative acts of the universal spirit. The order and unity of historical facts are introduced by the historian and therefore have only logical value. The universal spirit is the only subject-object of history, it has a plan that can be realized in exceptional persons, according to a criterion of providentiality that remains unknown to us, even if man can strive to understand it. The persons and so-called salient facts that indicate some logical direction are only puppets and acts of puppets in the hands of the objective spirit. If the concept of the historical process is freed from dogmatism and placed within a temporal consideration of the historical course, we have what I would like to call an honest consideration of the forced facts which we witness or which our predecessors witnessed, and this is what we usually call history serving as a tool for evaluating the doings of the men of yesterday and today. There is no doubt that correctly set up this methodology can no longer make a distinction between natural process and human process, between nature and history. Leibniz was the first to note that there are analogies of structure between all the elements of reality. But life, of which we must speak, is something else. It is not a collection of mummies. The energy to go beyond all this must come from outside, it cannot be gathered in a certain way of remembering what happened or reflecting on what is happening or will happen. Life certainly calls for action but we, poor wrecks of existence, cannot live it if not by saying it, because the representative model is included in the doing that constitutes us and from which we cannot detach ourselves. To keep in mind the Hegelian model we are inside the process of self-conscious totality that takes us away in dialectical deduction overturning our negation into a further reaffirmation of the positive. Of course, this is not really how things are, but they can also be read this way. There are many ways to read a tombstone. Even rich in humor.

Hegel again: "The end of the history of the world is therefore that the spirit comes to the knowledge of what it really is, and objectifies this knowledge, realizes it by making it an existing world, objectively manifests itself. The essential thing is the fact that this objective is a product. The spirit is not a being of nature, like the animal; which is as it is, immediately. The spirit is precisely this production, this making itself what it is. Therefore, the immediately successive moment of its process of formation, that of its real being, is nothing but self-activity. Its being is actuality, not an inert existence, but this being produced, having become for itself, having made itself. To its true being belongs the being produced; its being is the absolute process. In this process, which is a mediation of itself with itself through itself and not through others, it is implicit that it has distinct moments, that it contains in itself movements and mutations, that it is determined now in this way and now in that way. In this process are therefore essentially contained degrees, and the history of the world is the representation of the divine process, of the gradual course in which the spirit knows itself and its truth and realizes it". (Lectures on the Philosophy of History, vol. I, op. cit., p. 61). Hegel hides the importance of his discovery from himself. Babbling with terminology he gives birth to a reality that is unequivocally presented as sacrifice, the becoming what one is the spirit experiences in its own original form, in the same symbolism as death.

There is no marvelous decision-making framework that does not involve in itself the obscure and inexpressible concealment of death, the absolute extraneousness to what happens as an expression of the happening itself, of the obscurity that includes light and makes it disappear in itself as one of its simple moments, that does not sacrifice everything, every productive event, to the martyrdom of the inevitable, to the testimony of what has already been decided, of what has been marked without a shadow of approximation. The spirit has - according to Hegel - this task, namely that of realizing itself for what it is, but seen under this perspective of duty, its realization wears the white robes of the priest, of those who do the sacred and therefore, in one way or another, is allied to death, not life. The sacrifice never corresponds to the real content, it does not present with its own manifestation the accomplished reality, but nevertheless it fixes a quite exact reference with the produced reality, that is, with what comes out of the structural deformations, the limitations of existence and its bonds. In the end we forget that sacrifice is the absolute extraneousness to life, while, at the same time, it unusually enters into the conventions of the time, taking stable residence there becoming from unusual presence habitual to renunciation.

Mario Rossi: radical and total refusal of Hegel. From Bern to Berlin. Includes the speculative movement and the historical situation. This rejection involves the very interpretation of Marx, or at least the common way of interpreting Marx. So the recognition of Hegel in Marx occurs in the sense that in Marx are identified the negative elements that instead in Hegel are found in positive form. If Hegel can say anything within his system it is something paradoxical. Of course, considering these paradoxical elements Rossi acts in an anti-Marxist and anti-Hegelian form, since Hegel himself had felt the contradictions and considered them part of the system. Marx's position involves the dialecticization of sensitive human reality, so it is grafted onto the discovery made by Feuerbach. The dialectical interpretation of the relationship between man and sensible reality as a function of human labor is the basis for understanding the foundations of scientific communism. All previous communism (Proudhon, Fourier, Saint-Simon, etc.) is considered vulgar, according to the pejorative definition used by Marx, since it is concerned only with the denial of private property and suppresses everywhere the personality of man up to support the commonality of women, a communism that in the end, again according to Marx, is nothing but the consequent expression of private property. And Marx notes with some pathos: "The universal envy which organizes itself into a force, is nothing but the disguised form in which envy presents itself so as to find its satisfaction only in another." In the crude communism Marx condemns the flat conception of existence that puts it at a lower level of the same private property, thus demonstrating how empty and vain is the only suppression of private property. This communism lacks the concept of man as "generic nature" from which scientific communism draws its theoretical positivity and social effectiveness: it detects the defects of private property but does not overcome them, it envisages the reintegration or the return of man to himself, as a way to overcome the alienation of the human ego, but without grasping the positive essence of private property and the very essence of human need as such. And this, by common logic, is paradoxical.

"An utterance is considered a law because it is used to make predictions and it is not used to make predictions because it is a law." (N. Goodman, *Facts, Hypotheses and Predictions* [1954], tr. it., Rome-Bari 1985, p. 17). According to Marx, scientific communism involves the overcoming of private property understood as the alienation of man and the effective appropriation of the human essence by man. There is thus a return of man to himself as a social being, a total return, a conscious return implemented within the historical development. This is a positive sociality, realized through the Hegelian overcoming of property, in which the purpose of Feuerbach's humanism is reflected. "An illusion is not the same thing as an error, nor is it necessarily an error. Thus religious doctrines are all indemonstrable illusions, so that no one can be compelled to regard them as true, to believe them. Just as they are indemonstrable, they are also irrefutable. We are not wise enough to approach them with a

critical sense." (S. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion* [1927], tr. it., Turin 1990, p. 73). The true resolution of the antagonism between nature and man, the solution of the enigma presented by history.

In fact, in philosophy there are no errors but a greater or lesser adequacy to reality, and it is Hegel himself who conquered this historical method and discovered the law of that adequacy. Rossi is thus a singular pre-Hegelian Marxist-Hegelian.

[1965], [1990]

VI. Restlessness of Life

The historiographical project that is being pursued on Hegel today is directed toward the clarification in Hegel of the restlessness of life, in a decidedly non-romantic key. In this way we want to overcome both the academic neo-Hegelianism and the tension between Marxism and existentialism.

Of course, it is not a question of a return to the "finitistic" interpretation as it happened for the existentialist readings of Hegel. Otherwise the many works of Adorno and Marcuse on dialectics would not be understood. The fundamental characteristic of the Hegelian subject is that of being substance in movement, "mediation of the becoming-other-than-self". This is the concept of simple negativity that grounds the problem of the beginning, the first moment of splitting and opposition, which in turn must be denied as indifferent duplicity. Here is Søren Kierkegaard: "The beginning of the system, which begins with the immediate, is then also obtained by reflection. Herein lies the real difficulty. For if one does not let this one thought slip through one's fingers through deception or dazedness or through the rush to finish the system quickly, it is able to decide with all its simplicity that a system of existence cannot be given and that the logical system cannot claim an absolute beginning; for such a thing as pure being is a pure chimera. If therefore one cannot begin immediately with the immediate (an immediate that should be thought of as a chance or a miracle, that is, something that cannot be thought of!), and instead this beginning must be obtained by means of a reflection, then one asks oneself very simply (alas, provided that I am not punished for my simplicity, because everyone can understand my question and therefore will have to be ashamed of the questioner's so popular knowledge): how is it that I stop the reflection that was set in motion so that I may obtain the beginning? In fact reflection has this remarkable property of being infinite. This implies in any case that it cannot be arrested by itself because obviously in order to be able to arrest itself it needs itself, and therefore it can only be arrested in the way a disease is cured if it were to prescribe to itself its remedies, that is, if the disease were to be nourished. Perhaps this infinity of reflection is the "bad infinity" (Hegelian), and then we are well and truly doomed, because this bad infinity is considered as something despicable that must be renounced as soon as possible. Only when reflection is arrested, the beginning can take place, and reflection can only be arrested with something that is something other than logic, because it is a resolution. And only when the beginning, with which reflection is arrested, is a rupture, so that the same absolute beginning emerges through reflection continued indefinitely, then only the beginning is without presupposition. If, on the other hand, it is a rupture by which reflection is interrupted so that the beginning can emerge, then this beginning is not absolute". (*Postilla conclusiva non-scientific to the Crumbs of Philosophy* [1846], tr. it., vol. I, Bologna 1962, p. 311). After more than a century, this need for a foundation remains indispensable. The myth has almost completely exhausted its founding charge - today we see the late evidence, less and less satisfactory - so something else is needed in the face of the pressing demand. The embarrassed response of philosophers is no longer enough. There is in this situation a civil element that is not bad to highlight. Society yearns for its own grounds, every newspaper purchase made in the morning by the clerk at the land registry is a request for grounds. The well-meaning wait, less and less patiently. To do this, contrary to Kierkegaard's concerns, they have long since suspended their admittedly poor aptitude for reflection. The mystifying (apologetic)

contributions are not lacking, but they do not satisfy. After all, Hegel is still back in fashion, but in this sense a greater constancy in the reading of his work would be necessary. Other than logic, for goodness sake, here is Kierkegaard's affirmation, and here is the reason for the topicality of this philosopher who often has very little of current relevance. This is why we always reread him with great interest, because in his pages there is a firm point against the predominance of reason. But it is not a criticism made in a decorative way, being intimate the labor that urges it, often in an unseemly way, like all real intimacies. The old Hegel is down there, always refusing to approach, not accepting all proposals to condescend to this or that utilization. The difficulties of a utilizational reading of Hegel are not only those indicated by Kierkegaard in the preceding passage, but also depend on the conflict between duty and inclination that constantly returns after acting for a long time behind the scenes of every moral reflection.

Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, speaking of the proofs of the existence of God, makes it clear that the work must be done today in opposition both to the general defamation of idealism as well as in opposition to the crypto-idealists, precisely because in the representation of the absoluteness of the spirit a salutary corrective is made light. In this way the depressing resignation of today's philosophy towards the dominance of blind existence is corrected. Thus he writes: "The very movement of the spirit, which - in other times - elevated its material to concept, is reduced to material for conceptual ordering. On the basis of what comes into your mind, experts are able to decide whether you are an obsessive character, an oral type or a hysteric. Subtracted from all responsibility, that is, separated from reflection, from the control of the intellect, speculation becomes the object of science, whose subjectivity has failed with it. Letting itself be led back to its unconscious origins by the directive scheme of analysis, thought forgets to be such, and transforms itself - from a judgment of truth - into neutral matter. Instead of striving for self-mastery through the work of the concept, it passively relies on the reworking of the doctor, who already knows everything from the beginning. Thus speculation is definitively crushed, reduced to pure and simple fact; and, as such, incorporated into one of the branches of classificatory science as a proof and document of the always the same." (*Minima moralia* [1951], tr. it., Turin, 1979, p. 71-72). This new disposition of the forces in the field is obviously not accidental, it is directed to make impossible the passage (casual, but possible) from the realization of oneself, of the epoch or of the spirit of the time, to the awareness of oneself, of the individual, a fact that is full of dangers for the constituted order. A thousand reflections governed by power have precisely the task of barring this passage. Immersing oneself in the dense sea (not very navigable) of Hegelian philosophy has (not least) the result of observing this mechanism at work, involuntariness becoming voluntary fact and the latter slowly turning into involuntary reaction, a phenomenon that can be accumulated but no longer identifiable in its single modulation. Here one is in something other than the dialectical mechanism. There is another of the historical and negative self-consciousness that spills over into the positive but refuses to be represented by the original opposition. Something new emerges from the extreme negation, and it is something that is found in the very sphere of forced production, something that comes out of repetitiveness and is not itself repetitive, it is included in the mechanism and appears as if it were outside of any possible dialectical process. Involuntariness becomes history, it would be better to say that one tries to make it become history, but this process can never be concluded in its completeness, there is always a refusal of consciousness that presents itself in an unconscious way, lived and not thought, excess and not rule, unrest and not satisfaction postponed. The difference here is just coming out of the heterogeneous movement I am trying to talk about. Hegel enclosed his whole world of phantasms in one movement, evidently some of them are left out. The negative critique is asserting something different, it is opening up instead of closing in its mortal encounter with the positivity that presupposes it, the collapse of the old meaning (values and dis-values) has a new and different aspect, it is a new positivity. The Kantian (real) and Hegelian (dialectical) confrontation seem behind us.

But Adorno should not be thought of as a reevaluator of the mystical and romantic Hegel. Like Benedetto Croce he combats idealistic transcendentalism with a critique that reaches into the magical conduct of the spiritual life. As a subject the pure simple negativity is the splitting of the simple into two parts, in other words the opposing duplication. The negation of this indifferent diversity and, at the same time, of its opposition; reconstitutes the equality or rejection of the being-other in itself. The true is not the original unity as such, nor is it an immediate unity as such. The truth is the becoming of itself, the circle that presupposes and has at the beginning its own end as its own end, and that only thanks to its own end is effective. Let us think of Giuseppe Rensi: "There is therefore no way to determine with logical certainty what is True. This is determined neither by the recognition of all minds, which we have seen to be impossible; nor by that of the majority of them, because if this were the case, it would really have to be said, according to Seneca's expression that "sanitatis patrocinium in sapientium turba est", and instead it is often the minority of them that grasps and designates the True. The superior True; nor from that of the minority of minds or of the only mind, because many times it is eccentricity and hallucination. It is not, on the other hand, determined by the certainty of inner intuition, since this is accompanied as much by propositions that actually possess the character of universality of right proper to the True, as by propositions that do not possess it, although they have the subjective vivid claim to possess it, a claim that, however, remains such and that reality denies". (My Philosophy, Milan 1939, p. 89). Even the universality of law is not at all proper to the "true", taking into account the fact that the true can not have universality as its characteristic under penalty of zeroing as a content provided with meaning. Everything that is not accessible with the richness of current relations, those same relations that bind us and signify us in the world of modification, can be considered "true", or completely irrelevant, since it is beyond the sense of which we continuously desire the availability. Yet things are beyond this limiting standard. Continually there is something in us that hints at the infinite subtlety that eludes us, a problematic area that we obscure so as not to sense its remoteness and the fear that comes with it. It is difficult to deny this condition, which is constitutive of our existence, as it spreads without problems in the vital impulse that pushes us forward. The more we try to go into this initial determination, the more it withdraws into itself, becomes silent, completely inaccessible. The more we make observations that raise answers, the more they don't come, showing the obscure nature of these questions, where the Mothers live who have sketched inside us the features of the building that we cannot complete. In this sense the logic of "everything and now" is paradoxical. Where reality runs the risk of becoming alive, human, there it is, closing itself off in an inaccessible way. No event that comes close to the origin sheds light on the latter; on the contrary, the closer we get to reality, the thicker the darkness becomes again. Archetypes knock on the door, we must avoid opening it thoughtlessly.

But this does not solve the problem in a negative sense, it does not push us to consider truth impossible. Aristotle had said: "We speak of being and non-being either by referring to the figures of the categories, that is, to the distinction of power and act for each thing that is predicated in them, and of its contrary; or, also, as true and false in their most proper meaning. In the latter sense being is considered in things insofar as it can be compounded or divided. For this reason he is in the true who thinks that what is divided is divided, and that what is composed is composed; and he is in the false who thinks otherwise than the way things are. Now, you ask, when is it that there is or is not what we mean by true or false? It is well that we should know what we say. Consider, in fact, that not because we think you are white, you are white indeed; but, on the other hand, because you are white we think the true we who say you are white." (Aristotle, The Metaphysics [fourth century BC], IX, 1051b). In fact, Giovanni Gentile: "If in Platonism one could with a clean cut detach the true principle from the false, and think so a Plato master of truth and a Plato disproportionate, it would be inconceivable the twenty years discipleship of Aristotle, a critic of his error. Disproportionate Plato, even a single day, a single hour, would have driven away the intelligent schoolboy whom Plato was pleased to call Intelligence. Where it is well known that the error of the great man always sounds with an accent of truth, which attracts or leaves

one doubtful: what would not be possible of an error, which was nothing but error; and aroused nothing but what every error naturally arouses: rebellion and denial. And already not only would the disproportionate Plato not have stopped the thoughtful attention of Aristotle; but he would not have stopped even that of Plato himself! From our point of view, therefore, it is not the truth that is not discernible: on the contrary, it is the error, in the ordinary sense of the term, as an act, of the spirit that should not have been. Nothing is, that should not have been: and our soul rests calmly and contentedly in the spectacle of a history, not of errors and defeats of the human spirit, but of victories (of ever greater victories) in which it is gradually realizing its divine nature". (La riforma della dialettica hegeliana [1913], Firenze 1975, p. 131). A man needs to believe, without a faith he cannot live. It does not need to be an otherworldly faith, i.e. projected too far ahead, it can also be a faith linked to his average life expectancy, an earthly faith. Something like this happens to many scientists who transfer their faith in reason just a little bit further, and derive from it an alleged foundation for a faith in God. But theirs obviously remains a faith of earthly origin, any point, and often a rather naive one, on which to rest their feet. Unwilling to admit the need for a "critique of reason", and therefore also of the operationalist procedures it recommends, they end up confirming their irrational faith in reason itself, thus deluding themselves into believing that they are sealing their pact with certainty and truth.

But the cult of scientific methodology presents, even within the very framework of the logic of "little by little", some perplexities which, however carefully hidden, cannot be annulled. Today we live in an atmosphere of distrust and uncertainty, before that in ideas this atmosphere is in everyday things and is beginning to penetrate into common sense. The scientific method has almost completely put aside the idea of being able to found within itself the search for truth, hence the birth of a substitute faith, all within the accumulative mechanism, a faith based on a new cosmology, a new probabilistic evolutionism, a planetary ecology, a hope in the possibility of winning the disease and even death, etc.. All to replace the ancient fables about genesis, the deterministic conjecture about the development of human consciousness, the relationship between micro and macrocosm and the myth of resurrection.

The relationship between faith and certainty is strange but explicable. There is no evidence that can guarantee certainty, there are more or less probable things, events and actions that we assume can occur in one way or another, but we must avoid going too deep, otherwise they become unreliable, unpredictable. And since our life is an expectation, always rather coarse, we adapt to these uncertainties and replace them with a fideistic expectation that turns them into certainties. If we ask our concrete individuality what is the purpose behind the will, if this purpose is there and is clear, if there is a sure way to remedy the blindness of the will, we never have a sure answer. We spend all our lives reaping the results of immediate consciousness, and we also know how to make up for or hide the real defeats, reproposing them as apparent victories, but between real and false victories we do not really know what to answer to the question that insists on the sunset of life. We only have the words to explain, but they are not explanations, even when we are able to break the circle of control of the blind will, we are not sure that we are not alone, and loneliness makes us afraid and predisposes us to renounce involvement. But the real problem is that of the conditioning that man receives in his daily actions, from which he cannot escape unless he goes beyond, advancing to excess, beyond restlessness. In other words, he can choose only by putting himself at risk, refusing the harmonic solutions that only temporarily appease. The new possibilities, a society that comes towards us in a totally unusual way, wrapped in the improbable clouds of myth, the projects that cannot be realized in the exhaustion of the present conditions, all this is a new morality that raises the battle cry, a hint towards where we must go, something more than a simple denial. The desolation that lies ahead is a sign of loss, but it is in the loss that we can measure true strength, not in the vain struggling of those who always want to win and do not notice the white lady waiting around the corner. If the forced situation can never be fully realized,

the same is true of the movement of going beyond. It is not a journey that is based on certainties. Fairy tales help one to live, but possibilities are the enemy of fairy tales.

The ancient immediate certainty of totality is no longer available. When Hermann Hesse shows us the dance of the pupil on the shore of the cold waters of the lake, in front of the rising sun, the dance that stretches out in the wind and seems to embrace the horizon still shrouded in darkness, under the eyes of the master, eyes capable of investigating but not of putting a stop to the near death, he establishes a precise distance between the innocence of the boy (who, like the ancient shepherd or the hunter described by Gottfried Benn, possessed the world in his hands) and the pensive diversity that sits on the banks of the embankment, tired of the reconnaissance journey and wishing only to conclude. There is nothing else to do, at some point, but to go through the night wondering where one is going, whether there is still a risk of being blind inside, due to a nameless and purposeless solicitation, or being blind outside due to reasons we can remedy. From the need to find a foundation to the urgency of creating it however it may be, the step can be short. And the linguistic tool helps, or circumscribes by helping, the effort of imagination. An absence asserted without transformative conviction, sought only as a superfluous hypothesis to be eliminated, is not enough to found certainties. The simple head of the dragonfly that Benn tells us about, the wing of the seagull, would be too much suffering, too much pain. Even further down, more essentially below, perhaps, one could find quiet, in the same waters marked by the bank, in an adventure in the thing, in an abandonment of the flow to remain in the thing, in the territory of desolation, to remain there forever, beyond delirium. Hence the continuous flashing of faith.

Of course, we cannot accept a faith directly. Our ethical conscience refuses to accept such a compromise. That is, we cannot tell ourselves, face to face, let's do as if it were true and end up believing it. We are too rigid for such a superficial thing, we need virtuous and correct thoughts. A faith, to be such, must be based on concrete data. If these are lacking, or are approximate, we don't need to worry, we can replace them with an excellent surrogate of reality, we can replace them with ideology. The more absurd and forced this substitution is, the more it holds up and is maintained for a long time. The bigger and more articulated it becomes, the more it turns from a simple idea, projected in the background like a mirage, into an organic body of ideas that self-maintains and justifies itself, providing alibis to support those who have the prudence not to ask too many questions. However, the demolition of the subject continues to operate. We would do well to take note. Pushing the negative opposition is important, pushing it to its extreme consequences, but it does not satisfy to the end, the old totality revives for brief flashes, then returns to the darkness from which it came out for the long Hegelian season. Now the unconscious prevail that animate desiring bodies, substituting the previous subjects stuffed with ideology. But criticism must know how to go beyond, beyond the very end of the subject, beyond the very nihilistic demolition typical of Central European rituals. Logical spaces are shrinking, there is a daily dispersion of Euclidean possibilities, digging elsewhere towards the doing in movement that is rejected, towards the structures that collapse into themselves suddenly deprived of the support we used to give them with such stubborn stupidity. A new doing presents itself every moment - we know it is insufficient - however, it is from there that we must start, its dialecticisation accurses us, since this is the sharpest weapon of recovery, the most difficult sacrificial priest to discover, but there is no other way. The active space of desolation, the non-Euclidean space cannot wait any longer.

This need to believe runs through the whole history of man, both that of his facts and that of his actions and, if we want to distinguish, even that of his thoughts. At the time of the passage of power from the dominant religious obscurantism to the first conquests of so-called secular thought, we were under the illusion that we could do without belief. Every evil in society was then referred to the faults of faith in God, but they did not take sufficiently into account the warning of Max Stirner, who showed how God

could very well transfer arms and baggage from heaven to earth. Faith in God became faith in science. To the practice of morning prayer, secularized man replaced the reading of the newspaper, then, later, the religiously passive listening of the radio and, today, of television. The source of the production of certainty is transferred but always remains in the firm hand of power.

Certainty is primarily an artfully procured need, produced in the context of accumulation and, as such, subject to continual revision and maintenance. There is no doubt that men of power are also men of faith. As soon as the unfoundedness of a certainty is revealed, they replace it with another. The elaboration of the dominant thought is a long reflection on the foundations of certainty, therefore on the ideology of power, now hard, now soft, now wrathful and careless, now neglected and sad. These variations do not matter much, what matters is to provide oneself and others with a basis for faith, a satisfaction, as it were, of this primary need. In order to make this basis possible, love was resorted to, assuming that love could more harmoniously direct itself towards the best possible intention. But the existence of this hypothesis fixes a value beyond love and with this fact alone nullifies the meaning of the feeling that should instead spread freely, go beyond any obstacle, reveal its being something excessive. Love is a reflection of tension, an unguaranteed possibility, a risk, a total involvement. Love is the synonym we know best for the concept of involvement. He who spares himself, who pulls out, even for one small moment, who retreats in an attempt to save himself, is the enemy of love.

If we reason from the point of view of poor people, precisely the most disinherited class, here faith assumes an even more important value, if only to bear the burden of misery. But even for the ruling class the function of faith is important, since it must also give itself an explanation for its directive and repressive task. Misery hopes to get better, but wealth cannot hope to get worse. And it is not necessary to believe much in power for power's sake or wealth for wealth's sake. One needs an ultimate, ideal end, even for rulers. The strangest thing is that this faith must necessarily be strongest in the oppressed classes, because it is here that one must necessarily believe in a change, given the situation of misery in which one finds oneself. In the higher classes, and therefore more educated, even if the change will not be there the present situation is sufficiently acceptable. For this reason, the most merciless reflections on faith, and therefore also on the possible certainty of something or in something, took place in the laboratories of the dominant class.

While faith in the common sense of the man in the street remained, and in some respects remains, unshakable, a poisonous snake has crept in among the certainties of the ruling class. That science deserved trust, as long as it remained in the macroscopic realm of analysis, was an undisputed dogma. And this lasted, let's say, until the dawn of the century that is about to end. But what did we do with the old God? Apart from the merely instrumental use of the professionals of religion, the old fideistic paraphernalia was handed over to the service of earthly needs. The God of intimate certainty and the God of objective certainty separated and gave a notable contribution to the construction of two faiths that, strangely enough, both took the name of science. The ancient Aristotelian and Thomistic rationalism passed permanently into the unproven premises of physical science, stoically withstanding the stinging arrows of Anglo-Saxon skepticism that wanted, in a far-sighted way, to build immediately but a more rational society, while the ancient hidden God, the one that is in the subject, in the heart, that has its own reasons different from the analytical ones, was recovered, at mass level, by the incredible and exciting Hegelian operation. Subsequent Marxism was able to collect this second part of Hegelian subjectivism and built on it a materialist reasoning, on the one hand, and a historicist, therefore idealist, reasoning on the other hand. But these directions, in order to have logical subsistence, thus to be able to be discussed and critically kept at a distance, if you prefer, it is necessary that the implicit religious attitude avoid the temptation to give reality and status of being to possibility, before it becomes something else, that is, before it is realized in the world, subjected to the compulsion of linkage and

meaning. Then there remains the task of initiating something else starting precisely from the field, from the very place of coercion. Dialectics cannot cope with this commitment; in fact, its mechanism is too nonchalant, too boldly (and naively, according to evaluations) it oversteps into unjustified schematism and determinism.

In the vast cemetery of history, reasons intersect without the possibility of justifying them in linear processes. All attempts in this sense are model constructions that run the risk of turning into guillotines at work, means of massacre not of clarity and intellectual enlightenment. There are no peaks where eagles fly, but misty banks where individuals sit and watch the slow flow of the waters waiting for signals that do not come without personal involvement. Of course, I know full well that this involvement certainly does not weld the polarized flow, I know that it could result in failure and a return once again to the assigned place on the levee, and I also know that any recomposition is always my recomposition and cannot be proposed as a reference or symbol, but it is all I can do, the only stake I possess and can put into play. Only in this way do I begin to work on the basis of the logic of "everything and now", which means now and here, in whatever condition I find myself, without looking anyone in the face, at any cost. Not the desire for a clean sky or the famous flight of eagles, but the penetration into specific problems, here, with a dull fidelity to one's own task which is to live life in its singularity and in its unrepeatable specificity, without losing it in an anonymity imposed by accumulation or by the blind ambitions of simple will. The only faith that seems acceptable to me is the one in life, in my own life, with the precise perspective of defeat but with the active practice of victory, a faith that has nothing to do with progressive and linear mechanisms, with the great accumulative projects of science and with the soporific aims of ideology, but an active and personal faith that opens and concludes in its own capacity of transformation regardless of possible limitations that do not concern me and cannot constitute a brake for me. That this faith in life is substantiated by a desiring charge I can also admit on condition that we understand the concept of "desire". This cannot be a point of expectation in view of maturation or reversal, no matter what. It must be a place of restoration of differences, first of all of those that the body imposes, of active presences that we unconsciously allow to come forward without subjecting them to the prior judgment of forced production. This desire does not allow for displacements, it must be realized by me, here and now, it cannot wait for external objective investments to plausibly patch it up.

And yet the spirituality-work relationship reaches an ontological foundation in the critical and non-Heideggerian sense of the term. It is in the *Phenomenology* [1807] that Hegel conceives of spontaneous spirit as work. In this way, the relation of spirit to datum becomes the working process. Hegel writes: "Self-consciousness has found the thing as self and self as thing; that is to say it is for self-consciousness that it, in itself, is objective effectivity. Self-consciousness is no longer the immediate certainty of being all reality; but it is a certainty such that the immediate in general has the form of a removed, so that its objectivity is still only worth as a surface, whose interior and essence is self-consciousness itself. The object to which self-consciousness relates positively is, therefore, a self-consciousness; it is the form of cosality, that is, it is independent; but self-consciousness has the certainty that this independent object is nothing foreign to it; it therefore knows that it is recognized by it in itself; it is the spirit which in the duplication of its self-consciousness and in the independence of both self-consciousnesses has the certainty of having its unity with itself. This certainty must now be raised to truth: that which for self-consciousness has the value of an in-self and which is in its inner certainty, must enter its consciousness and become for it." (*Phenomenology of the Spirit*, tr. it., vol. I, Florence 1963, p. 292). As if to say that true infinity - for Hegel - occurs when the determined being concludes a relationship with itself that leads it to be other than itself, that is, to become other in a dynamic relationship with itself, conquering an other for itself. Here the concept of negation does not conclude towards nothingness, but is overturned, with one of the classic Hegelian movements, in a sort

of positive value. The finite being, by denying itself, opens up to transformation; denial is here a process of rebirth and movement towards self-consciousness. It is certain that towards other openings we should go. The so-called negative dialectics has moved in this direction. But we should ask ourselves: what has it managed to filter into the practice of the forced production of everyday life? Affirmative positivity is part of desire, it is desire itself, but it goes beyond desire. It goes beyond when it finally understands that what we desire is the very misery that we are, even if it presents itself as an aspiration dictated by lack. That this desire sometimes presents itself as an "irruption" changes nothing. The outside, in the coercive sphere, provides us with what passes the convent, what we ourselves propose be provided. Insisting on the negative does not change the situation, we are always within the global representation. When I desire I imagine the thing desired and also the enactment that makes this thing meaningful, in other words I imagine the symbols that make the thing in question desirable. But my desire is not the antithesis of the desired thing, it is just the same thing seen from different angles, with my own personal condition of distraction that the thing does not necessarily possess, a condition that the symbol (the staging) does not always manage to remove.

Adorno concludes that "knowledge is restlessness," and from restlessness comes work. By directly linking craving with work, the latter is freed from the danger of being considered as an abstract activity of the abstract spirit. By dialectically opposing being-in-itself and being-for-itself, the Hegelian concept of idealism is also clarified. The finite can never be seen as an entity closed in its isolation and rigid, but it is in constant movement to become other than itself. The finite is not only "reality", but it is also "ideality". The finite does not have truth in itself, but acquires it as an ideal, taking it from within the infinite. Hegel declares the unity of thought and reality, agent only when one reaches, and therefore recognizes, the "ideality" of the finite and its positive character.

Paul Ricoeur will note that this craving to draw its self will have to head towards other than itself, then towards a splitting of consciousness into two rival self-consciousnesses. Only in this way is self-consciousness desire. With Ricoeur, the reflexive method breaks the pact with idealism and becomes that which clarifies existence through notions, that is, it establishes a relationship with experience. And clarifying existence means obtaining its meaning. In this way, Ricoeur's thought starts from the problem of interpretation, of the liberation of meaning, that is, hermeneutics. From Nietzsche onwards, the real problem is no longer that of error or falsehood, but that of illusion. The current crisis of language is oscillation between demystification and restoration. In this way, Ricoeur's philosophy becomes a meditation on language. In the work *Philosophie de la volonté* [1950], he tries to reconcile Descartes and Kierkegaard. The work is phenomenological. He brackets, as Husserl says, the guilt that alters man's intelligence, and the transcendence that hides the radical origin of subjectivity. He neither separates nor unifies them. It rejects dualism and monism. The voluntary and the involuntary are necessary components of what Ricoeur calls "will." The will disposes of each of our habits like a pianist skilled in the set of keys on his piano. This philosopher's entire work is a kind of dialectic between activity and passivity, an effort to find the involuntary within the integral experience of the cogito. Ten years later, the work *Finitude et culpabilité* [1960] seeks to overcome the dualism between voluntary and involuntary within a dialectic dominated by the ideas of disproportion, polarity between the finite and the infinite, and, above all, mediation. Totality comes first. Ricoeur's project is rational. A vast philosophy of language that starting from the cogito encounters reductive hermeneutics that he not only wants to challenge but also to use and understand. Meaning does not remain only at the old distinction between truth of reason and fact, Ricoeur goes beyond, towards the overcoming of this dualism by bringing reflection on desire. Kantian schematism is considered too limiting with regard to experience. The logical categories of historicity and the existential process demand different modalities. Desire can operate in this sense on condition of splitting the representation of the desired thing. The tragic is changed into parodistic, the libido into repetition without exit. A kind of critical

theology where the subject lies on the ground attacked from several sides, no longer a commemoration of past subjective successes, but a remembrance of something completely different. Ricoeur does not know in what way the extreme refuge of the objective spirit has been hit, but he is convinced of it, in fact he allows himself a total critique, rejecting even representation as already sufficiently martyred.

Of course, in this way one runs the risk of re-proposing a closed universality; the work not only transforms nature, but also posits it. The spirit despises what has been outside and affirms that there is nothing in the world that appears through labor. In fact, Hegel elaborates in this way: "The pleasure enjoyed has indeed the positive meaning of having become to itself as objective self-consciousness; but it has equally the negative meaning of having taken itself away; and since self-consciousness has conceived its own actualization only in that positive meaning, its experience enters as a contradiction into its consciousness, in which the achieved effectivity of the singularity of its self-consciousness witnesses its destruction by the negative essence which, deprived of effectivity, stands empty against that achieved effectivity, nevertheless constituting the destroying power of self-consciousness. Such essence is but the concept of what this individuality is in itself." (Ib., p. 303). And further on he continues: "However, this individuality no longer has the form of the immediate and simple being, as was the case with the observational spirit, where it is the abstract being or, placed as an outsider, the cosmos in general. Here in this cosality the being-for-self and mediation have entered. Individuality therefore arises as a circle whose content is the developed pure relation of simple essentialities." (Ib., pp. 303-304). Qualified for itself, the being determined as One distinguishes itself from the one and returns to place itself as one in the multiple. The one is thus brought to light as that which is absolutely incompatible with itself, ultimately delineating itself as the multiple. The ambiguity that characterizes Hegel's philosophical system, as can be seen by studying the criticisms that are rampant throughout the history of contemporary philosophy, has produced many contrasting interpretations of the dialectic especially in the history of political theory. In particular, Hegel's tendency to restrict the eternal into a determinate time with the consequence of absolutizing the latter has been noted. Thus we have that history is considered as a negation of temporality itself, finite in itself, of the temporal process, in a word of existence. The process towards the becoming is for Hegel a return back, a chase the foundation, the original, in a word the true. The essence is what the being was, and that now for Hegel returns to be as a return to itself. It resolves in this way the reflection of the negative into the positive, the world of man into that of the idea. History ends because the spirit becomes self-conscious. The Hegelian return has been criticized in a thousand ways but not fully experienced. Negation, the critical center of this process, demands that movements not be absolutized, and this is typically Hegelian. How, then, does one move forward with the critique against Hegel? The tools of this critique are, systematically, blunted by the philosopher himself, who constructs his own answers in advance in a circular fashion. Each time his own task begins anew.

According to Hegel, freedom has become the essence of human life, in its uniqueness and unrepeatability. It no longer indicates only a political condition, as it did in the ancient world, but it has become a philosophical, metaphysical, moral category, which characterizes the finite nature of man. Hegel himself and then, after him, many philosophers, have long abused this category. Yet in the clash of theories Kant had already said a conclusive word, which must not be forgotten. He had cast doubt on the Aristotelian definition of man as a "political animal endowed with reason". Animalitas and rationalitas are not enough to define man, something more is needed. We need spiritualitas, which for Kant consists in the fact that each person is personalitas moralis, an end never a means. In other words, it is necessary that freedom constitutes the humanitas of man. But freedom as seen by Kant falls into a terrible contradiction. How is it possible that human existence manages to escape the causality of nature and moves, i.e. acts, on the basis of a "causality for freedom"? How is it possible that it is not determined by natural necessity, but spontaneously chooses what it wants to do with itself? Kant's

answer is disappointing. For him freedom is a chimera that we must try to achieve on the moral level, while it remains unknowable on the theoretical one. We must consider that the way out could be that which affirms man to be an "undefined animal", lacking an essence or a principle, a cause or an idea, that is, a condition of possibility, which precedes and founds him. Therefore, indeed, it could find unthinkable ways out, and this not only in practice, but also in the theoretical hypothesis. In man, existence precedes and characterizes the essence, for which he does not have a paradigm or an ideal form to which to conform, but concretizes himself, from time to time, on the basis of what he decides to be in his lived existence, in terms of concrete choice of life. Without wanting to hide the fact that here, too, there lurks one last residue of the thought of essence, one last claim to define the essence of man, even if dissolving it in his existence.

It is the principle of immanence that reappears, for example, in Adorno when he affirms that if nature is not all workable, it is not possible to determine it in the last place except through work. We therefore have, rightly or wrongly, the metaphysicization of labor. Adorno reproblematises Marxism in relation to Hegel just as Ricoeur reproblematises Freud always in relation to Hegel.

For Ricoeur, if fulfillment consists in taking away the other, it is necessary that the other be there so that there can be the taking away itself, in Hegel's words, self-consciousness reproduces the object as well as the appetite. The presence of the non-conscious interlocutor transforms the object into a matter of "spiritual" contention. This struggle for recognition, Ricoeur said, is not a struggle for life, but a struggle to wrest from the other proof that I am a free self-consciousness. Another existence, its reality, makes me actual and makes my perceiving concrete by subtracting it in part from the compulsion of doing. This fantastic subtracting is imperceptible because that existence is not in front of me but goes beyond the life of man, beyond any imaginable life on earth. The infinite past recognizes me as a participant of this heritage and recognizing me comforts me in my being a possible consciousness, that is different, free. Thus Hegel: "The presentation of oneself as a pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing oneself as a pure negation of its objective guise, or in showing that one is attached neither to some precise being, nor to the universal singularity of being in general, nor even to life. Such a presentation is the duplicate operation: the operation of the other and the operation through itself. As long as it is a question of the working of the other, each aims at the death of the other. But in this way the second operation, the operation through oneself, is also already present; for the operation of the other implies risking one's own life. The relation of both self-consciousnesses is thus constituted in such a way that they give reciprocal proof of themselves through the struggle for life and death". (Ib., pp. 156-157). And further on: "The individual who has not put his life at risk may well be recognized as a person; but he has not reached the truth of this recognition as a recognition of independent self-consciousness. Similarly, every individual must aim at the death of the Other, when he risks his own life, because for him, the Other is no longer worth as himself; his essence presents itself to him as an Other; it is outside of himself, and he must remove his being-out-of-self; the Other is a variously entangled consciousness that lives in the element of being; and he must intuit his being-other as pure being-for-self or as absolute negation." (Ib. p. 157). It can be argued that the resolution of the internal ambiguity of the Hegelian dialectic lies in its potential interpretations. Only those who reject systematic thinking can find their way to a demand for truth that is configured as a mode of relation or, if one prefers, as openness-on-the-world. For Hegel, the object acquires a content of historicity not from its becoming in time. The meanings that the object acquires from interpretation are not exclusively the result or the projection of a possible transformation, linked to time. Historicity, if it were interpreted in this way, would be inserted in a perspective that bases the object on material being, or on ideal being, thus facing a reduction of the object to an ideological process of coverage. It would be the expression of an entity in its own right and defined once and for all. Instead the historical being of the object,

thanks to the positive value of the negative, overcomes for Hegel the division between nature and ideal, losing its autonomy that will be regained by other means.

But the most appreciable concern is always that of avoiding gnosticism in idealism, a risk run by transcendental idealism and by Hegel in particular, who ended up exchanging being to consciousness with being of consciousness. With acumen, here is Kierkegaard's critique: "If one immediately begins the struggle with ethical categories against this objective conception, one is in the wrong and achieves nothing, because one has nothing in common with the attacked party. But when one remains on the metaphysical plane, in order to reach such a transfigured professor, it is enough to resort to the comic cue, which is also contained in the metaphysical moment. If a dancer succeeds in jumping very high, we gladly admire him; but if he, even if he were able to jump higher than any other dancer ever did, wanted to give the appearance of wanting to fly, then he would make us laugh. To jump essentially means that one belongs to the earth and that one respects the law of gravity: thus the jump is only something momentary; but to fly means that one has freed oneself from earthly relations, as something that is reserved only for winged creatures: perhaps even for the inhabitants of the moon, perhaps - who knows, perhaps even up there the system finds its true readers! What constitutes a human being has been abolished and every speculator exchanges himself for humanity, through which one becomes something infinitely great and at the same time nothing at all: he exchanges himself for mankind out of distraction, just as the opposition newspapers write "us" and the boatmen "may the devil take us away!". But when one has cursed at length, one eventually returns to direct expression, for every oath abolishes itself. And when one has learned that every infant can say "we," then one realizes that this means nothing more than to be a man. And when one sees that every shopkeeper can play the game of passing himself off as mankind, then one finally realizes that to be simply and purely a man is something more than playing the parlor game that way. One more word: when a shopkeeper passes himself off as humanity, everyone thinks it's ridiculous. And yet it is also ridiculous when the greatest man in this world does it: in this respect it is possible to pillory him, while respecting the gifts and knowledge with which he was endowed. (Postilla conclusiva non-scientific to *Briciole di filosofia*, op. cit., vol. I, pp. 320-321). Indeed, here Kierkegaard's critique misses the mark. Hegel claimed to conclude philosophy insofar as his thought was mature humanity. To summarize the world in himself, in his own philosophy the thought of all humanity, is the paradoxically logical consequence of dialectics. There is no reason to be scandalized by this, at least by those who previously had not been scandalized at all by the let's say "normal" passages of the various Hegelian scans of *Phenomenology*. But this is not a real "end", the modern supporters of this "end" say other things that are not the case here. Instead, I think it is interesting to note that a step forward has been attempted to recover the movement of the dialectical process in such a way that something is saved, that is, that some aspects are not encompassed and "taken away", but remain as evidence of the ongoing critical process. These are aspects of discard, at other times, and by Hegel himself, considered as blind, unrepresentative, criminal elements in a society of counterparts endowed with the chrism of normality. This difference, in the Hegelian logical process, is recovered or silenced - a mode of unconscious recovery - so that everything appears perfectly linear in the conquest by the spirit of its own identity, while it can be kept out, put under suspicion as a "difference escaped the dialectic", not accepted by identity. The concept of the object finds itself deprived of something that should have been inside and instead finds itself outside, in a region of the possible where it must justify a different movement. This disintegration is not known what it may determine, however, for the moment, it presents a different concept, which the knowing subject places before him and with which he still has to come to terms. The identity between these two movements is non-truth, the rejection of the system. Desire dominates this opposition, the unconscious continues to justify it.

The discourse of the end is deepened more in the Philosophy of Right, of 1827. As everyone admits - says Hegel - nature must be recognized for what it is, that is, intrinsically rational, so it must be admitted that in the ethical world, in the state, reason has established itself in fact as a force and power and that it maintains and inhabits it. For Hegel in the ethical world (family, civil society, state) freedom has become reality. The system of law as such is therefore the realm of realized freedom, the world of the spirit expressed by itself as a second nature. But in order to realize law as such it is necessary that the finite will of the individual is resolved by dispersing itself in an infinite and universal will.

The philosophy of law is divided into three parts: 1) Abstract law: is that of the individual person and is expressed in property. 2) Morality: sphere of subjective morality that is manifested in action. The value that the action possesses for the subject who performs it is the intention, the end is the welfare. When the intention and welfare are raised to universality, the absolute goal of the will becomes the good. But this good is an abstract idea not existing on its own, waiting to come into existence by the subjective will. 3) Ethicality: the good has been realized concretely and has become existent. This is the sphere of necessity. This ethicality is first realized in the family and civil society, only in the latter, from the point of view of needs, the legal person and the moral subject become properly man, that is, the concreteness of representation.

According to Hegel, man is the ethical individual placed in the system of needs and constitutes the fundamental aspect of civil society. But only in the State is realized the infinite and rational substance of the spirit. The State is the reality of concrete freedom, says Hegel. If on the one hand, for the individual, the State is an external force, which necessitates and subordinates him to himself, on the other hand it is his immanent end, like the family and civil society, which, however, are imperfect organisms that depend on the State. Hegel denies the social contract that makes the state dependent on the arbitrariness of individuals and sees in it consequences that destroy the divine in itself and authority. The State, on the other hand, is closely related to religion because the latter is the supreme manifestation of the divine in the world.

The State does not derive sovereignty from the people but from itself, from its own substance. So denial of the democratic principle of participation of all in the affairs of the state. In this principle Hegel sees the product of an abstraction: the individual only because it is considered a component of the State. Instead it, again according to Hegel, becomes part of the State only insofar as it carries out a concrete activity, within a certain class, or corporation. As divine life that is realized in the world, the State cannot find in the laws of morality a limit or an impediment to its action. The State has needs of its own, different from and superior to those of morality. In this way Machiavellianism is justified.

The law, Hegel insists, is at the same time the instrument and the result of the implementation of freedom and will, concretized in the relationships that originate from the human personality. The philosophy of law is the spectator of the dialecticization of the spirit, which is realized as free and becomes objective freedom that is for itself. The objective spirit then culminates, through the state, in the spirit of the world. Law and history converge towards the absolute and infinite spirit: art, religion, philosophy, the movement of the idea proceeds in this way towards its supreme concreteness.

For Hegel, the positivity of law is a consequence of the fact that it is effective in a state. Legal authority is the principle of the knowledge of laws, that is, of the positive science of law. The second cause of the positivity of law depends on the sources of its content: the national character of a people, the degree of its historical development, the totality of natural relations.

In the philosophies of spirit-labor, human labor is absorbed into the essential determinations of spirit as absolute, this is Adorno's concern. The idealism that is in materialism proposes to bring the spirit to triumph over toil and suffering. The object arises from what the relation succeeds in producing, from the process of ongoing alienation. In fact, thanks to the relationship between subject and object, the object comes out of its spatio-temporal immobility and becomes an object in need, changeable and therefore historical. It is never identical to itself and is never a full identity. One of the essential and important points of Hegelian thought is to have shown the weakness of the sensible certainty and to have contrasted it with the concreteness of the idea, which fills that void that always accompanies every forcing of the sense of objectivity. "In truth," says Hegel, "in every sensible certainty one experiences only what we have seen, that is, of this as of a universal; which is the opposite of what that assertion assures to be universal experience. (Ib., p. 90).

The desystematization of labor, against the synthesis of pleasure and production proper to neocapitalist society, is the underlying theme of negative sociologies, despite being inspired by Hegel. Kant shows that the hypothesis of the presence in nature of an end, that is, of a representation of unity, a presence analogous to the concept, a presence capable of conducting the processes of life and determining natural processes, thus allowing the knowing subject to reunify the perceptible manifold in the unity of the concept, this hypothesis depends on the finite nature of our intellect, which proceeds by analytical universals (the concepts) but must receive the particular in the perceptible intuition, and therefore cannot but consider the universal an abstract unity separate from the particular. The Critique of Practical Reason [1788] confers objective reality on those transcendent ideas that The Critique of Pure Reason [1781] was to recognize only as problems. Man as the subject of moral life is placed in the domain of the noumenon. The ideas of the soul, the world, and God cease to be "transcendent and regulative" and become immanent and constitutive of the object of practical reason: the highest good.

But this contrast dissolves if one studies the fundamental unity of the two works. In the Critique of Pure Reason, the dominant theme is the controversy against the arrogance of reason that claims to go beyond human limits. In the Critique of Practical Reason, the dominant theme is the controversy against moral fanaticism understood as the desire to transgress the limits of human conduct.

In the Critique of Pure Reason, human knowledge, founded on the sensitive intuition of phenomena, is contrasted with a problematic divine knowledge founded on the intellectual intuition of the thing in itself. Similarly, in the Critique of Practical Reason, human morality, which is the observance of the moral law, is contrasted with divine holiness, which is the perfect conformity of the will to the law.

Morality is not the necessary rationality of an infinite being who identifies himself with reason itself, but the possible rationality of a being who may or may not assume reason to guide his conduct. Therefore, in order to live morally, man must transcend sensibility. This implies that he must avoid assuming as a rule of action any object of desire.

In fact, as a rational but finite being, man desires happiness. Precisely as an object of desire, happiness cannot be the basis of a moral imperative. Desire cannot be commanded. Everything that is the object of desire can give rise to subjective maxims, to hypothetical imperatives, which command something in view of an end, not to an objectively necessary law, such that it applies to all finite rational beings.

The hypothetical imperatives are those of any technique, say that of prudence, and indicate the means to be happy. The moral law - according to Kant - is instead a categorical imperative, which has in view no object, no determined purpose, but only the conformity of action to the law. For this reason, the categorical imperative is purely formal. The moral law cannot command anything other than to act

according to a maxim that can apply to everyone. The formula of the categorical imperative is: "act in such a way that the maxim of your will may always apply as the principle of a universal legislation." The moral law does not come to man from outside. It is a fact of his own rational constitution. In following the law, the will makes a law of itself, asserts itself as pure practical reason, as a rational principle of action. Kant proposes the use of this law for a critique of all moral doctrines that are based on a material principle, that is, that deduce the moral law from any object of desire. Thus Montaigne and Mandeville are criticized because they base ethics on external subjective motives: the former on education, the latter on civil government. Epicurus and the Scotsman Francis Hutcheson because they base ethics on internal subjective motives: the former on physical feeling, the latter on moral feeling. The German Christian Wolff and the Stoics because they base it on perfection, that is, on an internal objective motive. The Dutch Huig van Groot and the theological moralists because they base it on God's will, that is, on an external objective motive. Subjective motives, internal and external, are all empirical and therefore cannot serve as a foundation for an unconditional moral obligation. This obligation would in fact be conditioned by external circumstances and would not be justified in its universal validity. The same can be said for objective motives, which can be taken as motives for action only if we regard them as factors or elements of our happiness. They therefore depend on the desire for happiness and do not justify the validity of a law that commands unconditionally.

The formalism of the moral law allows Kant to establish that the "concept of good and evil is not to be determined before the moral law, but only after it and through it." Man belongs to the sensible world and therefore is endowed with needs and his reason also has the task, which it cannot refuse, to make itself an instrument of these needs and thus to contribute to their satisfaction. But man can and must also use reason for a higher purpose and therefore consider what is good in itself, and not only in relation to his needs. In this way reason determines the will immediately, that is, no longer in view of the objects of desire, and the will becomes pure practical reason.

Kant distinguishes in the motives of moral action legality from morality. 1) Legality is the conformity to the law of an action which, however, is done for another motive of a sensible nature, for example, avoiding harm or procuring an advantage. 2) Morality, on the other hand, is immediate conformity to the will of the law, without the concurrence of sensible impulses. Now, since the set of impulses, the satisfaction of which is happiness, is self-love or egoism, the action that realizes morality and therefore freedom is the elimination of egoism. The negative action of freedom on feeling is itself a feeling, the only moral feeling: respect. Respect is not only the motive of morality but is the whole of morality considered subjectively.

In our finite intellect the particular is not determined by the universal, and the correspondence of the particular with the universal, in which our pleasure perfectly consists, is contingent and refers back to a purpose intrinsic to nature. But the presence of purpose internal to nature is given by a simple principle of judgment reflecting on itself and on reality, a subjective statement that cannot have validity as a beginning and does not reveal the reality of nature. For Hegel only the explanation according to mechanical causes is the true scientific explanation of natural phenomena.

[1971], [1979]

VII. Progressive intentionality

Knowledge and foundation. The Hegelian solution of the problem of beginning implies that being as simple meaning is not entitled to any content except the global opposition to the positive determinate. This is clear as soon as Hegel expounds the beginning and considers it as the foundation "on which everything is built." (Science of Logic [1812-1816], tr. it., vol. I, Bari 1974, p. 27). "The beginning is

not pure nothingness, but a nothingness from which something must come out. Therefore, even in the beginning is already contained the being. The beginning contains the one and the other, being and nothingness; it is the unity of being with nothingness; it is a non-being, which is at the same time being, and a being, which is at the same time non-being." (Ib., p. 73). Consequently "the analysis of the beginning would give us the concept of the unity of being with non-being, - or, in a reflected form, the concept of the unity of being different and not being different, - or that of the identity of identity with non-identity. This concept could be considered as the first and purest (i.e. most abstract) definition of the Absolute". (Ib., p. 74). This implies that the relationship that welds together as distinct the identical and the different is that which is expressed in the creation of the determinate from the Absolute. In other words, this relation is the immanent self-constitution of the absolute concept. Hegel specifies that "the truth of being and nothingness is this movement consisting in the immediate disappearance of one of them in the other: the becoming; movement in which being and nothingness are different, but of a difference, which is at the same time immediately resolved". (Ib., p. 86). And further on: "nevertheless even in the most imperfect union there is a point in which being and nothingness coincide, and their difference disappears". (Ib., p. 88). Therefore, "even in God the quality, that is, the activity, creation, power, etc., essentially contains the determination of the negative; these qualities [in fact] consist in bringing out another". (Ib., p. 87). And even more clearly, when becoming is defined as "the subsistence of both being and non-being, which means that their subsistence is but their being in one." (Ib., p. 99). We are thus faced with a definition of becoming, which is the "passing into the unity of being and nothingness, which is as being or has the form of the immediate one-sided unity of these moments, is das Dasein [beingness]." (Ib., p. 121). The speculative verification of this mutual subsistence in one of being and non-being as becoming occurs in the subsequent and necessary dialectical step through which the determination of the infinite presents itself as the negation of the finite. "In the sphere of being," says Hegel, "being determined, comes forth only from becoming: [in the sense] that with something another is placed, with the finite the infinite, but the finite does not draw out the infinite, it does not place it." (Ib., p. 143). Hence: "it is the very nature of the finite to surpass itself, to negate its negation and to become infinite. The infinite does not therefore stand as something already in itself given above the finite, so that the finite continues to remain outside or below it. Nor do we alone go, as a subjective reason, beyond the finite into the infinite. But the finite is only this, to become infinite itself by its very nature. Infinity is its affirmative destination, what it truly is in itself. Thus the finite has disappeared into the infinite, and what it is, is only the infinite." (Ib., pp. 167-168). The original is not before the real but lives in it, a not inconsiderable discovery of a mature Hegel. It lives as in his house, as the original condition of existence. Today we know that this process, this movement, needs a sort of penumbra, a reduction of clarity, in order to appear in the current conditions, to disprove its paradoxical premises, but it is a distressing experience that we have had at our own expense. For the moment, in Hegel, this original is also ideal, though it cannot provide a criterion of adequacy for the development that encompasses it. The internal movement (poorly encapsulated in the formula infinite-finite) of reality, proceeds by mutual contamination, where the finite demands its place in the infinite, denying the conditions of precariousness that characterized it previously, but this on condition that it is recognized (and is recognized) for what it is, in the overall totality of its possible manifestations. There is no way out of this global closure. If one accepts Hegel's system, or simply comes close to its acceptance (even partial), one remains a prisoner of this formula. The reality that hosts us has many aspects close to this way of proceeding. Its beginning, its origin, is constantly present in all its manifestations, even the most extreme. The recovery of subjectivity takes place in this way, transforming the individual cue, even the most extreme, into a stereotype, disguising it with a "tailored" specificity that gathers it as an element of something that continues to be produced, something that is never the "surprise" that contradicting it can upset the world, at least not this world here. It is necessary to destroy it first, but it is not possible to catch it by surprise. It is not that the different is simply absorbed thanks to its always possible justification, its measured detachment from

the average, but something deeper. The criterion of divergence, of distance from the rule, is assumed as an element of greater functionality of the system, precisely because it acts in that beginning Hegelianly considered present and not as a distant origin, out of play forever.

Immediate being is thus the non-truth of sensible being. Therefore the object of philosophy in the moment of its beginning is nothing determinate. The passage to the second immediacy, that is, to the presence that envelops the contents and stops them together with the all-embracing thought, is achieved by the negation of that first immediacy. Thus Hegel: "If freedom as such is first of all the intimate concept, the means, on the other hand, are something external, they are what appears, and that therefore manifests itself in history as it immediately presents itself to our gaze". (Lectures on the Philosophy of History [1822-1831], tr. it., vol. I, Florence 1941, pp. 66-67). Correcting Kant, Hegel wants the beginning in the absolute, but the absolute is the relation of a multiple to the unity, so that having to listen to Kant's discourse, Hegel speaks of the absolute as an immediacy that shows itself in the element of reflection that progresses in the act of taking away so it becomes, at the same time and in the same way, the immediate and the result of immediacy. This indispensable condition could be a sign of overcoming precariousness in the producing contradiction of the historical process, but it is not so. The product bends towards the condition that produces it, it has no guarantee in itself since it lacks the cause detached from itself, the cause that in the past blindly identified itself with the creator. Now it must bow before the process, in the same way as the producer. God, for the latter, has come down from his pedestals, he cohabits in the distraction, perhaps he is even dead. This stooping produces an indirect reinforcement, precariousness is turned into strength insofar as it does not retreat in the face of unbearable pressure, but rather is itself that pressure with which it does not have to come to terms, it does not have to distribute compensation and completions, but only to share the common identity, the dream of a process absolutely without end and without beginning. No one needs to become aware of distance because, now, they are not distant. Mutual recognition guarantees a commonality that extinguishes the primary need for survival, reason dominates dominators and dominated. The place of the dream can still be frequented, for heaven's sake, here we find many puppets that wander around angry, having difficulty in grasping the substance of the enemy, but it is a place that can provide inconsistencies rather than ideals, nightmares sometimes, certainly justifications for their way of considering themselves above the clash. Pitiful counterfeits of reality.

Considering the beginning as an empty Sein, Hegel comes close to the pre and extra-Thomistic scholasticism, in the interpretation that will reach up to Christian Wolff; but for him the concrete totality that makes the beginning has as such in itself the beginning of advancement and development.

Let us now look at some relationships between knowledge and the possibility of a foundation.

The foundation, once left in the process of advancement, is further determined, revealing itself to be not only true but also false insofar as it remains only a foundation. The line of scientific development in this way becomes a circle. The development of the foundation removes the foundation. This is very true if one assumes as a priority the operation of isolating the simple, that is, the act of abstracting. After this bringing determinations into being, the task of knowledge is the very semantization of being. This conclusion is logical and absurd at the same time, once it is assumed that in order to produce the concrete (as overcoming, as removal) the pure is of determination is necessary.

Here is Hegel in the Logic: "The essence determines itself as a foundation. As nothingness is at first in simple immediate unity with being, so also here, at first, the simple identity of essence is in immediate unity with its absolute negativity. Essence is only this negativity of itself which is pure reflection. It is this pure negativity as the return of being in itself. Thus it is determined in itself, or for us, as the

foundation in which being is resolved. But this determinateness is not posited by essence itself; that is, essence is not a foundation, precisely because it has not posited this determinateness of its own. Its reflection, however, consists in its posing and determining itself as what it is in itself, that is, as a negative. The positive and the negative constitute the essential determination, in which the essence is lost as in its negation. These independent reflexive determinations take themselves away, and the determination that has gone down is the true determination of essence." (Science of Logic, vol. II, op. cit., p. 77). Recognizing the negative as a component of the foundation was a considerable step forward in the history of thought. Even Kantianism had stopped short of this eventuality, as is clear from the pages devoted to schematism. Many were the attempts to escape this machine of recognition. Essence as foundation has always attracted philosophers, seeming to them to be something that there was no reason to justify. Hegel went further by showing that the refusal can also be an equally important aspect of acceptance, certainly because it is a refusal recovered from the beginning. However, it is the operation that restores the legitimacy of the submerged that is emphasized here. Nothing more.

Hegel continues: "The foundation is therefore itself one of the reflexive determinations of the essence, but it is the last, or rather it is only this determination that consists in being a determination taken away. The reflexive determination, insofar as it goes to the bottom, acquires its true meaning of being its absolute backlash in itself, that is, that that being-place, which is the responsibility of essence, is only as a being-place taken away, and vice versa that only the being-place that is taken away is the being-place of essence. Essence, in determining itself as a foundation, determines itself as the non-determined, and only the removal of this being determined is its determination. - In this being determined as in that which removes itself, it is not an essence coming from another, but an essence which in its negativity is identical with itself.

"Insofar as from the determination, as from the first and immediate, one proceeds to the foundation (by the nature of the determination itself, which in itself goes to the bottom), the foundation is first of all something determined by that first. But this determining, on the one hand, as the taking away of the determining, is only that re-established, purged or revealed identity of the essence which is in itself the reflective determination; - on the other hand only this negative movement is, as determining, the placing of that reflective determinateness which appeared as immediate determinateness, but which however is only placed by the reflection of the foundation, exclusive of itself, and is thereby placed as something simply placed or removed. - Thus essence, in its determination as foundation, comes only from itself. As foundation, therefore, it poses itself as essence, and in its posing as essence is its determination. This posing is the reflection of essence, which reflection in its determining takes away itself, on that side it is a posing, on this side it is the posing of essence, and therefore both in a single act". (Ib., pp.78-79). These are the pages that fix the circular movements of totality. Separation has always been invoked against them, especially in the last twenty years. Denial has wanted to disengage itself from this unitary bond, refusal has wanted to make it become something absolute - in one with desire - the companion of non-representation, of the non-acceptance of domination. Undoubtedly great proposals, but we have to consider that in most cases they were unfounded propositions. The pure subtraction does not exist, otherwise we fall into the provisionality of the darkest idealism. The recovery of refusal is an art against which one must always oppose new forms of refusal, not simulated occasions. The place of exploitation continues to exist and to perpetuate itself, this is the place of materiality and within it it is possible to see very dangerous cohabitations that Hegel had, in his own way, underlined. It is up to us to break them.

Hegel again: "Reflection is the pure mediation in general, the foundation is the real mediation of the essence with itself. That, the movement by which nothing returns through nothingness to itself, is its own appearing in another; but since the opposition in this reflection has as yet no independence, so

neither that first, that which appears, is a positive, nor the other, in which it appears, is a negative. Both are substrates and properly only of the imagination; they are not yet their own referring to themselves. Pure mediation is only pure reference, without the referents. Determinative reflection does pose identities with itself, but at the same time they are nothing more than determinate relations. On the contrary, the foundation is the real mediation, because it contains reflection as reflection removed; it is the essence which through its non-being returns to itself and posits itself. According to this moment of reflection taken away the place receives the determination of immediacy, that is, of such a one, which outside of the relation or its semblance is identical with itself. This immediacy is being insofar as it is restored by essence; the non-being of reflection, remediating which essence mediates. Essence returns to itself insofar as it denies; therefore in its return to itself determinateness is given, which precisely for this reason is the negative with itself identical, the being placed removed, and thus subsisting as the identity of essence with itself as its foundation". (Ib., p. 80). After this the problem shifts to the result of the result or omnipresent presence, which accepts only what is present but which cannot be seen to arise because the arising is contained in it. We say ontological concreteness, on the other hand, the presence that imposes itself, without the need for that reversal through contradiction that is the Hegelian result. There remains the disproportion between what we are and what we know about ourselves. This territory allows for the appearance of the materiality that keeps us all imprisoned as individual subjects, but it also allows for the awareness of this being imprisoned.

Contemporary thought has entered into the question to distinguish from the presence of what is present (Heidegger) the being of presence or as we would say the result of the foundation. "In what sense," Heidegger asks, "does transcendence carry within itself the intrinsic possibility of something like the foundation? The world always presents itself to the being as the concrete totality of the "in-view-of" itself, that is, of the "in-view-of" a being that is co-originally: being-at-the-simple-presences; con-being with the Being of Others; being in relation with ... itself. Therefore, the Being can enter into relation with itself as such only because it goes beyond "itself" in the "in-view-of". The overcoming that characterizes the "in-view-of", takes place only in a "will" that, as such, projects itself in its own possibilities. This will that projects essentially above and, therefore, beyond the "in-view-of", cannot be understood as a determined will, as an act of will, as opposed to other human behaviors such as representation, judgment, joy. All behaviors are rooted in transcendence. But it is this "will" that, as transcendence and in transcendence, must "form" the "in-view-of." That which, by virtue of its essence, designing, delineates something like the "in-view-of", producing it as a non-occasional result, we call freedom. Transcendence to the world is freedom itself. Therefore, transcendence does not encounter the "in-view-of" as a value and an end subsisting for itself; but it is freedom, and precisely in its being freedom, that proposes and opposes to itself the "in-view-of". In this transcendent pro-position to itself of the "in-view-of", the being becomes historicized in man, so that man, in the essence of his existence, becomes responsible for himself, that is, he can be a free self. But in such a case freedom reveals itself as that which, at the same time, makes possible the imposition and endurance of a determined obligation. Only freedom can make it possible for the being to have a world that subsists and becomes a world. The world is not, but makes itself world [weltet]." (The essence of the foundation [1955], tr. it., Turin 1978, p. 665). The limit of this beautiful discourse is that it presupposes the possibility of "saying everything", or rather of "saying the whole", which is impossible. In the making of the world there is a freedom that is not freedom, even though we can talk about it endlessly, and it is not freedom precisely because it can be talked about, that is, it maintains in itself the conditions that allow the word to cover it. The identity between representation and historicized essence, i.e. man, is the non-truth, the minimum negation, that negative critique from which one must start but at which one cannot stop.

Heidegger adds: "Finally, this interpretation of freedom based on transcendence allows a definition of the essence of freedom that is more original than the one that understands it as spontaneity, as a kind of

causality. Beginning with itself is only a negative determination of freedom, in the sense that beyond it there is no other cause. But this interpretation does not realize that it assumes "beginning" and "historicization" in an ontologically indifferent way, without causality being explicitly determined from the specific mode of being of that entity which is such as to be the Essence. But in order for spontaneity (the beginning of itself) to be valid as an essential characteristic of the "subject", two conditions must be met: 1) The essence of the self (Hypeseity) must be clarified ontologically in order to achieve an adequate understanding of what it means "from itself"; 2) This clarification of Hypeseity must in turn show the characteristic features of the historicizing of the self, so that it is possible to determine the distinctive features of the movement of "beginning". The essence of the self (Hypeseity), that is, the essence of that self which is already at the basis of all spontaneity, consists in transcendence. The super-project that makes the world reign is freedom. Only because it constitutes transcendence can freedom be revealed, in the existing Being, as a particular kind of causality. The interpretation of freedom as "causality" has as its distinctive feature that it already moves into a particular interpretation of the foundation. Freedom as foundation is not simply a particular "species" of foundation, but the source of the foundation in general. Freedom is freedom for the foundation." (Ib., p. 667). Resulting from the foundation. Result of the result is the total of presences or insurgences. The relationship between the totality of insurgences and becoming arises in the sense that this totality is invested with the relevance or apprehension of the arising of the determinations of appearing, but it is not invested with itself, since the arising of presence does not appear. It is only by seeing, Husserl said, that one can bring into relief what is properly found in a seeing. In any case, a freedom that is the cause of something, say of the free life of man, is not freedom insofar as it appears constrained in the relation of causality. Its movement comes to be preserved in the relation within the world, a freedom for the world, equal to that which is the word that "says the world." Neither the word is free, nor is freedom, under these conditions. A freedom that is not freedom is not a contradiction in terms, it is, on the contrary, what we all experience continuously in every moment of our existence.

Hegel, on the other hand: "the given Being does not have mediation but is itself mediation". But in what sense is logic something to be founded? According to Husserl, logic was understood as a pure method of the formalities that scientific discourse releases in the course of its progress. This happened because of the lack of a preliminary reflection on the essence of scientificity and on the relations between the result and logic, between absolute form and original result.

Thus the sciences precede logic and this leaves the sciences in their fictitious positivity. But a logic that is preceded by the sciences can only be given as formal semantics. Thus, continues Husserl, Western logic was formal insofar as it took its cue from the constituted sciences and structured itself in accordance with them. Against this situation, Husserl had the merit of warning that a theory of science, which can guide science in its making, can arise only within a transcendental phenomenology.

In this way, founding logic means taking the direction of Klärung understood as a return to the possibility and original truth concerning things. The critique is particularly directed against the discourse of the logical analysts which, as we know, is a construct that functions only according to internal rules and has as a requirement that it is not speaking about any truth. Doing is coated by logic and justified as tautology. The whole analytic movement tries to justify the fullness of the immediate but fails to do so. Behind the appearance of production is the real world that cannot all be brought back to the logical truth of the concept. There is the desire to come out, to break the chains, to remove oppression, in a word to "act", and this world cannot be said even if it participates in the production of forced making and, in part, is captured in its mechanism. Desire and restlessness subvert the rules of the subject who accepts the limits of his own hope and the gates of his own misery, they act as unconscious (or almost unconscious) subversive elements on the monolithic presence of quantitative

certainty, tautological and therefore self-assured to the core, they break into logic and make uncontrolled litter of it, dust of horrified certainty.

The passage from judgment to experience, from the most immediate to the experience and to the motivation of an enlargement of the concept of judgment, is shareable insofar as it expresses the need that presides over the criterion of the attribution of the logicity of being. Almost as if to say that the logicity that being can sustain is that which it presents or expresses by manifesting itself. The foundation of logic is then a resumption of the type of absoluteness that comes from gnoseology: this is what Husserl intended.

Thus one has the possibility of developing the following statements: a) The concept of clarity as the gnoseological space of the resulting of judgments against the idealistic exegesis of presence. b) The inseparability of logic and theory of knowledge against the naturalism of the formalists or neoempiricists refuted by Kurt Gödel. c) The attempt of a material gnoseology or transcendental phenomenology insofar as one can point out the primacy of the act of being against Hegelian phenomenology.

Ontological problem of logic. Necessity is of all that is act and is in act. This is the basic thesis of all realism in logic. But what is necessary? Here is Aristotle's definition, "Everything that is or is when it is and everything that is not or is not when it is not."

Experience in fact means presence but also event, vicissitude, existential circumstance, but to be such it must enter the phase of production: this is the only way to give a sense to the actuality of the real (to its categorical construction), since objectively between real and possible there is no difference. Poor reduction this identity, even if ineluctable. Coercion can be broken and compensation brought to the credit of the suffering subject, but nothing can completely erase productive reality, nothing except the annihilation of everything, therefore also of diversity. The disappearance of the world includes the disappearance itself as zeroing. Desire returns to being the non-dialectical pivot of the movement toward diversity, the desire that seeks the tranquility of satisfaction versus disquiet, but we are not faced with a conclusive situation. Any conclusion is suspicious of idealism. The field of coercion, the world of the everyday, encompasses us all, even the coercion that regulates and unifies it. To nullify coercion would mean absolute freedom, that is, beyond the possible return to order, therefore unmeasurable chaos, not even identifiable in terms of the absence of coercion. The semblance of freedom in which we live makes coercion acceptable, modulated without any repressive extremism, and it is placed in the caput mortuum of contradiction that should solve everything at a higher level and instead does not solve anything, constantly re-presenting the same reality changed in appearance.

The logician, says Husserl, has before his eyes any judgment that varies with the consciousness of a free arbitrariness. This essential individual will not be able to give substance to a necessity of the meta-essential type, except for a recoil at formal coherence.

We thus access the attempted union between the theory of judgments of experience and the analytical conduct of phenomenological research, in the sense of Husserl, Ricoeur, Ryle, etc.

Manifestation of the whole. It is idealism that studied the whole as manifest, especially idealism presented as a concentration on becoming or self-concept. The dialectical method in fact argued that the mere appearing, the mere qualitative change of determinate being, cannot hold up the transcendental carrier in which all content emerges as such. If it is an apparition that emerges and vanishes, it does not contain that apparition which oversees the process, the apparition as total horizon.

In short, there is a presence that does not appear as the appearing and disappearing of the content realized by experience appears: it is therefore the appearing of becoming, that is, a form of self-consciousness. The coming forward of the opening is certainly a presence that has a different presentation, adequate to the consciousness that is no longer totally immersed in immediacy. The density of the traditional movement, immersed in rhythmically motivated and controlled production, increases in tension, the places of inclusion are overturned, identity refuses to return to play its part, specification demands a reference to totality. Overcoming is jammed in the process of representation. The fact must be described, the speech covers the fact and thickens it in the accumulation, but this process that, at least according to Hegel, should be an overcoming of the subject-object clash, at some point breaks down, the representation does not collide with the consciousness that has placed itself in front of the anxiety and has felt the breath on its neck. The linguistic cover takes on very serious responsibilities, it contains a poison that pollutes and numbs, the reproduction becomes automatic and there is no way to criticize it, even the criticism is automatic and is foreseen upstream of the reproductive system itself.

For Hegel - Heidegger says - what can be preserved as a necessary step in absolute thought is what is alive in a thinker. Such thought in so much as it is absolute insofar as it is articulated in its dialectical-speculative process and therefore postulates gradualness. Here is what Hegel writes: "I affirm that the succession of philosophical systems, which is manifested in history, is identical to the succession that takes place in the logical deduction of the conceptual determinations of the idea. I affirm that if the fundamental concepts of the systems that have appeared in the history of philosophy are stripped of what concerns their external formation, their application to the particular, and the like, one obtains precisely the various stages of the determination of the idea in its logical concept. Reciprocally, if one takes the logical process for itself, one finds in its fundamental moments the course of historical manifestations; certainly, however, one must be able to recognize the pure concepts in that which presents itself in historical form. One might believe that in the stages of the idea philosophy should have a different order from that in which these concepts appeared in time; on the whole the order is the same." (Lectures on the History of Philosophy [1816-1830], tr. it., vol. I, Florence 1964, p. 41). There is in this passage of Hegel the unique condition of his thought: to tend to totality with a movement inverse to that of addition. The recognition of a super-individual necessity is essential to his philosophy, where the strong inner component, in the sense in which Kierkegaard saw it, is dissolved in the function performed by the concepts of correspondence that serve precisely to keep away all temptations of aestheticism and irrationalist mysticism. Strong philosophers of reality as development, and all contemporary German historicism, have missed this consideration. There is here a strong tension towards totality, an attempt to access the whole before it disappears in the image reflected a thousand times, in the unforgiving semblance. The correspondence is obviously gratuitous but hints at something grandiose. The unity of life can no longer be tapped into but a vivid image has peeled away before our eyes, just for us, for us who have caught it. We cannot now escape from this image except by breaking the logical bolt that has enclosed us, it is not comfortable to do so but it must be done. Beware of the ideology of governing misery.

Heidegger's criterion for a discourse with the historical tradition is the same as Hegel's, since for us too it is a matter of penetrating into the spirit of what has been thought before, but we do not look for that force in the already thought but in a non-thought from which the already thought receives its constitutive impulse. I think something similar can be found in Hegel's analysis of the syllogism of analogy in the Science of Logic. In effect, Heidegger wants to denounce the fact that traditional logic fails to grasp man because it presupposes "no other possibility of ontological understanding than that of interpreting in terms of species and genus everything that is not simple individual." (Being and Time [1923-1928], tr. it., Turin 1978, p. 165). The identifiable positions of the two philosophers are: Hegel

with the rationalistic focus directed toward the explicit, and Heidegger with the effort to understand the elusiveness of being. However, this distinction, important but not fully operative, is not entirely accurate. Hegel grasps being in a complete but lacerating way, as if to say that he grasps it by leaving it teleologically enclosed in the dialectical mechanism. Heidegger does not grasp it, having rejected the place of overcoming at the beginning, replacing it with that of overthrowing.

Every possible beginning takes place with a choice. The formulation of truth can only be made through personal implication. The person alone can constitute a way of access to truth, since there is no other link with it. Everything can be done without the concreteness of the individual. Man is an interpretation of truth, even truth itself, but never in an exhaustive way. This is a perspective of incessant search. Life, in fact, is made up of choices. One cannot possess everything, one must choose therefore to lose something. The alternative is the starting point. The terms of this alternative often cannot be mediated and preserved as Hegel thought possible, because the choice determines life and with it also the direction of the whole philosophical path. Life compromises us, our interpretations lock us in a logical sack, our decisions characterize us, fidelity to ourselves also begins to resemble a prison. Hegel admits the beginning as a choice, but not as a beginning. For him, the characterizing element of the system is not its "beginning," it is not a fundamental proposition in which the absolute can find full exposition and from which finite determinations can be deduced. If the absolute is the identity of opposites, a concrete universal of determinations, it cannot be given in any single act of knowledge. The claim that the absolute finds expression in a proposition is a "foolish illusion". Hegel affirms this thesis with two points of view. For him the absolute is the system in its entirety, a "totality of knowledge" in which each part has its own necessity in connection and identity with all the others. He ridicules the far-fetched claim "of the enthusiasm which, like a gunshot, immediately begins absolute knowledge."

Yet Hegel assigns to the nature a part of the spirit, hence Croce and Gentile's accusation of inconsistency. The Italian neo-Hegelianism wants to be consequential and without compromise. Croce and Gentile propose a philosophy of pure spirit. Croce in an objective-idealistic form, Gentile in a subjective-idealistic form. The "absolute spirit" of Croce differs little from the "universal I" of Gentile. Gentile's attempt to move towards Fichte's "Absolute I" failed. His fear of solipsism betrayed him. Both deny the immediate existence of the material world. The spirit is all the real and the only possible philosophy is that of the spirit (Croce). Reality is the Act (Gentile).

Here is Croce's position: "Nor does it seem useful to add that unity with God does not exclude the consciousness of diversity, of change, of becoming. Because one can strengthen the objection by noting that that consciousness of diversity either comes from the individual and intuitive element, and in this case one does not understand how that element can subsist, with its own form of intuition, in thought, which always universalizes; or it arises as produced by the very act of thought, and in this case the distinction, which one believed to have abolished, is affirmed and the asserted indistinct simplicity of thought remains shaken. A mysticism, which asserts particularity and diversity, a historical mysticism, would be a contradiction in terms, because mysticism is ahistorical and anti-historical by its very nature. But these objections retain their validity precisely when the act of thought is conceived in a mystical way; that is, not really as an act of thought, but as something negative, a simple result of the negation that reason makes of empirical distinctions, and which leaves thought empty of illusions, but not yet truly full of itself. In short, mysticism, which is a violent reaction to naturalism and transcendence, even though it keeps traces of what it has denied, because it is unable to substitute anything for it, and thus keeps alive its presence, albeit negative. But the truly effective negation of empiricism and transcendence, the positive negation, is accomplished, not in mysticism, but in idealism; not in immediate consciousness, but in mediated consciousness; not in indistinct unity, but in the unity that is distinction, and, as such, truly thought. The act of thought is the consciousness of the

spirit which is consciousness; and therefore that act is self-consciousness. And self-consciousness implies distinction in unity, distinction of subject and object, of theory and practice, of thought and will, of universal and particular, of fantasy and intellect, of utility and morality, or how else these distinctions of unity and in unity are formed, and whatever the historical configurations and denominations that the eternal system of distinctions, the *perennis philosophia*, assumes. To think is to judge, and to judge is a distinguishing by unifying, in which the distinguishing is no less real than the unifying and the unifying than the distinguishing; that is, they are real, not as two different realities, but as the one reality, which is dialectical unity (unity or distinction be it said)." (Theory and History of Historiography [1917], Bari 1948, pp. 104-105). The basic truth of idealism is this: if appearance were history, that is, production, there would be no appearance or result of history or process. From this point of view, entering or exiting from appearance would be useless because it would be an event that would have no spectator. The conclusion of idealism is fruitful: since appearing must include every thing that appears, it therefore includes this inclusion as well, for which reason we become pure becoming, self-concept and transcendental subject. The distinction cannot avoid taking into consideration a part of reality, it must avoid the original sin of starting from the whole. This puts it perfectly capable of "understanding" the world, this world that partially unfolds until it covers us and suffocates us by providing us with identities and birth certificates. But, since it is a pseudo-world, since there must be an explanation for the terrible drive that moves us inside, the distinction does nothing more than contemplate the movement of partiality, what always remains outside of this contemplation, and of the relative representation, is the reference to an impossible completion that makes it autonomous, that is, the wonder to be conquered and towards which to direct desire and effort, autonomously recovers the lie and presents it unchanged as the other part of the distinction itself, the fulfillment that will come immediately afterwards, as long as the scalpel is sunk enough.

And this is how Croce concludes: "The first consequence of this concept of the spirit and thought is that history, once the empirical distinctions have been demolished, does not fall into indistinctness; once the fatuous fires are extinguished, it does not remain in the dark, because it has in itself the light of distinction. History is thought by judging it, with that judgment which is not, as we have seen, the reaction of sentiment, but the intrinsic knowledge of facts. And here its unity with philosophy is discerned more and more concretely, for the better philosophy deepens and refines its distinctions, the better it deepens and refines the particular; and the more strongly it embraces this, the more strongly it possesses its own concepts. Progress in philosophy and progress in historiography go together, inextricably conjoined. Another consequence, which is also drawn and which may seem closer to the practice of historiography, is the rejection of the fallacious idea of a general history, which stands above special histories: of a History about histories, as it has been said, and, for example, of a history, which would be the real history and would have under it the political or economic history and of institutions, the moral history or of feelings and ethical ideals, the history of poetry and art, the history of thought and philosophy. But, if this were the case, a dualism would arise, with the usual consequence of every dualism, that, from time to time, each of the two ill-distinguished terms discovers itself to be empty; and, in this case, empty indeed shows itself to be either the general history, to which nothing remains to be done after the special histories have done their work, or the particular histories, which fail to gather even the crumbs of the table setting, voraciously consumed by the other. That is to say, by a fragile expedient, the general story is given the content of one of the special stories, and the others are grouped apart from that one: a grouping of which the best that can be said is that it is purely verbal and does not designate a logical distinction and opposition; and the worst that can happen is to attribute a real value to it, because, in this case, a hierarchy is cerebrally established, which makes it impossible to understand the genuine course of the facts." (Ib., p. 106). The claim to dig history into a deterministic riverbed is as old as the world. The ancients had their own model of social upheaval, they did not speak of revolution, they believed in the return of all things, in the continuous cycle without novelty. Then the

industrial revolution upset the circular thinking in a definitive way, reconnecting science to philosophy, politics to social engineering. The new model was that of the spirit that evolves infinitely, knowing itself and its own destiny, that plays with men and their things, that realizes itself ineluctably, rationally. Then the collapse of all hope, the era of symbols and fierce reaction, the moment when the cards are definitely mixed, and still have not been unraveled. Revolution becomes reaction, red mixes with yellow. The places of the proletarian revolt are trampled and mystified by the symbols of progressivism of manner, of state socialism, of red fascism.

There has long been plenty of room for the skeptic. It is certainly not only now that we can clearly discover the incomplete and blind side of the revolutionary determinism of nineteenth-century, positivist and Marxist mold. Those who wanted to arrive at these conclusions could have done so earlier. The world of domination gradually proposed itself in a different way by proceeding the attack against the images that it kept proposing to our attention. The selection of these images was not only the task of the domain, we also did our part, we provided material for the call to order. Our intention directed at the "sensitive" par excellence was in the end intelligently misguided. After all, many people may have worked for the reaction, objectively speaking, a real crowd, if we go back in the annals of history. But was it a one-way job? Did only the reaction benefit? Or do we have to admit that, since the determinist model of reasoning is no longer used, it remains only to note that the struggle upsets relations, all kinds of relations, so that, depending on the angle, one can see strengths and weaknesses, or better to call them developments in the level of the clash, but one cannot see unique senses, clear causes and equally clear effects. Relationships have been subverted and the world of the commodity has been faceted into a thousand places of the imaginary, depriving the commodity of its substantial status. In this way the process of exploitation has been installed in a different and more solid way, everyone can now see how it works and no one knows where to attack anymore. Human beings have been isolated, distanced from each other, accelerated, nientified in their relations, and this movement is the same one that discovers and makes almost more "vulnerable" the oppressive mechanism of the compulsion to produce. No true revolutionary ever works totally for the revolution. Not because he does not want to or does not know how to do it, but simply because it is impossible. Within certain limits, he evaluates and decides. The result is a contradictory development that relates to the level of the clash in the social space and from there to the single relational flow and to the totality of possible relations.

The limits of quantitative growth paradoxically go back to the same limits that have often led to high hopes for the most advanced and creative forms of revolutionary transformation. The negation of the subject is linked to the exaltation of an objective model that continually re-proposes a subject devoid of all the contradictory characteristics of subjectivity. Thus, the crushing of the qualitative, which took place in the party and union schemes, even in the most advanced ones, proposed the same thing in the hyper-subjective schemes of the movement. The result was a general flattening, with no room for the true subject. Where to place the transition, once the negative movement of opposition has been assumed in a stable form within the same process of exploitation? How to make the revolution, if the revolution is threatened by the image of power itself? Elsewhere, one must go, look for a negative place, deny the mechanical possibility of overcoming, invent a "pure", clean place, where the justifications of so many professors of social recovery do not stagnate. In the case of the mass organization there was no room for definition, in the case of the specific movement there was no room for myopia and ignorance. In this sense, the skeptic and the singer shake hands and go to meet the party official and the union activist, each questioning the other about the reasons for mutual failure, no one having eyes to see and ears to hear. The broken thread of collaboration is reconnected and the glue condition is precisely the increasingly rampant estrangement that surrounds us on all sides. Proceeding

toward rupture is tantamount to rebuilding oneself in an uncomfortable elsewhere. Woe to those who fear deserts.

In a world that runs the risk of becoming devoid of meaning, through a deprivation of certainties that has intervened in practice, there has been a deliberate delay in abandoning theoretically the theses that had long supported those same certainties. This is true, specifically, for the Marxist dialectic, which still continues to roll around, and it is true, even before, for historicism in general and for idealism in particular. The crisis of the subject and its representation has not been fully accepted, also because no "crisis" can produce significant effects, inserted in the representation that justifies everything. This polluted mentality of a referential Hegelism is so widespread that it is not possible to propose a relationalist thesis, such as the one I argue in these pages, without already foreseeing the risk of being confused with an odious and antiquated historicist determinism. Even the recourse to the backward, say Lacan's, re-proposes a beginning that cannot free itself from the omnipotence of meaning. The problems of structure and the related problems of the interweaving of structure and form, which constitute the central argument of relational functioning as a whole, have so far only been hinted at, so that it may not be clear what I mean by the term self-organizing process or, better, self-organizing movement.

Let's keep in mind that in this movement there are no determinist implications, but there is a reconsideration of the limits and possibilities of voluntarism. It is precisely the realization that no one works in our place, not even an objective process that takes place in history, that can give excessive importance to the simple will, under the illusion of shifting the entire weight of historical events from the object to the subject, when instead the imprisonment of the will must first of all be critically opened up, before discussing the use of the will itself as the essential foundation of action. Shifting the centrality of the self, sending it into exile, could lead to an impossible explanation, an interruption of language. Silence is in fact not so much the risky conclusion towards which one might be directed, but the reality in which we live immersed in the chatter that is the primary condition of a silence of the soul, a mortgage inscription against life, which arises automatically the moment we accept without batting an eyelid compulsory production as a common social practice. Determinism pretended to give us an impersonal vision of reality, in which we could immerse ourselves just enough to play our part, within certain limits: now observers, now propagandists, now justifiers, never protagonists. In our place ended up acting the prosthesis, dialectically accessible, this last tool of existence about which it is easy to complete an original deepening. When we realized that we could become protagonists it was too late, no one is exempt from ridicule in a world now spoiled by too many messianic hypotheses. It would be easy for me now to limit myself to sounding the trumpet of action: above all, beyond everything, the sovereign will. The muscular worker opening the jaws of the lion. Imposing one's own will allows one to enlist among the doers, thus gaining access to the subordinate protagonists and having the illusion of being managers when one is simply managed. Unfortunately, reality is quite different and, for those who examine it more closely, it reveals an extreme complexity. No one is innocent in a world like this. We are all guilty and we cannot hide behind either the impersonal mechanism or the personal gesture of great courage. Involvement is not the gesture of a single day, it is a method of life, a solitary and collective commitment, continuous, hard-working and constant, courageous and irremediably destined to defeat.

The ability to speak critically from within a mechanism that is imprisoning us becomes increasingly difficult, the word becomes obscured and faded. Together with the reconnaissance interpretation is the central task of the relational investigation, the search for a new path, slender and almost invisible, so much in contrast with the great certainties of a distant and recent past. Extraordinary polyvalences, uncertainties, involvements, passions. Philosophy descends from its ancient pedestals, it educates itself

to go around the great traditional problems, denouncing their cracks and their incredible vacuity, thus presenting other indications and new paths. The desolate map of ancient errors and illusions that have never completely disappeared must be replaced by a simpler route, not in its composition, but simpler in that it is more modest, more acceptable, perhaps more within reach.

But it needs to be done quickly, we all need to be done quickly. Myths and illusions are wobbling and there is a need to build new foundations, or else go ahead in a hurry, with our own resources and weaknesses. We all feel this situation as the stark reality. There are religious regurgitations, but they don't reach mysticism, they don't propose a real substitute ideology, they are possibilist even if not less dangerous. When these regurgitations are integralist in the strict sense, it is the objective situation of backwardness that makes possible the millenarianism of redemption, which in the most economically advanced areas suffer heavy penalties. Then there are the national struggles for liberation, but they are not based on the myth of the nation, when this thin plot exists it is just hinted at, just enough to mobilize a certain social class, but no one bases their struggle totally on this myth. The goals are more concrete, though often just as anachronistic. Marxist and Leninist ideology has gone into the attic and no one seems to regret it. Even my own polemics of a few decades ago now seem outdated. The critical insights on the dialectic have their greatest value precisely in the perspective of an analysis of the logic of "all and now" as opposed to the logic of "little by little", otherwise really useless

Here are the positions of Giovanni Gentile: "He who makes the history of philosophy, must know what philosophy is, of which he wants to make history: he must know it so as to have determined a unique concept. It is not possible to think that there are several different concepts of philosophy, and to write a history; because given several concepts, different from each other, there are several realities, several philosophies, different from each other; and the history of one will exclude from itself the history of each other. If by philosophy is meant, for example, both politics in the ancient sense and geometry, as some of the ancients understood it, certainly the history of philosophy as politics could not be the history of philosophy as geometry; and vice versa. The two histories could be together materially in the same book; but they would not therefore cease to be two histories; neither would therefore cease to exclude the other. As philosophy is understood, and as its history is consequently understood, it is never possible for philosophy not to be a philosophy; nor history not to be of a philosophy. Now, that more disparate concepts of philosophy may be admitted is not infrequently conceded, nay sometimes demanded; and a certain doctrine of philosophical toleration is founded upon it, analogous to that which is defended and partially maintained in religious matters. But that in reality histories of philosophies are written with such an assumption of the multiplicity of the fundamental problems of philosophy, does not happen, nor can it happen: because if that concession or demand can be made, despite its irrationality, an irrational fact, such as a history of several objects would be, is not possible." (La riforma della dialettica hegeliana [1913], Florence 1975, pp. 100-101). Gentile denies the opposition not so much in the relationship between the forms of philosophy but within the thinking subject itself. The world for him is the unity of the Ego in the Act of thought. Objectivity is not in the thought-thought, but in the thought-thinking, that is in the self-consciousness of the transcendental subject or absolute Ego. Actualism is continuous creativity of thought that constantly avoids objectification, because it does not want to be limited by thought. Since distinctions are valid only for thought-thought, they are relative. Only the unity of thinking-thinking is absolute.

So he concludes: "Whatever the point of view from which the historian moves and the philosophical direction to which he adheres, he will not be able to search and in fact never searches except for the solutions that have been devised little by little of the same problem, which for him is the essential problem of philosophy; that problem on which all the others, more strictly philosophical (and I say more strictly, because all are, in a large sense, philosophical), depend directly or indirectly. So the

philosopher who is tolerant with words becomes a historian who is intolerant with facts: because facts cannot be removed from the empire of logic, and logic is intolerant by nature. Without that, the historian, in order to make his hat to all the different ways of understanding philosophy, would have to write as many stories as the ways he admits as legitimate. Now not only, as everyone knows, a historian alone writes only one history; but all historians together, whoever thinks well, do not write more than one history; and the same disputes about the nature of this one show clearly that all of them, after all, must have at their hands the same matter, since there can be no disagreement that does not stem from a fundamental agreement, nor difference between things that are not substantially identical, and therefore possible matter of comparison". (Ib., pp. 101-102). Decision makers at heart are all alike. Accomplishments must be tangible, measurable and identifiable achievements, even if all this, once brought back before the negative criterion of the critical tribunal, denounces a considerable inconsistency, but it is a structural constructibility that cannot be done without, only that it can neither be an end in itself, nor erased for fear of compromising. On the contrary, it would lead to consider defeat in its simple negative side, as a conclusion and death, as a necessity and not as a relational possibility, when death is always a possibility, never a necessity, if it is we who consciously construct it, preparing ourselves for it in the context and during the course of the same conquests we are making. The relational problematic must be able to enter the restricted area of social space, even if we know perfectly well that it cannot remain there for long and that it must be continuously brought back to its natural starting point, that of totality. In fact, society is not simply the place of accumulation, but it is an unresolved completeness, planned but not completed, in any case never referable to a polarized partiality such as that which is realized in oriented flows.

In the same way, and still in the context of a critique of strong theories, we need to better understand the relationship between the process of social self-organization, which cannot all be traced back to the simple mechanism of reorganization of meaning, and the restless labor that leads to the involvement of the individual. There is no reason to consider the two perspectives antithetical, or to consider the first determinist and the second voluntarist. All this in the course of the process of dissolution of the criterion of rationality dominated by a strong reason, able to propose models imposing them as substantial aspects of reality. This leads to the conclusion that there is a sort of disorientation: there are no clear and evident guides that were once imposed on the attention of all, in thought and, what is worse, in action. The leaders, the condottieri, the great philosophers. Fortunately, they seem to have definitively disappeared. If any political leader emerges, it is thanks to his weakness rather than to his ability to decide; his failures are moments of gratification even more than his successes which, if excessive and too evident, would soon end up arousing suspicion and betraying the fictitious tolerance that he always puts forward. In order to remain the same, the world of domination has given itself the appearance of constantly changing. Specific processes graft microscopic concreteness into the determined practice directed to produce reality. Indirect implications show possible worlds (simply illusory) that substantiate, however, the only reality of exploitation, facing it in a thousand lateral perspectives, often contradictory, where a critique of the subject flourishes, directed to clarify useless problems in their proposition as in their pseudo-solution. The return of the repressed is current practice, nobody seems to think about it. Just one example: the established linguistic codes. We all remain under the shelter of correctness. Limits and distances continually occur to us, we register them and then everything proceeds as if nothing had happened, no different dimension looms in the research itself, no philosophical solicitation enlivens a greyness that covers everything emphasizing the beauty of the revolution in words.

At the wholesale level there is a fragmentation of the subject that has taken the place of the previous existential crisis that proved to be only functional to capitalist restructuring. Of this fragmentation, the critical capacities are used with regard to history, so that the past now appears as an old blurred

photograph, however present, albeit as immobilized or embalmed, with regard to ideology, which is now considered with considerable irony as the probable cause of a new Middle Ages. This could not remain without consequences on the very ability to carry out an investigation and to document it. Attempts to go into unknown territories did not bear the expected and desired fruit. The opposition between signifier and signified remained without the expected outlets, the ego's claims remained as they were and its desiring tensions did not take advantage of the richness that could be drawn from collective reality, from the world of suffering. Rather than statements of principle, the above interpretative lines are consequences of reasoning and factual findings. Communication has cooled, the element of involvement has disappeared, even if circumscribed and even rhetorical, that the ideal produces before turning into ideology. The fate of the subject has remained a prisoner of this degeneration. Today's disenchantment does not even have the splendid desperation of dialectical thought and its inevitable lacerations. The mortuary detachment of certain analyses tries in vain to put together the results of a logic that can no longer present itself as a certainty after having affirmed the absence of any supremacy of reason. Hence the recourse to decorations and ornaments, often the result of an even exasperated technical evolution, in themselves also capable of causing effects and contents that could never have been reached before, but still a sign and documentation of an emptiness. The same is true for the flatness of the motivations, the uniformity of a sentiment that becomes fashionable even before being able to express itself in a reconfirmation of established values. Disappearance of every singular stimulus, specific to this individual and not to the other, everything now drowned in an imitation that distinguishes itself (and by distinguishing itself, exalts itself) precisely in the lack of differences, in rationalized accumulation.

The observations of Maurice Merleau-Ponty on the relationship between consciousness and time are interesting. Certainly consciousness contains time as idealism says, in the sense that time is thought of by us before the parts of time. But does this mean that past and future are objects of an absolutely pure present, does it mean that they are constructions of vision?

In practice, constructed time, the series of possible relations according to the before and after, is not time itself, but only the final record, as it were, the result of its passage, which objective thought always assumes to grasp and fails to grasp.

In short, it is certain that time requires a synthesis so that I must not get confused with any of the three terms of the relation (before, now, after), but at the same time this synthesis is always to be restarted since time is denied if it is supposed to be accomplished somewhere.

Merleau-Ponty writes more precisely: "The lived experience presents itself clothed with a meaning that, as it were, explodes in the course of further experience and in which no concordant synthesis occurs. We have not admitted, in order to explain this second-degree subjectivity, the causal explanations offered by naturalism. What is called corporeal, psychic or social determinism in hallucination and error seemed to us to be attributable to the emergence of imperfect dialectics, of partial structures. But why, in existendo, does a given dialectic of the organ-vegetative level succeed in breaking up a more integrated dialectic, as in the case of hallucination? Consciousness is not only, and not always, consciousness of truth; how can one understand the inertia, the resistance of inner dialectics, which oppose the advent of pure relations between impersonal subject and true object and which affect my knowledge with a coefficient of subjectivity? How to understand the adherence to the lived experience of a fallacious meaning that is constitutive of illusion? We have rejected Freud's causal categories and replaced his energetic metaphors with structural metaphors. But if the complex is not a thing outside consciousness that would produce its own effects in it, if it is nothing but a structure of consciousness, at least, this structure tends, so to speak, to preserve itself. What is called unconscious,

it has been said, is only an unnoticed meaning: it happens that we cannot grasp the true meaning of our own life, not because at the bottom of us an unconscious personality governs our actions, but because we cannot understand our lived states under an idea that is not adequate to them. Yet even if we ignore it the true meaning of our life remains its effective law. It is just as if it directs the flow of psychic events. It will therefore be necessary to distinguish their real meaning, which may be true or false, and their immanent meaning - or, to use a clearer language which we will have to use by now: their effective structure and their ideal meaning. Correlatively, it will be necessary to distinguish, in the process of development, an ideal liberation which does not transform us in our being and which only modifies the consciousness we have of ourselves, from an actual liberation which is the *Umgestaltung* of which we spoke with Goldstein. We are not reduced to the ideal consciousness we have of ourselves any more than the existing thing is reduced to the meaning with which we express it." (The Structure of Behavior [1942], tr. it., Milan 1963, pp. 352-353). This approach and also constitution, participation in the movement, is the proposition of otherness, involvement. It is therefore a relational project in which the whole field is critically re-examined in the light of the analysis of the individual flows and the condition in which they find themselves. The role of totality becomes fundamental not because in this way the beginning is placed in the immediate consciousness, which is only relative and has nothing radical about it, but because we recognize it in the other, regardless of any anthropomorphic tendency. The result is that it is not man who is the center of intersections of the totality of reality, but any relationship, even that hypothetical punctual relationship that we will never be able to identify. What we personally experience has no investor privilege, except to the extent that we cannot escape submitting ourselves to the same logic of "everything and now". Our involvement is therefore the leveling of ourselves to the objective conditions of reality, the destruction of an assumed anchorage to the certainty of the acquired, of the already accumulated.

With this we can realize that the objective process exists only if it includes us as an active force within it, otherwise, if we observe it as a phenomenon of nature, it ends up vanishing. This does not mean that we want to place ourselves once again at the center of the process we are objectifying; on the contrary, we place ourselves in that continuous flow of movements that is now center and now periphery, without ever being definitively either one or the other. Even the process of exploitation, as it is realized in the accumulative mechanism, does not in itself guarantee an objective direction towards liberation. It can determine conditions of precariousness and displacement in the mechanisms of control and recovery, but these are conditions which can be restored even if with profound modifications in the process itself. On the other hand, those who take the quantitative point of view, corresponding at the political level to the logic of the party, always look with great hope at the objective conditions of exploitation and expect from them the resolution of the problems of oppression. At every new arrangement that capital and the state manage to give to social contradictions, the disillusionment of the worshipper of quantity explodes, and with it the bitterness of defeat and the irreversibility of reflux. At the origin of this perverse mechanism is the use of dialectics. The challenge against exploitation can also be clothed in words, but it has happened and happens that words end up falling down from an active practice directed at attacking the specific conditions of exploitation itself. In this case the dialectic seeks to recover the force of the words and thus ends up justifying the recovery. Dialectical reason may become "unhappy" again by falling down but it continues to function in the same way. Struggle, while proceeding from doing exclusively, can move toward acting when it abandons all the significant ties that continue to anchor it to the world of productive reality, a world based on the logic of progressive approach. By constituting itself in a radically different way, this struggle ceases its normal relation to words and becomes exclusively ineffable, that is, non-dictable, but doable. Such a doing is in the process of being freed from its residual shackles, which is precisely why it presents itself with all the characteristics of extreme fragility.

It is precisely the habit of these recurrent defeats, placed on an exclusively quantitative level, that convinces us of the inevitability of a crisis that does not actually exist, and of the functioning of an underground excavation, independent of our capacity for transformation, which, if it does exist, is certainly not of a quantitative nature. On the contrary, the generalized tolerance is now accustoming the two struggling parties, substantially opposed to each other, to a formal and superficial aesthetics of neutrality, where the forbiddenness of the altercation is reversed in a distortion of the actual tragic character of the clash. The great turning point of capital has taken away any residual total meaning of production, so that the rules of a mercantile equilibrium no longer apply, which, once it collided with foreign and adverse forces, would have certainly caused the fatal crisis of the capitalist order. Now there is no longer what, and who, should enter the crisis.

Lacking precise indications of the blind and objective mechanism working in our place, we must take the initiative, involve ourselves. We cannot wait for the seed to bloom on its own, freeing itself from the snow that has covered it. Otherwise, time is not a good judge, it ends up agreeing with restructuring. The methodological canon of self-organization is not enough to set up the initiative, ideas and courage are also needed. The tendency to self-organization has always been one of the characteristics of the movement of the exploited as a whole. It has expressed itself now with greater or lesser force without ever completely disappearing in the face of the regulatory offensive. Rather than assuming the realized aspect in the form of a structure, it has been grasped in the past as a real tendency, that is, as a latent intentionality, suspicious of political practices and more disposed towards practically liberating projects. This latency comforts us about the existence of a moving force that cannot be identified with traditional canons, especially dialectical ones. It is a symptom that indicates the ongoing rupture of a continuity of recovery. Of course, even this symptom can be liquefied by repressive and controlling innovations, modified into a further construction, and "said" in such a way that it can be effectively understood in every sauce available in supermarkets.

The rigorization of becoming. Idealism had definitively affirmed that the passage or unfolding is completely contained in the incumbency of the positive (of the act) and that the nothingness, implicit in the deductions of existence, because of the mechanism of negativity, was to be distinguished from that nothing-being from which it should emerge and in which being should submerge.

The part not covered by presences thus becomes the zone of limiting activity by which relativity is affirmed within the positive.

In this way, the concept of becoming, as Vincenzo La Via said, must be distinguished from that of coming into existence, of being born, with which instead it always remains confused when it is defined as the passage from non-being to being (from nothingness to being). Identifying the concept of being born with this passage says nothing, in fact the passage, La Via insists, is something positive that can take place between two positive points. But can nothingness be conceived as a positive point? Of the logical leaps that Hegelian logic has preserved for us, the catalog is not yet completely exhausted. In the future other insights may hold further surprises.

Experience tells us that the becoming of things never appears as an annulment of being, in fact, how could such an annulment appear if appearing means being present, being in act, always being, in short? To be born, to die, to generate, to disintegrate, happen within a wider circle of junction. It is not a matter of denying the process but of keeping in mind that there is a witness who witnesses and scrutinizes every process. Birth, says La Via, is the pure (absolute) beginning of becoming. The word becoming rather indicates the relativity (dependence on something else) of becoming, that is, the fact that it can only begin relatively to something that, for itself and substantially, does not begin.

In the following way La Via, deepening the problem: "It remains, so, radically and peremptorily suppressed - as consisting in the mere presumption or illusion of an apriorism or dommatism actually and concretely impossible (before and beyond that logically absurd) - the supposed speculative antinomy that is considered inherent in the historical opposition of idealism and realism, understood in the sense of the alleged antithesis of a modern criterion and an ancient criterion of philosophy: That, if it could truly subsist (have a positive theoretical substance, rather than just an abstract and even fantastic basis!) as a fundamental dualism, it could not fail to be worthwhile to invalidate the assumption of an initial and final (insuperable) identity with itself or essential uniqueness of the logic of philosophizing.

"Criticism (explicitly modern, but already implicit in the many relativistic and skeptical directions of ancient and classical thought in general), in terms of its historical and logical content, is phenomenalism and idealism: which (with their various particular forms and filiations) constitute the essential aspects or determinations of that which are inseparable. Since, indeed, idealism is born in childbirth with phenomenalism: which, on the other hand, can only be defined and understood through (and on the basis of) its relation to idealism, of which it is but the incomplete and contradictory moment. So that, finally, criticism is properly the same idealism, considered, precisely, in its negative specificity, the essence of pure antithesis of realism.

"An entirely empty antithesis, if it can have no other substance than that of the abstract opposition and therefore presupposition - on which only criticism rests! - of the subject or "I" to the knowing in act: to knowing, therefore, insofar as (provided it is not mistaken with merely thought knowledge!) it identifies with the absolute fact of knowledge; which it is certainly absurd to imagine that it can, precisely subjectively considered (as "I" or consciousness), transcend (in order to constitute the principle of position ut sic!) the being or being given - whereby it is given and there is itself! - of its content; once this content (do not forget!) is not any of the particular contents that the knowing comprehends in its internal absoluteness or unity, but the content at the same time immanent and transcendent through which the knowing transcends them by distinguishing itself from them, and that, evidently, could not be transcended as well if the knowing itself could transcend itself". (The restitution of realism, in AA.VV., Contemporary Philosophers, Milan 1943, pp. 322-323). The absolute difference from nothingness and the nullity of nothingness. The difference from nothingness lies in the region of being. The act of being, the absolute act, makes the difference from nothing-being, when it denies, by virtue of the equality (identity of essence and existence) to its essence, any possibility of its non-being. Being originally withholds nothingness as simultaneously annulled, in fact the original is absolutely determined: being posits nothingness to differ absolutely from it. The necessity of being makes nothingness and the nullity of nothingness simultaneously be. The restoration of Hegel seems to me completed.

[1971], [1978], [1993]

VIII. Hegelian studies in France at the end of the sixties

In France, neo-idealist Hegel (the one, for example, of Augusto Vera) is forgotten in favor of an ideological reading, but not entirely indissolubly linked to ethical-political needs.

The return to Hegel is above all a return to the Hegelian climate, the climate of immanence, of the public, of the political, and this climate constitutes an essential moment of today's French culture [1969]. Hegel is the philosopher of two-faced philosophy, therefore the philosopher of conciliation or of the pure need for it. One must refer to him to understand this "return". Assuming German idealism as

the interpretative key of the development of the entire European thought, the problem of the "return to Hegel" automatically arises, and this as a response to the new need for "worldview". The nineteenth-century materialism with its blind mechanism, positivism based on scientific research not yet released from the mechanical necessities and the same psychologism of Niccian imprint, require a kind of "restoration". Many philosophers agree with the need to "avoid the metaphysical recklessness of the old Hegelism", criticizing Hegel's extremisms and saving the system that affirms history as the true "organ" of philosophy. The error of neo-Kantianism is not to accept a one-way gnoseologism, concluded in a kind of relativistic psychologism able to disintegrate all the values of reason replacing them with anthropological needs and necessities. It is necessary to rediscover values in the context of history, but without falling into absolute historicism, of which Benedetto Croce is an example and a negative testimony. I do not know to what extent a hypothesis of a "renewal of Hegelism" is possible, and even less do I know to what extent this can be considered a way out of the disappointing outcome of the philosophy that had proclaimed the need to "return to Kant", promising with this to settle accounts with the old metaphysics once and for all. Hegel's logic is to that of the neo-Kantians like the devil to holy water. There is a lack of connection between logic, non-logical disciplines and totality. The Hegelian system is certainly present in its classical setting, but it is overridden by logic, so either one accepts Hegel's logic or his system, although the two are not separable. In Kant, the transcendental dialectic of pure reason is negative and critical. It demonstrates the impossibility of those concepts which human reason is led to formulate regardless of experience (Christian Wolff).

Kant calls the procedure of reason leading to these concepts the logic of illusion. He calls these concepts ideas in the Platonic sense in that they represent perfections that are beyond experience and are not real.

Intellect: faculty of giving unity to appearances by means of rules. Reason: faculty of giving unity to the rules of the intellect by means of principles. The act of the intellect is judgment. The act of reason is the syllogism. The syllogism (Stoics-Scholastic logic) can be: 1) categorical, 2) hypothetical, 3) disjunctive. The concepts of reason based on this distinction are: 1) The idea of the complete (substantial) subject = soul. 2) The idea of the complete set of conditions = world. 3) The idea of a perfect set of all possible concepts = God.

Each of these ideas represents in its own way the totality of experience in relation to the subject (soul), in relation to phenomenal objects (world), in relation to every possible object phenomenal or otherwise (God). But since the totality of experience is not an experience, none of these ideas has any objective value, that is, they are not real, they are precisely ideas.

The critique of these three ideas is corresponding to the critique of Wolff's three disciplines (spatial metaphysics): 1) Rational psychology. 2) Rational cosmology. 3) Rational theology (ideal of pure reason).

Rational Psychology (soul). Underlying the concept of soul is a paralogism. This erroneous reasoning consists in applying to the "I think" the category of substance, so that this original act of the intellect becomes a simple substance, immaterial and incorruptible and therefore spiritual. But the category of substance can only be applied to empirical objects.

In fact: 1) The "I" that thinks is subject but is not substance (i.e. being subsistent from itself). 2) The "I" that thinks is a singular "I" that cannot be resolved into a plurality of subjects, but this does not make it a simple substance, because simplicity can only be based on empirical substances. 3) The I who thinks

establishes the distinction between itself and things outside itself, but does not say whether it can subsist without the latter.

By exchanging these statements for one another, traditional psychology makes clear its illusory character.

Rational cosmology (world). The idea of the complete seriousness of the conditions (world) reveals its illegitimacy by giving rise to antithetical statements both provable. Antinomies of pure reason: 1) Finitude and infinity of the world. 2) Continuous or interrupted divisibility. 3) Causality free or not free. 4) Existence of a necessary being as cause of the world and not.

Rational Theology. Ideal of pure reason (God). The idea of a perfect set of all possible concepts (God), constitutes the ideal of pure reason. The various determinations: 1) Original Being. 2) Supreme Being. 3) Being of beings. These are all purely conceptual and say nothing about the actual existence of the being in question.

The proofs of God's existence. 1) Ontological: claims to derive the existence of God from the same concept of God as a perfect being. It is contradictory proof if in the same concept of God is considered implicit his existence, in which case it is no longer a concept, it is impossible proof because if it is not considered implicit (tautological) existence must be added synthetically, that is through experience, while God is outside any possible experience. 2) Cosmological: moving from the contingency of the world to the necessity of God, it is always based on ontological proof. 3) Physico-theological: which moves from the order of the world to its orderer, not proof because it is not permissible to move from the centralized order of the world to the divine perfection, which should explain this order. The leap can be bridged only by keeping in mind the cosmological proof and the ontological proof.

However, the ideal of pure reason, even if denied in its objective value, incessantly presents itself as a problem. Denied the dogmatic use, it is necessary to propose the critical solution. This problem is answered by the regulative use of transcendental ideas. These ideas, therefore, cannot have a constitutive use because they do not serve to know any possible object, but they direct (regulate) intellectual research toward that ideal unity which they represent. In this way, each idea is, for reason, a rule that drives it to give, in its field of investigation (experience), the maximum extension and order. 1) The psychological idea: it impels one to search for the links between all phenomena of the internal sense and urges one to trace in them limits and order, as if they were manifestations of simple substance. 2) The cosmological idea: it impels one to move incessantly from one natural phenomenon to another, from effect to cause and to the cause of this cause and so on, as if the totality of phenomena constituted a single world. 3) The theological idea: it points to experience as an ideal of perfect systematic organization, which it will never reach, but will always pursue, as if everything depended on a single creator.

These ideas ceasing to be valid dogmatically will have a problematic value as conditions that engage man in natural research, which is then the only way to ensure the total unity of experience its true reality as a guide to thought and to prevent it from turning into an illusorily real scheme.

For inverse reasons, Kantianism plans to remain as a separate fragment from everything that revolves around the non-logical disciplines, which are certainly considered as philosophical worldviews, but characterized as non-scientific. The neo-Kantians try to oppose both the Hegelian metaphysics and the positivist empiricism, but the effort is completely useless.

The controversy: Marxist or existentialist Hegel? The authors who deal with it are: M. Merleau-Ponty, *L'existentialisme chez Hegel* [1947]. F. Grégoire, *Hegel e l'universelle contradiction* [1955]. J. Hyppolite, *Situation de l'homme dans la Phénoménologie hégélienne* [1955] and *La conception hégélienne de l'État et sa critique par Marx* [1956]. A. Kojève, *Hegel, Marx et le Christianisme* [1947]. P. Klossowski, *Hegel et le Mage du Nord* [1955].

In the work: *Le retour a Hegel, dernier mot du revisionisme universitaires*, signed: "The commission of criticism of the circle of communist philosophers", one polemicizes against the reactionary image created by Gentile, for example, and one also takes a position against the existentialist revival of the 1940s.

The existentialist interpretation is developed in the following three works: H. Niel, *De la médiation dans la philosophie de Hegel* [1945]. J. Hyppolite, *Génèse et structure de la Phénoménologie de l'Esprit* [1946]. A. Kojève, *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel* [1947].

In Alexandre Kojève also appears a Marxist concern especially in the examination of the dialectical figure of the master-servant, when he says that the subjugation of the worker or the poor bourgeois is not by the rich bourgeois, but both by Capital. Then existentialist urges take over. The *Phenomenology* [1807] results in an anthropology in which the theme of man's finiteness and death is prominent (Hegel becomes a precursor to Heidegger). Anthropology essentially atheistic and, for this reason, humanistically culminating everything with absolute knowledge, that is, with the science of finiteness and therefore of the true humanity of man.

However, Kojève continues, Heidegger unilaterally takes up Hegel's theme because in this theme there is also the problem of struggle and work, which will be taken up by Marx. In the end, existentialism and Marxism do not succeed in resolving within themselves the most atheistic and humanistic philosophy of modern times, that of Hegel, one turning towards anti-historicism and the other towards the most absolute historicism. After having thought for a long time that existentialist anti-historicism could be a way to lighten the heaviness of Crocian (first) and Marxist (later) historicism - in the order in which they appeared to my initial research - I had to conclude for the vanity of the two roads. The subject is not entitled to absolute knowledge, much less in history. The limit of this knowledge, once affirmed as present in the coercive production of the everyday, goes beyond into madness, and madness cannot be overcome, it constitutes a journey with no return.

In Henri Niel the interpretation of Catholic historiography is implemented. Hegel is studied in the religious and mystical character of his philosophy, which obeys a fundamental inspiration, that of rediscovering the original unity of the universe, broken by sin. This unity is the authentic problem of Hegel who tends to solve it with the logical instrument of mediation. There is no "complete" solution in this sense in Hegelian philosophy. There is an attempt to restore desire in order to fix a link with the knowledge of the world in order for the latter to participate in the constitution of true knowledge. The subject without wanting knows what it wants, the movement - typically Hegelian - is based on the cunning of reason, but it never reaches the condition of unity finally achieved. Truth is not revolutionary, this statement, as I have said many times, is typical of dogmatism.

In Jean Hyppolite, author of a monumental research on Hegel, the emphasis is on humanistic interpretation, conducted with the support of minute commentary. In particular, it is the sixth book of the *Phenomenology* (The Spirit), which is the object of investigation: the book of the destiny of man in the world. The gist of the Hegelian interpretation is this: man is spirit, that is, the becoming and history of humanity. For Hyppolite Hegel is not a mystic, but he is not an atheist either, rather he is a

philosopher attentive to the worldly history of man not willing, even when he faces the problem of religion, to celebrate an absorption of human life in the divine life. Beware of the dialectic. The mechanism is vindictive and dangerous. The antithetical space produces a process of recovery that can be silenced only on the condition of fixing a place of transcending, that is, the possible construction of a different consciousness. Negative criticism promotes this transcending but, being obliged to "say" the state of progress of its own work, in the end it becomes itself an explicit normalization if there is no circumventing movement on the part of the subject, that is, if the latter does not manage to play cunningly with the will. Transgression alone is not enough because, in order to have meaning, it must maintain an explanatory relationship with what is transgressed; the illegalist who too frequently plugs his nose must understand the law. But the respect of what is denied, in the long run, has deleterious effects on the denial itself.

In Franz Grégoire there is a definitive break with the critical and historiographic tradition represented by Jean Wahl. The attention to the young Hegel decreases and we return to the moment of speculative maturity. With the work of Grégoire we leave the double solution existentialist-Marxist, for an interpretation of an original type based on the primacy of reason and the rational. In this same area move studies such as that of Alphonse De Waelhens, which place a relationship between Husserl and Hegel. These are studies that remain mostly in the phase of descriptive historiography without being colored by pragmatic or existentialist or Marxist instances.

Marxist studies, or urged by the reading of Marx, constitute a climate determined by the works of Kojève and Hyppolite, for the most part. Also contributing to this climate were the humanistic instances of Henri Lefebvre's Marxism and the social instances of Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, later expressed in a conclusive form in *Critique de la raison dialectique* [1960].

According to Sartre, existentialism is theoretically integrated by Marxism, which inherits two fundamental requirements of Hegelism: a) Freedom must not be colored with the pale colors of the Enlightenment that reduce man to a simple homme. b) Man must be a citizen who, in the context of the city, finds his most authentic freedom. This dichotomy, moreover very articulated in the mature Sartre, re-presents the alternative of the unhappy leftist rationalists who try to re-propose the contrapositive dialogue between legality and illegality, between positive and negative, between norm and transgression. The contradictory present always appears identical to itself.

Among Marxist scholars, or in any case left-wing scholars, emerges a figure of notable theoretical stature: Eric Weil, a philosopher who has deepened the argument of Hegelian morality. Always by Weil the operation of uncoupling, carried out in the work *Hegel et l'État* [1956], from the conservative and reactionary positions on which Hegel remains attested following the denunciation of Marx. Weil says that Hegel does not identify the political rational with the political real. Certainly he was an admirer of Restoration Prussia, but his is not the empirical state, the de facto state, it is the idea of the modern state.

Emphasizing an aspect of Hegel is important for his definitive condemnation, but it would be a vain act of censorship if one did this while suspecting a possible different solution. On the contrary, one must say that "despite" a possible different solution, the distance remains unbridgeable. Reading *The Science of Logic* [1812-1816], one realizes to be in front of one of the most magmatic and impenetrable works of all human knowledge. While maintaining the previous condemnation, based on the results, one is astonished in front of this grandiose, powerful, mighty construction of thought, even if it is entirely wrapped in the mists of the categorial system, an operation directed to justify the divinization of the human and the humanization of the divine. Certainly because of its difficulty, and we can also say of its

impenetrability, this work has had an inconsistent diffusion and a very fragmentary and contradictory comprehension, but we cannot deny that reading it we can see the flashes of genius and universality of thought. Not to share the theory of subsumption, of the self-styled "ontologia recta", does not prevent admiration for the effort of dialectical conceptualization whose beginning is given by the overwhelming fruition of the relationship of matter with the complicated process of becoming and the movement of being-non-being-nullification. Hegel manages to keep himself far from the circumscribed territory of voluntarism as from that of praxi, from activism as from subjectivism. We could do without the suggestions of objectivism, just using the movement of the substance that becomes subject (just remember the part of the "absolute knowledge" in the Phenomenology of the spirit), but then the representation of an ontological device that is totality in movement would be reduced to formless substantiality, to the usual metaphysical abstractness. In Hegel ontologism loses its original character of ultra-sensible and dematerializing projection to assume the opposite function of foundation within the paradigms of concreteness and materiality. This operation of reorganization of a dialectical ontology, in the way revived by Marx, should be investigated in depth.

Roger Garaudy, as a perfect militant communist, reads the Hegelian logic with the conviction that, as essentially idealistic, it needs to be overturned. Dialectics, he argues, is the study of the more general laws of nature, thought, and history. These are (according to Josif Stalin's indication in Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism [1946]), the law of reciprocal action, the law of motion, the law of progress by leaps and bounds, and the law of contradiction, but there are no laws which - as Hegel says - are imposed by thought on history. Affirmation contradicted by Hegel himself regarding the theory of concept that remains a law of "thought" and therefore forces the Hegelian gnoseology not to go beyond the idealistic perspective.

One must know how to choose the Hegelian inheritance, says Garaudy, and this can be done starting from the utilization and the profound transformation of the Hegelian Logic in Marx's Capital [1867-1894] and in the critical assimilation of the Hegelian Logic in Lenin's Philosophical Notebooks [1914-1916]. The reversal is as follows: for Hegel contradiction is a moment of totality, for a Marxist on the contrary totality is a moment of contradiction and it is within the latter that it must be traced.

These statements do not deserve to be contradicted. The end made by Garaudy is exemplary in itself. Religion is comfort always available to all who find themselves orphaned in one way or another.

[1969]

IX. Metaphysics

Over the centuries the term metaphysics has had various meanings, its tasks and the means it has used have always been in relation to religion.

Let us look at some of the purposes that have been prescribed for metaphysics. According to Aristotle it is the science of being simply as existing, but then it lends itself to a twofold consideration, so it becomes the science of existence in general and the science of certain existences such as those of God and souls, inaccessible in itself to experience. In this way there was general metaphysics or ontology and special metaphysics divided into psychology, cosmology and theology.

Aristotle writes: "There is a science that studies being as being and that which is inherent in being per se. It is not identical to any of the sciences that are called particular, because none of the other sciences investigates universally about being as being, but each one cuts off a part of being and studies its accidents, as do the mathematical sciences. Since we seek the most distant principles and causes, it is

clear that they must necessarily be causes and principles of a nature which in itself has those causes and principles. If those who sought the elements of beings also sought these principles, those elements must also be elements of being, not of accidental being, but of being as it is. Therefore we too must grasp the first causes of being as being.

"Being" is said in many senses, but they all relate to a single term and to some unique nature, and not only equivocally, but in the same sense in which everything that is wholesome relates to health. One thing is wholesome because it preserves it, another because it produces it, another because it is a sign of health, another because it receives it. The same thing can also be said of the term "doctor" in relation to medicine, for sometimes it is said that the one who possesses medicine is a doctor, sometimes the one who is well disposed by nature towards medicine, sometimes the one who is the work of medicine. And we could find other similar ways of saying it. So also being is said in many senses, but all of them have relation to one principle. For of some beings we say that they are insofar as they are substances, of others insofar as they are properties of the substance, of others insofar as they lead to the substance, or are its destruction, or deprivation, or a quantity of it, or produce or generate substances, or have relation to the substance, or even are the negation of one of these things or of the substance itself. For this reason even of non-being we say that it is non-being. Of all the things that have relation to being there is only one science, and the same is true in the other cases. In fact, it belongs to a single science to investigate not only the things about which one speaks univocally, but also the things about which one can speak with reference to a single nature, because these too are somehow spoken of univocally. It is clear, therefore, that the study of things that are insofar as they are is also the responsibility of a single science. Always science concerns properly that which is first, on which all other things depend, and on the basis of which they are spoken of. If therefore what is first in this sense is substance, of substances the philosopher should possess the principles and causes.

"Just as there is a single sense of every genus that is unitary, so there is a single science for every genus, for example there is a single grammar that considers all species of sounds. Therefore a single science of genus, in turn, will be responsible for studying all species of being as being and the species of these species." (Metaphysics [IV sec. BC], tr. it., Turin 1974, pp. 262-263). The task of philosophy is to explain the form in its unfolding as opposed to the structure. If we prefer, the abstract in front of the concrete. Therefore, philosophy starts from the concrete to arrive at the abstract, to explain how it is possible for this to develop. Reality as a whole is total form, that is, creativity. It is always new, always different. Not only in the sense of the unity of reality, but in the sense of the multiplicity of the different, that is, of partiality. In fact, it too is always new in its individual parts. These parts are the situations (or fields). For example, if a situation is given by three relations, the insertion of a fourth one modifies it but not in the sense that before there were three relations and now there are four, rather in the sense that the three previous relations are no longer the same and this in a different way from how these three would no longer have been the same even without the insertion of the new relation, as an effect of the movement as a whole.

It is necessary to keep in mind a further aspect: metaphysics does not imply the reference only to what transcends the plane of physical experience, but it can contain the concrete possibility of experiences belonging to other planes, i.e. metaphysical states as indicated by all the oriental philosophy. This happens in Spinozism which with its degrees of knowledge realizes not only an abstract theoretical reflection but a real deepening of our spiritual experience: a real progress of participation.

Here is Baruch de Spinoza: "It is necessary to distinguish between ideas and words, with which we signify things. For since they have completely confused, or have not distinguished accurately enough, or finally not cautiously enough, these three things, that is, images, words, and ideas, many have

completely ignored this doctrine of the will, which is so necessary to know both for speculation and for wise conduct of life. And so those who hold that ideas consist in images, which are formed in us by the intervention of bodies, are convinced that the ideas of things, of which we cannot form such an image, are not ideas, but only fictions, which we make according to the free will of the will; they therefore regard ideas as dumb paintings on a picture, and prejudiced by this prejudice, do not see that the idea, in so far as it is an idea, implies affirmation or negation. Then there are those who confuse words with the idea, or with the very affirmation, which the idea implies, and believe that they can will against what they hear, when by words alone they affirm or deny something against what they hear. These prejudices can easily be taken away by those who pay attention to the nature of thought, which in no way implies the concept of extension; and therefore they will clearly understand that the idea (since it is a mode of thinking) consists neither in the image of a thing nor in words. For the essence of words and images consists only of bodily motions, which do not imply in the least the concept of thought. Suffice it to have warned of these few things in this respect; I now turn to the aforementioned objections." (Ethics. Demonstrated according to the geometric order [1677], tr. it., Turin 1959, p. 122). The consistency of words is linked to the dimension of doing, they make it possible to do and clothe ideas with something concrete, as a dress deprives us of the nakedness and then cuts off a considerable part of the message of the body. As words are not knowledge, by themselves and for what they pretend to mean, in the same way ideas without words are not knowledge, they are intuitions waiting to be perceived, that is placed under the cone of attention of our consciousness. Knowledge, by accumulating, produces the conditions of everyday life, but in this way does nothing but give body to ideas, which, having received this body, solidify here, in the field, becoming part of an irremediable chain of meanings. The quality that distinguished them is now only a residue.

Spinoza continues: "Of which the first [objection] is, that they believe it to be established that the will extends more widely than the intellect, and that therefore it is different from it. And the reason why they believe that the will extends more widely than the intellect is that they say they experience that they do not need a faculty of assenting, that is, of affirming and denying, in order to assent to an infinity of things, which we do not perceive, greater than that which we already have, but rather a greater faculty of understanding. The will is therefore distinguished from the intellect because the latter is finite and the latter remains infinite.

"Secondly it can be objected that nothing experience seems to teach more clearly than the fact that we can suspend our judgment and not assent to the things we perceive; which is also confirmed by the fact that it is not said that one is deceived insofar as he perceives something, but only if he assents or dissents. For example, he who fantasizes about a winged horse, does not therefore grant that there is a winged horse, that is, he does not therefore deceive himself if at the same time he does not grant that there is a winged horse; nothing therefore seems to be taught to us more clearly by experience than the fact that the will, that is, the faculty of assenting, is free, and different from the faculty of intending. (Ib., pp. 123-124). Here Spinoza reverses the reasoning. Precisely because of what he himself has stated the will is compelled, first it "wants" to fantasize about a winged horse, then it "wants" not to admit that a winged horse exists. The two movements of the will are both compulsory, even if of opposite sign. But it is certainly not the sign that characterizes coercion. The spectral place of reality, characterized by the fixedly repetitive sign of the will, is clearly before our eyes in all the things of everyday existence.

Spinoza again: "Thirdly, it may be objected that an assertion does not seem to contain more reality than another; that is to say, it seems that we do not need a greater power to affirm that what is true is true than to affirm that what is false is true; whereas we perceive that one idea has more reality or perfection than another; for the more excellent some objects are with respect to others, the more their ideas are

likewise more perfect than those of others; whence also the difference between will and intellect seems to be evident.

"It may be objected, fourthly, that if man does not operate by freedom of the will, what will happen if he is balanced like Buridan's donkey? Will he perish of hunger and thirst? And if I grant this, it would seem that I conceive not a man, but an ass or a statue of a man; but if I deny it, then he would determine himself, and consequently he would have the faculty to go and do what he wants. And in addition to these, other things may perhaps be objected to; but since I am not bound to report here all that anyone can fantasize about, I shall take care to answer only these objections and as briefly as possible." (Ib., p. 126). In this way, metaphysics becomes an asceticism that one must follow in order to realize one's own being and not a science that interests man because it solves his problems. Considering it as a partial aspect, a point towards which the intensity of meaning is directed, the side of the relation can erroneously be thought of as a "side" or moment of the relation itself, which is thus oriented towards its two poles, in the sense in which precisely the process of polarization is exercised. But things are not exactly like that. The "side" of the relationship is itself an element of convergence of a very wide network of relationships that only for reasons related to the limits of the field can we consider, and in fact we consider, circumscribed. In essence, on one "side" of the relationship there is another point that has exactly the same characteristics, that is, it too is a crossroads of the same totality. Stopping at one point of the relationship interrupts the signifying chain, so the other side crystallizes in the commonplace, in the expectation of the already known, in what could be defined as lack understood as presence. It should be pointed out that lack is not absence, the difference is considerable. Lack closes to repetitiveness, it guarantees that there is nothing else to be afraid of, absence warns that there is something else and that one cannot rest easy if absence persists because of its continuous messages. Desire would like to open up the lack but the representation is always the same, the productive dimension does not allow this in a direct way. The danger of remaining blissfully closed in one's own meagreness is greater than one can usually perceive. The missing world is unhappy, ghostly, and when we try to fill it with normal acquisitions it becomes even more missing, so that the present conditions can be preserved without difficulty.

It is the polarization that pushes towards these two extremes meanings endowed with different intensities. And it is here that one must grasp the transformative moment of the relational process. The meaning, in its arrival at the extremes of the relationship, does not make a journey in the classical sense of the term, that is, it does not move in space but becomes as the overall structure of reality is transformed. In this sense, movement is also polarization, therefore it is an increase in the totality of meaning that reality possesses as a whole, but it is also the retracing of previous itineraries, the consolidation of attitudes, adaptation and death. This retracing is a remembrance of quality but it can also be a simple control of boundaries, of the consistency of the wall. We continually play our game on the terrain of going beyond, but we do not always succeed in moving towards openness; regressions are always possible that lead backwards and reassure, reconfirming the moral condition in which we find ourselves. Despite all the water that has passed under the bridge, we cannot understand how the will of the subject can be taken by surprise, so we check and check without interruption a world that remains suspended waiting for something not yet said that could allude to something not yet done.

Thus, on one "side" of the relation stands the whole reality of possible relations but, in fact, this reality is such a vast and hardly comprehensible process that one prefers to admit that on one "side" of the relation stands something that is made up of a very limited set of relations, a set whose boundaries are variable in that they depend on the flows of meaning that arrive from each side. If on one "side" of the relation stands certainly the totality of possible relations, in practice we speak of a "relational situation". The need to say this condition of the "side" implies the reduction of the possibility of

considering this "side" as the totality of the world, the split that we should operate between "saying" and "doing" hinders us in going beyond, in going beyond. Any attempt to force the passage, to break the bar of separation, results in an emphasizing of the chain of meaning that binds us to the thickening of the "side" in its logical partiality. So we quietly move toward a logicization of existence and think no more about it. But life continues to press at the door.

Situation and field are sides of the relation, objectively and subjectively cut out in the totality of possible relations. All the considerations made about the field also apply to the situation.

I think that the situation is not without consequences in the polarization as this is realized in the relation. The side of the relation is not an amorphous point of simple reception. It is an active point insofar as it is part of the relations going on in the situation (or in the field) as well as a component of the totality of all possible relations. This dual attitude of its enters into the relations of polarization and conditions the reception of meaning. That is, it determines a real relational apprehension. This apprehension is not an accidental fact such as the simple presence of obstacles and a correct reception of the incoming meaning, but it is an orientation that the situation takes according to the overall project that is underway, a project that can facilitate the arrival of certain meanings by exalting their content, or hinder it to the point of extinguishing it. The variety of meanings arriving can determine a shift of the "side" of the relationship towards restlessness (desire to go beyond it), or towards appeasement (will to power). But this is not one of the aspects to be favored (the first) and condemned (the second), things are not so simple. Desire can fall victim to libidinal machinism, can hide behind the ignorance and imbecility of the subject (this is not a rare case), and appear as a banal emphasis on something insubstantial. Even dreams can be trivial.

Now, I think that apprehension is an active element of the situation, such that it can be considered as a sort of code that translates and makes usable that part of the meaning that best suits the situation itself. This has nothing subjective about it, it cannot be confused with voluntary processes, therefore it cannot be evaluated in anthropological terms. On the other hand, at the level of the field, what common sense indicates as will I think can be traced back to something similar. Here we are very far from dialectical claims, likewise we are in a different philosophical region from the old critique of the subject. Humanism had limits that are not found here, the future of man is an adventure of consciousness, he cannot remain in the moral conditions that keep him imprisoned in the camp. The poverties of democratic parliamentarianism do not even deserve a thorough negative criticism.

In this way, action would be a process of orientation of meanings. It is distinguished from apprehension just as the situation is distinguished from the field. Action I think is the subjective aspect of the processes of orientation and codification of relational flows, just as apprehension constitutes the objective aspect. A limiting assertion, the latter, in that action goes even further than its own transformative relationship to orientation and flows. The logos provides possible differences to action but can never fully capture it. The resumption of coactivity is a curse of man, a mode of being inherent in his destiny in the world, not something intrinsic to action that is always capable of hindering it and reducing it to order. Not even action is all-encompassing, even though it operates in the sphere of transformation, beyond the field, its peremptoriness stops in front of the fatal question: "is that all?", beyond which one cannot go except by falling back into the significance of forced production. In acting, the subject evokes the image of the total universe, of "everything and at once", but having to talk about it (remembering it), he can do so only from the side of language, that is, in the field of forced making.

The decision constitutes this orientation and can be seen as doing (field) and as apprehension (situation). It is always selective and partializing intervention, directed at reducing the flow of meanings and making its fruition possible.

Modification is only possible from the perspective of the field or situation, which are partial elements. From the perspective of the totality of possible relations, the term is meaningless, not because everything persists, but on the contrary because the very concept of permanence is absurd. Every single "side" of the relationship is in relation with all possible relationships, which are the totality of all possible meanings, but are not the change of these meanings. The process underway is change of the totality of the real and not modification of a single meaning. Through the field we certainly grasp modifications, but these are real only for our situation and here they appear objectively as expressions of the modifying process. From the point of view of the totality of the real they are not real modifications, the concept of persistence in the fullness of its complexity is a logical absurdity if thought from the perspective of reality in motion. Totality cannot be said, despite the fact that we can hear its ineffability active in the world, and not only in the limiting translation of residue. Desire is certainly sayable, so it operates in modification, but it is not resolved in the latter, it presses to go further, even if its ambivalence never establishes a clear separation that would facilitate analytical judgment. This ambivalence branches off in a thousand directions, it prepares the ground for openness insofar as it affects (in a non-dialectical way) the restlessness by demonstrating its insuperability on the side of the field. The advancement of the "differently conceived" works does not collide with the inexhaustible attempts to complete the accumulative addition. These are two antithetical movements. The apologia of representation, to which we have been reduced, cannot cover the shame of the forced condition either.

When I speak of totality, I am referring to reality in its set of possible relations. In this perspective, a distinction between possible and actual relations does not make sense. This is an error of common sense, relations are always different and none of them has streams of meanings that can be considered "in potency" and others "in act". The meaning of individual polarizations is given by the relational whole of the totality of relations. That is all. A change in the green color of a leaf always adds something to the totality of meanings of green that emerges from relations at the level of reality as a whole. When I speak of possibility, I am referring to the field and this is where the concepts that must be expelled from the totality of the real fall in. All the interpretative movements of the world of production, the refined works that have tried to cover the chains of coercion with the most garish colors, belong to the semiological nihilism that has been torturing us for many decades and that never stops disturbing us with its inconclusiveness. If everything is a sign, we will never go in search of quality, we will never find the passage to a world where a different experience will be able to fill our lungs. Continuing to sink into the covert is just another way of licking our wounds. If everything is a symbol, if it is our controlling consciousness, dominated by the will, that manages the symbol, let's put the will aside and we will find a crack in the symbol. Language covers the unconscious movement but does not inhabit it in its entirety. It is only by discovering the passage that our restlessness coats the opening in words, "says" it in order to know it and, in so doing, exorcises it.

The process is only possible by considering the relationship in which the different situations are to each other and thus to the totality of the real. These two things cannot be considered different or opposed to each other. The totality of the real is the set of possible relationships and this set is a set of situations (or fields).

The fading of meanings marks, as we know, the boundaries of situations (or fields), but these are boundaries that are themselves relations of situations. Thus, the relation between situations develops as

a relation between the deterministic element that comes out of the individual situation and the indeterministic element that comes from the totality of the real (or situations). It has been noted that this relation not being dialectical is lost in symbolic exchange, but this is a misleading admission. While there is no doubt that the representative symbol governs all movements that are directed towards the abandonment of compulsion, this is not why we can conclude for a total semiotization of life. On this side, a look at existence and the observation of a real, not symbolic, distance is possible. Demolishing the passage is possible, obviously putting aside the negative criticism and the same results obtained in the interpretation. I am not talking about the fiction of autonomy, but about a narrow passage where those who are directed towards this opening greet everything they leave behind without posing the problem of finding it again. All this movement towards diversity is not energetic, it is not regulated by the impulses of existence, it is not even a cheat against repression, it is a deformation of the rules of the field, a consequence of having circumvented the control of the will. Ambivalence and separation are accessible, as terms linguistically endowed with content, only in the interpretation, then they lose their linguistic content leaving the ineffability of the absence that is turning into presence. The other is now in a position to suppress the difficulties of the passage.

The boundaries of the situation (deterministic element) and the totality of the real (indeterministic element) are reabsorbed together in the circularity of the only effective process which is that of the movement of reality. In the most limited and partial dimension of the situation they give rise to an exchange and therefore to a process which, if it is not rectilinear, is not even circular precisely because it is not a total process. I do not intend here to reintroduce the old concepts of addition or modification. The situation is not modified, it does not grow or diminish. It is always different, but this diversity is a relational fact, not a static one, so we cannot accept the concept of addition, if not as a technical device of the field. Addition is first of all a linguistic problem. In the nature of language it is the overexposure, the deception of representativeness that settles like a peel on the concreteness of things. This capillary diffusion ends up claiming the place of the origin, to present itself as the myth of the absent, unnecessary motivation, when on the contrary the presence of saying is always motivated, at least within the limits of the paradox that the world of words creates the world of things. Many have tried to escape the nemesis of addition, but there has been no way to accept the ultimate separation except as an effect of the ambivalence of every acquisition. Excess does not follow this path, it does not fill gradually until it overflows but overflows immediately and completely, it does not hint at the pain of lack and its theatrical replacement personified in addition. What is needed is a multiple graft, eyes capable of looking at the blind eye of quantity, an antidote against the despair of lack. But this path is not viable for the moment.

With regard to totality and its etymological meaning, partiality (or part of reality) is given. It might not have been given, but it is given. From the totality of the possible relations between the set of relations comes only an (objective) situation that is an objectively defined unity. It is governed by an internal structural viscosity so strong that it decisively fixes the boundaries of fading. This is what we call object. The strength of this determination called object helps us to overcome the pain of lack, the restlessness of presence-absence, the impasse that we continually feel in front of every question that is a little more attentive to nuances, the closed entrance in front of our dreams. The object functions as a place of reunification, of affirmation of singularity in the face of possible dispersions, in the face of the negative and of despair. That is why it tirelessly needs a nostalgic representation, it needs to personify the lost origin, the impossibility of going beyond, the elusiveness of the absolutely other. The object fixes the solidity of the field and constitutes the most effective cooling of all anxieties.

The decision of partiality is always an objective act of the totality of the real, in which act the flow of meanings is punctualized. The orientation of the flows outside indicates the structural boundaries of the

situation which are polarized towards a formal center of the situation which is the subjective point, the center from which the field departs and which, in the sense of the opposite orientation of the flows and in the course of the set of polarization phenomena, retraces the same relational fabric of the situation. This is what we call the subject.

The side of the relation widens into the field and from this it flips back into the situation. These boundaries, continually interchangeable, allow for a kind of perspective and give the illusion of a linear "sense" and process. The making of a field is often called "existing," and the reception of the streams of meaning, in their more or less constant linearity, gives the illusion of existing as a particular concept, as "consciousness of being." This explains many inconsistencies and many tragic errors. The subject cannot go beyond the field except within the limits of penetrability of the boundaries. Now, the perspective, the project, are by definition this "going beyond." But, looking ahead, the subject cannot help but see himself. It is no small effort to see oneself, and it is what we practically do all the time in our becoming, with pain, what reality is without effort or strain. We thus realize that the perspectives of ourselves are infinite as infinite is our field and as infinite is the simple "side" of relationship. A whole new concept of infinity, a continuous change of perspectives, of flows, of relationships. The immediate consciousness slowly rotates around its certainties, this is what we call subject. It is precisely subordinated to these certainties, its mad movement of productive repetition denies its own aleatory nature at every moment in that game of conquests that constitutes the skin of immediacy, its perennial contact with the world. The frontier it keeps alive is entrusted to the extremely high substitutability of contacts and perceptions. Every distinction is annihilated and constantly reformed, this and that are replaced and alternated, overlapped and distinguished. Confusion is always lurking, but it is pushed back by the analytical mechanism of distinction; woe betide if we give it free access, it would be a grave sin against the intellect and its ability to formulate clear and distinct concepts. In the background is the controlled (but no less strong) desire to be what one is not, to get there, where that other thing exists that seems so indispensable to our survival. All to be redone. The analysis becomes a synthesis of the "not yet" with the "already more".

For the moment, we can reduce the fundamental uses of metaphysics to two: 1) Formal concept, referring to its logical function. 2) Content concept, concerning the possible expansion of our experience. Often these uses get confused, as happens to Francis Herbert Bradley in *Appearance and Reality* [1893] or to Johann Gottlieb Fichte in *The Mission of Man* [1800].

Here is what Bradley writes on the subject, "No aspect of experience as such is real. None is primary or can serve to explain the others or the whole. They are all like appearances, all one-sided and terminating beyond themselves. But one might ask why, admitting this, we can call them appearances. This, because such a term depends solely and directly on the perceptual side of things, and the perceptual side of things, we agree, is but one aspect among others. One might ask that it is not possible to appear except to a perceiver, and that even an appearance implies both judgment and reflection. On the other hand certainly I could ask whether all implied metaphors must be included, and in that case how many phrases and terms leave us. But in the case of appearance I immediately concede that the objection is valid. I think it undoubtedly involves an aspect of perceiving and judging, and such an aspect, I agree, does not exist everywhere. For even if we conclude that all phenomena pass through psychic centers, yet in those centers, even more absurdly, everything is not perception. And the claim that somehow in the Whole all phenomena are judged could not be sustained. In short, we must admit that some appearances really do not appear, and that therefore such a term is used by us with a certain license.

"However, our metaphysical attitude must be theoretical. It is our task here to measure and judge the various aspects of things. And therefore for us every thing that disappoints the moment it is compared to Reality, takes on the name of appearance. But we do not assert that the thing itself is an appearance. We mean that its character is such that it becomes one as soon as we judge it. And we have seen through the present work that such a character is ideality. Appearance consists in the lack of content of existence; and, on this self-alienation, every finite aspect is called appearance. And we have found that everywhere in the world such ideality prevails. Anything less than the Whole has been regarded as in itself lacking in content. Its existence implies in its intimate essence a relation to the external, and it is thus contaminated in the interior by the external. Everywhere the finite is self-transcendent, alienated from itself, and finite in itself in favor of another existence. Thus the finite is appearance because on the one hand it is an attribute of Reality, and because, on the other hand, it is an attribute not real in itself." (Appearance and Reality. A Metaphysical Essay, London 1908, pp. 429-430). The entire world of everyday experience is thus appearance. As in irrational and contradictory, thus unpredictable and unknowable. The metaphysician adopts an alternate use, often employing on the same page terms such as "need", "desire", "aspiration", "despair", etc., showing continuous transitions from the logical to the moral and emotional plane. Then he reproaches the anti-metaphysicians: a) for not having succeeded in concluding their discourse definitively (logical objection), b) for not feeling the indestructible need for metaphysics (content objection). In the first place, repetition is appearance. In the field, every production is the duplicate of itself, even in its continuous modification. If this duplication were to cease for a moment, the absolute quality of the object would emerge, not the residue that as a model (or form) permits duplication. That is, its substance would come out and the appearance that covers the productive movement like a varnish would be cancelled. Repetition confers on reality the annihilating peremptoriness that would otherwise characterize it, making daily existence impossible and any imperfect adjustment intolerable. The most immediate (but not the only) cognition we possess of this extraordinary mechanism is language. The signifying chain that binds inexorably to agreed pacts, to forced conventions: here is repetition. This paradox can be summed up in the fact that every forced repetition is open to modification, indeed it is characterized by the deadly inexorability of this innovation.

Another important metaphysical concept is that of a dogmatic metaphysics, which, wanting to reach the objective absolute or the in itself of things, takes as its object hypothetical metaphysical entities that ultimately turn out to be empty abstractions. A notable critique of this concept comes from the idealist and historicist camp. For the philosophers of this tendency, metaphysics will never be true and proper knowledge because it places the criterion of truth not in a theoretical law of development according to which concepts are elaborated and objectivities are modified, but in its own objective content. Of course, the idealists, after the critique, modify metaphysics into logic in the Hegelian sense or into critical metaphysics in the Kantian sense. The relation of the subject (strong) to reality (weak) is not fixed once and for all. The concept is not able to handle it as definitive immobility. Negation itself presents too many ambivalences to properly maintain exchanges of intensity. Desire remains outside the door. In any case, strong logic does not accept desires; it declares itself capable of satisfying all of them, to the good of wavering. Man is free to cry under the pillow as long as others do not notice.

"With Kantian philosophy," says Hegel, "it is the absolute concept that thinks itself, that goes into itself, that we see arising with it in Germany, so that all essentiality falls into self-consciousness: but idealism, which claims to self-consciousness all the moments of the in itself, remains at first still affected itself by a counterpart, as it still distinguishes from itself this in itself. In other words, Kantian philosophy does bring essentiality back to self-consciousness, but to this essence of self-consciousness, that is, to this pure self-consciousness it cannot yet procure any reality, nor discover in itself being; it understands simple thought as having in itself the distinction, but it does not yet understand that every

reality consists precisely in this distinction, and it does not know how to make itself master of the individuality of self-consciousness, it describes reason very well, but it does so in a way that is devoid of thought, empirical, which again invokes its own truth in itself. Kantian philosophy is theoretically the Enlightenment made methodical: one cannot know anything true, but only the phenomenon; it brings knowledge into consciousness and self-consciousness, but holds it firm in this point of view as a subjective and finite knowledge. Therefore, although it already touches the infinite idea, formulates its formal determinations and comes to demand it concretely, it repudiates it as truth and reduces it to something purely subjective, having now accepted finite knowledge as the ultimate and fixed point of view. This philosophy has put an end to intellectualistic metaphysics as objective dogmatism, but in reality it has done nothing other than transform it into subjective dogmatism, that is, into a consciousness in which the same finite determinations of the intellect subsist, and has renounced the problem of what is true in and for itself". (Lectures on the History of Philosophy [1816-1830], tr. it., vol. III, t. II, Florence 1964, pp. 286-287). The poverty of critical philosophy is well described by Hegel. Like all poverty, it has on its side the strength of being reduced to minimum terms. Those who are in this stage of reduction have fewer frills to deal with, they see things more clearly (apparently) and the distinction they produce fascinates more (weak spirits). But this force is only apparent, it depends on a mechanism symmetrically opposed to reality understood in its set of possible relations. The correspondence is symmetrical, as the scene is symmetrical to life, but the scene is life reduced, reproduced so that spectators draw not training but comfort, so that in the repetition of tragic or comic gestures perpetuates the fate of any prosthesis, that of helping men to discharge their frightening anxieties. But the absence of reality, the pain of distance from completeness, the delirium of an aimless repetition, the feeling of being a victim of the same positive effects of the prosthesis, it is always man who pays for them.

The moral action of man is directed, as to its object or final term, to the supreme good. But the supreme good for man, who is a finite being, consists not in virtue alone, but in the union of virtue and happiness. The identity of virtue and happiness was admitted, according to Kant: 1) By the Epicureans: who held virtue to be implicit in the pursuit of happiness. 2) By the Stoics: who considered happiness implicit in the consciousness of virtue. In reality, virtue and happiness constitute the antinomy of practical reason. The condition that makes virtue possible (adherence to the moral law) does not affect happiness. Just as the condition that makes happiness possible (conforming to the laws and causal mechanism of the sensible world) does not make virtue possible. The critical exit from this antinomy is given by the fact that man must, in order to be worthy of happiness, endlessly promote his moral perfection. Only holiness, that is, complete conformity to the will of the law, makes one worthy without doubt of happiness and constitutes the condition of the highest good, that is, of the most perfect union of virtue and happiness. Moral perfection has an oppositional character. In a world founded on exploitation and oppression, it must begin with the critical negation of power, representation and forced production. Allowing evil to advance in the world, dressed in Sunday clothes, is our responsibility. How can we stop it? How can we stop it if we do not oppose the desert, first of all the desert of the word? It is not easy if the will insists on presenting us with the same model of behavior, the same images that we would like to reject, the same roles. Denial cannot be a provisional fact, a tactical diversion; it must produce that dispersion which undermines the rigidity of Kantian morality.

But this progress to infinity, from the lower to the higher degrees of moral perfection, is possible only by admitting certain postulates: 1) Postulate of the immortality of the soul. "The postulate is a theoretical proposition and as such unprovable which is inseparably linked to a practical law and which holds unconditionally a priori." Only the postulate of the immortality of the soul makes that progress to infinity plausible. 2) Postulate of the existence of God. Necessary because the union of virtue and happiness does not occur according to the laws of the sensible world and therefore can be the product

of a holy and omnipotent will. Belief in the existence of God is not a duty but a need, this belief is not even necessary for the duty because this is based on the autonomy of reason. The postulate, as a need for practical reason, is a belief, but a rational belief. 3) Postulate of freedom. Conditions all moral life as life independent of sensible causality and as able to act according to the law of an intelligible world.

These postulates make it possible - according to Kant - to recognize with certainty what appeared simply problematic to speculative reason: 1) the reality of the soul as an indestructible substance, 2) of the world as the domain of human freedom, 3) of God as the guarantor of the moral order. What was transcendent for speculative reason becomes immanent for practical reason. However, Kant refuses to admit that postulates can go so far as to make known the noumenal objects to which they refer. Indeed, he concludes the Dialectic by saying that any certainty that man should have of the supersensible world would destroy the basis of morality. Subjectivity is constructed by the rules of the field, it is not foreign to the field, so it cannot be thought of in terms of pure opposition. If it were guaranteed from outside it would be able to resist effectively the simulacrum procedures of power. Its rationality is in a sense mimetic and it adapts by continuing to exist more or less well in the place of forced withdrawal. What we know about ourselves is never who we are; achieving the latter is a moral model to be pursued with all our might. Factual materiality is not exactly what we want without discard, it lacks unambiguous awareness, capable of getting to the bottom of it. The description in moral behavior is only a peripheral skirmish.

Every overcoming of thought that one attempts to achieve by resorting to something other than thought itself, as well as every attempt to base one's hopes for the future on the transcendentalism of action, specifically runs into the problem of the universal. This does not imply that the supporters of this thesis should be considered historicists in the specific sense of the term. It does imply, however, that in the analysis of facts one does not have recourse to indeterminate elements of a posteriori judgment or even to certain causes capable of acting absolutely a priori. The only solution seems to be provided by the overall evaluation of all the elements that concur in thought and action, even value judgments on specific details. After all, their concept is something that appeals more to the history of each individual than to his gnoseological capacity. This distinction, which we can conduct within experience itself (interpreting it gnoseologically and historically), opens the way for us to the foundation of the concept. Abandoning oneself to the mute eventuality seems like an eventuality to be discarded but it is not. Doing is said and is doing precisely because of this saying that reinforces and reaffirms it in its factual statute. There would be no possible mimesis without this essential support, without the word. This does not mean that the problem of the universal does not exist, but that the word can be extinguished in a silence that maintains a different relationship with factual reality. This new condition interweaves a double relationship with the power that regulates forced reproduction: on the one hand, this duplicates our reasonableness until it appears as the universal rationality that regulates the world; on the other hand, we can oppose the reasons of uniqueness, of singularity that channels itself to loss.

Considering action as something preeminent in the practical, therefore intellectual, life of each of us, opens the way to problematicism. It is very interesting to note how the concept passes from Hegel's dialectic of overcoming (despite the actualistic influence that we cannot but keep in mind today) to Kant's problematic dialectic, certainly more adequate to the conditions of being of a research that marks uncertainty. The Kantian dialectic, regardless of the negative evaluations that are current in the philosophical field today, constitutes a good ground on which to base any consideration of uncertainty. According to Kant's dialectics, in fact, philosophy cannot claim to solve the greatest problems by objectively dropping them into the known or knowable, since it is our will to create them. Any fragment of everyday life responds to this domain of will, for this reason it seems an explosion of creativity (at first) but then it reveals all its limits and its semantic and substantial closeness to the

image that manages to represent it so well. Action is before being such a thought, and vice versa, reflection is love or nothing, it is its opposite, exactly specular. Nothing is resolved in the mere will of thought. Everyone puts the emphasis where he or she sees fit. What is certain is that any such resolution is disquiet in the immediate consciousness, now as before. Such is the condition of active praxis, the transformative premise of history, the foundation of the possibility of speaking of a universal. In whatever way rational processes can be renewed, they are but sketches of an answer to the problem of the foundation of a universal reference. When the criterion of totality disappears, the meager distinctions of accumulation reappear. Unsatisfactory.

The concept conveys the need for a transformative vitality that must necessarily lie elsewhere, a precise need. In spite of the inaccurate interpretations of the Hegelian becoming and in spite of the attitudes of refusal of criticism, the experience in itself, abstractly considered, reduced to the bone of the concept, is not enough, for several reasons, to satisfy our desire to see more deeply into it. Demand that turns into the precise conviction that to achieve this goal it is necessary to go beyond the experience itself. It does not matter that some people confuse this going beyond with abandoning the concrete for the insubstantial spaces of the absolutely different, it does not matter because nothing can be circumscribed in action without restlessly maintaining a demand to go further and further, a demand without end. However, it is necessary to examine the difference between going beyond experience and staying, if only by posing the problems of the possibility and effectivity of this movement. It can be admitted at this point that the most important thing in moving toward diversity is not the "reporting on" but the "moving toward." What does the light foot of which Nietzsche spoke allow us? Dance is movement and John Cage's silence is music.

On the other hand, there is no possibility of agreement with the theses that support a sort of "overcoming of praxis", where praxis rests on the new conditions that would come out of the very movement of dialectics in reality, because this "overcoming", even though it already recognizes man's constructive capacities, sees the evolution of transformation in a zone of overcoming itself where the elements of the past, therefore the action itself and the causes that determined it, have completely disappeared, or at least been placed in another dimension. In this regard, it is necessary to take into account the "determinations" of being in the Hegelian Logic and the consequent evaluations of judgment. This is without detracting from the transfer of saying into acting, of the desire that acts and ceases its own personifying tale. Here too we are at a kind of "return to order", but one that bears on its own unsatisfied body (no desire can cease to be such) the signs of difference.

These determinations, however, only matter to those who want to make precise distinctions between ways of thinking about action, avoiding making these ways coincide with their inevitable commonality of perception and interest. Unlimited hypothesis breaking? Instead, it is very important that concept and action also be removed from the amateurish frequentations of stupid and petulant supporters of a preeminence of one or the other distinction, in fact, this way of doing things, in its arrogant assertions, reveals how deeply felt is the need for a philosophical research capable of providing unitary characteristics, in short, something constant behind which to barricade oneself, beyond the simple endless yearning. The Kantian dialectic lies beneath every such need and incites him not to be satisfied with Hegel's solutions, despite the sympathies that the Picardian adventurousness of the latter often seems to suggest. The Hegelian dialectic is for all too magniloquent, too self-confident, too all-encompassing, not to make absurd any constructive consideration that starts from uncertainty.

In any case, the circle is closed. I try to go beyond the repugnant cataloguing because I do not see the possibility of coming to terms with the problem of my life in a different way. Thus proceeding I pose another one: to find the hope of grasping the limits of the intellect, considering the latter as a necessary

instrument of the possibility of analysis. What do I seek beyond the thought: I seek the thought that awaits me, the destiny beyond the thought. No limpieza demasiada. Relationalism accepts the uncertain hypothesis of the guidance of the intellect, which is always the basis of all philosophizing. But the relationalist, by better specifying the distinction between Verstand and Vernunft, asks whether the process of specifying the Vernunft, and with it any possible reform of the principle of non-contradiction, allows to reach a distinction without anxiety between intrinsic and extrinsic, putting hand in hand with the construction of an overcoming of thought through the instrument of thought itself.

Relationalism is not posited by thought as something congenital. Thought is an activity that, if seriously rooted, moves towards transformations of reality, towards a positive rational consistency; it is not condemned forever to the reduced dimensions of interpretation. In the purulence of dogmatism it has its most fearful adversary, able to characterize the philosophizing of every time, just because the latter doesn't start from the experience to arrive to the reflection, but it places the thought in the pure essence of the word, that is not the concrete being of reality, but only the trembling semblance of something that is always subtracted to our will to understand.

Relationalism is among the most serious addresses of contemporary philosophy precisely because it has stiffened academic power in an indefinable series of suspicions. It has not yet realized a constructive efficacy, but it has highlighted at least in part the fundamental myopia of philosophical speculation. As a consequence, it presents considerable possibilities of development, being able to resort, in order to break the vicious circle of philosophizing, to activities that do not drown in the rottenness of pure theory. Pure theory seems to me, in fact, insufficient to realize the purposes of man.

The Kantian thesis of the contextual belonging of man to two worlds breaks in two every possibility of relationalism. If man, at one and the same time, is noumena because he is rational, and phenomenon because he lives in time and space, the only possible opening is the dialectic of oppositions. Wanting to clean up, Kant has brought back into the field the opposition between the reality of being and that of non-being, that is, he has given it a very different value. Kant can no longer speak of a trivial need for conciliation, but of the need for a decent synthesis. So the road to Hegel has been opened. The principle of non-contradiction could no longer be understood as it was before him, in other words, the analytical explanation of a static being, but something comes to change in that this static being discovers itself provided with a dynamic drag when it deepens itself into itself. Such an ingenious turn in the interpretation of this principle, a turn that does not mean a reduction in logicity, brings contradiction into the very mechanism of being and non-being, that is, it leads the restlessness of the underworld into the official world in a gigantic attempt at recovery. This is not a vicious circle, but an effective stimulus to philosophizing to build the frontiers of the new domain. The positions apparently conquered yesterday, are now questioned by Hegel and in this impassable discussion is drawn in all that world that history had kept away from itself making it flash in the background. The Kantian distinction between Verstand and Vernunft has been reduced to an inadequate but acceptable tolerability for power. Thought has become the morning prayer and has ceased to be the Sunday prayer. It appears as the only decidedly human activity and therefore inherent to man, an immanent condition. Beware of the humanistic pitfall. Recovery is always possible by using the word. A thousand expedients "internal" to the same logic make it possible. To let oneself go towards an absolutely different elsewhere, in the desolation of the territory of quality, this is the suggestion of dance.

A concept is therefore persistently imprecise. It

fatally expresses only the real, but like everything else, it is both exact and imprecise, true and untrue, universal and particular. To demand the choice of a point of view is to set a limiting stake, dignified but

castrating. This is not a trivial concession to the problematic argumentation and not even a resumption of the dialectic of opposites. Plato himself could come to the rescue.

Unfortunately, even the anti-metaphysics easily goes from a formal to a content level and does not sufficiently distinguish the criticism that moves now to the formal aspect now to the content. Anti-metaphysicians fall into the illusion of concatenating one purpose with another. Having obtained a formal aim, for example, they delude themselves into thinking that they can achieve a content result by the same means. In general, the anti-metaphysician struggles: a) against a religious conception of the world, b) against any presumed knowledge that does not conform to the intrinsic conditions that critically regulate the functioning of knowledge, c) against a synthesis of knowledge itself. It is natural that it tries to elevate the second point to a solution of the other two, but it falls into an irretrievable defect of circularity.

Positivism has fought metaphysics (for example: the matter of pins - Hippolyte Taine). The problem of language. Pseudo-concepts and pseudo-problems. The cause of these pseudo-patients has been identified in an erroneous use of language, a mentality proclivous to the metaphysical tendency. The Vienna Circle and the analysis of language. Pathogenesis of metaphysical language. Metaphysical propositions, according to neopositivism, are meaningless babble and are reduced to an inadequate and illusory expression of the feeling of life.

But such a position is not sustainable. There is a shift in the problem. The internal problem of the elimination of metaphysics from science (the problem of the construction of a scientific language) is shifted to the problem of the elimination of metaphysics in general. But the ideal language that allows at the same time the construction of a correct scientific language and the final liquidation of metaphysical language should, to be ideal, receive a metaphysical investiture. Hence the criterion (e.g., Rudolf Carnap's criterion based on the construction of sensible propositions on atomic propositions), elaborated in view of scientific language and then extrapolated to the analysis of language in general, reveals the narrowness of its conception and the violent conflict between pure logical analysis and philosophical analysis of what we can conceive and experience.

In practice then the work of Carnap is reduced to a decisive action against what are called pseudo-problems, that is precisely devoid of problematic content and therefore determine completely sterile polemics. But then in this case we should have talked about problems badly placed. That in the philosophical discourse it is necessary to pay more attention to the language is sure, but why stiffen everything in separations and then add a devaluation?

In fact, neopositivism - at least in its first phase - refuses to see experience as a problem and therefore becomes dogmatic and naturalistic. The devaluative definition that Carnap gives of metaphysics is indeed extremely dogmatic. However, it remains a very reassuring definition even if it does not make it possible to "speak" outside the rigidly assertory language that we know.

In addition to rigidity, another defect of anti-metaphysical discourse is incompleteness. In fact, it is either complete (thanks to axioms that we can question) and then assumes the closure of metaphysical systems, or it is incomplete (as recognized by modern methodologists) and then can not be excluded a priori integration and consequently the risk of metaphysics.

The arrest occurs in the separation (which is then the third defect) between subjective and objective. Scientific language is intersubjective, metaphysical language in addition to being intersubjective has emotional resonances that are intertwined with positive knowledge, giving rise to inexhaustible

controversy. Language, on the other hand, must eliminate all subjective elements so that knowledge can have only the objective character. But, evidently, even this is a plausible assumption only by way of hypothesis. How to eliminate all the fragments of "other" discourses that subsist even in the most rigid internal constitution of a metalanguage?

Edmund Husserl clearly demonstrated the origin of this scientific ideal. In practice, anti-metaphysics stops the discourse when it begins to talk about subjectivity, but subjectivity never comes to constitute itself as a problem and the judgments that are made about it are only traced by the knowledge of objectivity. Metaphysics is reduced to poetry, but aesthetics is also metaphysical: therefore, only science is left to determine our image of the world and to implicitly constitute all metaphysics, which is also metaphysical. If the place from which I write provides the transmitting and receiving dimension, I cannot go elsewhere on pain of silence. If I do so, still resorting to language, I must continually denounce the limits of my contradiction, to find myself in the end with a lattice of connections without content.

Ultimately, neo-positivist anti-metaphysics has been wrong to bend the tool (i.e., the analysis of language), the result of a perfectly legitimate analytical and clarifying need, to a heterogeneous and content-driven purpose.

The struggle against Hegel has almost always been extremely superficial. Subjectivity considered in a different way cannot be limited to the refutation of the Hegelian conception of interiority because in this way it falls into a paralogism, that is, into the confusion between interiority "in itself" and interiority "in alio". One can deny the Hegelian theory according to which subjectivity is one of the moments of the dialecticity of the whole, without thereby establishing a fixed relationship with objectivity, because otherwise objectivity would remain dependent on the former. Undoubtedly, the specific difference mentioned above can also be included in the generic one, for which the movement of being is thought of as a dialecticity of oppositions or as a development that does not necessarily have to pass through oppositions. In this case one restores the metaphysical hypothetical by tacking on a false betrayal.

Metaphysicians believe that logical forms are secondary and that only questions of content are essential. Regarding this alternative there is nothing to do, as Kant did, but to take scandal or not to take it. But in fact it is difficult to distinguish form from content. Kant forges the tool of transcendental logic but does not lose sight of the rigorously logical formulation of the problem (what kind of judgment intervenes in metaphysical discourse). Therefore, the Kantian critique presupposes a logical-formal aspect of the use of reason, which today is sized as a critique of language. But this critique is screwed on itself, it runs the risk of not coming out of the metaphor that provides its content. The rigidity of the copula resets to zero any different discourse that pretends to start from the forced productive level.

The problematic judgments express an uncertain relationship. There are categorical judgments and hypothetical judgments. But the hypothetical is not always problematic, indeed it often is not, and therefore it must be distinguished, since the hypothetical judgment can, like the categorical, be assertory or apodictic. The relations asserted by the apodictic judgment are such, that they could not be otherwise than what they are. Now a thing cannot not be, when another is posited which determines it. Therefore all relations, expressed in categorical or hypothetical judgments, which are explicitly or implicitly regarded as determined by some other thing, are necessary. If man were fully acquainted with all reality, judgments about the things of the world, except in certain respects those concerning the free facts of man, would be apodictic or might take the apodictic form. We think of all things as

connected to each other. On the other hand, judgments expressing their properties and the facts and laws that govern them cannot be apodictic for man. This is because we cannot derive nature from other principles, and must simply accept it as given by experience.

Judgment necessarily consists of three ideas: the idea of an object, of which a relation to another object is directly asserted, the idea of this, and the idea of their relation. In the first of these ideas lies the subject of the judgment, in the second the predicate of the subject, in the third their relation. The subject and the predicate constitute the matter of the judgment, the relation the form. This determines the way in which they are joined together. Judgments, like ideas, though more clearly and explicitly, apply the principles of Kantian reason. Hegel tried to do without them in every way. Here is what he says: "In the thought, which it has drawn, that the single consciousness is, in itself, absolute essence, consciousness returns to itself. For the unhappy consciousness the being-in-itself is the beyond of itself. But the movement of such consciousness has accomplished this in her: of having placed the singularity in its complete development, or the singularity which is effected consciousness, as the negative of itself, that is to say, as the objective extreme; of having released from itself its being-for-itself, and of having made of it a being; in such a passage there has also developed for consciousness its unity with this universal; a unity which - the Singularity removed being the universal, - for us no longer falls outside of consciousness; and which - maintaining itself in this negativity of consciousness, - constitutes in consciousness as such its essence. Its truth is that which in the syllogism, where the extremes are kept absolutely outside each other, appears as the mean, which announces to the transcendent consciousness that the individual has renounced itself, and to the individual that the transcendent, far from constituting an extreme for the individual, is reconciled with it. This middle is the unity which immediately knows and relates those two extremes; and it is the consciousness of their unity, a unity which, by enunciating them to consciousness, enunciates, therefore, itself: it is the certainty of being all truth." (Phenomenology of Spirit [1807], tr. it., vol. I, Florence 1963, p. 193). Thought in the representation of the various things conceives one as existing by itself (subjects), and the other (predicates) as adhering to them in a given way (relationship), so it affirms the predicates of each subject. Hegel tries to remedy this. To say - metaphysically speaking - that every judgment is formed according to the rule of the principle of substance, does not mean that every judgment always and only affirms relations of substantiality, but rather that, since we always think of the modes as existing in the substances, so we always think of the predicate as founded on the subject, while the latter like the substance is thought of by itself. The other aspect of Hegel here takes on an intolerable consistency. Even when the idea of the subject is a genus of the predicate, as is the case in particular judgments, the subject is always taken as that which stands by itself, while the predicate is thought of as its dependence. The dialectical rhythm does not admit this dependence, but the way forward may be another.

In the permanence of this antinomy, structures of thought and philosophical openings destined to appear devoid of consistency at the moment of their establishment have progressively asserted themselves - up to full and almost uncontested hegemony - because they are afflicted by systematic dogmatism. It remains to be seen how a logical analysis of language can concretely organize itself to satisfy the logical-formal requirement that is implicit in the Critique of Pure Reason [1781].

Accepting to start from these mighty structures, which affirm paradigms almost always theologizing to give life to all the potentialities of modification that can come out of the epistemological ground, means implicitly imposing a handicap based on the mandatory finalization of one's own thought. All the possible unilateral and self-sufficient schematizations of Hegelian absolutism, veined in an anti-Enlightenment way, thus do not escape the emptying of their contents, even if they appear in the end as imposing architectural-monumental constructions. The fundamental category of mediation, which

could lead to a productive reversal, does not have the form to subvert the initial condemnation of all these philosophical-theological models.

First of all, we must speak of analysis of language and not of critique of language, because this second concept is at least ambiguous, expanding to too many different needs. This means to avoid reworking en bloc the whole Kantian critique of reason, as the English analytic movement and the neo-positivism of the Vienna Circle did. This is possible because we have enucleated an already determined science: symbolic logic to which syntactics and semantics are added as natural developments and applications. These sciences are based on the new mathematics (George Boole) and the new logic (Giuseppe Peano), as well as on the axiomatization of geometry (that is, the complete dissociation of its rational-deductive aspect from its intuitive one). To the symbolic logic is entrusted the same task that mathematics has carried out during the development of modern physics.

Rudolf Carnap's principle of tolerance constitutes an overcoming of the first phase of very simplistic closure, directed to constitute a basic language capable of determining meaning, a kind of ideal language.

In practice, a non-formalized language has a too complex structure, being composed of many languages, hence a serious danger of verbalism and paralogism. This language is used in metaphysical discourse, now some terms of the metalanguage have a certain correspondence with the terms of metaphysical language, but the latter remains always an ordinary objective language and therefore the former can never get to draw metaphysical consequences.

Neopositivists say that there are two ways of pronouncing a proposition: a material way by which we assert an observable fact about which we have a method of verification, and a formal way that does not express any assertion about facts, but represents an assertion about the syntax in some language. Now metaphysical propositions are meaningful as formal propositions, but meaningless when considered as material propositions.

But in what way can a limit be set on the possibility of devising ever new methods of verification? To assert this as possible is to say a metaphysical proposition, that is, to do metaphysics, so even neopositivism becomes metaphysical. But Carnap said that neopositivism is nothing but a criterion to eliminate metaphysical questions, then only a criterion of analysis that alone is not enough to found an anti-metaphysics, it only serves metaphysicians to push them to better formulate their problems.

At the time of Fichte's removal from Jena, after the accusation of atheism, Kant writes his declaration of extraneousness while Fichte receives a letter from Schelling in which the latter shows his loyalty to the thinker removed from teaching. This letter, dated September 12, 1799, contains among other things the following passage: "... Kant's declaration that he has nothing in common with your philosophy is the clearest proof that posterity has already come to him, which (as he himself once said of Plato) understands him better than he himself has understood himself; and since everyone can speak his mind only in his own time, he, who does not know how to go beyond the limits of it, has lost all right to continue to speak, and is philosophically dead. He has every reason not to want to admit anything other than the Critique; but since going beyond the Critique is not only possible, but has already occurred, so that there can be no doubt about its possibility, here is something that is placed entirely outside his horizon, which for him already belongs to posterity, and where he has absolutely no right to speak."

In Kant's "declaration" was written: "... I hereby declare that I consider Fichte's doctrine of science to be a completely untenable system. Pure doctrine of science is in fact neither more nor less than mere

logic which, with its principles, cannot presume to arrive up to the material element of knowledge; being pure logic, it abstracts from the content of this, and to want to take out a real object is wasted effort, and is an enterprise to which no one had yet set himself; and if then one attempts it one is forced, assuming that transcendental philosophy is valid, to pass immediately beyond it, and to end up in metaphysics. And as far as metaphysics according to Fichtian principles is concerned, I am so unwilling to accept it that, replying to a letter of his, I advised him to cultivate, instead of fruitless subtleties, his good qualities as an expositor, which could be applied with useful results to the Critique of Pure Reason; but he politely refused, declaring to me that he would not cease to be interested in the scholastic element". And this corresponds to what can be read in a note by Kant about the "package of Fichte's works, which lies on the floor of the antechamber".

Kant's affirmation concerning the inability of ideas to know objects depends on the fact that according to him every idea is characterized by a specific logical error that constitutes an obstacle to his attempt to know the thing in itself. In the intention to know the world as an unconditioned totality reason finds the obstacle of the antinomies of the cosmological idea. It is, according to Kant, inevitable that in the attempt to know the world as unconditioned totality, that is, the world as it is, in itself and not as it is given to our experience, reason finds itself stuck in endless objections, which can never reach a positive conclusion. If the world is finite, therefore composed of simple parts, it is at the mercy of free causes, there is no room for an absolutely necessary being. The antitheses that admit the infinity of the world, then the existence of an infinitely divisible world, are harbingers of unresolvable antinomies. The two positions are, according to Kant, in equal measure necessary and erroneous. They cannot show in an intuition the validity of their statements, so, applying the principle of the excluded third, they try to prove their validity by demonstrating the erroneousness of the opposite statements, hence the antitheticity of reason. Kant states that these two antinomies, both the one related to the thesis and the one related to the antithesis, are false. The world, as a thing in itself, is not endowed with a space-time structure, as space and time are pure forms of human intuition. It is therefore neither finite nor infinite, nor infinitely divisible, nor composed of simple elements. In conclusion, according to Kant reason, in moving towards the unconditional, inevitably comes to antinomy. In other words it concludes with antithetical propositions, propositions provided with the same degree of necessity.

Benedetto Croce will remember how he drew from Hegel above all "the hatred against the abstract and immobile", or better, "against the *do verum esse* that is not, against the ideal that is not real". The philosopher of distinctions indicates precisely in the distinction as a starting point the danger of all philosophy. At least of all those philosophies that divide reality "into supra-history and history", that break the real "into a world of ideas and values and a lower world that reflects them or has reflected them so far in a fleeting and imperfect way". It is immanentism the message of Hegel that continues to circulate and with that the negation of any transcendentalist metaphysics.

After Hegel's anti-Kantian lesson, an idealist philosopher (and this definition often emerges even against the many declarations of principle in circulation) - without disturbing the Herbartian concepts of "soul" and "real" - cannot do anything but leave the indications of metaphysics and logic considered in a strictly technical way. There will be other terrains of confrontation.

To return to Carnap, mathematics has been able to play an extraordinary role in the sphere of idealistic philosophy. Sometimes it has been used in contrast to metaphysics, or to provide metaphysics with a supposedly concrete basis. While the so-called anti-idealistic philosophies have never considered it a significantly interesting tool. It may also be that the value assigned to mathematics is connected with the directing of idealism towards subjectivism. The idealist seeks in mathematics the objectivity that he cannot find in the experiences of concrete everyday life.

The Hegelian concreteness suggested many cues to the philosophy of the concrete, but also elements of rejection and denial of any possible concreteness. Many aspects of life have a kind of "metaphysical limitedness", and there are irrecusable aspects that testify to this limitedness. Where to find the confidence that in the reality of all is founded even the small, negligible partiality? How can we ensure that it is recovered, that it has a destination, the small reality, often insignificant and negligible, in the concrete openness of everyday life?

Descartes believed that he had settled the problem of being once and for all by closing every problem regarding the reality of existence. But this was recklessness. Kierkegaard could thus object in his own way: "Existence is like movement: it is very difficult to have anything to do with it". This statement marks the downfall of Cartesianism. The danger indicated by Kierkegaard is very real for any thesis based on transcendental idealism. After all, it is a vibrant protest made in the name of existence against any claim to a system. Philosophers who are interested in the problem of being (and who should not for this reason be called "existentialists") have in this way opened their own way.

There is nothing essential apart from existence, and it would be better here to speak of life. The same knowing that threatens to have no relationship with life is inessential knowing, something that would be better to do without. We must go in search of an original and therefore "necessary" relationship between thought and life. Metaphysics has often manifested an existential tendency, affirming that in this condition objectivity and subjectivity could find their connection or, I would say better, their point of union.

We are in front of one of the highest indications of philosophy. From Parmenides onwards, the problem remains open. By affirming, as someone does, the primacy of pure thought in the relationship between thought and being, one affirms the possible beginning from thought itself, which, isolating itself, tries to obtain life from its own movement. Independently of life, thought claims to fix its dominion over reality through logic, but this is not possible. Life always punishes any such attempt by proving it abstract and timeless. This is the work done by Hegel. Starting from the pure, empty and indeterminate being of the science of logic. Since the collapse of the process was already evident from the first lines, he introduced the dialectical movement into logic. Thus recovering all the underground efforts that clandestine thought had conducted over three thousand years. Hegel in this way was looking for something ingenious, that is he was trying to make the logic of the quantitative coexist with that of the qualitative.

Underneath this grandiose Hegelian architecture, completely impracticable, there is the great sense of the sacred, the breath of the Gothic, the portentous movement of Cistercian architecture. The life of men who felt those feelings is still alive in stone, in the space defined by certain forms. But that life has meaning in itself, therefore in the stone, because it is life for us. It is not a matter of adjustment, nor of learning, but of the life of human feeling, as it expressed itself in a period under the religious aspect. Hegel succeeds in grasping all this and much more.

To deal critically with the problem of dialectics does not mean to come to terms with the Hegelian method to the end. In order to realize this ambitious project, it would be necessary to have a clear idea of an alternative logic to that progressivism which, after all, constitutes the best known secret message of Hegelian thought. To escape from Hegel means to consider the activity of thought as a social product and not as an in itself that only to itself must give justification. Philosophy is certainly capable of reading the products of human life, feelings in the first place, as something connected with objective social forces. Philosophy cannot accept the task of reconstructing the world in its own image and

likeness, it has to face a negative social critique, so it has to construct an indirect process where thought can reflect on itself. None of this can be found in philosophy, which intends only to produce a system completed in all its details, including Hegelism.

It must be said that such a program does not necessarily imply an urgency for clarity and methodological rigor, nor does it intend to indicate a placement of thought on a higher level. The practical possibility of a real original unspeakability of reality is always possible. The very refusal to lock oneself into any definition may itself be an acceptance of the "particularly sublime" definition, according to the Hegelian hypothesis. It is not possible to provide a definition of dialectical criticism, in the same way that it is conceivable to trace boundaries and limits to resolve the legitimacy of a content to which thought is led by its own immanent logic. Dialectics concerns the relationship between subject and object, therefore also the confrontation between thing and concept, for this reason it enters into any defining procedure reaching its origin and revealing its limits. Dialectics is not even a method.

Hegel writes: "The dialectical movement that consciousness exercises in itself - and in its knowledge and in its object, - as the new true object arises, is precisely what is called experience. In this respect, there is a moment in the process which should be emphasized in order to shed new light on the scientific side of the discussion. The consciousness knows something; this object is the essence or the in-itself; but it is the in-itself also for the consciousness; and with that comes into play the ambiguity of that truth. We see that consciousness now has two objects; the one is the first in-itself, the other is the being-for-itself of this in-itself. This last object seems to have been from before only the reflection of consciousness within itself: a representation not of an object, but only of the knowledge which consciousness has of that first object. Except that now the first object is changed; it ceases to be the in-itself, and becomes a similar object which is the in-itself only for it; but thus this, the being-for-itself of this in-itself, is then the true; which means, moreover, that this is the essence, or its object. This new object contains the nullity of the first and is the experience made upon it." (Phenomenology of Spirit, vol. I, op. cit., p. 76). In this passage it is precisely the dialectic in motion that is observed, while the examination of the mechanism itself takes a back seat. Here we see very well the limitation that dialectics has as a "method". It is not only not a method but not even something real in the common sense of the term. The term which remains unreconciled, which lacks identity, the term which thought tries to replace, is contradictory and is open to any attempt at interpretation. Dialectics does not constitute any organizing impulse for thought. Moreover, it is not real since contradiction is only a category of reflection. Dialectics as a procedure is summarized in thinking in a contradictory way, in developing the passages of thought precisely because of the contradiction experienced in reality and in concluding in a contrary way. But this dialectic - left to itself, that is, pushed to its logical consequences - cannot be reconciled with all of Hegel's thought. His logic is logic of disintegration, while Hegel's logic tends to construct and objectify concepts that the knowing subject has immediately in front of him. Their identity with the subject is non-truth.

In the dialectic there is something impregnable. Remember that we are in front of a mechanism that is neither method nor something simply real. It is significant that almost all thinkers have given a different version of the dialectic, as if to say that each one has his own dialectic, or if you prefer each one tries to fix the difference between his own conception of the dialectic and the Hegelian one. By what means can one make room for the non-identical? The problem, or concern, of all thinkers is that their own view of the dialectic ends up looking like a contribution to disintegration, unlike dialectical logic which, by constantly removing difference in the identification of the other, manages to think against itself without renouncing itself and, in so doing, managing to preserve non-identity. A logic in accord with Hegel, such that it gathers all the elements of his inheritance, thus a logic that is dialectical in a concrete way, cannot be the basis of a negative critique.

[1971]

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